

# The Licensing Link

April — June 2011

## From Your Licensors

### Supervision is Essential



Licensed providers, parents and child care licensors share the same goal. All want a safe environment for children to thrive in. If you break it down, there are three parts to providing a safe environment for children. First, child proof the home. Second, teach children good safety practices. Third, and most important, be diligent with supervision practices. Supervision is essential and the focus of this article.

It is important for each provider to take a few minutes to think about your proximity to the children through the course of your day and evaluate your supervision practices. The child care rule states that you must be able to intervene to protect the health and welfare of children under school age at **all** times.

- How are you seeing that you are capable of intervening at all moments of the child’s day?
- How often are children checked on during naptime?
- Can you hear an infant or child in distress (not just crying) when they are in a different room at naptime?
- Are substitutes, assistants aware of the supervision requirements?
- Do you give clear directions and oversee your helper’s interaction with children?
- Do you move as a group from one level to another in your home where children under school age are concerned?
- Do you move as a group from inside to outside?
- Do you keep all children together while you are preparing everyone to go outside instead of letting those ready run out on their own?
- Are you prepared for the day so that you are eliminating trips to other levels of your home?
- Is contact between pets and all children supervised?
- Do you have a plan for responding to school-agers in need outside when you have children under school age inside?



“Interactive supervision allows caregivers to prevent injuries from occurring”



**From January 2000 until February 2011 there were 200 negative actions taken in Dakota County of which 74 had supervision cited as the basis for the negative action.** Tight supervision practices protect the children and the provider. Providers should always be asking themselves that essential question, “Am I capable of intervening?” The definition of intervene is **to come between**. The child care rule states that a provider must be within sight or hearing of an infant, toddler, or preschooler at all times so that the caregiver is capable of intervening to protect the health and safety of the child. Too often providers tend to focus in on the “within hearing” part of the supervision definition and forget the “capable of intervening” piece. If a provider leaves preschool age children on one level of the home and goes to prepare lunch on another level of the home, they may be able to hear children at play, but they have lost the ability to intervene. Also remember that a child who is getting into something that they should not be getting into, is often a quiet child so you would not know if there is something hindering the safety of children in this instance. Not only is this an unsafe practice, it is a rule violation.

Naptime requires special consideration because this is often the one time of the day when children are located in different rooms and levels. Providers are still required to be capable of intervening to protect the health and welfare of children under school age during naptime. Think carefully about who you have napping together in rooms. It doesn’t take long for one child to bite another child. Children climb out of cribs. Think about using monitors to enhance your ability to hear children during naptime but do not allow these to take away from your physically checking in on napping children every 10 minutes or so.

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Not only it is the provider's responsibility to educate his or her assistants, substitutes and teen helpers about supervision, it is the provider's responsibility to oversee helpers used in the program. The Department of Human Services reported most temporary immediate suspensions ordered in family child care are issued due to situations connected to supervision. The license holder's failure to properly supervise children in care can lead to children being left unattended and wandering away from the license holder's care, children being seriously injured, and most alarming is the fact that lack of supervision can result in children being subjected to sexual abuse.

In most cases, the person who sexually abuses a child in care is the license holder's minor child, or some other household member. These events can be very traumatic for the victim and his/her family, but also devastating to the license holder and his/her family. In most cases, the license holder is shocked to learn about this, indicating having no prior indication of this type of behavior. In addition, providers are faced with the loss of their business. When license holders provide supervision as required by the rule, the risk of harm to children in their care is greatly reduced if not eliminated. Generally, the sexual abuse occurs when the victim (or victims) is separated from the group. The child is often taken into a private area such as a bedroom, a bathroom, a garage – in other words, away from the supervision of the provider. In some cases, the license holder's own child who has been inappropriate with the victim is in the role of a helper at the time. Physical abuse can also occur. In a recent case in the State of MN, a provider's 13 year old son caused the death of a 2 year old in care. It is essential that the provider be supervising all children and helpers in their home at all times.

The child care rule states that for school-agers, a provider must be available for assistance. Although the supervision requirement for school-agers is much less intense than for children under school age, there is still a lot to consider when making decisions about school age children in your program. Do you feel comfortable allowing school-agers outside, while you are inside or alone on another level of your home? Maturity levels from child to child vary immensely. You as the provider must feel comfortable with what you allow the school-age child to do away from your immediate supervision. Remember just because a parent allows something, you as a caregiver; do not have to allow the same thing as your risk is a different level than that of the parent. Always keep in mind that you are operating a business within the auspices of the childcare rule.

Pets and supervision:

Remember that interaction between **all** children and pets must be supervised, so it would not be alright to have a pet out in the backyard with school-agers when you are not outside with them as well. It is also not okay to leave a pet in a room with children without a caregiver being directly in the room with children and pet.

Obviously the standard for supervision in licensed child care is higher than what would be expected of parents caring for their own children in their own home. Caring for a group of children is quite different than a few children in a parent's own home. Supervision is a core function of licensed child care providers. More than anything else, parents want to be assured of their child's safety. Safety is more important to parents than what their child ate, their activities of the day or what they learned. Make tight supervision practices routine in your program to protect yourself and the children.



### Supervision Websites

[http://ncchildcare.dhhs.state.nc.us/providers/pv\\_supervision.asp](http://ncchildcare.dhhs.state.nc.us/providers/pv_supervision.asp)

A free downloadable supervision series training

[http://www.healthykids.us/chapters/supervision\\_pf.htm](http://www.healthykids.us/chapters/supervision_pf.htm)

National Resource Center for Health and Safety in child care

<http://www.playgroundsafety.org/training/index.htm>

National program for playground safety

[http://www.ncac.gov.au/factsheets/oshcqa\\_factsheet2.pdf](http://www.ncac.gov.au/factsheets/oshcqa_factsheet2.pdf)

Effective supervision for school age children

<http://edmgmt.com/blog/supervision/education-expert-on-supervision-of-children-and-school-accidents/>

Supervision of Children and school accidents



“Interactive supervision allows caregivers to observe the various temperaments and learning styles of each child”



## What is quality supervision?

We all know what it means when we fail to supervise according to the ages and abilities of the children we are caring for even when we think we are doing a good job. A provider informed us that they had thought their own 3 year old was just taking an extra long time to wash his hands after using the bathroom. When she went to check on him she opened the door to discover water all over the floor. It turns out he was using the cups on the counter to fill and spill. She cleaned up the mess and shut the bathroom door. Later, when she took another child to use the bathroom they discovered more water on the floor. That would be the water leaking out of the drawers in the cabinet which she hadn't noticed the first time around. Now, this scenario may seem harmless enough, but what if the water got into the outlet or caused him to slip and hit his head on the floor? As a provider, it is essential that you are directing **all** activities and know what the children in your care are doing, not only because there may be consequences involved if you don't, but also because quality supervision results in quality care.

- Quality supervision includes participation in the activities of children. When you are down on the floor with the children and actively engaged in their play, children will know that you are interested in them and what they are doing. Children learn through role models and by watching activities progress therefore your interaction is teaching children how to participate and to learn from their activities.
- Quality supervision includes having a plan for your day. Plan what you intend to do before the day begins. Have in mind what activities you will be doing, what materials you will need, how you will prepare and serve meals, and where everyone will be during quiet time. By planning your day you will not encounter those times when children have to wait as these transitions (which can be difficult for many children) can already be prepared and help your day run smoothly.
- Quality supervision includes understanding developmental stages and planning ahead to accommodate the various age groups in your program. Know ahead of time how you will supervise the group during infant feedings and changing, bus routines, outdoor play, and so on. Remember each child will relate differently to the situations depending on their stage of development and how they interact with the group.
- Quality supervision includes knowing and understanding each child's personality and behaviors. The more vulnerable the child is, the closer the child should stay to you. Again, having an awareness of the child's age and abilities will help prevent accidents and injuries that result from unrealistic expectations.
- Quality supervision includes always knowing where the children are and what they are doing. The way houses are built these days with multiple levels and many rooms, it is easy for children to get out of sight and into trouble. Best practice: if children are on the first level of the house, then so are you. If children are in the house sleeping, you are in the house with them. If they go out to play, then you go with them.

**“Interactive supervision allows caregivers to observe the individuals needs of all the children in their care”**



### Letter to a Teacher



Dear Teacher,

I am a toddler. I am a super snooper. I search and check everything within my reach and often beyond. I am curious, too curious at times. I declare my independence, often quite loudly. I know I can do it, all by myself.

But, please stay close.

I need you there, to help keep me from hurting myself when I am too curious. I need you to encourage me, and allow me to try to do it by myself, and to help when I can't, or when I get frustrated.

I need you to hug and cuddle with me. If I do something you don't like, Tell me. Show me a better way. Please don't reject me. Please be patient. I have really only been in this world a short while. The world and its ways are still so very, very new to me.



## SUPERVISION and WATER PLAY

Summer weather brings many opportunities for fun and learning through water play. Spray bottles, sprinklers, water tables and wading pools naturally fascinate young children, and water is one of the basic raw materials for learning mathematics and science, developing language, and fostering social skills. While playing with water is developmentally appropriate regardless of the child's age or abilities, caregivers must always consider safety factors when children are anywhere near water. Young children require extremely close supervision when water is involved in their play. Children can enjoy water play with great abandon, but adults need to be aware that **young children can drown in less than an inch of water**. Submersion incidents can happen very quickly and with no splashing to alert a provider that a child is drowning.

Most licensed providers don't like using wading pools, but do like to use some fun alternative to keep children busy and cool while playing. Numerous alternatives exist.

### FUN ALTERNATIVES TO WADING POOLS FOR ALL AGES



- Sprinklers
- Squirt toys
- Spray Bottles
- Water Paints with large paintbrushes. Even on cool days, children can “paint” outdoors with water. Set up a paint shop by providing a large paintbrush and partially fill a large can or small pan with water. They can pretend to “paint” the sidewalk fence, slide, and other outdoor equipment.
- Sponge Toss
- Water Balloon Toss with partners, or “hot potato”
- Dodge Ball with wet Nerf Balls
- Water Cup Exchange Relay
- Big Wheel/Trike/ Wagon Wash
- Wash doll clothes and hang out to dry. Create a dramatic play area for children to wash doll clothes in a tub of sudsy water and hang them up with clothespins to dry in the sun!
- Individual water tubs at a table are great for enhancing fine motor skills. For younger children, eye-hand coordination can be practiced by retrieving objects with tongs, aquarium nets, scoops, and fingers. Small muscles get a workout as plastic tubes are fitted to funnels and spongers are wrung dry. Very young children may also enjoy spending many happy moments repetitively filling and emptying containers.
- Water trays with boats, ducks, corks, measuring cups & spoons, funnels, basters, egg beaters, whisks, strainers, etc. Mathematic concepts can be learned by using a variety of inexpensive materials. Children develop concepts such as empty/full, before/after, shallow/deep, and heavy/light.
- Introduce sand to water play incorporating sand toys, sand combs, seashells, trowels, etc.

“Interactive supervision allows caregivers the enjoyment of those great “kidisms” that occur throughout the day”

When water is involved in play, it's best to not have any other activity going on simultaneously that might take a caregivers attention from the important job of supervising the children playing with and around water.

### WADING POOL REMINDERS

Wading pools can be a hassle because of the numerous rules and regulations childcare providers must follow to ensure the children's safety. I recommend using one of the alternatives listed above! But if you are going to use a wading pool, there are several issues to be aware of.





First, measure the height of your pool. If it's more than 24 inches tall, it isn't a wading pool and cannot be used. Twenty-four inches refers to the pool height, not the water height within the pool. A wading pool must also be capable of being manually emptied and moved.

Before you plan to use your wading pool, you have to obtain written consent from a parent or legal guardian (new form signed each year). Parents need to be given and read the wading pool fact sheet, which outlines the risk of disease transmission as well as other health risks, associated with the use of portable wading pools.

The permission forms are available for download from the Dept. of Public Health's form page at: <http://www.dhs.state.mn.us>. Update permission forms annually. Permission forms must be available for your licenser to view upon request.

Because the use of wading pools in family child care settings could facilitate the transmission of infections among children and cause serious illness a number of best practices are strongly recommended.

1. Pools should be emptied daily.
2. Pools should be cleaned daily following emptying with a diluted bleach solution of 1-cup bleach to 1 gallon of water.
3. Pools should be emptied and cleaned immediately if a child has a fecal accident in the pool.
4. Diaper-aged children should wear tight-fitting plastic pants to help prevent fecal contamination of pool water.
5. Providers should exclude from child care any children who have diarrhea.

Again, don't try to have any other activities besides wading pool play that would distract you from the diligent supervision required when a wading pool is in use. A safe practice is to teach the children that if you, the caregiver, do not have one foot in the wading pool, no one should be in the pool.

It's important to remember that **a wading pool is a water hazard that needs to be kept inaccessible to children when not in direct use**. Therefore you can't fill a wading pool that is in your backyard in the morning, hoping the sun will warm the water by afternoon, and then play in the backyard on the play equipment in the morning. The wading pool must be inaccessible to children except during periods of supervised use.

All types of pools are water hazards. A securely installed barrier, with a minimum height of four feet must surround pools or other water hazards such as ponds and fountains to prevent children from inadvertently wandering into water. Your licensing worker must approve the barrier.

**“Interactive supervision allows children the ultimate teaching models”**



Swimming pools (not wading pools) have to meet several physical requirements and statutory requirements. Consult your licensing worker for a copy of the statute. One requirement is that providers complete a 16+ hour training to obtain a pool operators license prior to swimming pool use. Pools that do not meet either the wading pool definition or the swimming pool physical requirements cannot be used in licensed child care programs and have to be made inaccessible to the daycare children even when just used for the provider's own family.

Have fun, take advantage of teaching opportunities with water, and keep children within arms reach so you are capable of intervening to protect the health and welfare of the children enrolled in your care!

## For Child Care Providers

Minnesota Department of Health

# Child care providers asked to report chickenpox and shingles cases in children or staff

### What are child care providers being asked to report to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)?

Child care providers are being asked to report two diseases – chickenpox (varicella) and shingles (zoster) in children or staff.

### Do health care providers also report these diseases?

Health care providers also report cases of chickenpox and shingles, but only when the cases are unusual or severe.

### Why are all child care providers being asked to report chickenpox and shingles?

Prior to 2010, MDH asked for chickenpox and shingles reports from a subset of child care providers that were randomly selected each year. Starting in 2010 and going forward, all child care providers are asked to report all cases. This change came about because of the decrease in the number of cases due to the success of vaccination. It is good that the vaccine is working, but now it is harder for us to monitor and describe chickenpox and shingles disease in Minnesota.

### How do child care providers report cases of chickenpox or shingles to MDH?

When you find that a child or staff member is sick with chickenpox or shingles, you need to fill out and send a simple form, or call us with your report.

- To report a case by phone, call MDH at 651-201-5414 or toll-free at 1-877-676-5414.
- You can find the form to mail or fax on our website at: [www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/varicella/index.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/varicella/index.html) then click on “Varicella Information for Child Care Providers”
- To obtain a paper copy of the report form, call MDH at 651-201-5414 or toll-free at 1-877-676-5414.

### How do I find more information on chickenpox and shingles?

For more information, call MDH at 651-201-5414 or toll-free at 1-877-676-5414 or visit our website at [www.health.state.mn.us/immunize](http://www.health.state.mn.us/immunize) then click on the “Diseases Prevented by Vaccines” link to find a list of diseases.

Thank you for your help in keeping Minnesotans healthy!



Vaccine-Preventable Disease Surveillance  
P.O. Box 64975  
St. Paul, MN 55164-0975  
651-201-5414 or 1-877-676-5414  
[www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us)



Cindy Rustan had a very interesting way of discussing clouds and rain with her children and she has agreed to share it. They were discussing the weather changes that are coming for spring and summer. One of the science discussions was "It's Raining." She asked where does the rain come from and why does it fall. How does the cloud get the rain? They did not get it. She demonstrated how a cloud rains by giving the kids a cotton ball. She asked them to describe what the cotton ball felt like, heavy or light, can it float in the air (they blew it across the table) etc. She then had them float the cotton balls down to some water that she had in a bowl, she then had them lift the cotton ball out of the water and asked "how does it feel?" Their answer was "it's heavy." They then were instructed to hold the cotton ball over the water and squeeze it out and asked what was happening. First answer was "it's dripping"-and she asked why? And received no response. Then one child said "it's raining." Great she asked why is it raining. Again they had no clue. She thought how did she get them to understand? Her quirky light bulb went on and she squeezed the cotton ball and told them the clouds drank so much water that it had to go potty. They got it and had a blast having the cloud go potty.

This goes to show that with preschool children you need to keep it simple and explain things from their reference point.



John Baars says: Being a child care provider can feel like a very solitary career. Most of our time is spent with children, which limits our topics of conversation. One way to speak your mind and get valuable feedback is by starting your own blog. There are many free websites to get you started. You can talk about whatever you want, whenever you want. Most sites also have adjustable settings for who can comment on your posts so you can limit responses from strangers if you choose. If you're looking for a way to communicate with other adults or just a way to vent, you may want to give blogging a try.

(Just a reminder that anything you say on your blog is public information)

**"Interactive supervision allows children and caregivers to have the greatest pleasure out of their days"**

From Lora Flugstad:

Put a filled water bottle in the refrigerator for each child each day and they can then drink cold water all day, which they normally would not drink if offered from the tap.

Ann Quigley made a scrapbook on Shutterfly for families and they loved it. She has also taken a picture on her cell phone and texted parents when they are doing something fun or exciting. This makes parents feel like they are part of their child's day. She also uses a small notebook that parents and she journal back and forth in for the kids day/nights and she finds this very helpful with teamwork and communication. (Remember you should get permission to take photos of children as well as giving you permission to use in scrapbooks that may be given to a number of people.)



## Dakota County Social Services

14955 Galaxie Avenue  
Apple Valley, MN 55124

Phone: (952) 891-7400  
Fax: (952) 891-7473



**Just remember  
that:  
“Interactive  
supervision will  
prevent being a  
focus on the 10  
o’clock news.”**

You can earn one hour of training by reading the newsletter and answering these questions. Keep this page along with your answers for your visit to receive the training hour. (Use separate page for answers.)

1. What are the 3 parts to providing a safe environment?
2. What must you be able to do for children under school age to meet the rule requirement?
3. How many homes had negative actions that were cited for supervision between 2000 and 2011?
4. What does naptime require regarding supervision?
5. The license holder’s failure to supervise properly can lead to what?
6. What should you consider when making decision about supervision of school age children?
7. What considerations do pets bring into your supervision practices?
8. What is a core function of licensed child care?
9. Quality supervision results in what?
10. Children learn through what?
11. What does quality supervision include?
12. Water play is one of the basic raw materials for learning?
13. What must you do before using a wading pool?
14. What are the best practices to insure the non-spreading of infections and diseases when using wading pools?
15. Name 5 things interactive supervision provides for you and the children.



## Dakota County Child Care Licensor Directory

### Hastings, Inver Grove Heights

Becky Elrasheedy 952-891-7361  
[Becky.Elrasheedy@co.dakota.mn.us](mailto:Becky.Elrasheedy@co.dakota.mn.us)

### Apple Valley

Cases distributed among other licensers

### Farmington and West St. Paul

Bill Hess 952-891-7381  
[Bill.Hess@co.dakota.mn.us](mailto:Bill.Hess@co.dakota.mn.us)

### South St. Paul and Rosemount S-Z

Maura Johnson 952-891-7362  
[Maura.Johnson@co.dakota.mn.us](mailto:Maura.Johnson@co.dakota.mn.us)

### Lakeville & surrounding areas, Burnsville A-R, and Mendota Heights

Jan Kochendorfer 952-891-7363  
[Jan.Kochendorfer@co.dakota.mn.us](mailto:Jan.Kochendorfer@co.dakota.mn.us)

### Rosemount A-R , Burnsville S-Z

Amy Novak 952-891-7841  
[Amy.Novak@co.dakota.mn.us](mailto:Amy.Novak@co.dakota.mn.us)

### Eagan

Joan Visnovec 952-891-7380  
[Joan.Visnovec@co.dakota.mn.us](mailto:Joan.Visnovec@co.dakota.mn.us)

### Supervisor

Warren Chaffee 952-891-7462  
[Warren.Chaffee@co.dakota.mn.us](mailto:Warren.Chaffee@co.dakota.mn.us)

### Website:

[www.dakotacounty.us/HealthFamily/ChildCareProviders](http://www.dakotacounty.us/HealthFamily/ChildCareProviders)

**We're on the Web!!!**

**[www.dakotacounty.us](http://www.dakotacounty.us)**