

# Accessibility of Pools

**Child Care Learning Centers: 591-1-1-.35(2)** All swimming and wading pools shall be inaccessible to children except during supervised activities.

**Family Child Care Learning Homes: 290-2-3-.13(2)(d)** Such outside play areas shall be protected from traffic or other hazards by fencing or other barriers at least four feet in height and approved by the department. Fencing material shall not present a hazard to children. A fence shall be provided around swimming pools to make them inaccessible when not in use.

## **Rule Type: Core Rule**

## **Intent of the Rule**

To protect children from pool hazards that can lead to serious injury or drowning.

## **Clarification**

This rule applies to any pool on the child care program's premises. A swimming pool should be made inaccessible by a fence with a locked gate. The fence must be at least four feet high and secured at the top and the bottom, with no entrapment hazards. Fencing material must be secured to all poles, and the bottom of the fence must be flush with the ground to prevent a child from trying to crawl underneath the fence and enter the pool area. All gates must be equipped with locks to prevent access, and the locks must prevent the gate from being pushed open when pressure is applied.

An effective fence is one that prevents a child from getting over, under, or through it and keeps the child from gaining access to the pool or body of water except when supervising adults are present. Fences are not childproof, but they provide a layer of protection for a child who strays from supervision. The fence should be constructed to discourage climbing and kept in good repair. For a chain link fence, the mesh size should not exceed one and one-quarter square inches.

All wading pools should be emptied and stored in an area inaccessible to children immediately after use.

---

## **Indicators**

- ✓ Child care programs must ensure the pool is completely enclosed by a fence.
  - Note: The fence surrounding the pool must be at least four feet high and have a locked gate.
  - TIP: Routinely monitor the entire perimeter of the pool's fence to ensure it remains in good repair. This will help to prevent injury to children and their accessibility to the pool when it is not in use.
  - Recommendation: When children occupy the pool area, keep the pool gate(s) closed. This will help to ensure children do not enter or exit the pool area without staff's knowledge.
  - Reminder: If/when local ordinances require the fence around the pool to be taller than four feet, the center must comply with the stricter requirement.

- ✓ Child care programs must ensure that wading pools are inaccessible to children when not in use.
  - TIP: When not in use, store wading pools in storage sheds, outside of the playground fencing, etc.
  - Reminder: Wading pools must be emptied every day, the pool cleaned, and, if possible, allowed to dry in the sun for at least four hours.

## **Resources:**

Caring for Our Children, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition

<http://cfoc.nrckids.org>