



Healthy and Green Is Your Child Care Center Safe?

Providing a healthy environment for our children is a goal we all share.

What is Healthy and Green?

The purpose of the Healthy and Green Child Care Siting program is to ensure that new child care centers are sited in healthy environments. Former industrial properties that used harmful chemicals could pose a health risk to child care centers that later opened on or near the property. The Healthy and Green Initiative is designed to contribute to the existing efforts of local and state officials by identifying and evaluating potentially contaminated sites early in the process, thereby identifying potential sources of chemical contamination before new child care centers open and preventing harmful exposures.

Why is it important?

Children, especially young children, are more vulnerable when exposed to chemicals in the environment. Children's behaviors, such as putting non-food items in their mouths, make them more susceptible to environmental exposures, especially in soil and dust. Research has shown that chemical exposures during child development may contribute to respiratory illnesses, cancer, neurodevelopmental disorders, obesity and birth defects.

What do I need to do?

1. Complete your child care center application as usual.
2. Gather as much information as possible about the history of the site. The following people may be able to provide relevant information on how the site was used in the past:
 - A. Former owner(s);
 - B. Local government officials, such as local zoning, planning, health or building officials; and
 - C. Other officials who may be able to provide useful information, including economic development or historical society members, fire marshals, or land record personnel.
3. Go to: www.surveymonkey.com/s/childcarecenters and complete the survey to the best of your ability.



What will the Health Assessment Program do?

1. Cross reference the location with a group of environmental databases, including:
 - Superfund sites;
 - Drycleaners;
 - Landfills;
 - Brownfield or land recycling sites;
 - Department of Energy or Defense sites; and
 - Other.
2. Review the survey and look for sources of contaminants that could potentially impact the air, soil or water on the site over time. These may include the following:
 - Major highways, rail yards, port facilities, truck traffic exceeding 100 trucks per day, airports;
 - Factories, power plants, refineries, propane or other storage tank areas, high pressure pipelines; and
 - Auto body shops, dry cleaners, large gas stations, large animal feeding operations, nail or hair salons, and print shops.
3. Conduct one or more of the following, if indicated and as appropriate:
 - Conduct a record review;
 - Conduct a site visit;
 - Recommend the collection of environmental samples;
 - Consult the environmental agencies;
 - Evaluate environmental sampling data;
 - Recommend environmental mitigation;
 - Prepare a health consultation or technical assistance letter; and
 - Provide guidance and information to parents and providers, as appropriate.

Please note that identifying any of the above current or former land usage does not necessarily mean that there is an environmental problem; it does indicate a need for further investigation to ensure the health and safety of sensitive populations attending or staffing the child care center. We do not expect to find many problems; however, if one is identified early, it may be addressed prior to occupancy, thereby preventing exposure and potential health and safety concerns.

Where can I get more information?

Please contact the Health Assessment Program, Bureau of Epidemiology, at 717-787-3350 or via email at ballerton@pa.gov.

On the web: http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/environmental_health/14143/