



CHILD CARE CONNECTIONS

Serving Columbia, Greene and Ulster Counties

www.ccconnectionsny.org

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Child Care Connections
Child Care Resource & Referral Agency

Supervision & Safety for Young Children



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What's inside:

- *Importance of supervision & safety for young children*
- *Specific supervision & safety issues for child care providers*
- *Specific supervision & safety concerns for parents*
- *Resources relating to supervision & safety for young children*

Supervision and Safety of Children

Being responsible for children of all ages is one of the largest challenges you will ever take on. Caregivers must reduce risks and prevent harm to the children in their care. Supervision and safety are the basis of most regulations, rules, and policies in the child care field. Unfortunately, lack of supervision and basic safety is the cause of most accidents or injuries that occur in child care programs and family homes. Child care providers and parents should be familiar with NYS OCFS Day Care regulations and be aware of the common dangers in the home. (Office of Children and Family Services)

Supervision is not just being able to physically see children, it also includes:

- being aware of the environment and who is in it
- being aware of each child's developmental capabilities
- allowing children to safely gain independence
- and most importantly being able to always answer,, Where were you when...?

There are some specific situations when it is appropriate for children to be out of direct vision for short periods of time. This may include:

- children who are napping
- children using the bathroom (only when they are able to do so independently)
- school-age children playing

In each of these situations, frequent visual checks and written parental permission is required. Consider how to keep children safe if unable to see them. (Office of Children and Family Services)

Important Questions

- Is the child responsible enough to be outside direct supervision?
- Can the children's behavior be assessed & responded to quickly if an unsafe situation develops?
- Is the environment appropriate for children to be away from an adult?
- Am I familiar enough with this child to know they will be safe without constant direct eye contact?

Safety is not just child proofing your home or child care space but it also includes:

- Being aware of the environment (water on the property, plants inside and outside, fenced yard, pets, etc.)
- Being prepared for any situation to arise

Children are natural explorers. Caregivers should be fostering children to explore, learn and gain independence. Caregivers need to make sure they are safe, secure and supervised appropriately.



Some important definitions to remember:

Supervise- to oversee (a process, work, workers, etc.) during execution or performance; superintend; have the oversight and direction of.

Safety- the state of being safe; freedom from the occurrence or risk of injury, danger, or loss. The quality of averting or not causing injury, danger, or loss. A device to prevent injury or avert danger.

Observation- The act of watching carefully and objectively. The usual goal involves paying attention to details for the purpose of understanding behavior. (McGraw High Higher Education)



McGraw High Higher Education

http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/dl/free/0073525871/437999/gon25871_ch02.pdf



Office of Children and Family Services

<http://www.ocfs.ny.gov>

Early Intervention

http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/early_intervention_video.asp

Nation Association for the Education of Young Children

<http://www.naeyc.org/files/academy/file/SupervisionResource.pdf>

Center for Disease Control

http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/dvs/divorce_rates_90_95_99-11.pdf

Brazelton, T.B. *Working and Caring* (Reading Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, inc.1995)

Contact Child Care Connections for other Best Practice Information Sheets on the following topics:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Program Development | • Child & Parent Communication |
| • Behavior Management | • Ages & Stages |
| • Administration/Business | • Health |
| • Professionalism | • Nutrition |
| • School Readiness | • Literacy |
| • Room Arrangement | |



Mission Statement: To support the community by expanding and promoting high quality child care that meets the needs of children & their families.
Visit our website www.ccconnectionsny.org

At what age is it okay to leave my children home alone?

OCFS is often asked questions regarding the appropriate age to leave a child alone, or what age is appropriate to allow a child to begin babysitting. There are no straightforward answers to these questions. All children develop at their own rate, and with their own special needs and abilities. Some children are responsible, intelligent, and independent enough to be left alone at 12 or 13 years of age. Likewise, there are some teenagers who are too irresponsible or who have special needs that limit their ability to be safe if they are left alone.

Parents and guardians need to make intelligent, reasoned decisions regarding these matters.

Below there are some items for these decision-makers to consider before leaving a child alone. Be aware, this is just the beginning of issues to consider. It is not an all-inclusive checklist to guarantee intelligent and reasoned decision-making:

- **Consider the child:** How mature is the child? How comfortable is the child with the circumstances? What has the child done in the past to show you he/she is able to take on this kind of responsibility?
- **Consider the child's knowledge and ability:** Does the child know how and when to contact emergency help? Is the child able to prepare food for him/herself? Are there hazards to the child in the environment such as accessible knives, power tools, a stove or oven?
- **Consider the circumstances:** Where will the child be when left alone? How long is the child to be alone? How far away is an adult, if one is needed?



It is your responsibility to keep all children safe at ALL times!

Child care providers need to be ready for any situation. There are many situations when supervision is the basis of a child's safety. Some of the most common situations to think about when examining or developing policies is to ensure offering the safest space and best supervision to the children in your care. (Before you create policies be sure you review the regulations and policy statements available to help you which is listed on page 7 or contact Child Care Connections for assistance.)

Have you thought about how you will handle:

- Visitors to the program (welcomed or unwelcomed)
- Volunteers giving a helping hand
- Using the bathroom
- Allowing children to use the bathroom independently or assisting a child
- Answering the door
- Taking a phone call
- An unfamiliar animal (domestic or wild on your property)
- Overnight care
- Allowing school age children to play out of direct supervision
- Children riding bicycles or scooters
- Medical emergencies for your own child and child care children
- Using surveillance cameras
- Outside therapists working with children in the program (i.e. occupational, mental health, speech, or physical therapists)
- Extreme weather conditions and shelter in place
- A late parent, who puts you over your permitted capacity
- A non-custodial parent arriving to pick up their child
- School age children walking to or from child care

What is your responsibility as a child care provider?

- Performing a daily health check
- Being sure your program is safe and ready for all ages to attend daily
- Making any child abuse or maltreatment reports as a Mandated Reporter
- Documenting all incidents, accidents, injuries, or illnesses and reporting all serious issues to your registrar or licensor immediately
- Staying in compliance of all the NYS OCFS Day Care Regulations



What to do when parents are present in your care?

When a child is being picked up or dropped off, keeping everyone safe may become more challenging. This may happen because you are trying to do several things at once: greet the parent, help gather the child's belongings and continue to supervise all of the children. To avoid problems, talk with parents about supervision when both you and the parent are in your program. Decide at what point the child is supervised by you and when he is supervised by the parent. Some providers and families agree that the parent is responsible as soon as they walk into your program. Others use a signal like a "hello" and a "good-bye" hug from you to note when this change happens. This also helps children transition in and out of your program each day. (Office of Children and Family Services)

Always remember your behavior management policy is always in effect even if parents are in the program. Be sure parents are aware of all your programs' policies. (ask about our Behavior Management Information Tip Sheet)



What is my role as a Mandated Reporter?

You are responsible to see that you and any other adults that care for children in your program do not harm a child. Children must never be abused or maltreated when they are in your care. You and any caregivers working with you are mandated reporters. Mandated reporters must report suspected incidents of child abuse or maltreatment to the **Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment 1-800-635-1522**, even when the situation involves you or any others caring for children in your program. You are obligated to report anyone working, visiting or a guardian of the children in your program who you suspect may have abused or maltreated a child.

Early childhood programs like yours may be the only place where young children are seen on a daily basis for an extended period of time. You may be the only person to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment. Your action may make a tremendous difference in the life of a child who may be suffering abuse or maltreatment. Children who are being abused or maltreated may not be able to develop to their full potential. These children may carry emotional scars for life and suffer long-term physical and emotional consequences.

Remember,
it is **ALWAYS** your responsibility to keep all children safe at **ALL** times!

Supervision & Safety of Children for Parents

What do I do if I have a custody or visitation order in place?

In New York 3 out of 1000 people will be divorced, according to 2011 census information. (Center for Disease Control) For the safety of your child, the child care program, and the child care provider it is important you share any custody and visitation issues pertaining to your child. A child care provider may not withhold any child from their parent at any time, for any reason. Therefore it is very important that child care providers have accurate and up to date list of those people approved to pick up your child and a copy of any visitation or custody court documents.

Remember, it is ALWAYS the responsibility of child care providers to keep all children safe at ALL times!



How to make sure my child needs to be evaluated?

If you have concerns about the development of your child (ages birth to age three) one place you can reach out to is the New York State Department of Health Early Intervention Program (Ulster 845-334-5000, Greene 518-719-3617 and Columbia 518-822-4278).

The program will give the child the assistance needed if he or she is eligible. Child care providers are an important piece to early intervention. They are continuously documenting the development of your child in various ways, through art work, observations of play, communication, attention and many other developmental areas. They could be a useful partner to assist your child in achieving all they can. Please keep the lines of communication open as concerns arise from you or your child care provider.

http://www.health.ny.gov/community/infants_children/early_intervention/

