

Our reference: C040-02

**RE: Application for Early Childcare Centre Licence
Health and safety requirements for licensing in the Auckland Region**

Dear Applicant,

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 and 46, 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 *Pre-licencing Information on Health and Safety in Early Childhood Centres* (referred to hereafter as the Pre-licencing Information).

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 detail the public health and safety issues that commonly arise from the assessment of ECCs, and provide the relevant standards that ECCs must meet.

¹ Ministry of Health. Environmental Health Protection Manual. Early Childhood Centres. Section 9, Version 2.0: January 2010.

The Pre-licencing Information listed all the requirements in terms of health and safety and will be checked during the Health Protection Officer's assessment for the health report.

Please read the information 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 guidelines. It also includes review 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 7 working days following the assessment. This report will include recommendations to the contact person 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 centre contact person before granting an ECC licence.
5. The health and safety assessment is a user pays service – and upon completion of the final report, the centre will be sent an invoice.

Health and Safety Assessment - What we expect from you

1. Please refer to the Guideline and the Prelicencing Information for developing relevant policy and procedures.
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.**

We also require someone with detailed knowledge of the centre and its operations (e.g. manager or supervisor) to be available to assist us with our assessment.

Auckland Regional Public Health Service

Rātonga Hauora ā Iwi o Tamaki Makaurau



Working with the people of Auckland, Counties Manukau and Waitemata

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

For more information, please contact the Environmental Health Team, Auckland Regional Public Health Service on (09) 623 4600.

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