

Auckland Regional Public Health Service

Rātonga Hauora ā Iwi o Tamaki Makaurau



Auckland Regional Public Health Service

Central Auckland Office
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Working with the people of Auckland, Counties Manukau and Waitemata

Our reference: C040-02

Dear Applicant,

RE: Application for Early Childcare Centre Licence

Health and safety requirements for licensing in the Auckland Region*

Health and safety assessments are undertaken by Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) at the request of early childcare centres (ECCs) as one of a number of necessary steps before acquiring their opening licence from the Ministry of Education (MinEd).

Auckland Regional Public Health Service has the mandate to perform ECC health and safety assessments from the Ministry of Health, as the Director General of Health's nominated officers. The Director General of Health's legislative mandate comes from the Ministry of Education as stated in the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008. The Ministry of Health's operational instructions to public health units for performing ECC health and safety assessments are provided in section nine (early childhood centres) of the *Environmental Health Protection Manual*¹.

Health and safety assessments cover compliance with legislative requirements, including health and safety standards required by the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 45 or 51 (whichever is applicable) and 46 or 52 (whichever is applicable), and the assessment of health risks. The Ministry of Education considers health and safety assessments of ECCs by the Ministry of Health's designated officers, essential in the provision of quality early childhood education.

Enclosed is an information pack which includes *Health & Safety Guidelines for Early Childhood Centres* (referred to hereafter as the Guidelines) and the *Health and Safety Self Audit Tool* (referred to hereafter as the Audit Tool).

The Guidelines are intended as a guide for early childhood centre operators whose centre is to undergo a health and safety assessment by ARPHS. The Guidelines details the public health and safety issues that commonly arise from the assessment of ECCs, and provides the relevant standards that ECCs must meet.

It is designed to be used in conjunction with the Audit Tool which ECC operators are required to complete prior to the health and safety assessment. It is intended to assist early childhood management and staff to identify and address health and safety issues relating to children at the centre. The relevant section of the Guidelines appears beside each topic. The Audit Tool will be assessed by a Health Protection Officer during a visit to the centre.

¹ Ministry of Health. Environmental Health Protection Manual. Early Childhood Centres. Section 9, Version 1.0: June 1999.

* Including Rodney District, North Shore City, Waitakere City, Auckland City, Manukau City, Papakura District & Franklin District.

Please read the information and questionnaire as soon as possible, so that you can address health, safety and hygiene in the design and management of your centre. Please contact ARPHS for further advice on any health, safety or hygiene issue.

What you can expect from us

1. Contact ARPHS to make an appointment for the health and safety assessment or for further advice on any health, safety or hygiene issue.
2. ARPHS provides a health and safety assessment of the premise, that covers the issues outlined in the audit tool and guidelines. It also includes reviews of any applicable health and safety procedures and policies the centre has (refer to *Nga Kupu Oranga*).
3. ARPHS aims to undertake the assessments within 20 working days of receiving the request and making an appointment.
4. ARPHS will endeavour to provide a health and safety report within 10 working days following the assessment. However, some environmental concerns will require further research in which case the report may take a maximum of 20 working days. This report will include recommendations to the licensee regarding health and safety issues. The report is also sent to the Ministry of Education as part of its requirement for consideration of the centre's licence. The Ministry of Education then considers ARPHS' recommendations and determines what (if any) actions must be undertaken by the ECC licensee before granting an ECC license.
5. The health and safety assessment is a user pays service – and upon completion of the final report, the licensee will be sent an invoice.

Health and Safety Assessment - What we expect from you

1. Please complete the Audit Tool prior to the assessment and present it to the officer at the actual time of assessment. The Audit Tool must be completed to reflect the current state of the centre.
2. At the time of the assessment it is expected that the centre will be, as it is on the opening day:
 - any building work, renovations etc must be completed
 - all facilities must be in place
 - health and safety policies and procedures must be available for review

It is important that your centre is ready for the health and safety assessment when we visit. **We will not be able to perform a health and safety assessment if a centre is not ready.**

3. We also need someone with detailed knowledge of the functioning of the centre (e.g. Supervisor) to be available for about 2 hours to assist us with our assessment.
4. The current fee for the health and safety assessment is under review (at time of print \$150 per licence).

We hope that this information is useful and welcome your feedback and any suggestions for improvement.

Further sources of information

- Early Childhood and Regional Education, Ministry of Education, ph 632 9400, www.lead.ecd.govt.nz.
- Early Childhood Centre Lead (Elliot Roberts), Auckland Regional Public Health Service, ph 623 4600, http://www.arphs.govt.nz/Healthy_Environments/early_childhood.asp
- Public Health Resource Centre, Auckland Regional Public Health Service, ph 623 4600
- Safekids New Zealand, ph 630 9955, www.safekids.org.nz
- Child Safety Foundation, ph 0800 CHILDSAFETY, www.childsafety.co.nz
- PlunketLine, ph 0800 933 922, www.plunket.org.nz
- Safe Waitakere project, Waitakere City Council - child safety, including planning guidelines for childcare centres and maps of water hazards near your centre, Margaret Devlin ph 836 8000 x 8540

Good luck with planning and developing a healthy and safe early childhood education centre. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely

Shanshan Li
Technical Officer
(for Medical Officer of Health)
Healthy Environments Team