

**NeighborImpact Head Start & Early Head Start
Policy & Procedure**

Section: Program Design & Management	PC Approval Date: 8-2-05, 1-18-18
Title: Physical Environment and Facilities	Updated: 11/7/17
Policy #: HS-69	NI Board Approval: 9/12/19
Forms Required: Indoor Daily, Weekly, & Monthly Health & Safety Checklists; Playground Daily, Weekly, & Monthly Health & Safety Checklists	
Performance Standards: 1302.21(d)(1-3) 1302.47(1)(i-ix) 1302.47(2)(i-v)	Page 1 of 2

Policy: All facilities will have materials and equipment that is safe, accessible, welcoming, comfortable, age-appropriate, and culturally sensitive and will meet the individual needs of children and families.

Purpose: To provide a physical environment and facilities conducive to learning and reflective of the different stages of development of each child.

Procedure:

- A. The program provides appropriate center space for the conduct of all program activities
- B. The center space provided by the program is organized into functional areas that can be recognized by the children and that allow for individual activities and social interactions.
- C. The indoor and outdoor space in Early Head Start or Head Start centers used by mobile infants and toddlers is separated from general walkways and from areas in use by preschoolers.
- D. Centers have at least 35 square feet of usable indoor space per child available for the care and use of children (i.e., exclusive of bathrooms, halls, kitchen, staff rooms, and storage places) and at least 75 square feet of usable outdoor play space per child.
- E. The program facilities meet the applicable licensing requirements.
- F. The program provides for the maintenance, repair, safety, and security of all Head Start facilities, materials and equipment.
- G. The program provides a center-based environment free of toxins, such as cigarette smoke, lead, pesticides, herbicides, and other air pollutants as well as soil and water contaminants. The program ensures that no child is present during the spraying of pesticides or herbicides. Children do not return to the affected area until it is safe to do so.
- H. Outdoor play areas at center-based programs are arranged to prevent any child from leaving the premises and getting into unsafe and unsupervised areas. En route to play areas, children are not exposed to vehicular traffic without supervision.
- I. The program conducts a safety inspection at least annually to ensure that each facility's space, light, ventilation, heat, and other physical arrangements are consistent with the health, safety and developmental needs of children. At a minimum, the program ensures that:
 - 1. In climates where such systems are necessary, there is a safe and effective heating and cooling system that is insulated to protect children and staff from potential burns.
 - 2. No highly flammable furnishings, decorations, or materials that emit highly toxic fumes when

burned are used.

3. Flammable and other dangerous materials and potential poisons are stored in locked cabinets or storage facilities separate from stored medications and food and are accessible only to authorized persons. All medications, including those required for staff and volunteers, are labeled, stored under lock and key, refrigerated if necessary, and kept out of the reach of children.
4. Rooms are well lit and provide emergency lighting in the case of power failure.
5. Approved, working fire extinguishers are readily available.
6. In appropriate number of smoke detectors are installed and tested regularly.
7. Exits are clearly visible and evacuation routes are clearly marked and posted so that the path to safety outside is unmistakable.
8. Indoor and outdoor premises are cleaned daily and kept free of undesirable and hazardous materials and conditions.
9. Paint coatings on both interior and exterior premises used for the care of children do not contain hazardous quantities of lead.
10. The selection, layout, and maintenance of playground equipment and surfaces minimize the possibility of injury to children.
11. Electrical outlets accessible to children prevent shock through the use of child-resistant covers, the installation of child-protection outlets, or the use of safety plugs.
12. Windows and glass doors are constructed, adapted, or adjusted to prevent injury to children.
13. Only sources of water approved by the local or State health authority are used.
14. Toilets and hand washing facilities are adequate, clean, in good repair, and easily reached by children. Toileting and diapering areas are separated from areas used for cooking, eating, or children's activities.
15. Toilet training equipment is provided for children being toilet trained.
16. All sewage and liquid waste is disposed of through a locally approved sewer system, and garbage and trash are stored in a safe and sanitary manner.
17. Adequate provisions are made for children with disabilities to ensure their safety, comfort, and participation.