

Active Supervision in Child Care Centres

The Child Care Regulations, 2015 require children to be adequately supervised at all times. This resource is intended to support child care facilities and their staff to understand what active supervision is and its importance in supporting children's wellbeing.

Active Supervision – What does this mean?

Active supervision is an effective way to ensure children's safety and prevent the occurrence of injuries in child care settings. It is also an essential component of quality programs by ensuring *all* children are supervised while allowing opportunities for educators to be engaged with individual or smaller groups of children.

Active supervision requires focused attention and intentional observation of children at all times so they are free to learn and explore in their environments safely. There are many components that contribute to active supervision:



Refer to Part IV – Standards for Centres in The Child Care Regulations, 2015 and The Child Care Licensee's Manual for further information concerning supervision of children.

The Environment

- The environment is carefully planned and thoughtfully designed to ensure children can be supervised at all times, without limitations.
- The environment allows for easy supervision of small groups of children engaged in play and activities.
- The environment is consistently monitored to ensure it is safe and free from hazards.
- Areas and pathways are free from clutter.
- Shelving does not obstruct staff's view of children.
- Children are visible from all areas of the room.
- Change tables are positioned so that staff are oriented towards the room to provide supervision while diapering.

- Staff make sure there are clear paths to where children are eating, sleeping, and playing so they can react quickly.

Staff Positioning

- Staff are positioned in such a way to monitor play, effectively scan the room at any time, and quickly respond when necessary.
- When interacting with smaller groups of children at a table, staff are positioned to face the room to allow for supervision of the entire room.
- Staff are positioned to be involved in play, story time, or washroom routines while keeping a watch on the activities the children are involved in.
- Staff place themselves where they can hear and see all of the children in their care, regardless of the activity.
- Staff move around the room or outdoor play area as needed, ensuring they are in a position to intervene when needed.



Active supervision is an essential component of quality care. Active supervision means effective, purposeful supervision strategies are in place to promote safety, wellbeing and opportunities for educators' engagement with children.

Engagement with Children

- Staff remain alert and aware of all other children in the room when responding to children's needs or when engaging with individual or smaller groups of children.

Planning

- Activities that are appropriate for when supervision can be minimized are planned ahead and available to children.
- Activities are planned that do not require heightened supervision during morning drop-offs and end of the day discussions with parents (e.g. cutting with scissors or small beading activities are avoided if younger children are part of the group).
- Programming supplies are on hand at the beginning of the day so staff are not required to leave the room to gather materials for activities.

Anticipating Children's Behaviour

- Supervision is adapted based on children's needs.
- Staff know each individual child's interests and skills to better predict how a child will react in certain situations.
- Staff recognize when children may not follow direction, wander, or take a risk that is dangerous, and provide more intensive supervision accordingly.
- Staff know the children well and assess them daily (temperament, illness, allergies, lack of sleep, etc.) to help anticipate behavior and better protect children from harm.
- Supervision of washroom routines is adjusted according to children's age and developmental level (e.g. younger preschoolers require more intensive supervision than older preschoolers or school-age children who are more independent).

Counting, Transitions, and Excursions

- Staff refer to attendance sign-in and sign-out sheets throughout the day to ensure accuracy.
- Staff keep a daily list on them at all times of children who they are directly responsible for supervising (e.g. clipboards or lanyards worn by staff with children's names).
- Staff refer to lists of children regularly throughout the day, and take note of who has left.
- Regular headcounts are done throughout the day.
- Lists of children are referred to and headcounts are conducted to ensure children are accounted for during transitions such as:
 - before going outdoors and returning indoors;
 - getting on and off a bus or other mode of transportation;



Implementing active supervision techniques will support educators to be responsive to children's needs and meaningfully engage with individual or smaller groups of children while being aware and alert of the entire group.

Active supervision promotes children's safety and wellbeing at the centre, and during times requiring heightened supervision, such as outdoors, transitions, and excursions.

- moving from one activity area/room to another.
- A risk assessment tool is completed to ensure that all possible hazards have been considered for any activity away from the facility.
- During common times (e.g. morning or end of the day), staff count and track all children in their care, even if they are not children's primary educator.

Staff Communication and Interactions

- Substitutes and casual staff are paired with a primary educator.
- Staff model active supervision with each other, substitutes and casual staff.
- Staff work together to supervise children (e.g. use of walkie-talkies for communication between staff indoors and outdoors).
- At the beginning or end of shifts or breaks, staff ensure that an accurate number and list of children is communicated.

Other Approaches to Support Active Supervision

- Management recognizes that staff training and orientation to the facility are key in understanding policies and procedures regarding supervision.
- Procedures are regularly reviewed that address supervision to promote consistency in staff practices.
- Procedures are reviewed to ensure family engagement times or routines such as cleaning do not interfere with overall supervision.
- A mobile phone use policy is developed and implemented which promotes the need for constant supervision.
- Changes in policies and procedures are shared with staff.
- A contingency plan is in place to ensure adults/staff are immediately available to supervise children in the event of an urgent or unforeseen circumstance.
- Incidents are reviewed after they occur and discussions occur about how the incident could have been prevented.

Resources/References

- *Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. The Child Care Licensee's Manual.* This manual describes supervision standards and expectations for licensed child care centres in Saskatchewan. Available at <http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/deplist.cfm?d=11&c=4628>
- *Government of Alberta. Effective Supervision in Child Care Settings.* This resource offers helpful supervision approaches. Available at <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/documents/child-care-effective-supervision.pdf>
- *The Head Start National Center on Health. Active Supervision.* This fact sheet provides active supervision strategies and templates to assess active supervision in early learning settings. Available at <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/safety-injury-prevention/safe-healthy-environments/active-supervision.pdf>