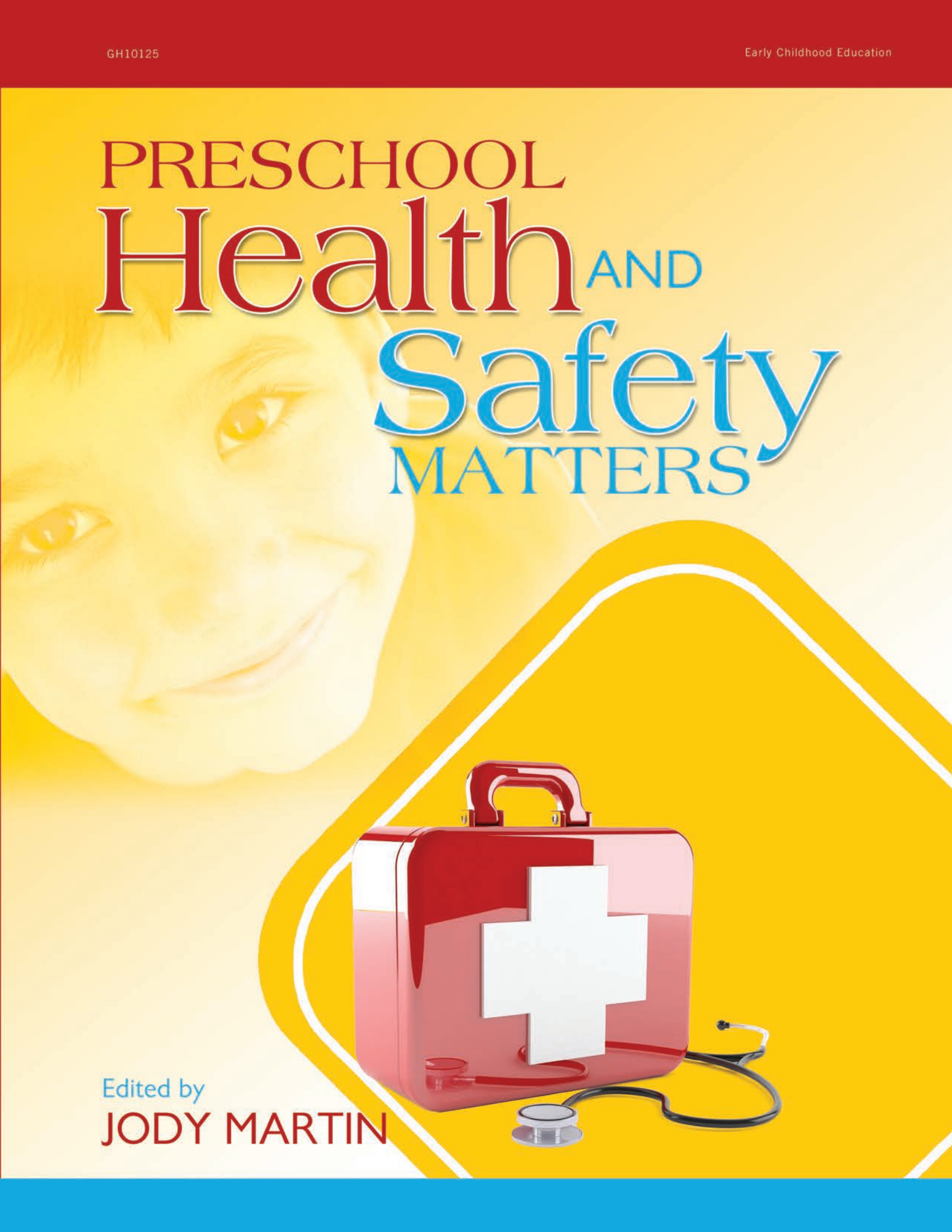


PRESCHOOL Health AND Safety MATTERS



Edited by
JODY MARTIN

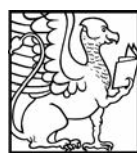
Preschool Health and Safety Matters

EDITED BY JODY MARTIN

PRESCHOOL
Health AND
Safety
MATTERS

Edited by
JODY MARTIN

Gryphon House, Inc.





Bulk purchase

Gryphon House books are available for special premiums and sales promotions as well as for fund-raising use. Special editions or book excerpts also can be created to specification. For details, contact the Director of Marketing at Gryphon House.

Disclaimer

Gryphon House, Inc. and the authors cannot be held responsible for damage, mishap, or injury incurred during the use of or because of activities in this book. Appropriate and reasonable caution and adult supervision of children involved in activities and corresponding to the age and capability of each child involved is recommended at all times. Do not leave children unattended at any time. Observe safety and caution at all times.

© 2011 Jody Martin
Preschool Health and Safety Matters
by Jody Martin

Published by Gryphon House, Inc.
10770 Columbia Pike, Suite 201
Silver Spring, MD 20901
800.638.0928; 301.595.9500; 301.595.0051 (fax)

Visit us on the web at www.gryphonhouse.com

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher. Printed in the United States of America. Every effort has been made to locate copyright and permission information.

Cover/interior photographs: © iStockphoto LP 2009. All rights reserved. iStockphoto® and iStock® are trademarks of iStockphoto LP. Flash® is a registered trademark of Adobe Inc. www.istockphoto.com.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Information

Martin, Jody.

Preschool health and safety manual / by Jody Martin.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-0-87659-149-9

1. Preschool children--Health and hygiene. 2. Preschool children--Care.

3. Preschool children--Nutrition. I. Title.

RJ101.M3476 1995

613'.0432--dc22

2011011476

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| INTRODUCTION..... | 11 |
| Policies and Procedures | 12 |
| How to Use This Book..... | 13 |
| Resources..... | 15 |
| | |
| Chapter 1: Healthy Habits (Health and Hygiene) by Jody Martin..... | 17 |
| Handwashing | 18 |
| How to Wash Hands..... | 18 |
| Diapering and Assisting with Toilet Training | 19 |
| Diapering..... | 19 |
| Assisting with Toileting..... | 20 |
| Oral Health | 21 |
| Sanitation | 21 |
| The Green Movement | 23 |
| Important Facts..... | 24 |
| Best Practices..... | 25 |
| Tools to Use | 25 |
| Ideas for Children | 26 |
| Ideas for Families | 26 |
| Resources..... | 27 |
| | |
| Chapter 2: Germ Busters (Health and Disease Prevention) by Charlotte Hendricks.... | 29 |
| Handwashing | 30 |
| Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Standard Precautions | 31 |
| Immunization..... | 32 |
| Recognizing and Responding to Signs and Symptoms of Disease | 34 |
| Administration of Medication..... | 35 |
| Important Facts..... | 37 |
| Best Practices..... | 38 |
| Tools to Use | 38 |



| | |
|--------------------------|----|
| Ideas for Children | 39 |
| Ideas for Families | 39 |
| Resources..... | 39 |

Chapter 3: Safe and Sound (Safety and Injury Prevention Indoors)

| | |
|---|----|
| by Charlotte Hendricks..... | 41 |
| Building Maintenance | 42 |
| Entrances (Doors, Stairways, and Hallways)..... | 42 |
| Floors, Walls, and Ceilings..... | 42 |
| Windows | 43 |
| Indoor Lighting and Noise | 44 |
| Air Quality..... | 45 |
| Furnishings..... | 45 |
| Bathroom and Toileting Areas | 46 |
| Toys and Supplies..... | 47 |
| Supervision | 48 |
| Response to Injury..... | 48 |
| Important Facts..... | 50 |
| Best Practices..... | 51 |
| Tools to Use | 51 |
| Ideas for Children | 52 |
| Ideas for Families | 52 |
| Resources | 52 |

Chapter 4: Healthy Body and Mind (Mental and Emotional Health and Behavior)

| | |
|--|----|
| by Jody Martin | 55 |
| Child Abuse and Neglect | 56 |
| Positive Guidance and Behavior Management..... | 58 |
| Biting Policy..... | 60 |
| Family Communication | 60 |
| Stress Management | 61 |
| Important Facts..... | 63 |
| Best Practices..... | 64 |
| Tools to Use | 64 |
| Ideas for Children | 65 |
| Ideas for Families | 65 |
| Resources..... | 65 |

Chapter 5: The Unique Child (Diversity in the Classroom) by Francis Wardle.....

| | |
|--|----|
| Responding to Diversity..... | 68 |
| Start with the Child..... | 68 |
| Integrate Diversity Throughout the Curriculum and Center | 69 |
| Specific Approaches and Ideas | 70 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Have a Clear Program Philosophy | 72 |
| Important Facts | 74 |
| Best Practices..... | 75 |
| Tools to Use | 76 |
| Ideas for Children | 76 |
| Ideas for Families | 77 |
| Resources..... | 77 |
| | |
| Chapter 6: Food Facts (Nutrition and Food Safety) by Jody Martin | 79 |
| Nutrition Policy..... | 79 |
| Nutrition Education..... | 80 |
| Feeding 81 | |
| Obesity 83 | |
| Menus 84 | |
| Organic Foods | 85 |
| Food Safety | 85 |
| Allergies | 86 |
| Important Facts..... | 87 |
| Best Practices..... | 88 |
| Tools to Use | 88 |
| Ideas for Children | 89 |
| Ideas for Families | 89 |
| Resources..... | 90 |
| | |
| Chapter 7: Fit and Fun (Fitness and Outdoor Activities) by Francis Wardle | 91 |
| Playground Design | 92 |
| Activity Zones | 93 |
| Surfaces..... | 93 |
| Equipment..... | 94 |
| Playground Safety | 94 |
| Playground Maintenance | 96 |
| Playground Supervision..... | 96 |
| ADA Accessibility..... | 97 |
| Active Play | 98 |
| Best Practices..... | 100 |
| Important Facts..... | 101 |
| Tools to Use..... | 101 |
| Ideas for Children | 102 |
| Ideas for Families | 102 |
| Resources..... | 103 |



| | |
|--|-----|
| Chapter 8: Kids on the Move (Pedestrian and Transportation Safety) by Jody Martin... | 105 |
| Transportation Safety Policy | 105 |
| Vehicles..... | 106 |
| Staff..... | 106 |
| Prior Authorization | 106 |
| Safety Precautions..... | 107 |
| Transportation Safety Procedures..... | 108 |
| Vehicle Maintenance | 108 |
| Driver Training | 109 |
| Substance Use and Abuse | 109 |
| Field Trip Safety | 110 |
| Planning | 110 |
| Permission Slips..... | 110 |
| Ratios..... | 110 |
| Leaving the Facility | 111 |
| Head Count..... | 111 |
| Emergency Plans | 111 |
| Pedestrian Safety | 112 |
| Bike Safety..... | 112 |
| Important Facts..... | 113 |
| Best Practices..... | 114 |
| Tools to Use..... | 114 |
| Ideas for Children | 115 |
| Ideas for Families | 115 |
| Resources..... | 115 |
| | |
| Chapter 9: Be Prepared (Emergency Preparedness) by Elizabeth F. Shores and Cathy Grace | 117 |
| Reduce Your Program’s Risk..... | 118 |
| Open a Disaster Account | 118 |
| Map Your Escape Route..... | 119 |
| Outfit an Emergency Shelter | 119 |
| Stay in Touch..... | 119 |
| Involve the Entire Staff..... | 120 |
| Promoting Resilience in Children | 120 |
| Child Safety Precautions | 121 |
| Infection Control..... | 121 |
| First Aid | 121 |
| Sheltering in Place..... | 122 |
| Building Evacuation | 122 |
| Off-Site Relocation | 123 |
| Helping Children Cope After Disasters..... | 123 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| Important Facts | 124 |
| Best Practices..... | 125 |
| Tools to Use..... | 127 |
| Ideas for Children | 127 |
| Ideas for Families | 128 |
| Resources..... | 129 |
| Appendix | 131 |
| Handwashing Poster | 132 |
| Cleaning Guidelines..... | 133 |
| HIP on HEALTH..... | 134 |
| Handwashing Book..... | 136 |
| Authorization to Administer Medication..... | 137 |
| Daily Health Check | 138 |
| Medication Administered at Center (Daily Medication Form) | 140 |
| Child Injury and Incident Report | 141 |
| Health and Safety Checklist..... | 143 |
| First-Aid Kit List..... | 146 |
| Disaster Posters | 148 |
| Eight Steps in Pediatric First Aid | 150 |
| Behavior Management Plan | 151 |
| Behavior Log | 152 |
| Diversity Materials and Activities Checklist | 153 |
| Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences | 154 |
| Meal Patterns | 155 |
| My Pyramid (Food Pyramid for Young Children) | 159 |
| Sample Menu | 161 |
| Allergy Treatment Plan | 162 |
| Playground Surfacing Options | 163 |
| Playground Checklist | 164 |
| Public Playgrounds Safety Checklist (CPSC) | 167 |
| Guide to ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Play Areas..... | 168 |
| Authorization to Transport Children Form | 169 |
| Passenger Log | 170 |
| Vehicle Maintenance Checklist | 171 |
| Field Trip Permission | 172 |
| Index | 173 |



Introduction

One of the very important things that early childhood educators do is protect and promote the health and safety of young children. This includes preventing harm to children from known safety risks as well as promoting children's medical, nutrition, oral, and mental health.

As program directors and teachers, you must be able to protect children from harm and promote the health and well-being of not only the children and other staff members, but also the families. Whether you are implementing regular site safety checks or making sure proper handwashing is taking place, you are taking simple steps that can produce major health gains for your program.

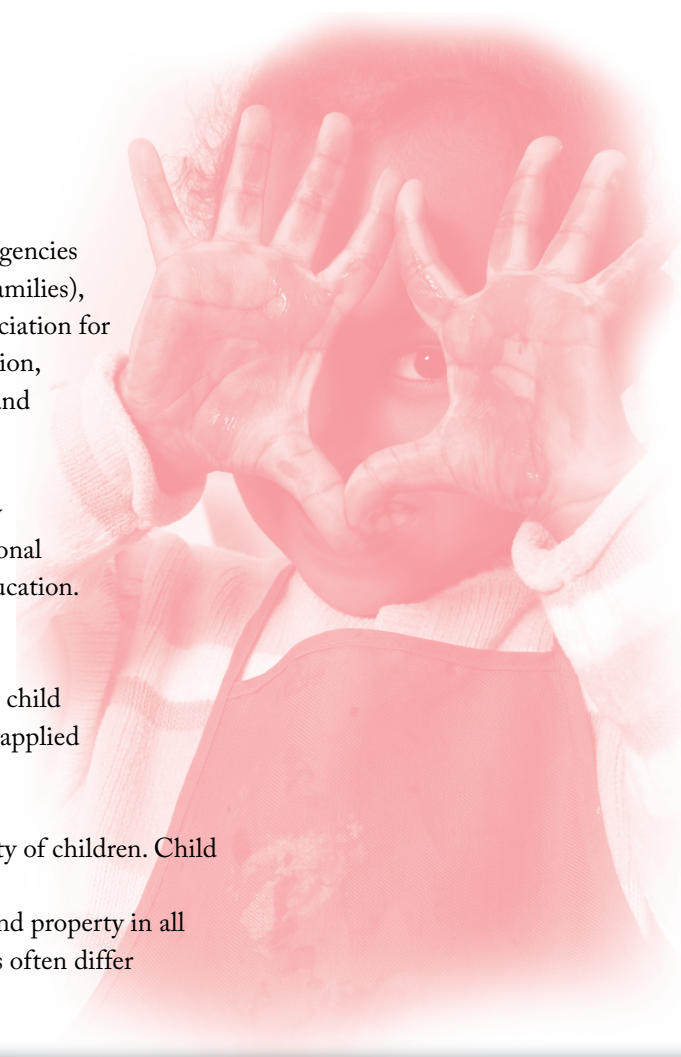
This purpose of this easy-to-use manual is to provide specific information, procedures, and recommendations on health and safety topics. In this resource, you will find helpful information to integrate health and safety practices with up-to-date recommendations for keeping children healthy and safe in child care settings.

The information in this manual is based on standards from various agencies and organizations such as ACF (Administration for Children and Families), Head Start, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, American Public Health Association, the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education, and on the information in *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs* (2002) by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Public Health Association, and the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education.

This manual is for directors, teachers, caregivers, health professionals who work with child care programs, and other individuals who assist child care professionals. The information in the following chapters can be applied to any child care setting by selecting the issues that meet your needs.

Many organizations and agencies are involved in the health and safety of children. Child care is typically regulated by at least the following:

- **Building Inspectors:** They enforce building codes to protect life and property in all buildings that are preparing to operate with children. These codes often differ between states and between cities within states.





Please note that this manual does not replace your state's child care regulations and laws. In every situation, the laws and regulations of the city, county, and state in which you operate must be carefully followed even if they are different from the recommendations in this resource.

- Health Department: Codes are intended to prevent the spread of disease and address other issues that might affect the health of children within a facility.
- Licensing Agencies: They have very specific minimum standards and requirements for running a child care program.

As a professional working directly with children, you have an important responsibility to protect and promote the health and well-being of not only the children but also their families. In addition to the specific health-related steps that you must take to achieve a healthy and safe environment, such as proper handwashing, surface cleaning, and monitoring the safety of the playground and equipment, there are other components of an environment that promote a sense of well-being. These include preventing known risks by promoting medical, oral health, and nutritional health, and considering the mental health practices you can implement to encourage a healthy body and mind in the children in your care.

Policies and Procedures

By developing and implementing clear policies and procedures, there is less opportunity for confusion or misunderstanding about how to address situations that arise. Ensuring that all staff know and follow the necessary policies provides consistency and stability for children and their families.

Providing policies and procedures in both family and staff handbooks enhances the professional status of your center, establishes lines of authority, clarifies specific responsibilities for each staff member, and, in an emergency, provides coordinated, timely response to the crisis.

Policies are those principles set up to govern actions within a child care center, such as the philosophy, goals, and operating regulations set forth by licensing, the health department, and your corporate office (if applicable). *Procedures* outline the process for carrying out the policy. Procedures are the actions taken to implement the policy in day-to-day operations.

As you write your policies and procedures, be sure to define the subject of the policy and state the goal or purpose. Then state the policy in a clear and concise way, clarifying the levels of authority involved, followed by the specific actions that need to be taken.

Most state licensing standards require that written policies be provided to family members and staff members. Such policies for families and /or for staff typically may include the following categories (be sure to check with your specific licensing standards):

- Philosophy and mission
- Hours and days of operation
- Address and telephone number of center

- 
- Daily schedule for the various age groups
 - Description of established lines of authority
 - Termination of enrollment procedures
 - Safe pick up
 - Positive guidance and behavior management
 - Transportation safety
 - Handling medication distribution
 - Reporting suspected abuse/neglect
 - Emergency plan
 - Sanitation and hygiene (universal precautions)
 - Food handling, feeding, and nutrition
 - Smoking, prohibited substances, and weapons
 - Supervision (head count, ratios)
 - Playground safety
 - Injury prevention
 - Guidelines regarding employment
 - Compensation and review
 - Work schedule (time cards, breaks)
 - Benefits (health, education, childcare, leaves of absences, time off)
 - Employee safety and health (workers compensation, harassment, dress code, cell phone usage, confidentiality, grievance procedures)
 - Disciplinary action and termination of employment

There is a saying that you can't play the game if you don't know the rules. Policies and procedures need to be clear and concise to be effective and families and staff need to be aware of these "rules" right from the start. Once you have clearly defined policies and procedures, they can be used in the orientation process for new staff members and in the enrollment process for families. This allows you to provide guidance rather than criticism. Further, training through modeling promotes a strong bond with staff members and enhances their self-concept and self-esteem. Families will also appreciate the structure and consistency that policies and procedures provide.

How to Use This Book

Have you ever wondered how to create an environment that prevents injuries or how to prevent the spread of disease? You might want to know what to do in the case of a disaster or how to handle suspected child abuse. You may know the answers to some of these questions, but there may be some topics that you either don't know how to handle or what you have already tried is not working. In this manual, you will find ideas and suggestions to help you maintain a safe and healthy child care setting in regard to the following topics:

Chapter 1: Healthy Habits (Health and Hygiene)

Chapter 2: Germ Busters (Health and Disease Prevention)



- Chapter 3: Safe and Sound (Safety and Injury Prevention Indoors)
- Chapter 4: Healthy Body and Mind (Mental and Emotional Health and Behavior)
- Chapter 5: The Unique Child (Diversity in the Classroom)
- Chapter 6: Food Facts (Nutrition and Food Safety)
- Chapter 7: Fit and Fun (Fitness and Outdoor Activities)
- Chapter 8: Kids on the Move (Pedestrian and Transportation Safety)
- Chapter 9: Be Prepared (Emergency Preparedness)

Each chapter includes important facts, best practices, tools to use, suggestions for things to do with children, and what family members can do at home. Some information may be suitable to incorporate into a written policies and procedures document for your center. Finally, each chapter includes a list of additional resources that you can use to find out more information about each topic. The Appendix of this book also contains charts, forms, checklists, and other information to supplement the information in the chapters.

You can read the entire manual or turn to the table of contents to find a relevant topic. What topic do you feel the least informed about? What topic relates to a situation you are working through in your program? Are there topics you avoid because you find them overwhelming or too complicated? This resource will give you a clear and concise synopsis of many relevant health and safety topics.

Providing a safe and healthy environment for the children in your care and their families includes making healthy choices for children and teaching them to make the same choices for themselves. The health and safety topics in this manual will support your work with young children and provide the information and tools you need to provide the best possible early childhood program.

To make this information easy to use and find, look for the following sections in each chapter highlighted by the icons below:



Important Facts—key information that is highlighted from the topics addressed in the chapter or additional tidbits of information regarding the topics.



Best Practices—a technique, method, process, or activity that is particularly effective or efficient and meets state licensing or company quality standards or criteria regarding the topic addressed in the chapter.



Tools to Use—charts, forms, tables, diagrams, and other tools that can be used to outline a procedure or philosophy related to the content in the chapter.



Ideas for Children—activities, ideas, or information that you can share with children so they understand the topic.



Ideas for Families—activities, ideas, or information that you can share with families that will help them understand the importance of each topic so they can support and extend their children’s learning at home.



Resources—references related to each topic that suggest other avenues for you to explore for more information about the topic in the chapter.

Resources

American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, and National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education 2002. *Caring for our children: National health and safety performance standards: Guidelines for out-of-home child care programs*. Elk Grove, IL: author. Also available at nrckids.org.



HEALTHY HABITS

(Health and Hygiene)

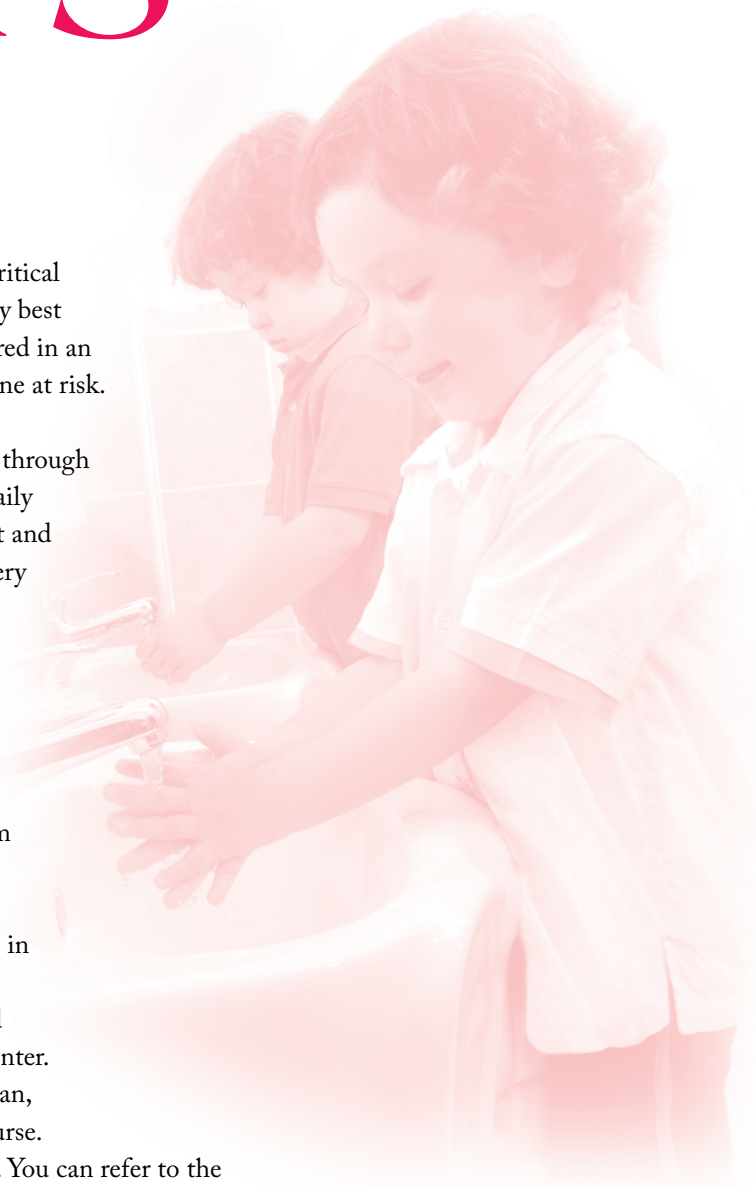
BY JODY MARTIN

Basic hygiene practices for children and adults are a critical component of quality child care. You can have the very best educational program, but it won't matter if it is delivered in an environment that puts the health and safety of everyone at risk.

It is possible to prevent many communicable diseases through appropriate hygiene and sanitation practices. These daily routines need to become automatic and habitual. First and foremost, your state licensing standards will outline very specific guidelines for proper hygiene practices and sanitation that you need to follow.

To make sure these practices are implemented correctly, you will want to have written policies and procedures about handwashing, diapering/toileting, oral hygiene, and sanitizing and disinfecting classroom equipment and materials.

There may be health resources and health consultants in your community who can provide guidance, technical assistance, and consultation to help you recognize and develop additional policies and procedures for your center. This may include a pediatrician, family health physician, pediatric nurse practitioner, or a community health nurse. Some states require that you have a health consultant. You can refer to the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care website (nrc.uchsc.edu) for your state's regulations.





Handwashing

Handwashing is the first line of defense against infectious diseases. If hands are not properly washed, they become the primary carriers of infections. Many outbreaks of diarrhea among the children and caregivers have occurred because of deficiencies in handwashing procedures. In addition, how you wash your hands and when you wash your hands are more important than what you wash with.

All adults should learn proper handwashing procedures and all children should be taught the proper way to wash their hands. Instead of using technical explanations or scare tactics when talking to children about handwashing, just explain that they need to keep their hands clean so they won't get sick. Model the proper techniques and make handwashing a normal part of your daily routine. You can find a chart outlining the proper handwashing techniques in the Appendix of this book on page 132, or on the Internet. For a chart in English and Spanish, go to childhealthonline.org.

People, not objects, are the number one carriers of germs. We collect germs on our hands each time we cough, sneeze, blow our nose, or touch a contaminated surface. Scrubbing your hands with soap and warm, running water for at least 20 seconds can remove up to 90% of germs. We know that handwashing helps us get rid of germs, but when should we wash our hands?

Children should wash their hands:

- When they first enter your building or classroom.
- Before and after meals, snacks, or food activities.
- After coming in from outside.
- After toileting or having a diaper changed.
- After sneezing, coughing, or blowing their noses.
- After playing with animals.
- Before and after sensory play (sand, water, clay).

In addition to the above, adults should also wash their hands:

- When they first enter a classroom.
- Before and after feeding children or eating meals.
- Before and after giving any medical procedures or first aid.
- Before and after diapering or assisting with toileting.
- After handling any bodily fluids (mucous, blood, vomit).
- After cleaning up spills or handling the garbage.

HOW TO WASH HANDS

Make sure the water temperature is less than 120° but more than 60°. To begin, moisten your hands with water and apply liquid soap to your hands; rub the soap lathering over

your hands, between your fingers, and around and under your nail beds and fingernails. Continue to do this for at least 10 seconds. Be sure to use liquid soap, as bar soap tends to harbor microorganisms. Next, hold your hands facing downward under running water until the lather is gone. Finally, dry your hands thoroughly with paper towels or a hand dryer. Leave the water running while you are drying your hands and then use a paper towel to turn off the faucet. Dispose of the paper towel in a lined trash can.

Keeping hands clean when outside or on a field trip is not an easy task and is sometimes overlooked. If soap and running water are not available, you can still take some steps to keep hands as clean as possible. First, remove dirt with a moistened wipe and then use a hand sanitizer. (Check with your state licensing regulations regarding the use of liquid sanitizers.) Liquid sanitizers can be used to kill germs, but they do not necessarily remove dirt, so both steps are needed. When you arrive back at the center, be sure that everyone properly washes their hands.

To be effective, children have to be encouraged and reminded to wash their hands, and you have to model proper handwashing techniques. If you do, you will be rewarded with fewer illnesses and better health for children and adults.

Diapering and Assisting with Toilet Training

DIAPERING

It can be challenging to manage diapering and assist children with using the toilet in a sanitary way. But if you pay close attention to diapering details, you can reduce the spread of disease through germs left on surfaces and hands. Ultimately, this will reduce the number of upset stomachs, diarrhea, and even more serious illnesses such as Hepatitis A.

Diapering should be done in a designated area where food handling is not permitted. Running water needs to be available so hands can be washed immediately after the diaper is changed. The surface should be flat, non-porous, and free of cracks or crevices.

The proper procedure for diaper changing is designed to reduce the contamination of surfaces that will eventually come into contact with the child or caregiver's hands and other furnishings. Diaper changing procedures should be posted in the diaper changing area so everyone can reference the proper steps to take. For a chart on diapering procedures, download the information at ucsfchildcarehealth.org/pdfs/posters/BWDiaperPosterEN.pdf.





To ensure the safety of the child while at the diaper changing table, make sure that you have collected all supplies before bringing the child to the table. **Never leave a child unattended, even for an instant.** You will need to collect a non-absorbent paper liner large enough to cover the changing area needed for the size of the child, wipes for cleaning the genitalia, a clean diaper, a plastic bag for any soiled diapers, disposable gloves (if applicable), and diaper cream (if needed).

To start the procedure, pick up the child and tell him or her that you are going to change his or her diaper. Remember that anything that comes in contact with stool or urine is a source of germs. If the child has soiled his or her clothing, be sure to hold the child out away from you while carrying him or her to the diaper-changing table so you don't contaminate your own clothing. Change the child's clothing and put the soiled clothes in a bag to send home. Once you lay the child on the changing table, you must never leave him or her unattended. Remove the soiled diaper and clothes if necessary and put the diaper in a lined, covered step can. Clean the child's bottom with a moist disposable wipe from front to back. Repeat with fresh wipes if needed. Dispose of the wipe in a lined, covered step can. Wipe your hands with a disposable wipe and put it in the lined, covered step can as well. Diaper and dress the child and wash his or her hands. Remove the disposable covering from the diaper surface and disinfect the area. Wash your own hands thoroughly.

Although gloves are not necessary for diaper changing, they can reduce hand contamination and the possibility of infectious disease-causing agents getting under your fingernails and on the surfaces of your hands. For added protection, wear gloves when changing the diaper of a child with diarrhea or a diagnosed gastrointestinal disease. Wearing gloves for routine diaper changing is optional unless your health department, licensing agency, or company policy states otherwise. You can remove the gloves after you have cleaned the child's bottom area and removed the soiled diaper. Place both the gloves and soiled diaper in a lined, covered step can.

ASSISTING WITH TOILETING

Toilets should be separate from the children's activity area and children younger than five years old should be accompanied to the toilet or monitored by a teacher. The use of potty chairs is discouraged because of the increased opportunity to spread germs when emptying the urine and stool from the potty chair into the toilet. If you do use a potty chair, you need to empty the contents into the toilet, clean and sanitize the potty in a utility sink (not in a sink used for handwashing), and store it in the bathroom. After that you will need to sanitize the sink. If you assist with toileting, adhere to the handwashing routines before leaving the toilet area and again before handling food.

Oral Health

The quality of oral hygiene and dental care children receive early on often determines their oral health throughout their life. As early childhood educators, we have an opportunity to provide guidance on healthy behaviors and positive experiences for children. You can help prevent dental disease by serving nutritious foods, limiting sugary snacks, teaching children about good oral health, and having children brush their teeth (if licensing permits) while in your care.

When plaque builds up on the teeth, it results in tooth decay, which can lead to gum disease. If gum disease goes untreated, the tissue that holds the teeth in place will be destroyed and the teeth may eventually be lost. Children and adults should brush their teeth at least twice a day for two minutes each time.

If you choose to have children brush their teeth, you will want to remember the following:

- Children must have their own toothbrushes, labeled with their names.
- Store toothbrushes so they stay clean and open to the air. Do not allow the bristles to touch.
- Provide small toothbrushes with soft, rounded, nylon bristles.
- Replace brushes when the bristles become bent or about every six months.
- Brush your own teeth to be a role model for good oral hygiene.

If appropriate, give children information and reassurance about going to the dentist. If they are afraid, give them enough information to quiet their fears—too much information may make them more anxious. Talk about the simple procedures and some of the instruments dentists use. Introduce new vocabulary such as *fluoride*, *cavity*, *gums*, *plaque*, *enamel*, and *x-rays*. Avoid words like *shot*, *drill*, or *pull*.

Invite a dentist or hygienist to your center to teach children about oral health and oral health examinations. This can help reduce children's anxiety about going to the dentist. Many children do not know what to expect and they may have heard about family members experiencing pain after a dental visit.

Sanitation

It is almost impossible to maintain a germ-free environment all the time, but one of the most important steps in reducing the spread of infectious diseases is cleaning and sanitizing surfaces that could pose a risk or exposure to germs. In order for this to work well, it is important to have systems and procedures in place to keep germs at bay. You may want to have a written policy for the routine cleaning and maintenance of the





facility and equipment. Take into consideration the type of cleaning and the chemicals used, as well as the method and schedule for cleaning and sanitizing. For this to be effective, appoint specific people to be responsible for cleaning and/or monitoring the facility and equipment.

Toys that cannot be washed and sanitized should not be used in your child care center. Toys that children have put in their mouths should be set aside after the children are done playing, cleaned and disinfected, or put in a dishwasher that meets the requirements of the health department. [Machine-washable toys can only be used by one child until they must be laundered.] Do not move toys from one group to another without sanitizing them first. These guidelines will help considerably in cutting down the spread of germs.

The frequency of cleaning and sanitation should follow a timeline as outlined in the Cleaning Guidelines chart in the Appendix on page 133. If there are outbreaks of illness, visible soil, blood or other bodily fluids, or if recommended to do so by the health department, increase the frequency with which you clean and disinfect the classroom.

The proper procedure for cleaning a surface begins with using detergent and water. This will remove the dirt so that the disinfectant can be more effective at killing germs on the object or surface. Next, apply a bleach solution by spraying from a spray bottle or by dipping the object in a bleach solution. Allow the surface or object to air dry long enough to kill the germs. The minimum contact time should be two minutes.

To make a disinfecting solution, mix $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of bleach with one gallon of water or one tablespoon of bleach in one quart of water (check with your health department or licensing agency to make sure this complies with your local or state standards). Make this solution daily, as heat and sunlight can weaken its effectiveness.

There are a number of industrial products available that can be used for sanitizing, but they need to meet the Environmental Protection Agency's standards for "hospital grade" germicides. Some products advertise themselves as disinfectants or as having germicidal action, but they may not have the same effectiveness as bleach and water.

Disposable towels are preferred for cleaning. Place them in a plastic bag-lined container when you are done. If you use cloth rags, place them in a covered receptacle after disinfecting the classroom and launder the rags after each use. Sponges are not recommended because they can retain organic material that can promote bacterial growth. Clean and sanitize mops after each use. If you use utility gloves to clean and sanitize toilets, wash the gloves with soapy water and let them dry.

If you have pets in your center, create additional guidelines for maintaining a clean environment. First, make sure that no child is allergic to the pets. Remember always to wash your hands and make sure the children wash their hands after playing with or feeding the animals. Do not allow animals in areas where you prepare, eat, or store food. Clean the animal's area frequently and wash your hands afterwards. Although it is acceptable to allow children to feed pets, it is best—in order to protect the children from contamination—not to allow them to clean and maintain a pet's cage.

The Green Movement

“Going green” is certainly on all our minds these days, and to ensure a “green” future, it is important to begin educating young children on how they can contribute to the greening of their own environments. You also have an opportunity to help families understand how to guide their children to create a more sustainable environment. It is our responsibility to implement lessons that instill a life-long appreciation for the environment. You can lead by example by implementing the following practices:

- Keep the water flow to a pencil-thin stream when using the sink and turn the water off in between children washing their hands.
- Turn the lights off when leaving the room and keep the lights off in rooms that are not being used.
- Shut down computers and unplug unused appliances.
- Recycle construction paper, copy paper, old faxes, and junk mail.
- Pay attention to serving sizes and allocate food appropriately to cut down on waste.
- Use plastic or paper bowls instead of Styrofoam®.
- Eliminate or restrict the use of aerosol sprays.





An Eco-Healthy Child Care Checklist can be found at ecohealthychildcare.org. This checklist offers easy-to-follow steps that will immediately benefit the health and well-being of all the children in your care. The items on the checklist comply with *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs* (2002) by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Public Health Association, and the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education.



IMPORTANT FACTS

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that every year, more than 164 million school and child care days are lost due to illness. Many of those illnesses could have been avoided if children had used proper handwashing techniques.
- In programs that have implemented a handwashing training program, the incidence of diarrhea-related illness has decreased by 50% (Steinhardt, 2003).
- Antibacterial soaps contain ingredients that can help kill some disease-causing bacteria, but not viruses or fungi, which are responsible for most of the illnesses children get.
- Natural sugars, such as syrup and honey, are just as harmful to teeth as refined sugar. Research shows that 25 percent of children in the U.S. have cavities by age four.
- *Cleaning* involves removing dirt and scum with soap and water. This sometimes kills germs. *Sanitizing* involves removing soil and dirt and small amounts of certain bacteria. *Disinfecting* means killing germs (bacteria, viruses, fungi).



BEST PRACTICES



- Important handwashing components:
 - Use running water in a sink that drains.
 - Use liquid soap.
 - Rub your hands together for at least 20 seconds.
 - Turn the faucet off with a paper towel.
- Keep laminated pictures or other easily disinfected toys, mirrors, and interesting objects near the diaper-changing table to occupy children's attention while they are getting changed. Ensure all hanging objects are out of the reach of children.
- Remove the child's socks and/or shoes while diapering so if the child kicks and touches the soiled area, he or she will not spread the contamination throughout the classroom.
- Having children brush their teeth or rinse their mouths out with water after eating will cut down on the time the teeth are exposed to the decay process.
- Use a bleach solution for disinfecting surfaces. Add one tablespoon of bleach to one quart of water ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup bleach per one gallon of water). Mix this solution fresh daily. Use the solution to disinfect surfaces that have already been cleaned. Spray or wipe the solution on a surface. Leave the solution on the surface for at least two minutes before drying it with a paper towel or allowing the surface to air dry.
- Only use animal cages that have removable bottoms. Keep all animal cages clean and sanitary. Immediately remove and discard all animal litter, following the guidelines of your state and local health departments.

TOOLS TO USE



Proper Handwashing Techniques
(childhealthonline.org and other websites)

Proper Diapering Procedures
(ucsfchildcarehealth.org/pdfs/posters/BWDiaperPosterEN.pdf and other websites)

Cleaning Guidelines Chart (page 133)



Ideas for Children

- To help children wash their hands for a good period of time, encourage them to wash their hands for the time it takes to sing the “The ABC Song” or “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.”
- Reinforce the importance of handwashing by reading children’s books about germs and handwashing, such as *Germs Make Me Sick* by Melvin Berger, *Germs Are Not for Sharing* by Elizabeth Verdick, or *Those Mean Nasty Dirty Downright Disgusting but... Invisible Germs* by Judith Anne Rice.
- Provide props in the Dramatic Play Center that children can use to play the role of the dentist or hygienist. Add gloves, gowns, dental health posters, bibs, flashlight, dolls, dental x-rays, and office items like clipboards, paper, pens, and appointment books.
- Help children learn the importance and function of cleaning through their play. For example, include baby dolls, a baby bath tub or plastic bin, and soap and water in the Dramatic Play Center for children to bathe their babies. Children can also wash plastic dishes and foods. You may need to sanitize these materials later, but children will learn the importance of keeping their toys clean. In addition, when you make cleaning and sanitizing a regular part of the routine in your classroom and when children watch what you do to keep the classroom clean, you teach children that cleanliness must be a routine for them as well.
- Provide a recycling bin in your classroom so children begin to understand the importance of reusing items—one thing they can do to take care of the environment. Find more ideas and activities at websites such as ecokids.com, globalkids.org, and kidsplanet.org.



Ideas for Families

- Child Health Information and Prevention Resources (www.childhealthonline.org) has a downloadable HIP on HEALTH parent letter and mini-poster, in English and Spanish, as well as articles for child care programs on the importance of handwashing. (Some of this material is also available on pages 132 and 136 of the Appendix.)
- Provide oral hygiene information to families through posters, newsletters, handouts, or videos. Local health departments sometimes have brochures and other resources that can be made available to families.

- Let families know that they can help ease fears about going to the dentist by reading storybooks to their children. Have the following books available for families to check out: *The Berenstain Bears Visit the Dentist* by Stan and Jan Berenstain, *Just Going to the Dentist* by Mercer Mayer, or *The Tooth Book* by Edward Miller.

Resources



- American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, and National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. 2002. *Caring for our children: National health and safety performance standards: Guidelines for out-of-home child care programs*. Elk Grove, IL: author. Also available at nrckids.org.
- Aronson, S., Editor. 2002. *Healthy young children*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Arsonson, S., T. Shope. 2005. *Managing infectious diseases in child care and schools*. Elk Grove, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Aronson, S., Editor. 2002. *Model child care health policies*. Rosemont, PA: Healthy Child Care Pennsylvania.
- Hale, C., J. Polder. 1997. *Handbook for child care providers, ABCs of safe and healthy childcare*. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Healthy Childcare Consultants, Inc. *Child Health Information and Prevention Resources*. 2010. www.childhealthonline.org.
- Leger-Ferraro, S. 2010. *Raising a 'Green Generation'*. Redmond, WA: Child Care Information Exchange.
- Smith, B. 2007. *Health and safety manual*. Silbert, AZ: Hand Print Productions.
- Steinhardt, M. 2003. *The director's toolbox*. Richmond, VA: Virginia Department of Social Services.