

Childcare Worker Safety Stats and Facts



FACTS

1. Childcare workers are exposed to several health and safety risks in their work environment, the most common being infectious diseases, musculoskeletal injuries, accidents, and occupational stress.
2. Childcare work requires childcare workers to meet the basic physical needs of children and provide learning activities. It is physically and emotionally demanding and requires constant interaction with children who are active, sometimes impulsive, or heavy.
3. Childcare workers are exposed to disinfectants and sanitizers which contain chlorine bleach. This compound is known to irritate the skin and eyes. Other common cleaning agents may contain volatile organic compounds which, if inhaled, could lead to upper respiratory irritation or headaches. Arts and crafts materials such as powdered paint, permanent markers, and spray-fixatives or enamels contain organic solvents, which can cause dizziness, allergies, psychological and behavior changes, nerve and respiratory damage with chronic exposure.
4. Stressors in the childcare setting originate from issues such as understaffing, inadequate break times, long working hours, limited resources, non-structured programs, and ambiguous job description and evaluation. Depending on the facility management, social factors may include poor communication, conflict in relationships with co-workers/parents, inadequate professional support and recognition, and differences in philosophies and work ethics.
5. The loss of childcare workers to injuries and illnesses causes a chain effect that impacts the family of the children and the job duties of other workers who must take up more than they normally would encounter. That cycle promises a spiral of further illnesses and accidents, making the goal of preventive training a strong government policy to pursue. One issue is that some daycare facilities don't provide workers' compensation insurance.

STATS

- Child-care employment is still down more than 126,000 positions as workers leave for higher-paying positions as bank tellers, administrative assistants and retail clerks. Parents are struggling to return to work as day care and after-school programs dwindle.

- The child-care services industry is still down 126,700 workers – more than a 10 percent decline from pre-pandemic levels, Labor Department data shows.
- child-care tasks with high biomechanical risks (such as carrying a child in a car seat), and parents' perceived psychological strain related to caring for their children. Ninety-two percent (92%) of the providers were mothers. Sixty-six percent (66%) of the sample reported the presence of musculoskeletal pain. The parts of the body most affected were the low back (48%), neck (17%), upper back (16%), and shoulders (11.5%).
- The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that childcare workers are 18 percent more likely to experience a lost-time injury on the job than the general working population.