

SOUTHWEST HRA HEAD START

Section: Early Childhood Development
Subject: Playground Safety and Environment
Revised: February, 1998; February 2010

REGULATION REFERENCE:

45 CFR Part 1304 (Nov. 1996) Performance Standards 1304.21(a)(5)(I), 1304.53(a)(8-9)(10)(viii)
Consumer Product Safety Commission "Handbook for Public Playground Safety"
Tennessee Department of Human Service Licensing Regulations

POLICY:

SWHRA will provide outdoor play environments with age-appropriate equipment that meet DHS safety guidelines. All playgrounds will meet the DHS requirements of climbers, crawl-through, and balance beam. As renovations are made on existing playgrounds, SWHRA will meet the Consumer Product Safety Commission guidelines for public playground safety and will make playgrounds accessible to children with disabilities.

PROCEDURE:

1. Upon identification of new classroom sites, and with available funding, the Assistant Director for Early Childhood Development will arrange for renovations to create safe outdoor play environments.
2. Playground renovations will include the following:
 - a. Selection of site, including adequate space and fencing.
 - b. Installation of age-appropriate equipment that meets CPSC guidelines.
 - c. Modification of existing equipment to meet CPSC guidelines, if appropriate and cost-effective.
 - d. Installation of resilient surfacing fall zones. Pea gravel is the surface of choice.
 - e. Provision for accessibility for children with disabilities.
 - f. Provision for shade.
3. For general outdoor play, children will only use those areas and equipment identified as safe and appropriate. Teachers will document the safe environment of their playgrounds using the Daily Playground Inspection Report as required by Tn DHS Licensure Rules (see next page).
4. When on field trips, Head Start children are not allowed on equipment which has been identified as unsafe. This includes climbers with cross beams or excessively tall swings that do not meet safety guidelines, tall slides, or other equipment that does not have effective resilient surfacing in the fall zone.

Playground Safety and Equipment

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5. Teachers will assist children in taking out portable equipment daily (see “Outdoor Play Materials”).
6. Teachers will supervise children at all times and will participate in children’s activities. Both the teacher and assistant should be with the children when on the playground or on nature walks. **Two adults must supervise outside play and utilize a Playground Safety Plan as required by DHS Licensure Rules.**
7. Children will be encouraged to drink fluids before and after play periods if the weather is very hot.
8. Teachers will communicate with parents regarding clothing and footwear most appropriate for the safe use of outdoor areas and equipment. Parents are informed in the “Parent Manual,” at Parent-Center Meetings, during home visits, and through personal contacts that outside play is a daily activity throughout the winter and that they must dress their child appropriately.
8. Each classroom will be issued two sets of child-size jogging clothing to be used when a child is sent to school dressed inappropriately for the weather. Parent contact will be made concerning the incident (see following page--”Appropriate Dress for Outside Play”). It is the teacher’s responsibility to wash the worn garment(s) before another child can wear it/them.

SOUTHWEST HRA HEAD START

Center: _____
 Daily Playground Inspection Report for the Month of _____

As per the TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES Licensure Rules for Child Care Centers serving Pre-School Children rules:

1240-4-3-.12 (9)(c)(2) "A pre-play/care inspection of the outdoor play area shall be completed by the agency before children play outdoors."

1240-4-3-.12 (9)(c)(3) "The play/care areas shall be free of hazardous items or materials unless adequately protected by storage, inaccessibility, proper supervision, or other safety procedures."

1240-4-3-.12 (9)(c)(4) "These play/care areas shall otherwise present no conditions which may be hazardous to children."

1240-4-3-.12(9)(c)(5) "All such play/care areas shall be free of all animal wastes."

The playground was inspected by the person as indicated on the chart below BEFORE children had access:

Day of the Month	Staff Signature
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(Form will be posted while in use. Completed forms will be filed in center.)

APPROPRIATE DRESS FOR OUTSIDE PLAY

Head Start Child _____ Date _____

Dear Head Start Parent:

The Tennessee Department of Human Services Licensing Standards state "Except in extreme weather conditions, there must be an opportunity for outdoor play for all children who are in care for more than three consecutive daylight hours." (Extreme weather conditions are: below 32 degrees, above 95 degrees, rain, snow, sleet, thunderstorms). In order to keep a license to operate our Head Start Center, we **must** follow the above guideline.

We want our children to be happy and remain healthy. Please dress your child in a way so that he/she will be warm while outside during these winter months.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Head Start Teacher

Date