

Effective Supervision in Child Care Settings

Standards

Provincial standards for child care programs (Child Care Licensing Regulation, AR 143/2008 and Family Day Home Standards Manual, July 2011) require that children are at all times under supervision that is effective in ensuring their safety, well-being, and development.

What is Effective Supervision?

Effective supervision reduces the risk of harm to children by preventing injuries and accidents. It also promotes positive, responsive, and intentional learning environments for children and child care providers.

Effective supervision requires primary staff in licensed child care settings and approved family day home providers to be involved and familiar with the children in their care. This is important because the most effective kind of supervision for a particular setting can change depending on the type of program provided (out-of-school care versus a family day home), or the ages and individual needs of the children under care.

Effective supervision also requires child care programs and staff to assess their supervision practices on a regular basis to ensure that they continue to promote safety and to meet the needs of children enrolled in the program.

Effective supervision is about more than watching children; it is about using techniques that promote effective supervision practices and create safe care environments.

Caregivers

Effective caregivers are always aware of the physical environment of the child care program.

They:

- conduct regular safety checks of the program premises and equipment to remove hazards;
- position equipment and arrange the environment to allow caregivers to supervise the children's play, rest, and toilet areas;
- know which individuals are authorized to pick-up a child from the program in place of a parent;
- notice when children arrive and leave the program, ensuring that both arrival and departure times are accurately recorded;
- remember where emergency medications, first aid kits, and emergency contact numbers are kept; and
- monitor children are at all times.

Caregivers should avoid carrying out activities that may draw their attention away from active supervision. Examples of such activities include administrative tasks, cleaning, texting, reading, or using the phone.

Effective caregivers observe children's play and behaviour by:

- directing and closely monitoring children when carrying out activities that may involve some risk, such as playing near water, near doorways, or during transition times when children may gather in larger groups;
- observing play and anticipating what may happen next in order to provide caregivers with the opportunity to assist children and intervene in the event of potential danger;
- listening closely to children, even those who are not in the caregiver's direct line of sight (such as those in outdoor play spaces or areas where children nap);
- positioning staff to allow for the supervision of the entire group of children;
- monitoring children's health to identify early signs of fever, illness, or unusual behaviour; and
- watching and participating in children's play to ensure that children are playing in a safe manner.



Agency and Licence Holders

Agencies and licence holders can promote safety and reduce injuries by:

- creating and following policies and procedures that outline supervision practices for programs;
- reviewing policies on a regular basis with all staff, including caregivers, particularly when there are programming changes (for instance, during the summer, when children are outside more, or in the fall, when new children may enroll in the program);
- recording the actual arrival and departure times of children, including their arrival or departure from outside play or field trips;
- using a consistent system during head-counts or roll call (counts should be done during all transitions, including when children leave or return to their classroom, or enter or leave a vehicle);
- establishing simple rules for children (for example, “when we are indoors, we walk”); and
- maintaining staff to child ratios at all times.

Where to go for more information:

The Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement (ARCQE) offers workshops related to supervision in child care programs including:

***Let's Take a 2nd look at your play space
Facilitating Smooth Transitions
Learning through Play***

ARCQE can be reached at **780-421-4930** or toll-free at **1-866-421-4930**.

Program Supervisors/ Home Visitors

Program Supervisors/Home Visitors monitor and evaluate supervision practices to ensure that staff/provider practices adhere to provincial standards and program policies on supervision.

This is done by:

- spot-checking caregivers;
- randomly asking caregivers how many children are present;
- observing caregivers to ensure that they are following established procedures; and
- reviewing program policies on a regular basis, including presenting caregivers with hypothetical scenarios to test their response (e.g. “if the program goes on a field trip, how will staff account for all of the children?”)

