

BUREAU OF CERTIFICATION NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2021

PENNSYLVANIA OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY LEARNING

CORONAVIRUS UPDATES

As coronavirus mitigation efforts continue to change, it is important for child care providers to have the most up to date information. To ensure the receipt of important information, please register for the Bureau of Certification Newsletters at [Pennsylvania Key website](#). Child care providers who are already registered are encouraged to double check spam and/or junk email folders to ensure important information is not missed.

SHANTE' A. BROWN DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF CERTIFICATION



MEET THE CERTIFICATION BUREAU DIRECTOR

As of January 25, 2021, Shante' A. Brown joined us as the Director of the Bureau of Certification. Shante' is a dedicated early childhood education leader with over a decade of experience in leading child care programs. She believes in connecting people to resources and building strong community relationships.

Prior to this role, she served as the director of the PHLpreK program, Philadelphia's locally funded pre-K initiative. A 2019, Drexel University School of Lebow "Leading for Change" fellow, Shante' holds a B.S.Ed in Early Childhood - Elementary Education, M.S. in Reading Education and an EdS in Teacher Leadership. She is a genuine advocate for the field, and committed to positive outcomes for children, families, and providers in the state of Pennsylvania.

We are excited to welcome Shante' as our new Director for the Bureau of Certification!

If you have questions about the information within this newsletter, please contact your Regional Certification Office.

NEW REGULATION CHANGES

New child care regulations became effective December 19, 2020. Following the release of the new child care regulations, OCDEL provided training to providers to support implementation and answer providers' questions. Providers can still view this training [here](#). Regulatory changes for child care centers, group child care homes, and family child care homes were made in the following topics:

- Application for and issuance of a certificate of compliance
- Child abuse reporting/CPSL
- Departmental access
- Availability of certificate of compliance and applicable regulations
- Emergency plan
- Waivers (for family child care homes)
- Age and training
- General requirements for facility persons
- Suitability of persons in the facility
- Supervision of children (for family child care homes)
- Fire safety
- Fire drills
- Fire detection
- Meals for infants
- Fire safety

All new regulatory amendments are available now via the [PA Bulletin](#).



SWIMMING AND LIFEGUARD REQUIREMENTS

The following staff:child ratios that apply while children are swimming:

When children are swimming, supervision shall include one person certified in lifeguard training and this person may not be included in the staff:child ratio. The lifeguard must be at least sixteen years of age and have a staff file including: proof of age, address, background clearances, disclosure statement, health assessment, TB test, two references and verification of lifeguard certification.

Any staff person included in the staff:child ratio while children are swimming must complete water safety instruction annually.

Age Level	Staff	Children
Infant	1	1
Young or older toddler	1	2
Preschool	1	5
Young school-age	1	6
Older school-age	1	8

where's baby?

Look before you lock.

As temperatures across the country rise, it is more important than ever to understand the health effects for children. Infants and young children are particularly sensitive to the effects of extreme heat and must rely on others to keep them safe.

Babies and young children can sometimes sleep so peacefully that we forget they are even there. A change in a schedule, being overly tired or distracted, or even a new pattern of behavior—like dropping off a child at child care when someone else usually does it—can cause a parent or caregiver to put a child at risk.

- A child's body temperature rises three to five times faster than an adult. When a child is left in a hot vehicle, that child's temperature can rise quickly – and they could die within minutes
- Heatstroke begins when the core body temperature reaches about 104 degrees
- A child can die when their body temperature reaches 107 degrees
- In 2020, 24 children died of vehicular heatstroke
- In 2018 and 2019, we saw a record number of hot car deaths – 53 children died each year – the most in at least 20 years, according to [NoHeatstroke.org](https://www.noheatstroke.org).

However, these tragedies are completely preventable.

Parents and Caregivers

1. Never leave a child in a vehicle unattended – even if the windows are partially open or the engine is running, and the air conditioning is on.
2. Make it a habit to check your entire vehicle – front and back – before locking the door and walking away. Train yourself to Park, Look, Lock, or always ask yourself, "Where's Baby?"
3. Ask your childcare provider to call if your child doesn't show up for care as expected.
4. Place a personal item like a purse or briefcase in the back seat, as another reminder to look before you lock. Write a note or place a stuffed animal in the passenger's seat to remind you that a child is in the back seat.
5. Store car keys out of a child's reach and teach children that a vehicle is not a play area.

Everyone – Including Bystanders

Secure Your Car: Always lock your car doors and trunk, year-round, so children can't get into unattended vehicles.



Act Fast. Save a Life:
If you see a child alone in a locked car, get them out immediately and call 911. A child in distress due to heat should be removed from the vehicle as quickly as possible and rapidly cooled.

IT'S FIELD TRIP SEASON!

Field trips are a fun way to take learning out of the traditional classroom. A comprehensive plan is key to successful excursions, so be sure to review the regulations ahead of time. Ask yourself, does my plan address the following questions?

The regulations listed here are highlighted to assist you in creating your personal field trip safety plan but, please keep in mind, all regulations must be upheld, even when away from the facility, to ensure the health and safety of the children in your care. Keep in mind, the result of every great field trip experience is that the children return safely to the facility.

1. Have all parents signed consent forms as in §3270.172, §3280.172, and §3290.171?
2. Did I pack a first aid kit as per §3270.75(d) and §3270.178, §3280.75(d) and §3280.178, and §3290.73(d) and §3290.176?
3. Is each staff person assigned to a specific group of children and will be physically present with the group as in §3270.113(a)(1)(2), §3280.113(a)(1)(2), and §3290.113(a)?
4. Do all staff persons have emergency contact information for each child in their group as per §3270.124(d), §3280.124(d), and §3290.124(c)?
5. Do I have adequate staff to meet staff:child ratios in §3270.51 and, §3270.52, §3280.51 and §3280.52, and §3290.51 and §3290.52?
6. When transporting in a vehicle, do I have enough staff to meet the staff:child ratio in §3270.173 and §3280.173?
7. Does my driver meet the requirements of §3270.174, §3280.174, and §3290.172?
8. Does the vehicle have required safety restraints as in §3270.175, §3280.175, and §3290.173?
9. Also, and very important, children may not be left unattended in a vehicle and children shall be supervised during boarding and exiting vehicles by an adult who remains outside the vehicle as per §3270.177, §3280.177, and §3290.175. Does my plan address boarding and exiting strategies?



BUG BITES AND BUTTERFLIES

The summer season is here, which means spending more time outdoors. Increasing outdoor activity means heightened exposure to bees and bugs.

It's amazing how some children are fascinated by bugs and others are terrified. Educating children about the different types of insects, those which are safe to observe, such as butterflies, and those which should be avoided, will alleviate fears and make the outdoors a safer place to play and learn.

Some insects are a simple annoyance and others can result in injury and illness. Some children may have allergies to bug bites or stings such as bee stings.

Remind children that they should not swat at buzzing insects as they may sting if they feel threatened. Mosquito bites and tick bites typically do not hurt but may cause mild irritation or potential illness. It's important to conduct a thorough investigation for ticks after an excursion in wooded areas or tall grass.



Children can wear light-colored clothing, long sleeves and pants for protection. Parents should inform all caregivers if a child has a history of reactions to bites/stings, so they know what to do in the event of a bug bite or sting. As best practice, written authorization by the parent should be completed before applying bug spray on a child. If a child in care gets stung, bit, or has an accident or illness, you must complete an incident report and provide the original copy to the parent on the day of the incident as per §3270.182(7)§3280.182(7) and §3290.182(7).

The removal of a tick from a child should be completed by the parent/guardian or medical professional as soon as possible unless there is written authorization by the parent and the provider has received the appropriate health and safety training to do so. If emergency medical care is required, follow regulations §3270.132, §3270.20, §3280.132, §3280.19 §3290.132 and §3290.17.

Remember, outdoor play allows for exploration, creativity, sensory experiences, and exercise of motor skills. Child care provides are encouraged to promote outdoor activities, weather permitting. Bug spray and lotion are toxic and should be store in a locked cabinet or in an area that is inaccessible to the children. (See §3270.66, §3280.66, §3290.64)

PLANT SAFETY

§3270.66(d), §3280.66(c), and §3270.64(c) –
Relating to Toxics

Plants, bushes, trees, flowers, and other vegetation are not always on the top of the priority list and sometimes we overlook or assume that that where children are playing is safe or that the plants inside the child care facility are not harmful. However, since there are more than 700 poisonous plants in the United States it is especially important to be aware of the vegetation located in the areas where children are playing.

There are some common signs to look for when recognizing a poisonous plant. They include: a milky sap, naturally shiny leaves, umbrella shaped plants, and plants with white or yellow berries.

Plants generally poison by ingestion, contact and/or absorption through inhalation. The possible reactions to the poison depend on the amount of toxin a plant carries, a child's level of resistance, and the amount the child ingested or absorbed. Reactions to poisonous plants include, but are not limited to skin irritations, abdominal pain/nausea/vomiting, watering, or burning of the eyes, difficulty breathing, dilated pupils, slow/rapid pulse, headache, sore throat, drowsiness, swelling, itching, or death.



If you are unsure whether a plant is poisonous, you can call Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 or visit your local county agriculture extension. You can access this information [here](#).

For a list of Poisonous Plants please click [here](#). If a plant isn't listed on the chart, don't assume it isn't poisonous. Call your Poison Center for prompt, professional advice.





SAFETY IN THE SUN

Safety in the sun is extremely important to remember when spending time outdoors. Be sure to provide plenty of drinking water and protect children from sun damage. Use shade and protective clothing, including hats and sunglasses, whenever possible.

Applying sunscreen twenty minutes before exposure and reapplying every two hours will help prevent sun damage. As best practice, written authorization by the parent should be completed before sunscreen on a child. Your facility should have an individual bottle of sunscreen for each child, labeled with the child's name. Parents should supply bottles of sunscreen for their own children for two reasons. First, there may be ingredients in one brand of sunscreen that could cause reactions in a child. Second, the parent should decide what SPF is appropriate for their child.

Sunscreen is a toxic and should be stored in a locked cabinet or in an area that is inaccessible to the children. (See §3270.66, §3280.66, §3290.64)

SUMMER CHILD CARE PROGRAMS AND SUMMER CAMPS

§3270.3 and §3280.3, relating to applicability and §3270.3a and §3280.3a, relating to applicability-statement of policy

Summer is the time when questions arise regarding summer programs and summer camps. Please review the statement of policy at §3270.3(a) and §3280.3(a). The statement of policy specifically addresses the fact that school-age programs that operate less than 90 consecutive days in a year are exempt from certification. The statement of policy further states this exemption does not apply to a certified facility that increases its enrollment to include school-age children in the summer and on school holidays (See §3270.3a (1) and §3280.3a (1)).



BEAT THE HEAT WITH SUMMER TREATS

Strawberry Blueberry Frozen Yogurt Bark

Ingredients:

- 1 cup yogurt, plain
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup, pure
- 1/4 cup blueberries
- 1/4 cup strawberries



Instructions:

1. Mix the yogurt with maple syrup and place onto a parchment lined cookie sheet.
2. Top yogurt with blueberries and strawberries.
3. Freeze for 6-8 hours or overnight. Break up and serve.



Strawberry Salsa and Baked Cinnamon Chips

Strawberry Salsa

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. fresh strawberries, chopped
- 2 whole kiwis, peeled and chopped
- ½ a lime, juiced

Baked Cinnamon Chips

Ingredients:

- 4 Homemade Whole Wheat Tortillas
- 1 teaspoon unrefined coconut oil, melted
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon and 1 teaspoon raw coconut sugar in shaker bottle

BEAT THE HEAT WITH SUMMER TREATS

continued

Strawberry Salsa and Baked Cinnamon Chips continued

Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Wash and chop the fruit for the salsa, mix it together in a bowl, and add the lime juice. If it needs a little sweetness you can add a teaspoon of honey or pure maple syrup, but the fruit will usually be sweet enough on its own.
3. Brush both sides of the tortillas with melted coconut oil. Then stack them all together and cut into 8 triangles.
4. Arrange the triangles in a single layer on a cookie sheet lined with foil. If they overlap, they won't crisp as well.
5. Sprinkle each triangle lightly with the cinnamon mixture. Flip them over and sprinkle the other side too.
6. Bake in the preheated oven for 8-12 minutes. Rotate the pan halfway through, and make sure you check the chips often so that they don't burn. They are finished when the edges get dry and crispy. The center will still be slightly flexible, but they will crisp even more as they cool.
7. Allow to cool slightly and test the texture. If they aren't quite crisp enough, return to the oven for 2-3 minutes.
8. Once they are mostly cool, remove from the pan and enjoy with your fresh salsa! Keep leftovers of salsa in the fridge and eat quickly, after about 24 hours the fruit will break down and get soupy. Keep leftover chips in a sealed ziptop bag.