

Providing Guidance on Quality Child Care to Families, Child Care Programs and Policymakers

The following information is based off the AAP manual "The Pediatrician's Role in Promoting Health and Safety in Child Care." Depending on your interest and time available, below are suggestions on how pediatricians can be involved in children care on different levels.

Level One: Providing Guidance to Families on Child Care Issues

There are opportunities for incorporating child care issue into individual clinical services that you provide the families you serve. Advice on finding high quality child care, providing timely health information forms, especially for children with special needs, and giving clear advice about return to care after illness can be very helpful to families. These tips require very little extra time to implement. Further details are provided in the document Providing Guidance on Quality Child Care to Families, Child Care Programs and Policymakers.

Level Two: Providing Health Consultation to Child Care Programs

For pediatrician who are interested in providing communicate based services, you can establish an ongoing relationship with a child care program to promote health and safety. Learn more about being a health consultant in this document (need to give it a name).

Level Three: Advocating for Quality Child Care

Promoting quality child care in your community and beyond is also needed through community outreach, education and advocacy. Learn more about advocacy opportunities to promote health and safety in early education and child care in this document.

Provide Guidance To Families

Prenatal and Well-Child Care Visits

Talk with families about child care:

- Help families weigh their child care considerations.
- Underscore the importance of quality child care.
- Explain the different types of child care; their characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages.
- Provide information on finding child care.
- Remind parents to consider back-up child care arrangements for when their child is ill.

Help families create partnership with their child's caregiver:

- Document the child care program in the child's medical chart.



- Complete the admission requirements. Complete the admission requirements. Make sure the child is up-to-date on immunizations and health screenings.
- Develop individual care plans for children with special needs.
- Ask families about their concerns and their plans for the transition to child care.
- Remind families of the importance of good communication with the caregiver.

Follow up and support child care programs:

- Address questions and concerns about child care.
- Update records of the child care situation.
- Provide anticipatory guidance.
- Promote a 3-way partnership among pediatrician, families, and caregivers.

Children with Acute Conditions

- Review the information on child's signs and symptoms from the parents and the child care provider.
- Ask the family about contributing factors at home and child care.
- Simplify treatment recommendations and medications.
- Discuss when the child can return to child care.
- Document the child's condition for the caregiver.
- Report specified conditions to the necessary authorities.

Children with Chronic Conditions and Developmental/Behavioral Issues

- Ask the family about contributing factors at home and child care.
- Offer to speak with the child care provider.
- Consider doing an on-site observation at the child care program.
- Develop a written plan for the child.
- Simplify treatment recommendations and medications.
- Report specified conditions to the necessary authorities.

Become A Health Consultant to a Child Care Program

Health and safety issues in out-of-home child care settings can range from simple to complex. Early education and child care programs can handle certain health matters on their own, such as responding to a minor injury or developing materials and procedures based on their state's child care regulations.



However, when programs face more complex health concerns, such as determining a “safe sleep” policy, developing a care plan for children with chronic medical conditions, or responding to an infectious disease outbreak, they can benefit greatly from expert health consultation.

[Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards, Third Edition, 2011](#) is an evidence informed resources that is invaluable in any work done in the field of quality early childhood education.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the foremost professional association for the early childhood field promoting high-quality early learning for all children, birth through age 8, has revised its [criteria for accrediting licensed early learning programs](#), and now recommends that early learning programs contract and form an ongoing relationship with a health care professional to improve the health and safety of the children enrolled in that program.

According to *Caring For Our Children (CFOC)*, a Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC) is “a licensed health professional with education and experience in child and community health and child care and preferably specialized training in child care health consultation” (CFOC, 3rd Ed., [Standard 1.6.0.1](#)). According to *CFOC*, CCHCs have knowledge of child care practices, rules, and regulations, infant and early childhood development, a range of health topics relevant to young children, and community health resources to support staff wellness, program preparedness for emergencies, and family health and mental health.

Currently, a majority of child care health consultants (CCHCs) are nurses, mental health professionals, nutritionists, or other health and safety experts. Yet, there is an increasing number of pediatricians who serve as CCHCs or medical directors for local child care programs.

Recommendations for Pediatric Involvement:

- Build relationships with child care providers
- Conduct a needs assessment
- Visit the program and observe practices and facilities
- Promote effective communication
- Develop and review child care health policies
- Ensure medical homes and preventive care
- Develop plans to care for children with chronic conditions
- Provide health education for staff, families, and children
- Review illness and injury logs
- Provide ongoing health consultation

Other Issues to Remember:

- Laws and regulations



- Consent and confidentiality
- Liability

Advocate for Quality Child Care

After learning about early education and child care, you can take the important next step—advocating for improvements in the quality of child care in your community!

Provide Assistance to a Local Child Care Program

- Serve on an advisory board
- Conduct workshops on child development, health, and safety
- Donating or advocating for additional services, supplies, or funding

Promote Early Childhood Professional Development

- Participate in early childhood professional organizations and conferences
- Write articles on health for child care publications
- Provide consultation to agencies that offer child care technical assistance

Advocate for Improved Supply, Financing, and Regulation of Child Care

- Serve on child care planning committees
- Work with child care and child health advocacy organizations
- Contact local media to gain interest in and exposure for promoting quality child care
- Act as a legislative advocate

Develop a Health and Safety Initiative in Child Care

- Conduct research on health and safety in child care
- Sponsor a community-based health promotion project

Increase the Involvement of Health Professionals in Child Care

- Teach pediatric residents about child care
- Participate in continuing medical education on child care

