

Hazard Free and Safe Environments

Slide #1 Welcome

Welcome to this course titled, ***“Hazard Free and Safe Environments”***.

This course is developed as part of the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) alignment process, to prepare providers and licensors in their understanding of the “why”, the “what” and the “how” of complying with the updated Foundational Quality Standards for Early Learning Programs (referred to in each course as the Foundational Quality Standards).

Slide #2 Helpful Hints

WA DCYF is pleased to present this e-Learning course! To help provide a positive learning experience for you, please take a moment to review the following “Helpful Hints” summary, detailing what you can expect from this course. A complete listing of Helpful Hints has been added to the Resources section of your learner’s screen for reference.

- If you would like to access and review the full course text, please visit the Resources section of your learner’s screen. You can view, print, or download a full version of the course text that is narrated within each module. The full text will be included in each course and listed as the first resource in the Resources section of your course frame.
- The time to complete the course will depend on the course topic and the pace at which you advance through the slides.
- To help you get the most out of the course, settings are in place to prevent users from skipping ahead through the slides. You can advance through the course when the narration for each slide concludes by selecting the “Next” button, or, go back to review material already presented by selecting the “Previous” button.
- Web links and additional resources will be utilized in some of the courses to enhance your learning experience. We hope you will take time to explore them to further develop your knowledge about the topics being presented.

Slide #3 Introduction

This course is designed to introduce you to the updated Washington Administrative Code or WAC, as well as outline strategies and examples of WAC compliance. Updated WACs will be detailed in each course as a reference and a full listing of the WAC is included in the Resources section of your learner’s screen. You can print or download this resource at any time, either as a reference while you complete this course, or as a resource after the course is completed.

Slide #4 Learning Outcomes

This course will help early learning professionals understand how to meet, assess for, and demonstrate ongoing compliance with the Foundational Quality Standards.

Upon completion of this course, participants will:

- Identify hazards to children in an early learning program environment
- Identify characteristics of a safe early learning program environment
- Understand ways to minimize risk of harm to children through maintaining a hazard free early learning program environment

Slide #5 Guiding Principles

As we cover the material in this course, please keep in mind the following Guiding Principles. We will revisit these at the end of the course to “check in” with you and give you an opportunity to assess your understanding and application of the course content.

Guiding Principles:

- Injuries are often preventable.
- Risk of harm to a child can be minimized by maintaining compliance with safety requirements.
- Maintaining a hazard free early learning environment is the ongoing responsibility of early learning providers.
- Early learning programs must consider the indoor and outdoor learning environments, materials, and equipment before, during, and after children are in care.

Slide #6 Terms and Definitions

Take a moment to review and familiarize yourself with the following terms and definitions. For your reference, a listing of these terms has been added to the Resources section of your learner’s screen. You can access the list at any time by visiting the Resources section of your learner’s screen. You can download the file to keep as a future reference or print as a desk guide.

Active supervision or actively supervising means a heightened standard of care beyond supervision. This standard requires an early learning provider to see and hear the children they are responsible for during higher risk activities. The provider must be able to prevent or instantly respond to unsafe or harmful events.

ASTM refers to the American Society for Testing and Materials.

CPSC means the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Early learning professionals are all early learning providers, child care licensing staff, and other professionals in the early learning field.

Early learning program space means the licensed indoor and outdoor space on the premises approved by the department for the purpose of providing licensed child care.

Inaccessible to children means a method to prevent a child from reaching, entering, using, or getting to items, areas, or materials of an early learning program.

Infant is a child birth through eleven months of age.

Preschool-age children means children thirty months through six years of age not attending kindergarten or elementary school.

RCW means Revised Code of Washington.

School-age children means a child not less than five years of age through twelve years of age who is attending kindergarten or elementary school.

Supervise or **supervision** means an early learning provider must be able to see or hear the children they are responsible for at all times. Early learning providers must use their knowledge of each child's development and behavior to anticipate what may occur to prevent unsafe or unhealthy events or conduct, or to intervene in such circumstances as soon as possible. Early learning providers must also reposition themselves or the children to be aware of where children are and what they are doing during care. An early learning provider must reassess and adjust their supervision each time child care activities change. See "active supervision" for a heightened standard of care.

Toddler means a child twelve months through twenty-nine months of age.

WAC means Washington Administrative Code.

Weapon means an instrument or device of any kind that is used or designed to be used to inflict harm including, but not limited to, rifles, handguns, shotguns, antique firearms, knives, swords, bows and arrows, BB guns, pellet guns, air rifles, electronic or other stun devices, or fighting implements.

Slide #7 Course Introduction

Unintentional injuries, such as falling, burns, or suffocation, are the leading cause of child fatalities in the United States¹. Injuries that are not fatal account for nearly 9.2 million visits by children to an emergency room each year.

While these statistics are staggering, most injuries to young children can be prevented with proper supervision, safe environments, and proper training.

The primary purpose of the Foundational Quality Standards is to provide safe and healthy environments for children in care. The role of early learning professionals is invaluable in keeping children in care safe!

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015). *CDC Childhood Injury Report*. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/safekid/child_injury_data.html

When early learning professionals comply with and regulate to safety standards found in the Foundational Quality Standards, the risk of harm to a child is minimized and injuries can be prevented.

WAC 110-300-0165 specifically focuses on the safety requirements for early learning programs.

Slide #8 WAC 110-300-0165

One of the ways in which children learn is to actively explore their environments using their senses. The nature of this type of exploration often leads young children to thoroughly manipulate the items found in their environments by touching, tasting and smelling them. The role of the early learning provider is to ensure that all program space, materials, and equipment can be engaged with safely.

WAC 110-300-0165 Safety requirements.

(1) An early learning provider must keep indoor and outdoor early learning program space, materials, and equipment free from hazards and in safe working condition. Equipment and toys purchased and used must be compliant with CPSC guidelines or ASTM standards, as now and hereafter amended. Playground equipment and surfaces must meet the requirements of WAC [110-300-0146](#).

For example, an early learning provider may have plastic toys, such as trikes or cars for children to use when playing outside. Over time, the plastic and other materials this equipment is made up of may become damaged or cracked because of the weather, prolonged use, or other contributing factors. During routine inspections of program equipment, an early learning provider must remove, make inaccessible or repair any damaged toys or equipment found in the early learning space. When replacing or purchasing new equipment, an early learning provider must ensure that the equipment is compliant with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (or CPSC) guidelines or American Society for Testing and Materials (or ASTM) standards. The informational documents or specifications that often come with equipment used in early learning programs is a great way for providers to demonstrate compliance with this requirement and is something licensors should be looking for during site visits to ensure compliance with this WAC requirement. Please refer to WAC 110-300-0465(4)(c) for additional information on keeping required and applicable records.

Slide #9 WAC 110-300-0165 continued

Section (1) references equipment and toy compliance with CPSC and ASTM standards. Both of these agencies outline guidelines for safe product use.

The website for ASTM describes their purpose as developing and publishing standards to “improve lives” and “help everyone have confidence in the things they buy or use”². Early learning professionals can look for ASTM compliance information on the packaging of products, or on the products themselves, such as cribs or car seats.

The CPSC also provides information about product safety. A useful resource on their website is a product recall search function, where early learning professionals can search for and see the latest recalled products and injury statistics. This information is important for all early learning providers to use to determine product safety and compliance with this WAC requirement. The link to the search function is: cpsc.gov/Recalls. Early learning providers may want to mail in product registration cards when they purchase new equipment for their early learning programs, so they will get alerts if those products later become recalled.

Slide #10 WAC 110-300-0165 continued

For young children, choking presents a serious hazard.

Nearly 90 percent of fatal choking incidents occur in children younger than 4 years old and often a choking child does not make any noise³.

The risk of choking is not isolated to structured eating or feeding times.

As children explore their world using their senses, they are often putting all types of objects in their mouths. Where infants and toddlers are present, early learning professionals must take the following steps to minimize the risk of choking.

WAC 110-300-0165 Safety requirements.

(2) An early learning provider must take steps to prevent hazards to children including, but not limited to:

(a) Making inaccessible to infants and toddlers any equipment, material, or objects that may pose a risk of choking, aspiration, or ingestion. For the purposes of this section, equipment, material, or objects that have a diameter or overall dimension of one and three-quarter inches or less shall be considered items that may pose a risk of choking, aspiration, or ingestion. Small parts from larger equipment, material, or objects that have a diameter or overall dimension of one and three-quarter inches or less, that may become detached from the larger equipment, materials, or object shall also be considered items that may pose a risk of choking, aspiration, or ingestion;

² ASTM International (2018). *About Us*. Retrieved from <https://www.astm.org/ABOUT/overview.html>

³ American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. (2011). *Caring for our children: National health and safety performance standards; Guidelines for early care and education programs*. Retrieved from <http://nrckids.org>

Compliance with subsection 2(a), along with meeting supervision requirements found in WAC chapter 110-300 will minimize the risk of choking for young children. For example, an early learning program has ensured that all toys in their toddler classroom comply with the size requirements found in subsection 2(a). However, a toddler in this classroom arrived for care wearing a sweater with a loose button. The toddler teacher, through proper supervision, was able to observe the toddler playing with the button, noticing that the button was loose. The button was removed by the provider, preventing it from coming off and posing a choking hazard to the children in care.

Slide #11 WAC 110-300-0165 continued

Other environmental safety concerns are identified in ***Caring for our Children***, Standard 3.4.6.1 which recognizes the cords of blinds and window coverings as strangulation hazards⁴ for children. To mitigate this hazard, early learning providers must comply with the following:

WAC 110-300-0165 Safety requirements.

(b) Eliminating and not using in the licensed space, pursuant to RCW 43.216.380, any window blinds or other window coverings with pull cords or inner cords capable of forming a loop and posing risk of strangulation to children.

(i) Window blinds and other window coverings that have been manufactured or properly retrofitted in a manner that eliminates the formation of loops posing a risk of strangulation are allowed; and

(ii) A window covering must not be secured to the frame of a window or door used as an emergency exit in a way that would prevent the window or door from opening easily.

To learn more about window cord safety, retrofitting, or cordless window coverings, visit the Window Covering Safety Council website at windowcoverings.org

Slide #12 WAC 110-300-0165 continued

Strings and straps, whether they are part of a toy, a piece of equipment or are a part of a child's clothing can also pose a risk to a child's safety.

⁴ American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. (2011). *Caring for our children: National health and safety performance standards; Guidelines for early care and education programs*. Retrieved from <http://nrckids.org>

For example, an early learning provider may put a pair of binoculars in their science center for children to use. The binoculars have a strap, so they can be worn around a child's neck. An unintentional injury could occur if a child is wearing the binocular strap around their neck and another child reaches for the binoculars, unintentionally pulling the strap tight across the child's neck. Removing the strap reduces the hazard and doesn't interfere with the toy's use.

Let's explore what the WAC says about these requirements:

WAC 110-300-0165 Safety requirements.

- (c) Making inaccessible to children straps, strings, cords, wires, or similar items capable of forming a loop around a child's neck that are not used during supervised early learning program activities;**
- (d) Making inaccessible to children plastic bags and other suffocation hazards;**

Slide #13 WAC 110-300-0165 continued

There are times in an early learning program when strings, scarves, straps, or other similar items are valuable learning materials. For example, stringing beads on a piece of yarn is a valuable activity for developing fine motor skills for preschool age children. Dancing with scarves can provide an outlet for creativity and gross motor skills for both toddlers and preschool age children. In these instances, active supervision is required while the materials are being used by children. When a provider is not able to actively supervise children using these materials, the materials must be stored inaccessible to children.

Slide #14 WAC 110-300-0165 continued

Subsection (2)(e) addresses firearms, guns, weapons and ammunition requirements. The requirements for centers and family home programs differ in this section of the WAC. Center early learning programs are required to ensure that these items are not on the premises at any time. Family home early learning programs are allowed to have these items on the premises, however, they must ensure these items are securely stored and made inaccessible to children in care at all times.

The importance of gun safety cannot be underestimated. Unintentional shootings happen among children of all ages when they are able to access a gun. Children as young as three may be strong enough to pull the trigger of a handgun⁵.

In 2017, at least 285 children under the age of 17 gained access to a gun and unintentionally shot themselves or someone else⁶.

Nearly 30 percent of these children were ages 4 and younger.

Let's review the full requirements of this section:

WAC 110-300-0165 Safety requirements.

(e) Ensuring firearms, guns, weapons, and ammunition are not on the premises of a center early learning program. Firearms, guns, weapons, and ammunition on the premises of a family home early learning program must be stored in a locked gun safe or locked room inaccessible to children. If stored in a locked room, each gun must be stored unloaded and with a trigger lock or other disabling device. The locked room must be inaccessible to children at all times;

Slide #15 WAC 110-300-0165 continued

Subsection (2)(f) addresses safety considerations for glass doors and windows in an early learning program. Broken glass can cause serious injury to a child, either as a result from colliding with a glass door or window or from the broken glass itself.

Subsection (2)(g) addresses safety concerns when cribs, bassinets, infant beds, and indoor climbing equipment are placed next to windows.

The safety requirements of the WAC include:

⁵ American Academy of Pediatrics. (2018). *Guns in the Home*. Retrieved from <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/Handguns-in-the-Home.aspx>

⁶ Every Town for Gun Safety Support Fund. (2018). Not an accident. Retrieved from <https://everytownresearch.org/notanaccident/#4043>

WAC 110-300-0165 Safety requirements.

- (f) Preventing children from walking into or through a glass door, window, or other glass barrier, by placing stickers or art work at the children's eye level on the glass; and**
- (g) Cribs, play pens, bassinets, infant beds, and indoor climbing structures must not be placed next to windows, to prevent harm from shattered glass, unless the window is made of safety glass.**

Because glass can be invisible to an active child or adult⁷, placing stickers or art on a glass door, window, or other glass barrier can help distinguish the barrier for those in the program. The placement of stickers will need to be done on all glass barriers in the early learning program space, where a child could potentially walk into or through, such as sliding glass doors, lower windows, or a glass kitchen pantry door.

Slide #16 What does inaccessible mean?

This brings us to the end of section (2). Let's review how the terms accessible and inaccessible were used in this section of the WAC. In (2)(a), the WAC requires that early learning providers make inaccessible to infants and toddlers any equipment that can pose a risk of choking, aspiration, or ingestion. Keeping this equipment inaccessible to children may look different for center and family home programs. In a center program, infants and toddlers are often cared for in their own age group.

Providers can keep materials that pose a choking hazard inaccessible to children by not allowing them into the infant and toddler environment.

Items in the environment that are a potential choking hazard can be kept up high, in a closet, or behind locked doors. Take a minute to think of what other ways this requirement can be met.

Slide #17 More about inaccessibility

In a family home early learning program, children in care are often of a mixed age group, with infants and toddlers present with older children. Older children need opportunities to work with small pieces and parts to develop small motor skills and move forward in their own growth and development. Early learning providers caring for children of multiple ages must find a way to provide a safe environment for infants and toddlers to play in, while allowing older children to access these materials.

⁷ Standard 5.1.3.4 from American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. (2011). *Caring for our children: National health and safety performance standards; Guidelines for early care and education programs*. Retrieved from <http://nrckids.org>

Here are some examples of ways this can be done:

- Older children can be sitting at a table working with small parts, with the table top high enough to prevent younger children from being able to reach the small parts;
- Projects that older children are working on can be saved, and made inaccessible to infants and toddlers, by placing them on higher shelves or in spaces where infants and toddlers do not have access.

Another idea is to take out materials with smaller pieces when infants and toddlers are napping. This allows the older children an opportunity to use these materials, keeping them inaccessible to the younger children. Before the napping children wake up, the provider will need to ensure that all small items have been removed from table tops, floors, and any other areas infants and toddlers will have access to.

Slide #18 Test Your Learning!

Before we continue, let's test your learning. Review the question and select the best response.

Which of the following are hazards to children in an early learning program environment?

- A. A crib positioned under a window not constructed of safety glass
- B. Building blocks in a toddler classroom measuring 1 ½ inches in dimension
- C. A loaded gun stored in a locked room
- D. All of the above

Slide #19 Test Your Learning!

True or False?

An early learning provider is required to place stickers or children's art work on glass windows at children's eye level to prevent children from walking into or through the glass?

- True
- False

Slide #20 WAC 110-300-0165 continued

Falling is the leading cause of non-fatal injuries among young children.

Each year, nearly 2.8 million children visit emergency rooms for injuries resulting from a fall.

In a recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, for children

under the age of nine, the second leading cause of non-fatal injuries is being struck by or hitting against an object⁸.

Child injuries can happen quickly, giving early learning providers little time to react or intervene. While it is impossible to prevent *all* injuries, in many cases, injuries can be prevented when intentional actions are taken to ensure a safe environment.

The WAC is an excellent guide for ensuring a safe environment. Let's explore additional WAC guidance on this topic on the next slide.

Slide #21 WAC 110-300-0165 continued

Let's begin by exploring section (3), subsections (a) through (d).

WAC 110-300-0165 Safety requirements.

(3) An early learning provider must take measures intended to prevent other hazards to children in care in early learning program space including, but not limited to:

(a) Cuts, abrasions, and punctures. Equipment, materials, and other objects on the premises that have splintered edges, sharp edges, points, protruding nails, bolts, or other dangers must be repaired, removed, or made inaccessible to children;

(b) Burns. Equipment, materials, or products that may be hot enough to injure a child must be made inaccessible to children;

(c) Sheering, crushing, or pinching. Broken or cracked equipment, materials, and objects must be repaired, removed, or made inaccessible to children;

(d) Entrapment. Freezers, refrigerators, washers, dryers, compost bins, and other entrapment dangers must be inaccessible to children unless being actively supervised;

⁸ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015). *CDC Childhood Injury Report*. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/safecild/child_injury_data.html

Slide #22 WAC 110-300-0165 continued

Let's finish up section (3) by reviewing the remaining subsections, (e) through (g):

WAC 110-300-0165 Safety requirements.

- (e) Tripping. Tripping hazards must be eliminated. Uneven walkways, damaged flooring or carpeting, or other tripping hazards must be removed or repaired;**
- (f) Falling objects. Large objects that pose a risk of falling or tipping must be securely anchored. Large objects include, but are not limited to, televisions, dressers, bookshelves, wall cabinets, sideboards or hutches, and wall units; and**
- (g) Equipment in poor condition. Equipment in poor condition (loose parts, rusty parts, flaking paint, or other dangers) must be repaired, removed, or made inaccessible to children.**

As we finish up our review of section (3), let's take a minute and reflect on what early learning professionals will need to consider in determining how to make hazards inaccessible to children in care.

Listed below are things to think about when making this determination:

- Age or size of child
- Child's ability level
- Strength or size of barrier between child and hazard
- Can the child reach over or reach through the barrier

What other considerations can you think of?

Slide #23 WAC 110-300-0165 continued

It is important, as well as required, that early learning providers take measures to be aware of and prevent potential hazards in their early learning program environment. When hazards are found, the early learning provider must take steps to remove the hazard or make it inaccessible to children in care.

For example, an early learning provider must take steps to anchor large equipment such as, televisions, entertainment centers and large cubby units to prevent the equipment from falling or tipping over on a child. Children are curious about their environments and will climb on or use equipment in a manner that could cause serious injury. According to CPSC, there are approximately 28,300 tip-over or instability incidents involving furniture, televisions, or appliances where individuals were treated in an

emergency room each year; 44 percent of these incidents affected children under the age of 10.

Of the estimated 542 fatalities reported from 2000 to 2017 resulting from tip-over or furniture instability accidents, 83 percent were children ages 1 month to 14 years old⁹.

Early learning providers must also consider the size and weight of objects placed high on shelves or cabinets. What are the risks if those items fall on top of a child?

Slide #24 Test Your Learning!

Before we continue, let's test your learning. Review the questions on the following slides and select the best response.

Children are never allowed near refrigerators or washing machines due to entrapment dangers.

- A. True
- B. False

Additional Feedback: Active supervision is required when children are around objects with entrapment dangers like refrigerators or washing machines.

Slide #25 Test Your Learning!

Which of the following pieces of equipment would not be required to be securely anchored to a wall in an early learning environment?

- A. Televisions
- B. Dressers
- C. Child sized table
- D. Bookshelves

⁹ U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. (2018). *Product Instability or Tip-Over Injuries and Fatalities Associated with Televisions, Furniture, and Appliances: 2018 Report*. Retrieved from: https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/Product%20Instability%20or%20Tip%20Over%20Report%20Oct%202018_STAMPED.pdf?J6AwbQ.ZwNQKkWQknOKUDI4ur0i.6D73

Slide #26 WAC 110-300-0165 continued

Additional measures must be taken to ensure a safe early learning program environment for all children.

WAC 110-300-0165 Safety requirements.

(4) To ensure a safe environment for children in care, an early learning provider must comply with the following requirements:

(a) Indoor temperatures for the premises. The temperature of indoor early learning licensed space must be between 68 and 82 degrees Fahrenheit. If indoor licensed space is colder than 68 or hotter than 82 degrees Fahrenheit, an early learning provider must use climate control devices that are inaccessible to children to bring the temperature within the required range;

(b) Window openings. Windows within the reach of children must only open up to three and one-half inches or have some barrier or preventative measure to discourage children from exiting through the window. The three and one-half inch opening does not apply to exit windows in family home early learning programs;

The range of indoor temperatures are defined for both comfort and health purposes. While it is healthier when facilities are able to open windows to allow for fresh air and improved ventilation, limiting the size of the opening of the window and ensuring screens are in place to prevent children from exiting or falling are important considerations.

The opening size of the windows is informed using CPSC guidelines and ASTM standards, and ***Caring for our Children Standard 5.1.3.2.***

Slide #27 WAC 110-300-0165 continued

Appropriate and sufficient lighting in an early learning program allows for children to safely engage in activities, while allowing program staff to be able to see clearly and meet supervision requirements.

The requirement for shatter-resistant light bulbs or covers in early learning programs is supported by ***Caring for our Children Standard 5.2.2.*** Shatter resistant light bulbs and covers over light bulbs help to prevent injury by ensuring that bulbs will remain intact, preventing shattered glass from contaminating food or coming into contact with children in care.

Securing free standing lamps can help to prevent a lamp from falling on a child, or from igniting a fire in the event that an overturned lamp was left unattended for a long period of time.

Excessive sound can be damaging to hearing, reduce effective communication, interfere with a child's language development, and reduce a child's psychosocial well-being¹⁰. In the next section of the WAC, we'll produce guidance on this and other safety requirements.

Slide #28 WAC 110-300-0165 continued

WAC 110-300-0165 Safety requirements.

- (c) Licensed space lighting. Early learning program space must have natural or artificial light that provides appropriate illumination for early learning program activities and supervision. A provider must comply with all light fixture manufacturers' installation and use requirements. A provider must also ensure compliance with the following requirements:**
- (i) Light fixtures must have shatter-resistant covers or light bulbs;**
 - (ii) Lights or light fixtures used indoors must be designed for indoor use only;**
 - (iii) Free standing lamps must be attached or secured to prevent tipping; and**
 - (iv) Halogen lamps and bulbs are prohibited.**
- (d) Safe noise levels. Noise levels must be maintained at a level in which a normal conversation may occur;**
- (e) Safe water temperature. All water accessible to enrolled children must not be hotter than 120 degrees Fahrenheit;**

Water that is too hot may burn or scald a child. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a water heater's thermostat be set to 120 degrees Fahrenheit or less to reduce the chance of burning or scalding a child.¹¹ Early learning providers must ensure that hot water that is accessible to children measures no hotter than 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Faucets or appliances with water that reaches temperatures hotter than 120 degrees Fahrenheit must be made inaccessible to children at all times.

¹⁰ Standard 5.2.3 from American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. (2011). *Caring for our children: National health and safety performance standards; Guidelines for early care and education programs*. Retrieved from <http://nrckids.org>

¹¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). *Burn Prevention*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/safekid/burns/index.html>

Slide #29 WAC 110-300-0165 continued

As noted earlier in this module, falling is the leading cause of non-fatal injuries among youth. To prevent children from falling down a stairway, the following safety requirements must be observed:

WAC 110-300-0165 Safety requirements.

(f) Stairway safety.

(i) There must not be clutter or obstructions in the stairway;

(ii) All stairways (indoor and outdoor), not including play structures, must meet local building codes pursuant to RCW [43.216.340](#).

(A) Open stairways with no walls on either side must have handrails with slats (balusters) that prevent a child from falling off either side of the stairway.

(B) Stairways with a wall on only one side must have a handrail with slats (balusters) on the side without the wall that prevents a child from falling off the stairway.

(C) Stairways with a wall on both sides must have a handrail no higher than thirty-eight inches on at least one side of the stairway.

(iii) Stairways must have a pressure gate, safety gate or door to keep stairs inaccessible to infants and toddlers when not in use. Openings between slats on pressure or safety gates must not be large enough to allow a sphere that is three and one-half inches wide to pass through.

Slide #30 WAC 110-300-0165 continued

Safety measures must also be taken to prevent children from falling from raised platforms or decks.

Early learning providers need to work closely with DCYF licensing staff when determining if platforms and decks meet compliance with local building codes. Early learning providers also need to partner with DCYF licensing staff when outdoor licensed space is landscaped with retaining walls or tiered levels to ensure children's safety.

WAC 110-300-0165 Safety requirements.

(g) Platforms and decks. All platforms and decks used for child care activities must meet local building codes pursuant to RCW 43.216.340. This does not include play equipment. All platforms and decks with a drop zone of more than eighteen inches must have guardrails in sections without steps.

Slide #31 WAC 110-300-0165 continued

Each year, approximately 2,400 children are injured by inserting objects into electrical outlets. For the majority of these incidents, the child is under the age of 6 years old¹².

The final subsection in WAC 110-300-0165 focuses on electrical safety requirements.

WAC 110-300-0165 Safety requirements.

(5) To ensure a safe environment for children in care, an early learning provider must comply with the following electrical requirements:

- (a) In areas accessible to children, electrical outlets must have automatic shutters that only allow electrical plugs to be inserted (tamper-resistant) or that are covered by blank plates or other tamper-resistant covers appropriate to the electrical outlet;**
- (b) Outlets near sinks, tubs, toilets, or other water sources must be inaccessible to children or be tamper-resistant and equipped with a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlet type;**

Slide #32 WAC 110-300-0165 continued

Tamper-resistant electrical outlets prevent children from placing fingers or objects in the exposed outlet. This image shows a compliant electrical outlet, where the shutter must be moved in order to access the electrical outlet and the shutters stay closed when not in use.

The ground fault circuit interrupter type of outlet represented in this image is compliant with subsection (5)(b). This outlet is also compliant with the standard in subsection (5)(a). While the outlets look like they are open, they actually have built in “shunts” that make them inaccessible to power unless a two-prong outlet is inserted.

For outlets that will not be used, an early learning provider may choose to cover the outlet with a blank plate in place of a tamper-resistant outlet cover.

¹² American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. (2011). *Caring for our children: National health and safety performance standards; Guidelines for early care and education programs*. Retrieved from <http://nrckids.org>

Electrical outlets which would not demonstrate compliance are those where the cover or socket plug can be easily removed, pulled off by children in care, or cannot be anchored shut. In the case of socket plugs, there is an added risk of potential choking if placed in a child's mouth.

Slide #33 WAC 110-300-0165 continued

Electrical malfunction, such as disruption in cords, wiring, or outlets, is a major cause of house fires. Annually, electrical malfunctions cause an average of 34,000 fires in homes¹³. Sound electrical safety practices can protect against this, as described in the following section of the WAC:

WAC 110-300-0165 Safety requirements.

- (c) Electrical cords must be in good working condition, not torn or frayed, and not have any exposed wires;**
- (d) Electrical cords must be plugged directly into a wall outlet or a surge protector;**
- (e) Power strips with surge protectors may be used but must not be accessible to children in care;**
- (f) Extension cords may only be used for a brief, temporary purpose and must not replace direct wiring; and**
- (g) Electrical devices accessible to children must not be plugged into an electrical outlet near a water source such as sink, tub, water table, or swimming pool.**

The following example demonstrates a provider engaged in an activity with children involving the use of a hair dryer and an extension cord. Please consider how the provider sets up the activity to meet all of the requirements of this section.

An early learning provider sets up a science experiment at a table where preschool age children are seated. The early learning provider has set out small objects of different weights, including a ping pong ball and a golf ball, and will use a hair dryer, using a cool setting, to show how air can move the different objects.

Because there is not an outlet close enough to the table for the hair dryer to be plugged into, the early learning provider is using an extension cord. When the experiment is finished, the early learning provider unplugs the extension cord and puts it and the hair dryer back in inaccessible storage.

¹³ National Fire Protection Association. (N.D.) *Electrical Safety in the Home*. Retrieved from <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/By-topic/Top-causes-of-fire/Electrical>

Slide #34 Test Your Learning!

Before we continue, let's test your learning. Review the question and select the best response.

An early learning provider is taking children outdoors to play and notices the paint on the bench in the playground is chipping, exposing rust on the metal frame. What should the early learning provider do to minimize hazards to children?

- A. Remove the bench from the early learning program space, or make it inaccessible to children, until it can be fixed
- B. Stand away from the bench and hope children don't play near it

Slide #35 Test Your Learning!

Review the question and select the best response.

Which of the following safety precautions is NOT required?

- A. Check all electrical cords on a regular basis to ensure they aren't frayed and are in good working condition
- B. Avoid using power strips as they are prohibited
- C. Use of an extension cord for a brief or temporary purpose only

Slide #36 Closing

This concludes the content portion of this course! Thank you for your participation!

Before this course ends, please take a moment to reflect and set personal goals related to the following Guiding Principles and ways that each of the principles relate to early learning professionals.

Guiding Principles:

- Injuries are often preventable.
- Risk of harm to a child can be minimized by maintaining compliance with safety requirements.
- Maintaining a hazard free early learning environment is the ongoing responsibility of early learning providers.
- Early learning programs must consider the indoor and outdoor learning environments, materials, and equipment before, during, and after children are in care.

What take-a-ways do you have? How will you change your practices as a result of participation in this learning module?

Slide #37 Course Evaluation

Please take a moment to answer the following end-of-course questions by selecting the appropriate choice.

This course improved my understanding of this course content.

- True
- False

Slide #38 Course Evaluation continued

The information presented in this course was clearly connected to the session and Learning Outcomes.

- True
- False

Slide #39 Course Evaluation continued

There are opportunities for application of this course content in my role as an early learning professional.

- True
- False

Slide #40 Course Evaluation continued

I would recommend this course to others who work in the field.

- True
- False

Slide #41 Course Conclusion

This concludes this course. If you have questions following this session, please contact your supervisor or licensor.

We hope this course has been helpful in providing information about the WAC and how programs can meet the new standards with compliance.

Our goal is that all early learning professionals viewing this course have left with an increased understanding and knowledge of the updated WAC, and that you will be able to either assess programs for compliance or be able to maintain and demonstrate compliance.

Be sure to visit the Learning Management System to review and select additional modules that are part of this series.