

Ensuring Health and Safety in Connecticut's Child Care Programs

A recent study, funded by the Children's Fund of Connecticut, has shed significant light on the health and safety risks in Connecticut's child care centers by examining the results of over 1,400 unannounced inspections by the Department of Public Health of these centers across the state. Yale nurse practitioner Angela Crowley and Yale pediatrician Marjorie Rosenthal led the study. Some key findings:

INSPECTIONS OF CONNECTICUT CHILD CARE PROGRAMS REVEALED SIGNIFICANT HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS

- Nearly one half of all programs had playground hazards
- 1 in 5 centers had no trained staff member in medication administration
- 1 in 3 programs had dangerous indoor hazards, such as unsafe water temperature and unsecured poisons and cleaning products in classrooms
- 4 in 10 medications were being administered *without* an approved prescriber's order

CONTINUING EDUCATION WAS THE MOST FREQUENT PREDICTOR OF COMPLIANCE WITH HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATIONS

- When child care providers were trained on health and safety best practices—including medication administration--a clear and consistent pattern of compliance with safety regulations was shown.
- Child care providers were far more likely to administer medications safely when a trained nurse consultant provided weekly visits to the program.

Bottom Line

- Training child care providers in how to safely administer medications would reduce errors and allow children with health needs to attend child care programs safely. Access to affordable, convenient continuing education for providers is imperative.
- Weekly visits by nurse health consultants are effective in guiding and educating child care providers on a range of common health and safety issues.
- We support convening a statewide committee to develop a long term plan for a sustainable system of statewide health consultation and medication administration training.

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