Safety Tips for Childcare Workers



Slips & Falls– Working around small children, small furniture, numerous toys, and frequent spills increases the risk of slips, trips and falls. To minimize the likelihood of a slip or fall injury, childcare workers should wear sturdy, comfortable shoes with good traction.

Also:

- Pick up and properly store scattered toys on the floor between activities.
- Secure rugs, electrical wires, and cables.
- Keep walkways and work areas well lit and clear of debris.
- Clean up spills.
- Watch where you walk.
- Walk slowly and avoid rushing, especially when carrying children or other loads.
- Make sure you can see over the load you’re carrying.
- In outside play areas, watch for uneven surfaces, holes and tree roots.

Illness & Infection–Consistently employing proper hygiene procedures is critical to the control and prevention of disease, infection, and food contamination in childcare facilities. Tuberculosis (TB) vaccinations are required for childcare workers, and vaccinations for chicken pox, Hepatitis B, measles, rubella, mumps, polio, tetanus, and diphtheria are recommended.

The most important aspect of good hygiene is frequent hand-washing and practicing universal precautions, especially after handling sick children, changing diapers, wiping noses, helping children in the bathroom, before preparing food, before and after eating, when administering first aid, and before leaving for the day. Always wear gloves during these tasks.

Frequently wash working surfaces like tables, counters or sinks and clothing such as smocks aprons, towels or blankets with a mild bleach solution.

Discourage the sharing of combs, brushes, towels, hats, helmets, and bedding and sharing other personal items.

Store hazardous items in a secured area away from food, drinks or heat sources.

Regularly dispose of garbage and trash.

Post emergency phone numbers and first aid kits where they are easily accessible.

When outdoors, wear a hat and sunscreen and dress for the temperature and weather conditions.

However, in order for you to take good care of those children, you must be mindful of your own health and personal safety.

Be prepared for the physical and psychological demands of the job by starting each day well-rested and stress-free. Get a good night’s sleep, eat a balanced diet, and then continue to hydrate yourself throughout the day.

Before the children arrive, perform a few warm-up stretching exercises to increase flexibility.

Meditate or practice other relaxation techniques.

Childcare workers provide a vital service to parents, children, and the community. You are teachers, nurturers, and role models to the children in your charge.

Remember, the children in your care watch and learn from you. If you demonstrate a concern for your personal health and safety, the children you care for will become aware of and place an importance on their own health and safety.

Strains & Sprains–As you go about your daily activities, pay particular attention to the high-risk tasks for childcare workers listed below.

Childcare workers perform lifting activities hundreds of times during the day. They lift children, toys or equipment, and clean up a variety of spills. Whenever performing these activities, practice proper lifting techniques to safeguard your back from strain and sprain injuries.

- Lift only a weight that you can safely manage. Divide large loads into smaller sizes and make several trips or ask for help with the load.
- When lifting a child or an item on to, in to or out of a structure, keep yourself as close to the child or item as possible and close to the structure’s side. If the structure is a crib, lower the crib’s side rails before attempting the lift.
- Avoid twisting your back while carrying a load; turn your whole body toward the direction you’ll be going.
- Bend your knees and squat down to a child, low table or cot; sit on a portable stool or kneel on portable kneepads.
- Choose alternatives to lifting. Encourage toddlers to walk or climb with you at hand to safely assist, and instruct children to clean up their messes and pick up and put away their toys. Use wagons, strollers, carts or dollies to transport children or equipment.
- Adjust changing tables or preparation tables to waist height and store heavy or frequently used items at waist height.
- When standing for prolonged periods, shift your weight from leg to leg or rest one foot on a slightly elevated step or surface.