



Checklist for Creating Healthier, Greener Child Care Settings

Name of child care centre: _____

Address: _____

Contact person and phone number: _____

If this checklist was completed with the assistance of a public health inspector, his/her name and phone number: _____

Date this assessment was completed: _____

About this Checklist

Child care practitioners and public health inspectors aim to provide healthy early learning and child care environments. Controlling infection and preventing injury have always been foundational in meeting this aim. More recently, however, there has been increasing interest in further protecting children by addressing environmental health issues — specifically, reducing potential exposures to toxic chemicals and pollutants known or suspected to pose health risks. The checklist has been designed to help staff address these issues.

The checklist is a self-assessment tool that will help child care practitioners and the public health inspectors who work with them to identify actions that will result in healthier, greener environments for children in their particular child care setting.

The checklist can be used by child care practitioners and local public health inspectors, either jointly or individually, to **track milestones** achieved, **discuss ideas** in the works, and **explore possible future steps**. It is best if the checklist is applied on a periodic basis (e.g., once per year) as a means of tracking progress and as an aid in planning.

The checklist is **not a regulatory tool** and is not intended to replace or supersede guidance or requirements from public health units and/or provincial agencies.

A. Outdoor Air Quality

See pp. 17–20 for more information and resources		Yes	In Progress	N/A
A1	a. We check the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI), Air Quality Index (AQI), smog, forest fire and extreme heat and cold alerts daily.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. We schedule and tailor children’s activities according to the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI), Air Quality Index (AQI), smog, forest fire and extreme heat and cold alerts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A2	We locate children’s activities away from parking areas during drop-off and pick-up times.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A3	a. Our centre has an idling control policy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. Our centre has posted signs about idling control.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	c. We provide outreach and educational resources on idling control.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A4	We have taken measures to reduce the amount of vehicle exhaust that enters the centre through air intake vents, the entrance door and/or windows.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes and Comments

B. Outdoor Areas

See pp. 21–25 for more information and resources		Yes	In Progress	N/A
B1	Children play in green spaces that are not treated with pesticides.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B2	a. We take actions to minimize the need for insect repellents, including removing any stagnant/standing water, avoiding outdoor play during peak biting times and encouraging parents to provide protective clothing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. When an insect repellent is used, we apply only those intended for children and registered by Health Canada’s Pesticide Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) (bearing a <i>Pest Control Products [PCP] Act</i> number) and we closely follow label instructions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	c. When an insect repellent is used, we ensure that children always wash their hands when returning inside and before eating.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B3	a. We ensure that any play equipment made of chromated copper arsenate (CCA)-treated wood (found in pressure-treated wood structures built before 2004) is treated with a penetrating sealant every one to two years.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. We ensure children wash their hands after contact with equipment made of CCA- or pressure-treated wood.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes and Comments

C. Sun Safety

See pp. 26–28 for more information and resources		Yes	In Progress	N/A
C1	We ensure children avoid direct sun exposure during sun peak hours, typically between 10 am and 2 pm.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C2	We check the UV index daily all year long and take appropriate protective actions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C3	We encourage parents/caregivers to provide children with light, loose clothing that covers the body (long-sleeved shirt and pants as removable top layers) and a sun hat with a wide brim that shades ears and eyes (ideally with a flap or “tail” to protect the back of the neck).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C4	a. Natural and/or built shade is available in outdoor play areas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. Our centre has a protective shade policy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C5	a. We apply sunscreen on children at least 30 minutes before going outdoors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. We apply sunscreen before insect repellent, if both are being used.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes and Comments

D. Indoor Air Quality and Dust

See pp. 29–34 for more information and resources		Yes	In Progress	N/A
D1	We require staff members, children and parents to leave outdoor footwear at the door or in the mudroom area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D2	All rooms have adequate ventilation and are aired out at least daily.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D3	We ensure that mould or mildew, if present, is dealt with promptly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D4	We remove dust with a damp mop or cloth.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D5	a. We vacuum all carpets/rugs and vacuum or damp mop floors daily.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. We dispose of vacuum bags and dryer lint safely.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D6	a. We have a fragrance-free or “scent-smart” policy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. We do not use deodorizers/air “fresheners” (including plug-ins).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D7	We have tested for radon and, if needed, taken remedial measures to reduce levels below the Government of Canada guideline.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes and Comments

E. Cleaning and Disinfection

See pp. 35–40 for more information and resources

Yes In Progress N/A



Infection prevention is extremely important.

The suggestions below do not replace guidance from public health units and may not be appropriate in the case of outbreaks.

E1	a. We use bleach for the purposes and in the concentrations recommended by our local public health authority.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. We consider non-bleach and/or less-toxic alternatives for other tasks, in consultation with our local public health officials.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	c. We are aware that mixing bleach with other cleaning products can be dangerous and we ensure that this does not happen by posting warning signs and educating staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E2	All cleaning products are inaccessible to children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E3	We avoid using disinfectants, sanitizers and other cleaning products in close proximity to children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E4	We avoid using products labelled with hazard symbols whenever possible, while recognizing that we may need to use such products to ensure infection control and disinfection per local public health guidelines.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E5	a. We practice proper hand hygiene at all times.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. We do not use antibacterial hand soap.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	c. In the event that access to soap and water is not available, we take proper precautions when cleaning children’s hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E6	We use the least toxic carpet cleaners available.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E7	a. We use fragrance-free and biodegradable laundry soap.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. We do not use dryer sheets and/or scented fabric softener.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes and Comments

F. Activity, Learning and Play Areas

See pp. 41–45 for more information and resources		Yes	In Progress	N/A
F1	a. We check regularly for product recalls on all toys, play equipment, furniture and accessories.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. We avoid old, donated or inexpensive toys or other objects that may contain lead.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	c. We have replaced PVC plastic toys with safer options.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	d. We have a toy safety policy that considers environmental health/toxic chemical hazards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F2	a. We use only art and craft materials intended for use by children and avoid products that bear hazard symbols.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. We use liquid, gel and paste art materials rather than powders and sprays.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	c. We use water-based art and craft materials rather than solvent-based products.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes and Comments

G. Kitchen and Food Preparation Areas

See pp. 46–52 for more information and resources		Yes	In Progress	N/A
G1	a. We flush water pipes each morning (or less frequently as specified by local/provincial authorities) to reduce lead levels in drinking water.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. For drinking and/or to prepare food or drinks, we use water from the cold water tap.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G2	We do not heat food or drinks in, or put hot food or drinks into, plastic containers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G3	We serve low-mercury fish.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G4	We serve fresh and frozen foods (rather than canned foods) whenever possible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G5	We avoid cooking at very high temperatures when using non-stick cookware coated with perfluorinated chemicals (PFCs).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G6	We use the least toxic oven cleaners available.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G7	a. We run the dishwasher only when children are not in the kitchen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. There is good ventilation in the room when the dishwasher is running.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	c. We avoid opening the dishwasher until the dishes are cool to the touch.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G8	a. We employ strategies to reduce the likelihood of pest problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. If a pest problem occurs, we select the least toxic method of eradication/control.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes and Comments

H. Renovations

See pp. 53–54 for more information and resources		Yes	In Progress	N/A
H1	We ensure that precautions are taken during renovations to avoid/reduce the potential for toxic exposures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes and Comments

I. Surrounding Sources of Chemical Emissions

See pp. 55–56 for more information and resources

	Yes	In Progress	N/A
I1 We are aware of potential sources of chemical exposures in the vicinity of the centre (e.g., industrial facilities, dry cleaners, gas stations).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes and Comments

J. Sustainability and Other Issues

See pp. 57–60 for more information and resources

	Yes	In Progress	N/A
J1 a. We use energy-efficient light bulbs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. We use energy-efficient appliances.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. We take additional steps, where feasible, to conserve energy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J2 We take steps to foster/support the use of public or active transportation by our staff and/or the families we serve.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J3 a. We buy locally grown and/or organic food when available and affordable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. We grow some of our own food (e.g., vegetables, herbs) for use at the centre.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J4 We conserve water.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J5 a. We avoid waste by reducing, reusing and/or recycling whenever possible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. We compost — either through a municipal program, an outdoor bin or an indoor bin.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. We dispose of electronics, pharmaceuticals and other hazardous materials responsibly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a. We have done a waste audit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J6 We involve children in composting, recycling, gardening, conservation and/or other activities related to sustainability.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes and Comments
