

Toys for Children Under Three

Child Care Learning Centers: 591-1-1-.12(4)(a-e)/Family Child Care Learning Homes: 290-2-3-.12(6)(a-e) – Toys for Children Under Three. Toys for children under three (3) years of age shall also be age-appropriate. Those toys shall be: (a) Non-toxic and lead-free; (b) Too large to be swallowed by a child and not capable of causing asphyxiation or strangulation; (c) Free of sharp pieces, edges or points or small parts which may be pried off by a child; (d) Free of rust; (e) Easily cleaned with a disinfectant daily.

Rule Type:

Non-Core Rule: Child Care Learning Center

Non-Core Rule: Family Child Care Learning Home

Intent of the Rule

To ensure developmentally appropriate play for children under three years of age. To protect the health and safety of children by minimizing the risk of infection, injury, and other hazards.

Clarification

Toys should be carefully selected, routinely inspected, and kept in good repair to ensure safety. Toys should be non-toxic and free of sharp edges, broken or small parts, rust, lead, etc. Children, especially infants and toddlers, should not have access to plastic bags, styrofoam objects, balloons, or toys/objects with a diameter of less than one and one-quarter inches since these items pose a suffocation hazard and a choking hazard for children.

Eliminating small parts from children’s environments will greatly reduce the risk of injury and fatality from choking or aspirating. Objects should not be small enough to fit entirely into a child’s mouth. Stuffed animals accessible to children under age three should be safe, i.e., no eyes or nose that could be removed or bitten off by the children and made of material that is easily cleanable and machine-washable. Stuffed animals should be washed at least once a week or more often if heavily soiled and checked frequently to ensure good repair (no exposed stuffing, split seams, or loose parts).

Toys can spread disease when children put the toys in their mouths, touch the toys after putting their hands in their mouths during play or eating, or after toileting with inadequate hand hygiene. Since these behaviors are most common in children under three, toys used by these ages should be disinfected daily.

Indicators

- ✓ Toys for children under three years of age must be age appropriate.
 - Note: Follow manufacturers’ guidelines to ensure that toys and play materials are intended for use by children under three years of age.
 - Reminder: It is developmentally appropriate for children under three years of age to put toys in their mouths since these ages explore their surroundings through their senses. Children learn to differentiate among objects by how they taste and feel.

- ✓ Toys used by children under age three must be non-toxic, too large to be swallowed, and free of lead, sharp pieces, sharp points, sharp edges, and rust. Toys should also be free of small parts that a child could pry off.
 - Note: Any toy that is able to fit inside a paper towel roll could be swallowed by a child under three years of age. According to the federal government's small parts standard on a safe-size toy for children under three years of age, a small part should be at least one and one-quarter inches in diameter and between one inch and two and one-quarter inches long; any part smaller than this poses a potential choking hazard.
 - Organizational TIP: Establish and implement a routine for checking toys to ensure they are in good repair and free of hazards. A good time for this would be as staff clean and disinfect the toys each day.
 - Reminder: Small batteries can pose choking hazards to children if the batteries were to fall out of toys. Button batteries also pose a potential burn risk if swallowed due to a chemical reaction caused when saliva triggers an electrical current.

- ✓ Toys used by children under age three should be disinfected daily.
 - Note: A bleach and water solution used as a disinfectant must be prepared daily because of rapid deterioration, and unused portions should be safely discarded at the end of the day. The disinfectant should be stored in a labeled, sealed container out of the reach of children and away from food and drink.
 - Reminder: If a commercial disinfectant is used, the manufacturer's label should indicate that the product kills bacteria, viruses, and parasites, and it should be used according to the instructions on the label.
 - TIP: Toys should be cleaned with soap and water, then rinsed with a sanitizing solution. Some toys may be safe to be placed through the dishwasher cycle. A dirty film can develop on the surface of the toys if the toys are only sprayed with disinfectant without first being cleaned with soap and water.

Resources:

Caring for Our Children

www.cfoc.nrckids.org

The Natural Child Project

www.naturalchild.org

United States Consumer Product Safety Commission

<https://www.cpsc.gov/Business--Manufacturing/Business-Education/Business-Guidance/Small-Parts-for-Toys-and-Childrens-Products>