



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning



## CHILD CARE SERVICES

# Provider Bulletin

### SUMMER SAFETY REMINDERS

#### Transportation

During the summer months extra attention is needed to keep children safe. For child care programs the summer months mean more field trips.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the interior of a vehicle parked in the summer sun can climb from 78 degrees to 100 degrees in just three minutes, after 6-8 minutes, the temperature can soar to 125 degrees. A child's body temperature can increase as much as five times faster than an adult's. Heat stroke can occur at 104 degrees, at 107 degrees cellular damage to internal organs can occur, resulting in death. A report by KidsandCars.org states that hyperthermia (a rapid and often fatal rise in body temperature) is the third-leading cause of death in nontraffic-related incidents involving children and vehicles.

#### What can you do to keep children safe?

- **Review the Department of Early Care and Learning's Rules and Regulations pertaining to field trips and transportation with all staff that transport children on field trips, home transportation or school transportation.**
- **Ensure that staff persons are following the safety measures intended to protect children from being inadvertently left on the transporting vehicle.**
- **When staff persons conduct the visual inspection of the vehicle, make sure they walk all the way to the back of the vehicle and check not only the seats but under the seats and any compartments.**
- **The rules and regulations require that the person completing the transportation checklist sign the checklist once they have conducted a visual inspection of the vehicle and turn the checklist over to the person in charge who will conduct a second visual inspection.**
- **Supervision is the most critical component of keeping children safe. Staff should always be alert, attentive and aware of where children are and their actions.**

Following these important steps will help ensure children's health and safety during summer field trips.

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### **Weather and Ozone Watch**

During the summer months child care providers must pay close attention to weather conditions in order to plan for outside playtime and field trips. Once it has been determined that extreme heat or ozone alerts have not been issued for your area, and it is safe to go outside, attention to children's clothing, fluid intake and sun screen are all factors regarding safe outdoor play. It is also important to supervise each child to watch for signs of heat exposure.

During the summer months you will want to alter your daily activity schedule to take children outside early in the day when it is not as hot, and it may be appropriate to go outside for shorter periods of time to prevent children from overheating.

Make sure that water is available for children on the playground and that they stay hydrated. It is important to encourage children to drink water frequently.

#### **Signs of dehydration include:**

- Thirst
- Dry or sticky mouth
- Headache
- Muscle Cramps
- Irritability
- Extreme fatigue
- Weakness
- Dizziness

#### **Signs of heat exhaustion include:**

- Nausea
- Heavy sweating
- Rapid/weak heartbeat
- Dark colored urine
- Cramps
- Headache
- Fatigue

#### **How to prevent dehydration in children:**

- Drink 12 ounces of fluid (such as water) 30 minutes **before** the activity begins.
- Children under 90 pounds should drink five ounces every 20 minutes **during** the activity.
- Children over 90 pounds should drink nine ounces every 20 minutes **during** the activity.
- Have mandatory fluid breaks – **don't wait** for the child to tell you he/she is thirsty.
- Children should **drink fluids** after physical activity to make up for fluid loss.

Go to Safe Kids for more information on signs of heat [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org)

The following link provides information to help you decide when it is safe to take children outside.

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<http://www.idph.state.ia.us/hcci/common/pdf/weatherwatch.pdf>

In addition to heat, you should check the local Air Quality Index (AQI) daily before taking children outside to play or on field trips. The AQI indicates how clean or polluted the air is and identifies health effects. Check the AQI at [www.epa.gov/airnow](http://www.epa.gov/airnow) for the color flag alerts. Green indicates good air quality, yellow is moderate, orange means unhealthy for sensitive groups (children and those with asthma), and red signals unhealthy air for everyone. A purple flag means the air quality is very unhealthy and sensitive groups should avoid all outdoor exertion and everyone else should limit outdoor exertion.

You may subscribe to a city by city air quality forecast via e-mail by subscribing to [www.airnow.gov/enviroflash](http://www.airnow.gov/enviroflash).

\*Note: this service is not available to all zip codes.

### **Sunscreen**

During the summer months children will spend more time playing outside and will be involved in outdoor field trips. Sunscreen is important in protecting children's skin from the sun's harmful rays. Don't reserve the use of sunscreens only for sunny days. Even on a cloudy day, up to 80 percent of the sun's ultraviolet rays can pass through the clouds.

It is important to work with parents to protect children from sunburn. Parents should be informed of the center's sunscreen policy. Obtain the parents written permission to apply sunscreen.

#### **When using sunscreen remember to:**

- Apply sunscreen to dry skin at least 15 to 30 minutes before going outdoors
- Apply sunscreen to all exposed areas of the skin and pay particular attention to the face, ears, hands and arms
- Coat the skin liberally and follow the directions on the product when applying sunscreen.
- Inadequate application may result in lower SPF than the product contains.

For more information on sunscreens please visit the following sites:

American Cancer Society – [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

Food and Drug Administration – [www.fda.gov/sunscreen](http://www.fda.gov/sunscreen)

The American Academy of Dermatology – [www.aad.org](http://www.aad.org)

**Remember to keep children SUMMER SAFE; Sunscreen, Attention to outdoors conditions, Fluids, Early is better.**