

Script: Safety and Supervision in the Childcare Setting

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1. Introduction

Welcome to “Safety and Supervision in the Childcare Setting”. This course will help you learn about effective supervision and how to keep your kids safe. We will look at how to create a safe environment and ways to teach children about safety through classroom activities.

2. Learning Objectives

Let's take a few moments to look at our learning objectives. After completing this course you should be able to:

- Define effective supervision
- Describe how to maintain a safe classroom and playground environment
- Demonstrate best practices for teaching in regards to child safety and supervision
- Teach children about safety using age appropriate activities and resources

3. Defining Effective Supervision

Effective supervision reduces the risk of harm to children by preventing injuries and accidents. It also promotes positive, responsive, and intentional learning environments for children. Effective supervision requires staff to be involved and familiar with the children in their care. This is important because the most effective kind of supervision for a particular setting can differ depending on the type of program, and the ages and individual needs of the children under your care.

Effective supervision also requires programs to assess their practices on a regular basis to ensure that they continue to promote safety and to meet the needs of children. This includes staying up to date with first aid, CPR and early childhood trainings.

Effective supervision is about more than watching children; it is about using teaching techniques that promote effective supervision practices and create safe environments.

4. Why is Effective Supervision Important?

Childcare programs must adhere to certain standards. Licensing regulations require that children are under supervision that is effective in ensuring their safety, well-being, and development at all times. Every teacher needs to be

familiar with your states' minimum standards for child care. These standards include (but are not limited to):

- Maintaining required teacher/child ratios and appropriate group sizes for each age group
- Insuring that every employee is up-to-date on required background checks, first aid, CPR and emergency procedure training
- Insuring there are procedures in place for children who become sick during the day, have allergic reactions, or are injured at school
- Any dangerous substances – like cleaning products, medications or pest control are safely locked away
- Insuring indoor and outdoor environments are free from hazards
- Having regular emergency drills to prepare children and teachers for the unexpected

5. How would you feel?

Imagine this: A group of twelve children were playing on a playground at the childcare center where you work. A 5-year-old girl falls from the play structure and breaks her arm. You and your co-teacher were in the middle of a conversation when the accident occurred and neither of you saw what happened. The other children told you that the little girl was attempting the monkey bars, lost her grip, and fell.

It is easy to have explanations in situations like this – “it happened so fast I couldn't get there” or “she's gone across the monkey bars a hundred times, I didn't think anything would happen!” And it's true, accidents happen. But they are less likely to happen if teachers are fully engaged in supervision, moving about the playground as children play and making sure that one adult is posted near climbing areas.

6. Quiz1

7. Answer

8. Statistics

To put childcare supervision and safety in perspective, let's look at some statistics. An estimated 500,000 children are injured on playgrounds every year. Over 200,000 playground injuries require treatment in emergency rooms. 15% of injuries treated in emergency rooms were classified as severe. Fractures, contusions, abrasions, and lacerations make up almost 75% of all playground injuries. Children four years old or younger account for over 50% of all injuries.

9. How Does Effective Supervision Reduce Risk of Injury?

Effective supervision reduces the risk of injury by providing meaningful interactions with the children. Research has shown that learning in young children is the result of collaboration between the child's thoughts and experiences with material, ideas and people, especially teachers. We enhance learning by providing structure and a variety of opportunities to practice and

explore new skills. By interacting and engaging with the children, the teacher is more likely to notice things that may be off. The more involved a teacher is, the better he or she will be able to react when the situation demands it.

10. Quiz 2

11. Answer

12. Being an Effective Teacher

Effective teachers are always aware of the physical environment of the classroom and playground areas. Teachers must follow all safety regulations put in place by the childcare center and conduct regular safety checks of the building premises (including inside and outside) and all equipment to remove hazards. These checks should all be recorded.

An effective teacher positions equipment and arranges the environment to allow supervision of children's play, rest, and toilet areas and knows which adults are authorized to pick up a child from the program in place of a parent.

13. Being an Effective Teacher cont.

Teachers should also be aware of when children arrive and leave the center, accurately recording both arrival and departure times in an easy access notebook or on a clipboard. They should avoid doing things that draw their attention away from active supervision. Examples include administrative or clerical tasks, meal preparation, cleaning, reading, becoming engrossed in conversation with another adult or using the phone.

14. Quiz 3

15. Answer

16. Observing Behavior and Play

We need to closely monitor children when doing activities that involve risk, such as playing near water, stairs, or doorways, when on a walk, or when changing from one room to another.

You should be able to observe children at play and anticipate what may happen next. This gives you the opportunity to intervene in the event of potential danger or threat. Listen closely to children, even those who are not in your direct line of sight and make sure you and your co-workers can see and hear all of the children all of the time. Careful listening enables you to intervene if tempers are rising... which often leads to tears for one reason or another. Help children use words before they spontaneously push or hit to make their point! Position yourself and other staff to allow for supervision of the entire group at all times.

Field trips are an important part of enriching children's learning. Getting out of the classroom to visit the fire station, a water park, the zoo or a play at a local children's theatre is loads of fun for everyone! Of course, lots of planning is required. You'll need: signed permission slips, medical consent forms, first aid

kits, nametags on each child, safe transportation, and extra staff or volunteers so that everyone is supervised closely.

17. Observing Play and Behavior cont.

While outside and inside, monitor children's health to identify early signs of fever, illness, or unusual behavior and watch and participate to ensure that children are playing in a safe manner. This helps provide a sense of security for children – knowing that you are watching and keeping everyone safe! Effective teachers use a consistent system for head-counts and counts often. This includes during all transitions, including when children leave or return to the classroom, or enter or leave a vehicle. You should also keep accurate emergency contact and medical records for each child and know the location of this information at all times (Alberta)

18. Quiz 4

19. Answer

20. The role of the childcare center director:

The owner or director of the center is expected to create policies and procedures that outline supervision practices and review them on a regular basis with staff. This is particularly helpful when there are programming changes, for instance, during the summer, when children are outside more, or in the fall, when new children enroll. They are also responsible for making sure staff is up to date on training. They establish simple, school-wide rules for children, so that all teachers are consistent and that promotions to new rooms as children get older aren't met with confusion.

21. What to Have Posted in the Center

According to the Texas Minimum Standards of Childcare Centers, the following information must be present and posted in your facility at all times: the childcare license, form from the most recent licensing inspection, licensing notice *Keeping Children Safe*, emergency and evacuation relocation plans, and the minimum licensing standards for the childcare center.

The daily activity plan for each group of children, daily menu, including snacks and meals, most recent fire, sanitation, and gas inspection reports, phone numbers for emergency services, 911, law enforcement, fire department, poison control, child abuse hotline, and phone number and address of the childcare center and the nearest licensing office should also be posted in a readily seen area.

22. Minimizing Risk with Paperwork

Also in accordance with the Texas Minimum Standards of Childcare Centers, each child must have paperwork filled out regarding: admission information, statement of health from the child's doctor, immunization forms and records, sign

in and sign out logs, incident report forms, and copies of any recommendations for providing specialized medical care (for allergies, etc.). Having these forms minimizes risk because the caregivers are always aware of who to contact in case of an emergency and what to do if the child has an allergic reaction.

23. Review

Effective supervision is not just about watching the children; it is about engaging with them and being alert to what is happening at all times with each child. Who ever said that working with young children is easy?!? What you do every day is very important work!

24. Quiz 5

25. Answer

26. Creating a safe and healthy classroom

Encouraging safe exploration is an important task for teachers. Children are natural explorers and risk takers. They are curious, move quickly, love to climb and hide and have pretty low impulse control. But we don't want to spend all day saying "Don't touch this!" or "Stay away from that!" Instead think carefully about how you set up the environment. Giving them the chance to explore freely in a thoughtfully organized classroom is an effective way to manage behavior and encourage learning.

If children are having trouble following the rules, check to see whether the environment is contributing to the problem. Take a close look at your space, indoors and outdoors. Providing an appropriate and engaging classroom will keep them interested in learning, reduce behavior problems, and save you from saying "No" too often.

Try a child's-eye view. Get down to the children's height and walk or crawl around the room. Pay attention to hazards you might not notice when standing up. From this vantage point, you may see accidents waiting to happen.

27. Continued

Make sure your space is child-safe. Whether you are in a center or a family child care home, make your space safe for children. Store dangerous chemicals and medicines out of children's reach. Cover electrical outlets, and store dangerous or breakable objects up high. Fix, lock up, or discard anything that might be a danger to children. Be sure all outdoor play areas are fenced in to keep children safe. Take a walk around the playground daily to insure nothing happened overnight.

Arrange your space wisely. Often the way you organize your child care space can make a difference in how children behave. If a space is too open, you may find children running wildly. Pay attention to where behavior problems occur. Set

up shelves and other furniture to divide the room into separate learning and play areas. This will cut down on running and help children find activities more easily.

Identify and cut off "runways." Long, narrow spaces -- including open hallways and long aisles in the classroom -- encourage running. Break up those long, narrow spaces by rearranging furniture, or add barriers to discourage runners. Try staggering tables so you don't have long, open aisles. Place seating areas or small tables at intervals down the hallway. These visual cues may help reduce running.

Organize toys and supplies to make things easy for children. You will have fewer problems if children can find toys and supplies. Place toys on low shelves. Label the shelves with pictures and words so children will know where to put them back.

28. Continued

Make sure there are enough toys. Problems often arise when children do not have enough toys or materials to play with. Think about what you need for children of different ages and interests. Plenty of paper to draw on; materials to sort, collect, trade, and share; dress-up clothes and props; puzzles and games; and well-maintained equipment to climb or ride on will keep children busy and interested.

Make sure the toys match the children's ages and abilities. Infants need toys that they can shake, drop, mouth, roll, and otherwise explore with their bodies. Toddlers need toys they can push, pull, grab, fill, dump, or yank without causing major damage. Toddlers have not yet learned how to share well, so purchasing several favorite toys can help prevent a lot of behavior problems. Preschoolers need more complex materials that keep them interested for longer periods and challenge their new learning skills.

Teach children how to handle toys and materials. Explain and model how to carefully handle books, toys, and other materials.

29. Quiz 6

30. Answer

31. Safe and Healthy Environment Video

Here's a video on creating and maintaining a safe and healthy childcare environment.

Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cvlafOX4tSw>

32. Video Discussion

One thing you've got to love about those who work with children is they are typically very fun people! This teacher gives us a visual reminder of ways to keep your classroom and playground safe. Note that there was no mention of

keeping children inside just because it was cold outdoors! Children need to play outside every day.

33. Infants and toddlers

Infants and toddlers should have a separate play area, even if you have a mixed age group or family day home with a wide age-range of children. Toys and games that are appropriate for older children will not be safe for the tiny ones. Because infants and toddlers are in the oral stage of development and learn by exploring with their mouths, toys with small parts, foam blocks, Styrofoam objects or anything else that can be a choking hazard are not safe.

When creating an indoor space, secure the premises and child proof everything. Windows, cabinets, stairs, purses, medications and hazardous materials need to be locked up or made inaccessible to small hands. Make the play space engaging and entertaining by adding colorful art, unbreakable mirrors, interesting things hanging from the ceiling, and interactive play centers on the walls. Even the youngest infants will be able to engage with the things around them.

Infant and toddler teachers are constantly picking up toys that have been thrown, mouthed and set aside to keep the play space relatively clear, but also need to insure babies have someone close by at all times. Find a balance – accept the mess of toys scattered and then take time when children are napping or outdoors to clean the room throughout the day. The play area and classrooms are going to become messy! We don't want cleaning to distract teachers from their first duty: keeping children safe.

34. Older children

With older children, appropriate room arrangement is important. When there are obstacles that children have to get around in high traffic areas, accidents will happen. Big pieces of furniture sticking out will ensure tripping and bumping. Make sure all of the furniture and rugs in the classroom are safe and secure.

Room arrangement is also important for guiding children's behavior. Learning centers, divided by shelves and tables will define activities and give children a sense of what to do during free choice time as well as give them a sense of security as they explore.

It can feel impossible to have your eyes on all your children all of the time, but there are ways to allow for continuous supervision. Check for blind spots in your room. These are places where children can hide or places where you cannot see what's happening. This is where room arrangement is key to effective supervision!

Children are very curious. Take care to reinforce locks on doors and place childproof locks on low hanging cabinets and shelves. Remove items that a child could use to stand on. Cover electrical outlets. Place heavier toys on bottom shelves. Place a non-slip mat under sinks and water tables. These are relatively simple ways to reduce risk of injury in your classroom.

35. Child-Safe Equipment: Classroom

Make sure your equipment is the appropriate design, scale and size for the age group you are working with! Equipment must not have any openings that can entrap a child's body and should not have any protrusions that can entangle something around a child's neck or their clothing. Child-safe equipment includes low tables and chairs, child size toilets and sinks, low-to-the-ground easels, low shelving for toys and rails on all steps or stairs.

36. Maintaining a safe and healthy playground environment

Having an outdoor area where children feel safe to explore is a delight! Outdoor play provides for greater freedom and flexibility, fuller expression through loud talk and a greater range of active movement. It also allows opportunity for large muscle development, social-emotional development and small muscle development by offering variety, challenge and complexity in ways that are not possible indoors. Centers are required to allow for outdoor play both in the mornings and afternoons. It's recommended that children 18 months and older be allowed 60-90 total minutes of outdoor time each day – with the goal of 20 minutes outdoors for every 3 hours indoors.

However, there are quite a few more dangers outside than there are inside the classroom. When setting up an outdoor space, cover the ground with mulch or grass to cushion any falls. If there are swings, slides, climbers or any equipment where the child is off the ground, make sure they are a safe distance away from the ground and have appropriate guard rails as well as fall zone cushioning.

Regularly conduct safety checks of the playground equipment. Ensure that there are no bolts, nuts, screws or other fasteners protruding in a way that could potentially harm children. Equipment should be spaced at least twelve feet apart and be free of tripping hazards. Ensure the fence is in good repair and make sure any gates leading to the outside are locked. Always check the playground before taking children out.

This practice became extremely prudent for a teacher I mentored in the Houston area several years ago. The school was located near a neighborhood where one of the residents had an African wild cat as an exotic pet. This wild cat, called a serval, was about the size of a small wolf. It had gotten free and was wandering the neighborhood, ending up on the playground of their day care center. Fortunately the school was able to contact authorities who were able to

intervene and no one was hurt. Imagine if the teacher had not checked the playground before letting children run outside!

37. Playground injury statistics

It is estimated that over 40% of playground injuries may be related to equipment. Licensing requirements have changed over the years to provide safer playgrounds. Heavy swings, certain styles of monkey bars and jungle gyms, trampolines, swinging rings, teeter-totters, and gliders are no longer allowed in child care. Safe equipment with adequate fall zones plus effective supervision can reduce injuries and allow children to play big outdoors!

38. Quiz 7

39. Answer

40. Child to caregiver ratio

What is the ideal ratio of caregivers to children on the playground? Keep in mind; the playground is an outdoor classroom. Children should have the opportunity to explore in meaningful ways to increase their physical, emotional, social, and cognitive skills. They should have time to develop their strength, play big, share with other children, and work on problem solving. The appropriate ratio of adults to preschoolers should be the same outdoors as indoors, as recommended by NAEYC. The recommended ratio is 2 adults per 12 to 16 children. For infants, the recommended ratio is 1 adult per 3 infants. Minimum standard ratios are a little higher.

41. Infants and toddlers

What makes a good outdoor space for infants and toddlers? Safe and interesting places to play and explore which accommodate differing needs, skills, and interests of the children, including those with disabilities. Soft surfaces, protection from the sun, low equipment with adequate fall zone cushioning will keep them safe and comfortable. Also incorporate natural materials, like logs for climbing over, non-toxic plants to touch and grass for crawling. Also provide areas for music by incorporating xylophones, wind chimes, and bells.

42. Older children

For older children, the key features of an outdoor space include developmentally appropriate play areas that promote a range of experiences. Children display the highest levels of physical activity on playgrounds that have a combination of manufactured equipment and natural materials. All the materials and equipment should be age appropriate for the children who use it, to ensure safety and maximum skill development.

Create multi-use open spaces of play. In an open play space, children can engage in a range of gross motor activities and skills such as running, jumping, crawling, and rolling. With manipulative equipment such as balls, beanbags, and

hoops in open spaces, children have even more options with play. Adding simple toys and building materials gives children the chance to partake in construction play and develop fine motor skills. Open spaces also encourage fantasy or dramatic play, especially with a few props for pretending.

43. Child-safe equipment: Outdoors

Your outdoor area should provide shade for children during sunny weather. Using sunscreen and bug spray is helpful. Your center should have a policy about this. Sometimes schools will provide it for children and sometimes it only used when parents provide them for their own child.

44. Watch out for those swings!

Establishing a simple set of rules for the playground, posting them outdoors to make sure everyone knows them. Talk with children so they understand the reason for the rules. Reinforce them often, by going over them when you get ready to go outside. This helps children remember the rules!

One place that is an accident waiting to happen is around swings. Children need a visual reminder of the swing zone as well as a rule that reminds them to walk around them. And like all rules, runners and daydreamers alike will occasionally forget and run in front of the swings. This is why it's important to always have a teacher nearby to supervise.

45. Creating a safe social-emotional environment

It is important create an environment where children feel welcome, safe, and encouraged. Children learn better when they feel nurtured and cared for. Teachers can do this by knowing each child well, having inviting activities and spaces, displaying student work, and reacting warmly and calmly in situations of stress or conflict. We want to educate children about risk, but only in appropriate ways. Insure that when you talk about about the dangers of this world, you always remind them that you and their parents will take care of them and keep them safe.

Children don't like conflict any more than adults do. Stay calm and collected in situations where the children are out of hand or in danger - don't raise your voice, and give clear instructions. This helps reduce fear and anxiety. Assure them that you will keep them safe.

46. Creating a safe social-emotional environment

Encouraging open-ended play is one of the best ways to enable children to express themselves. Open-ended, or child-directed play is when kids use their

imaginations as they interact with other children. Through this they are learning how others think, how to respond to one another and how to resolve conflict on their own. In a similar manner, unstructured art is beneficial learning to express themselves. Art easels with blank paper, sidewalk chalk on blank concrete, and sand are all different ways to encourage artistic expression. Building objects, such as blocks, dollhouses, or Legos, encourage children to express their emotions in a safe manner. They are 'practicing' what they've observed and learning how to be a friend.

47. Understand your children

During the hours the children are in childcare, they are your responsibility. Consistent procedures and expectations are an important part of keeping children safe. Setting the rules and not following through from day to day will teach children that you're not serious about it and they will continually test the boundaries, putting themselves in danger. Set realistic expectations for the children to follow by understanding their developmental level. Familiarize yourself with helpful resources to help you understand children. NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practice is a comprehensive guide to teaching young children. Learn what makes your children tick! Being informed and consistent in your work helps to keep them safe!

48. Classroom rules

It's a good idea to have a few simple rules for children to follow. These should be easy to remember. For example, the five rules for "Give Me 5" are hands are still, ears are listening, eyes are watching, feet are quiet, and lips are closed. You can incorporate the five senses into these rules or point to the body part you are talking about when teaching these rules to the children.

Give directives in a positive way. Instead of saying, "don't leave your markers out", say "put your markers in the basket when you're done". Try not to say "no". Instead, rearrange your words so they are positive. For example, "Food is for eating, not playing!" if the child is playing or throwing their food around.

49. Teaching weather/disaster safety and drills

Bad weather and disaster situations are unavoidable. It is important that you have guidelines and procedures for what to do in emergency and weather-related situations. These procedures should be posted and parents should be notified of when drills are occurring and be updated on what their child will do in an emergency. Fire and tornado drills should be conducted at least once a month to get the children used to the procedures.

Make teaching the children about weather and fire safety fun! There are a variety of books, songs, films, and activities that make learning about these topics more enjoyable and relatable.

50. Safety Books

Here are a few books children's books about safety. You can read these during circle time and have a class discussion about how it applies to your school. Put these books in your library center so children can look at them on their own. Have them create their own books in the art center, with pictures about how they can keep themselves, and their friends, safe at school.

No Dragons for Tea by Jean E. Pendziwol: fun, but informative book about a young girl who makes friends with a dragon. When she brings her dragon friend home for tea, the dragon accidentally sneezes and starts a fire. This book includes important fire safety messages about not hiding during a fire, calling 911, and how we have to leave behind our favorite toys to get out quickly.

Make Way for Ducklings by Robert McKloskey. Mrs. Mallard was sure that the pond in the Boston Public Gardens would be a perfect place for her and her eight ducklings to live. The problem was how to get them there through the busy streets of Boston. But with a little help from the Boston police, they arrive safely at their new home.

Miss Mingo and the Fire Drill by Jamie Harper: This book illustrates the fears that many children may associate with fires. In this book, the fire chief comes to school and prepares them for a fire drill that would happen later in the week.

51. Center activity props

Children learn through play. You can incorporate items that promote safety, such as goggles in science center, aprons in pretend and art centers and hardhats in construction. This allows children to become familiar with these items and use them as they play on their own in centers. Take time to explain each of the items when you include them in centers and talk about why they are important.

52. Quiz 8

53. Answer

54. Review

This brings us to the end of our course. Let's take a moment to review what we've learned about safety and supervision. You are now able to:

- Define effective supervision
- Describe how to maintain a safe classroom and playground environment
- Demonstrate best practices for teaching in regards to child safety and supervision

- Teach children about safety using age appropriate activities and resources

55. Resources

We have included some resources for more information about safety and supervision. Take a moment to look these over and print the ones that are relevant for you. *Please note the handout entitled: "Core Competencies for Safety and Supervision in the Childcare Setting". You will need to print this handout and file it with your training Certificate for licensing requirements.*

56. References

Here's a list of the references used in the creation of this training. You may print this list for future reference.

Safety and Risk, Beginnings Workshop, Exchange, March/April 2010

Guidelines for Effective Playground Supervision, Donna Thompson, Susan Hudson and Mick Mack, Child Care Information Exchange, May, 1999

Effective Supervision in Child Care Settings, Child Care Licensing Regulation, AR, July 2011

Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, 2010

Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8, 3d ed, Carol Copple and Sue Bredekamp, Washington D.C., National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

57. Quiz

Before we end, please take this short quiz about our training. This meets the requirements of the Texas Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers. You may repeat the quiz until you make 80% of the questions correct.

58. Conclusion

Congratulations! You have completed this course and may print your certificate. I hope that this information helps you understand how to provide a safe environment for the children in your care.

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