



Choose Safe Places for Early Care and Education

Planning. Guidance. Protection.



Working together to protect children's health

Idaho is working with professionals in public health, community planning, childcare licensing, environmental protection, early care and education, and other fields to create safe practices in our communities. The goal is to make sure early care and education facilities are located in safe places – so children aren't exposed to harmful chemicals during their care.

Understanding the problem

Early care and education facilities may be located in places where children and staff are exposed to harmful chemicals even if facilities meet current licensing regulations. New childcare providers may be unaware if a proposed site is in a contaminated industrial building that was never cleaned up, or next door to a dry cleaner using harmful chemicals. This can put staff and children, who are more sensitive because they're still growing, at risk of health problems.

How Idaho is helping


The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare is developing a voluntary program that encourages informed choices about where to locate early care and education sites. The mission of the Choose Safe Places (CSP) program, is to support childcare providers in selecting safe locations for new facilities by increasing awareness of potential environmental concerns. CSP is helping childcare professionals identify potential risks of a site by considering:

- ▶ Former uses of a site that might have left harmful substances
- ▶ Movement of harmful substances onto the site from other sites
- ▶ The presence of naturally occurring harmful substances
- ▶ Access to safe drinking water

In Idaho, 977 state-licensed childcare programs serve over 31,000 children.

Protect children in childcare centers from chemicals like:

- ▶ Arsenic
- ▶ Lead
- ▶ Pesticides
- ▶ Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)



The Idaho CSP program is designed to complement state and local regulations. The program is designed so that evaluating environmental health concerns doesn't necessarily require additional funding or staff. The goal is to integrate with current resources and licensing processes to build awareness about potential environmental contamination before opening new early care and education facilities.

What is the Property Checklist?

- A voluntary tool to help determine if the childcare location is safe by identifying potential environmental concerns near the location.
- Easy-to-use format with specific resources if a potential issue is identified.
- Helps protect future businesses, children, and employees.

Complete the Property Checklist:

- https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Portals/0/Health/EnvironmentalHealth/CSP_PropertyChecklist.pdf



Learn more about child care in Idaho

- Idaho Daycare Licensing Program: <http://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Children/ChildCareAssistance/DaycareLicensing.aspx>
- IdahoSTARS: <https://idahostars.org>

Other resources

- Choose Safe Places for Early Care and Education Toolkit. You'll find an interactive checklist for choosing a safe location and more helpful resources. <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/safeplacesforECE/resources.html>
- Caring for our Children Basics: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/caring-for-our-children-basics>
- Learn more about Children's Environmental Health: <https://cehn.org/>
- Idaho Department of Health and Welfare's Environmental Health Program at (800) 445-8647 or visit CSP.dhw.idaho.gov