



# Child Safety Alert

Over recent months the licensing departments across the province have received a number of reportable incidents and/or complaints regarding missing children. Some of these incidents posed a high risk for children in care or resulted in serious outcomes for children.

**REMEMBER: ALL STAFF MUST SUPERVISE CHILDREN IN CARE AT ALL TIMES**

## Active Supervision

Active supervision strategies help keep children safe. Children are naturally active and curious they also tend to be impulsive, and are natural risk takers. It only takes a moment for a child to wander off or get into a situation that can result in serious injury. Please review and follow these supervision strategies to help keep children safe and free from harm:

- **Set-up the environment:**

A carefully planned environment supports active supervision. When activities are grouped together and furniture is waist height or shorter, adults are always able to see and hear children. Your environment must be checked daily for potential hazards or barriers to supervision. Position furniture and equipment to support clear sightlines.

- **Position yourself:**

Care providers must place themselves so they can see and hear all of the children in care. Care providers need to stay close to children who may require additional support. Supervision requires much more than simply seeing or hearing the child. You must also be near enough to immediately intervene and protect their health and safety.

- **Scan and count:**

Care providers must account for all children in their care. They should continually scan the entire environment to know where everyone is and what they are doing. This is especially important during transitions when children are moving from area to area or while they are on field trips. Reference your daily attendance and count children frequently.

- **Listen;**

Specific sounds or the absence of them may signify a reason for concern. A child may have wandered out of the facility without being observed. Care providers can put additional safeguards in place for example, bells may be added to doors to alert caregivers if a child leaves.

- **Anticipate children's behaviour and abilities:**
- Caregivers must know what to expect from individual children so that they can better protect them from harm. Provide supervision appropriate to the individual age, needs, and capabilities of the children in your care. For example, you have been informed by a child's parent that her two year is very curious and often wanders.

*Reminder: Don't leave children alone in a vehicle at any time for any reason. Do not exceed your maximum capacity or care for more young children than allowed.*

## Indicators of Active and Positive Supervision

The basic purpose of all child care licensing regulations is to help protect children in care. Perhaps the single most important regulation is the one that addresses child supervision. A clear understanding of active supervision will make it easier to keep children safe.

The following statements are indicators that can help you determine if you are providing active supervision or if your practice needs improvement. They may also help you to develop written policies and procedures to guide staff in the care and supervision of children.

- I have arranged the furniture, equipment and play space strategically to assist with supervision.
- I am present to help children resolve conflict.
- I can see and hear the children while they are napping.
- When I take phone calls, I maintain supervision of the children.
- I position myself and circulate the room so that I can see and / or hear the children at all times.
- All of the children in my group are on the same level of the facility at one time.
- I take all children in my group outside at the same time and remain with them at all times.
- All children in my group are brought in from outside at the same time.
- I am able to monitor children in the bathroom while respecting their need for privacy.
- If a friend arrives at my door I ask them to return at a more convenient time.
- I have taken measures to ensure children cannot exit the facility unattended.
- I have planned and prepared for the day by having all supplies on hand so that I don't have to leave children unsupervised to find something.
- A second adult is immediately available to supervise children in the event of an urgent and unforeseen circumstances.
- I always supervise children while they eat and drink to prevent choking.

*Reminder: If a serious incident does occur (Schedule H, Child Care Licensing Regulation) you are required to report to child care licensing within 24 hours. If in doubt call your licensing officer.*

## Toddlers Attending Care

Licensing Officers receive many Temporary Placement requests from care providers applying to care for more toddlers than allowed under their License. Licensing recognizes that increasing the number of young children that you care for makes it more difficult to provide for their individual needs and ensure appropriate supervision.

Each request that Licensing receives must be fully assessed to determine that you can provide a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment for all of the children in your care. Some considerations include:

- How will you meet the needs and schedules of all children in your care on a daily basis? For example, napping schedules and school pick up?
- How will you handle emergencies? For example, what will you do if a child becomes ill?
- Does the facility history demonstrate compliance?
- What is the current hazard/risk rating for the facility?

- How will the licensee ensure Health and Safety?
- How many exemptions and/or temporary placements are currently granted to this Licensee?
- Does the facility environment allow for increased supervision?
- Does the facility demonstrate active supervision practices as described above?
- Does the programming and equipment ensure children's needs are met?

**Reminder:** Licensing Officers assessment and approvals of any temporary placement request is based specifically on what is in the best interest of the child. Filling vacant spaces is not part of Licensing's considerations for approval. Temporary placements must be approved in writing prior to you accepting the child into your care.

If you have any questions, contact the Licensing Officer assigned to your facility or visit the Northern Health Website at <http://www.northernhealth.ca/services/community-care-licensing>

