

Activities For Children Under Three

Child Care Learning Centers: 591-1-1-.03(3)(b) - Children less than three (3) years of age shall not spend more than one-half (1/2) hour of time consecutively in confining equipment, such as swings, highchairs, jumpseats, carriers or walkers. Children shall use such equipment only when they are awake. Such children shall be allowed time to play on the floor daily. Infants shall have supervised tummy time on the floor daily when they are awake.

Family Child Care Learning Homes: 290-2-3-.09(5) - Children less than three (3) years of age shall not spend more than one-half (1/2) hour of time consecutively in confining equipment, such as swings, highchairs, jumpseats, carriers or walkers. Children shall use such equipment only when they are awake. Such children shall be allowed time to play on the floor daily. **290-2-3-.09(6)** - Supervised tummy time on the floor shall be provided daily for each infant while the infant is awake.

Rule Type: Non-Core Rule

Intent of the Rule

To provide varied activities that foster proper physical and intellectual development for infants and toddlers. To ensure that children are allowed substantial amounts of time to explore their environment outside the confines of restrictive equipment. To protect children's safety by ensuring that child care program staff use confining equipment appropriately and only allow children to sleep in equipment that has been safety approved for sleeping.

Clarification

Children are continually developing their physical skills, and they need opportunities to use and to strengthen their physical abilities. This is especially true for infants and toddlers eagerly using their bodies to explore their environment. Infants need opportunities to play on the floor in a safe open area to develop their gross motor skills. Tummy time helps infants build the strength and coordination needed to reach movement milestones including rolling over, sitting up, and crawling. To promote normal development, infants should spend time on their tummies when awake and supervised.

Restrictive equipment prevents active movement, and extended periods of time in confining equipment limits children's physical growth and affects their social interactions. Social interactions are essential for children to gain language skills, develop self-esteem, and build relationships. Excessive periods of confinement can be tiring and frustrating for children and can lead to injuries when children try to escape the confinement. When an infant is kept in restrictive equipment such as an infant seat or a swing, additional pressure is applied to the back of their head, thus affecting the shape of the child's head.

Children who fall asleep in confining equipment should immediately be moved to a safety approved crib or to other approved sleeping equipment to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) or accidental suffocation. (Note: The type of approved sleeping equipment would be determined by the age of the child.)

Indicators

- ✓ Child care program staff shall ensure that children do not spend more than one-half (1/2) hour consecutively in confining equipment.
 - Note: Once thirty minutes have lapsed, children should not be moved from one piece of confining equipment to another without providing alternate activities in between.

- Reminder: The manufacturer’s instructions should be followed when using confining equipment. (e.g., use safety straps; do not exceed weight limits; place equipment on appropriate surfaces)
 - TIP: Consider using a timer with an alarm to monitor a child’s time spent in confining equipment.
 - Recommendation: Based on the standards in Caring for Our Children, restrictive infant equipment should only be used for a maximum of fifteen minutes twice each day.
- ✓ Child care program staff shall ensure that children use confining equipment only when they are awake.
 - Reminder: Allowing young children to sleep in confining equipment is not recommended due to the documented decrease in oxygen saturation from their underdeveloped head and neck muscles.
 - Note: When children fall asleep in confining equipment, they should be moved to a safety approved crib or cot/mat in accordance with the safe sleeping and resting requirements.
 - Recommendation: As a best practice, staff should remove children from confining equipment and place them on their backs in a crib when they become drowsy. This promotes good sleep habits by allowing them to become accustomed to an appropriate sleep surface. This practice also ensures that staff are in tune with children’s needs and responding appropriately. It prevents staff from accidentally allowing children to sleep in confining equipment for lengths of time.
 - ✓ Child care program staff shall ensure that children are allowed floor play time and that infants are allowed tummy time on the floor each day.
 - Recommendation: The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that infants are provided tummy time at least two to three times each day while they are awake and are being supervised by an adult.
 - TIP: For a young infant unaccustomed to being on his or her stomach, start with short periods of tummy time (i.e., three to five minutes) and increase the amount of time as the infant begins to enjoy this position and grows stronger. A good time to allow tummy time is after a diaper change or when the infant wakes up from a nap.

Resources:

Caring for Our Children
<http://cfoc.nrckids.org/>

American Academy of Pediatrics
<http://www.aap.org>