

Section F: Standards for the Daily Program in Licensed Child Care Facilities



1.0 Definitions

“**Commercial**” means designed for commercial (public) use and installed according to the manufacturer’s specifications.

“**Daily routine**” means a written schedule of events that happen in a predictable order each day. These include arrival and departure, snacks and meals, nap/quiet periods, free play and small and large group gatherings (e.g., story time). A typical routine will vary based on the ages of the children and group size.

“**Developmentally appropriate practice**” refers to a framework used to create early learning environments that are respectful of children’s emerging competencies and foster children’s optimal development in all domains. Developmentally appropriate programs recognize that activities and materials in the learning environment reflect the competencies and interests, cultural background and experiences, of the children present. Embedded within this framework is an understanding that the development of positive relationships between families, children, child care staff and communities, is a key factor in creating optimal early learning environments. Individual personality, learning style, family background and health history all affect the rate of development for children (NAEYC, 2009).

“**Free play**” means children are permitted to make their own choices for play. Adult interaction is in the context of facilitation and support provided to children to foster meaningful and child-initiated experiences. (Harms, Clifford and Cryer, 1998).

“**Inclusion**” supports the right of all children, regardless of their diverse abilities, to participate actively in natural settings within their communities. A natural setting is one in which the child would spend time if he or she did not have a disability (NAEYC/DEC, 2009).

“**Majority**” means 80 % of the children expected to be in attendance for that day. This is to ensure that all children have the opportunity to engage in free play.

“**Non-commercial**” means designed for residential or backyard use and does not meet Canadian Standards Association “Children’s Playspaces and Equipment Standard.”

“**Open-ended materials**” means play materials that may be used in multiple ways for multiple purposes and include items such as paint, sand, tape, water, blocks and found materials such as cloth remnants, scraps of yarn, and cardboard tubes.

“**Play Structure**” means a free-standing structure in an outdoor play space that has one or more components, is securely anchored to the ground, and is not intended to be moved.

“**Program Plan**” means a written document that identifies the activities and experiences that are planned for the children.

“**Routine based planning**” means a program planning process where goals and strategies identified for children with special needs are embedded directly into the daily routines of the child care facility.

“**Staff**” means paid employees of a licensee and does not include care providers.

“**Transitions**” refer to the period of time during the daily routine when children move from one activity to the next. For example, the transitions from indoor play to outdoor play or from the rest period to free play in the afternoon.

2.0 Objectives

2.1 These standards apply to facilities only.

2.2 These standards will assist regulated child care facilities in the provision of programs for children that are developmentally appropriate, inclusive and successful in meeting the needs of all children.

2.3 The standards with respect to outdoor play will assist in ensuring that outdoor play structures, when provided by a licensee, are age appropriate, safe (appropriately risked); and well-maintained.

3.0 Scope

3.1 These standards apply to licensed child care facilities as required under Section 18 (1) of the *Day Care Regulations*.

3.2 Licensed child care facilities that implement a specific and recognized curriculum approach that has an established set of Standards for Practice may request to have these approved as a comparable means of partially or fully meeting requirements set out in Sections 4.0, 5.0, and subsections 6.2 and 6.3.

3.3 Play structures are not required in an outdoor play space; however, if outdoor play structures are provided, they must meet standards set out in Section 8.0 if they are commercial or Section 9.0 if they are non-commercial.

3.4 A tolerance of $\pm 2\%$ can be applied to the dimensions used for play structures and fall zones in these standards.

Standards for Practice – Daily Program

4.0 Daily Routines and Transitions

4.1 The daily routine provides an overview of the activities provided for children.

4.2 The daily routine is posted in the children’s activity room and is visible to all staff, volunteers and parents.

4.3 Free play activities occur for a minimum of 1/3 of the total daily operating hours and meet the following criteria:

- ✓ A minimum of 45 minutes of uninterrupted free play occurs in the morning when the majority of the children have arrived.
- ✓ A minimum of 45 minutes of free play occurs in the afternoon before the majority of children have left in the afternoon.

4.4 The daily routine provides a minimum of 30 minutes for uninterrupted outdoor play in the morning and afternoon when the majority of children are in attendance (as above).

5.0 Program Planning

5.1 Program plans document the daily and ongoing activities and planned experiences for each group of children and are:

- (a) posted in each activity room, or readily available for review by staff, care providers and parents; and
- (b) retained for one year.

5.2 Program plans indicate that, for indoor and outdoor play, staff facilitate:

✓ **Child-initiated play experiences**

For example, children have opportunities to play with open-ended materials and to make their own choices for play in each of the learning areas and outdoors; and

✓ **Adult-initiated experiences**

For example, adults lead small and large group experiences where they engage children in discussion, stories, games, and movement activities.

5.3 Routine-based plans are developed for children who require additional support to participate in the program.

6.0 Learning Environments, Materials and Equipment

6.1 Children's activity rooms and outdoor play spaces are clean and in good repair.

6.2 Children's activity rooms and outdoor play spaces are equipped with materials and equipment to facilitate developmentally appropriate experiences.

Please see the *Materials and Equipment Checklists* for a list of materials and equipment for the children's activity areas and outdoor play spaces.

6.3 Materials and Equipment Checklists are completed annually and available for review.

6.4 Indoor and outdoor activity areas support:

- (a)** individual and group play;
- (b)** active and quiet play; and
- (c)** child-initiated and adult-facilitated play.

6.5 Materials and equipment are sufficient in quantity based on the number of children present.

6.6 Open-ended materials are available for use throughout the children's activity rooms.

6.7 Materials and equipment are in good repair and organized in a manner that allow for independent access by the children.

6.8 Additional toys and materials are stored in areas that can be easily accessed from the children's activity room.

Standards for Practice - Outdoor Program

7.0 Environmental Conditions

7.1 Children play indoors when the temperature falls below -25C (-13F) with or without a wind chill factor, or when the wind chill factor is -28C (-15F) OR lower regardless of the temperature. (Canadian Paediatric Society).

7.2 When the UV index from Environment Canada is high (6-7) or very high (8-10):

- (a)** children have hats with brims and lightweight clothing;
- (b)** children apply (with support from an adult as needed) adequate sunblock with a SPF of at least 30 on all exposed skin before going outside, following the application instructions set out by the manufacturer; and
- (c)** outdoor activities are planned for the early morning and late afternoon, when possible, especially when UV conditions are very high.

7.3 There is access to shade in the outdoor play space.

8.0 Commercial Play Structures

8.1 As of April 1, 2011, play structures installed by a licensee must be designed for commercial use and installed according to the manufacturer's specifications. Documentation is available to verify that the play structure is designed for commercial use and installed and maintained according to manufacturer's specifications.

8.2 Play structures must be age appropriate.

8.3 Play structures must be safe and well-maintained.

8.4 Commercial play structures installed prior to April 1, 2011 must:

- (a) meet all of the above requirements; or
- (b) be considered to be a non-commercial play structure and meet all of the requirements of Section 9.

9.0 Non-commercial Play Structures

9.1 Licensees with an existing outdoor play structure located at a facility prior to April 1, 2011 are not required to comply with the design and installation requirements of Standard 8.1, but any replacement of the structure or additions of new structures must comply with section 8.0.

9.2 Non-commercial play structures must be age appropriate.

9.3 Non-commercial play structures must be safe and well maintained.

9.4 Non-commercial play structures meet the following applicable requirements:

- (a) **Critical fall height** - Play structures for toddlers and preschoolers are less than 1.8 m (70.87 inches). Play structures for school age children may be more than 1.8 m (70.87 inches) as long as there is an appropriate protective surfacing (see below).

(b) Protective surfacing - Play structures with a critical fall height of 45.72 cm (18 inches) or higher must be on a protective surface. Protective surfaces must be maintained to provide adequate protection to children in case of a fall.

- ✓ Play structures with a critical fall height of 1.8 m or lower must have a minimum of 6 inches of loose fill protective surfacing.
- ✓ Play structures with a critical fall height of 1.8 m or higher must have a minimum of 9 inches of loose fill protective surfacing.
- ✓ Loose fill protective surfacing can include: pea gravel, sand, wood mulch, shredded tires.
- ✓ When synthetic material (e.g. rubber tiles, poured in surfacing) is used, documentation from the manufacturer must be available to verify the material is appropriate for its intended use and installed as required.
- ✓ Protective surfacing extends 1.8 m (70.87 inches) beyond all sides of stationary play structures (fall zone).

(c) No encroachment zone - Swings have a no encroachment zone that extends 1.8 m (70.87 inches) beyond the swing fall zone.

(d) No head entrapments - All spaces should be smaller than 9 cm (3.54 inches) or larger than 23 cm (9.05 inches).

(e) Entanglement - There are no apparent areas where draw strings or other pieces of clothing could become entangled on play structures where there is uncontrolled motion (e.g. grooves on a slide).

(f) Swings - The following additional requirements are met:

- ✓ s-hooks are tightly closed; bolts and chains are in good repair;
- ✓ seats are spaced 76 cm (29.92 inches) apart from each other and the side supports;
- ✓ two swings per bay; and
- ✓ seats are made of impact-absorbing material (e.g., rubber).

Reference: Canadian Standards Association "Children's Playspaces and Equipment" (CAN/CSAZ614-98).

10.0 Pools

10.1 Wading pools must:

- (a) be made of a rigid model construction design;
- (b) have a depth of less than 12 inches of water;
- (c) be used under the constant supervision of an adult;
- (d) be emptied and disinfected after each use;
- (e) be properly stored to prevent water collecting in the pool.

11.0 Trampolines

11.1 Large back yard trampolines are not permitted.

► Best Practice

Backyard pools, including large inflatable pools, pose serious risks for drowning to children and **are not recommended**.

When there is a backyard pool onsite, child care facilities are considered to be public places and must:

- (a) meet provincial and municipal requirements regarding the installation and use of a swimming pool; and
- (b) be separate from the outdoor play spaces used by the children.

For more information on pool safety visit the Health Canada website at <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/cons/pools-piscine-eng.php>

► Please Note

Licensees are responsible to ensure that decking and accessory buildings meet provincial building code standards and must not support climbing.

References

Bredenkamp, S., & Copple, C. (Eds.). (2009). *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs, Serving Children Birth Through 8*. (Third Edition). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Canadian Standards Association (CSA). (2007). *Children's Playspaces and Equipment Standard*. Mississauga, ON: CSA.

Child Safety Link – this document can be accessed through this link:
<http://www.childsafetylink.ca/child-safety-3-5/playground-safety.html>

Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) – this document can be accessed through this link:
http://npdci.fpg.unc.edu/resources/articles/Early_Childhood_Inclusion.

Harms, T., Clifford, R.M., & Cryer, D. (2005). *Early childhood environment rating scale, Revised Edition*. New York: Teachers College Press.

For more information on Sun Safety, please refer to the Sun Safety Toolkit provided by the Department of Community Services or visit the Cancer Care Nova Scotia website at:
<http://www.cancercare.ns.ca/en/home/preventionscreening/preventioninitiatives/sunsafety/sunsafetydaycarecommunity.aspx>

