



Mecklenburg County Health Department

OUTDOOR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND PREMISES

- Child care center premises, including the outdoor learning environment, shall be kept clean, drained to minimize standing water (ornamental ponds must contain fish or have mechanical circulation), free of litter and hazardous materials, and maintained in a manner which does not encourage the harborage of vermin (ex. avoid piles of debris and lumber).
- All debris, glass, dilapidated structures and broken play equipment shall be removed. Wells, grease traps, cisterns and utility equipment (electrical panels, HVAC compressors, etc.) shall be made inaccessible to children.
- Sand toys, water tables and other items that can collect standing water in the outdoor learning environment shall be emptied and stored to prevent standing water.
- For outdoor play equipment, including all structures accessible to children, the following shall apply:
 - Equipment shall be kept in good repair, free of peeling, flaking, or chalking paint and free of rust and corrosion.
 - Sandboxes shall be constructed to allow for drainage and shall be covered when not in use and kept clean.
- When food service is provided in the outdoor learning environment, food shall be protected, stored, prepared and served to prevent contamination. Employees and children shall wash hands when designated and food service tables shall be cleaned or covered prior to use.
- Storage provided outdoors for children's toys shall be kept clean. Storage areas that are accessible to children shall be kept free of hazardous equipment and substances.
- Outdoor water activity centers shall be maintained in good repair. Flow through water play systems shall be designed to minimize standing water. Employees and children shall wash hands before and after water play.
- Swimming Pools must meet public pool standards. Portable wading pools (i.e. plastic kiddie pools and slides with a basin of water), natural bodies of water, and other unfiltered, non-disinfected containments of water shall not be utilized for recreation activities.
- Use of fresh garden fruits and vegetables grown at the childcare center is allowed, so long as they are washed before being served.
- Except for diapering and before eating meals or snacks, hand sanitizing products may be used in lieu of handwashing while children are outdoors if hands are washed upon returning indoors.

Pets kept outdoors shall be in a designated area that is maintained and separate from the outdoor area used by the children.

- Wood porches, steps, stairs, playground equipment, landscaping timbers, and walkways must be:
 - Sealed with a wood sealant
 - Be maintained free from accumulations of water, ice or snow
 - Be kept free of loose objects
 - Be in good repair
- All bolts, hooks, eyes, shackles, rungs, and other connecting and linking devices of all pieces of playground equipment shall be designed or secured to prevent loosening or unfastening except by authorized individuals with special tools.

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- All pieces of play equipment shall be free of sharp edges, protruding parts, weaknesses and flaws in material construction.

- Area shall be free of:
 - Toxic Plants
 - Sharp rocks
 - Stumps and roots
 - Twigs
 - Anthills
 - Beehives and wasp nests
 - Old bathtubs
 - Any item that may contain lead

Approved Outdoor Learning Environment



Non-Approved Outdoor Learning Environment – High Vegetation & Dilapidated Structure



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