



The National Training Institute
for Child Care Health Consultants

Caring for the Caregivers: Promoting the Health and Safety of Child Care Staff



- Your name
- Your agency
- Date of training



Introductions

- Locate the “Health and Safety BINGO” worksheet.
- Move around the room and introduce yourself to others. Try to find people who fit the descriptions in the BINGO squares.
- Write that person’s name in the box.
- When you have filled in 5 in a row, shout out “BINGO!”



Training Overview

1. Why focus on staff health?
2. Infectious Disease, Musculoskeletal Injuries, Falls, and Environmental Hazards
3. Case Scenario
4. Stress
5. Promoting Nutrition & Physical Activity
6. “Action Plan”
7. Closing



Training Objectives

- Explain occupational hazards in child care.
- Understand what you can do to prevent and manage occupational hazards.
- Identify opportunities to promote health and safety of child care staff.



Why focus on staff health?

- Why is the health of child care staff important?
- Why do you think the health and safety of child care staff do not receive more attention?
- Generally, what is the age and health status of child care staff in the US today?



Health and Safety Risks for Child Care Staff

- Infectious disease
- Musculoskeletal injuries
- Falls
- Environmental hazards
- Stress



Infectious Disease

- Children in out-of-home care have a higher incidence of infectious diseases.
- Child care staff also acquire infectious diseases at a higher rate than other adults. Why?
 - Higher incidence of disease in young children
 - Children's greater propensity for transmitting disease



Sources of Risk

- Child Factors
 - Immature immune systems
 - Physiological immaturity
 - Developmentally appropriate behaviors



Sources of Risk

- Group Care Factors
 - Children in close contact
 - Number of unrelated children in care
 - Age group mixing
 - Children/staff with mild illnesses

Patterns of Disease Manifestation



- Child has no symptoms, but adult has a more severe response (*Hepatitis A*).
- Staff has no symptoms, but child has a more severe response (*H. influenza type B*).
- Mild or asymptomatic response in both children and staff, but serious implications for fetal development in pregnant staff (*CMV*).



Preventive Measures

■ Immunizations

- ✓ Primary series for tetanus and diphtheria, with boosters every 10 years
- ✓ Been immunized against measles, mumps, rubella, poliomyelitis, varicella-zoster (chickenpox), and Hepatitis B
- ✓ Influenza immunization if over age 50 and pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine if over 65
- ✓ Tuberculosis screening prior to initial employment



Preventive Measures

- Disease Management Practices
 - Establish procedures for handwashing, diapering, food preparation, and cleaning and sanitizing the environment and toys in the child care setting.
 - Enforce exclusion criteria for ill staff and children.



Preventive Measures (continued)

- Disease Management Practices
 - Have a *written* exposure prevention plan.
 - Have pregnant staff consult with their health care provider for advice about immunizations and other measures to promote a healthy pregnancy.



Musculoskeletal Injuries

- Risk factors for child care staff:
 - Frequent heavy lifting and carrying
 - Sitting on the floor or in child-size chairs with insufficient or no back support
 - Kneeling, squatting, and reaching to a variety of heights



Maintaining Good Posture

- Use adult-sized furniture when possible.
- Squat and lift with the legs to stand.
- Sit with back to a wall or other firm support.
- Avoid sitting or standing for long periods.
- Store items where they are accessible.
- Squat or kneel instead of bending forward and down from the waist.



Proper Lifting Technique

- Give yourself a firm base of support, with feet shoulder width apart and one foot next to the child you are lifting and the other slightly back.
- Squat down by bending at the knees, not the waist. Engage your stomach muscles and keep your back as straight as possible.
- Have a comfortable hold on the child before you begin to lift.
- Use your legs to lift slowly and smoothly.



Adult-sized Furniture

- Child-sized furnishing and inadequate work surfaces can cause back injuries.
- CFOC Standards recommend:
 - Adult-height changing tables;
 - Small, stable stepladders, stairs, or similar equipment to enable children to climb to the changing table; and
 - Adult furniture that eliminates awkward sitting and working positions.



Wrap Up on Musculoskeletal Injuries

- Regular exercise and stretching promotes musculoskeletal health and prevents injury.
- Maintenance of proper body weight promotes musculoskeletal health and prevents back strain.
- Shoes with good shock absorption will help reduce injury.
- Staff who are pregnant should take extra caution to prevent back problems, swollen feet, varicose veins, and fatigue.



Falls

- Second most commonly reported injury for child care staff (21% of all injuries)
- Caused by work surface (including floor and stair) clutter, such as tripping on toys or equipment
- Back most often injured, followed by joint injuries



Exposure to Toxic Materials

- Cleaning Products
 - Employees must be trained on any chemicals present in the workplace.
 - Sanitation materials must be labeled and have an MSDS on file.
 - Use cleaning products for their intended purpose and according to manufacturer's instructions.
 - Store products in original containers.



Exposure to Toxic Materials

■ Art Materials

- Look for the ASTM D-4236 or ACMI label. These labels certify that the materials can be used without risk of health hazards.
- Solvents such as turpentine or aerosol fixatives should only be used outside or with good ventilation.
- Review toxicity of all art supplies. Substitute less hazardous products whenever possible.



Exposure to Toxic Materials

- Lead, Mold, and Mildew
 - Experts should be called in to assess and eliminate any lead, asbestos, mold, or mildew issues in the child care environment.



Activity: Case Scenario

- Divide into small groups. Select a group leader and a recorder/reporter for each group.
- Read the case scenario on the handout and discuss the questions at the bottom of the page.
- After five minutes, we will share ideas.



Stress

- What factors can contribute to stress in the child care environment?



Stress

- Documented Sources of Stress
 - High staff/child ratio
 - High number of hours working directly with children
 - Not enough break time
 - Lack of program structure
 - Infrequent staff meetings
 - Lack of social support
 - Need to control children's behavior
 - Negative interaction with co-workers



Workplace Interventions to Decrease Stress

- Limit the number of children for which staff are responsible.
- Have staff plan activities only for a specific group of children.
- Assign toys and materials to a specific room.
- Set arrival and departure times to a fixed schedule.
- Assign volunteers to one room.



Workplace Interventions to Decrease Stress (proposed)

- Written job descriptions and personnel policies
- Regular staff meetings
- Involvement of staff in program decisions
- Volunteers during the busiest times of the day



Workplace Interventions to Decrease Stress (proposed)

- Someone on call so staff members can take a break from direct care
- A pleasant, comfortable space for breaks
- Regularly scheduled exercise breaks for staff



Managing Stress

- Prioritize
- Set limits
- Assert yourself
- Use appropriate resources
- Maximize job satisfaction
- Sustain yourself
- Get support
- Laugh
- Exercise



Stress Management Assessment

- Find the *Stress Management Assessment* handout.
- Take five minutes to complete the questions.

Establishing a Nutrition Program



1. Assess present nutritional intake.
2. Set medium and long range goals.
3. Decide on food control practices to achieve goals.
4. Set weekly goals.
5. Set daily goals.



Physical Activity

- Experts recommend 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity on 5 or more days per week.
- Examples of moderately intense activity include brisk walking, cycling, swimming, or doing housecleaning tasks or yard work.
- Any physical activity is good for promoting health!



Incorporating Physical Activity Into the Workplace

- Take walks during breaks or when brainstorming ideas with a co-worker.
- Park farther away from the facility and walk the extra distance.
- Put posters of stretches and simple exercises in the break room.
- If possible, have jump ropes, resistance bands, weights, or a stationary bicycle available in the break room.



What do you do?

- How do you incorporate physical activity into your own life?



Benefits of Physical Activity

- Reduces risk factors for cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers
- Helps to lower high blood pressure and cholesterol
- Prevents or slows osteoporosis
- Reduces obesity



Benefits of Physical Activity (continued)

- Promotes a sense of well-being and improves appearance
- Reduces stress while improving the ability to cope with stress
- Improves posture and muscle toning
- Reduces injuries

(Aronson, 1997; American Heart Association, 2002; President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, 2002.)



Ticket Out

- On a sticky note, write down one new thing that you learned about promoting the health and safety of child care staff.
- Stick the note on the wall by the door on your way out.



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