

# Animals

**Child Care Learning Centers: 591-1-1-.05(1)** - Control of Animals. Animals shall be controlled to assure that proper sanitation of the premises is maintained and animals are not a hazard to the children, Personnel or visitors at the Center. No animals, such as but not limited to, pit bull dogs, ferrets, and poisonous snakes, which may have a vicious propensity, shall be permitted on the Center premises at any time there are children on the premises. Horses or other farm animals shall not be quartered on any property over which Center Staff exercises any control that is located within five hundred (500) feet of the building in which the Center is located. **591-1-1-.05(2)** - Confinement. All animals shall be confined in pens or covered areas except for specific teacher-directed learning experiences. Animal pens and confinement areas shall be kept clean. **591-1-1-.05(3)** - Vaccinations. Animals shall be properly vaccinated and documentation of the vaccinations shall be maintained at the Center.

**Family Child Care Learning Homes: 290-2-3-.11(1)(n)** - Pets in the Home shall be vaccinated in accordance with the requirements of the local county Boards of Health. Unconfined pets shall not be permitted in child care areas when any Child is present except for supervised learning experiences. **290-2-3-.11(1)(o)** - Pets and all other animals shall be controlled to assure that proper sanitation of the premises is maintained and animals are not hazard to the children, personnel or other visitors. No animal, such as but not limited to, pit bull dogs, ferrets, and poisonous snakes, which may have a vicious propensity, shall be permitted on the Family Child Care Learning Home premises at any time there are children on the premises. Horses or other farm animals shall not be quartered on any property over which the Provider exercises any control that is located within five hundred (500) feet of the building in which the Family Child Care Learning Home is located.

## Rule Type: Non-Core Rule

### Intent of the Rule

To ensure proper sanitation in areas occupied by children. To protect children from injury that can result from children's contact with animals, particularly those known to have a vicious propensity. To protect children from exposure to disease transmitted by animals, including domestic animals over which the child care program has control.

### Clarification

Animals can provide effective, valuable learning opportunities for children, but allowing children contact with animals can expose them to illness, aggravate allergies, and potentially injure children in some way. Animals should be kept separate and apart from areas used by children unless involved in a specific activity directly supervised by a child care staff person. The child care staff must plan carefully when having an animal in the facility. During children's contact with animals, child care staff should remain close enough to remove the child immediately if the animal shows signs of aggression (e.g., growling, barking, baring teeth, tail down, ears back) or if the child shows signs of fear or threat of treating the animal inappropriately. Appropriate pens or covered areas will help protect children from harm and keep animals from escaping.

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## Indicators

- ✓ Child care programs shall ensure that animals are controlled to ensure proper sanitation of the premises and to ensure that animals do not pose a potential hazard to anyone on the premises.
  - TIP: If possible, for sanitation purposes keep animals from areas used by children enrolled in the child care program, especially outdoor areas.

- Note: In situations where animals are housed on neighboring property, it is the child care program's responsibility to ensure that those animals are inaccessible to children. If necessary, add additional fencing, cover the existing fence with a solid material, and/or talk with the neighbor about controlling the animal while children are in care.
  - Recommendation: Contact animal control immediately whenever stray animals are observed on the premises.
  - Reminder: When animals are taken out of their natural environment for supervised learning experiences and are in situations unusual to them, stress may cause them to act aggressively or attempt to escape (flight or fight phenomenon). Even pets known to be passive can be unpredictable and become aggressive when they feel threatened or when they are put in unfamiliar situations. The pet could injure a child if a child care program staff person is not in control of the animal. Appropriate restraint devices such as a leash, a harness, a muzzle, etc. will allow the holder to react quickly, prevent harm to children, and keep the animal from escaping.
- ✓ Potentially vicious animals shall be restricted from the child care program's premises whenever children are present.
    - Reminder: Pit bull dogs, ferrets, and poisonous snakes are specifically prohibited by the rule requirements; however, any other animals with a potentially vicious nature should not be allowed at any time children are on the premises.
    - Note: Potentially vicious animals can turn on children and cause serious injury. In some animals, the rabies vaccination does not eliminate the possibility of rabies infection, such as in ferrets.
- ✓ Horses and other farm animals shall not be quartered on any property located within five hundred (500) feet of the building if the child care program has control over the property.
    - Recommendation: Check local, city, and county ordinances for possible restrictions, laws, and regulations regarding animals on the premises.
    - Reminder: Animals can carry germs like salmonella and E.coli on their bodies and in their droppings, even when they appear clean and healthy. The germs can spread to cages, bedding, and wherever animals roam. Salmonella and E.coli pose a serious health threat to children as they are more likely to develop severe illness from these types of infections.
- ✓ Animals shall be confined to ensure that children do not have access to animals except during supervised learning experiences.
    - Note: Supervised learning experiences should be short in duration, intentional, and linked to daily planned activities. Pets should not be allowed to roam freely throughout the premises while children are in care.
    - Reminder: Animal pens and/or confinement areas should be located where children do not have access, and enclosures should be free of openings into which children could stick hands or fingers.
    - TIP: Check children's allergy information before exposing children to animals during learning experiences.
- ✓ Child care programs shall ensure that all animals are properly vaccinated, if applicable, and documentation of current vaccinations shall be maintained at the program.
    - Note: All animals housed on the premises must be vaccinated regardless of whether or not children have contact with them.
    - TIP: Contact your local health department and veterinarian to determine if vaccinations are necessary (per animal type). For example, rabbits and hamsters are not required to be vaccinated.
    - Organizational TIP: File vaccination records in a central location (such as a notebook or a file folder) for easy access by child care staff and child care consultants. Check vaccination records routinely to ensure animals are up-to-date on all vaccinations.

## **Resources:**

Caring for Our Children

<http://cfoc.nrckids.org/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[www.cdc.gov/features/animalsinschools/](http://www.cdc.gov/features/animalsinschools/)