

## Introduction to Maintaining GSA Child Care Facilities: Training for Property Managers

You are about to begin the Maintaining GSA Child Care Facilities Training for Property Managers. Welcome to Maintaining GSA Child Care Facilities: Training for Property Managers. The purpose of this training is to provide policy and guidance on operating and maintaining a child care facility, as well as the unique requirements of the GSA Child Care Program. This training is intended to compliment the Property Managers Child Care Desk Guide. More information can be found in the Desk Guide.

### Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives for this course, the Participants will learn about:

- The mission and goals of GSA's Child Care Program
- Child Care stakeholders roles, responsibilities and agreements
- Design and alteration requirements including material selection
- Maintenance, inspection and equipment needs
- Playground safety and maintenance requirements
- Environmental health and safety considerations
- Sustainable child care practices
- Security and emergency planning needs
- Child care industry program standards
- Fundraising and tuition assistance authority and requirements
- Additional resources and tools to successfully manage a child care facility

### Course Overview

This course is divided into 6 mini lessons. Each lesson covers a facet of the day-to-day management of GSA child care facilities. Following each lesson, you will find a "Knowledge Review" section with questions that emphasize key points of the lesson. At the end of the course, you must take the Final Test and score 70% or better to receive a Certificate of Completion for the training.

The Lessons are listed below and should take about 90 minutes to complete:

Lesson 1: Child Care Program Fundamentals

Lesson 2: Maintaining a Child Care Facility

Lesson 3: Playgrounds

Lesson 4: Environmental Health and Safety

Lesson 5: Emergency Planning and Security

Lesson 6: Program Standards and Quality

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## **Lesson 1 Child Care Program Fundamentals**

In Lesson 1 we will discuss: Child Care Program Fundamentals

### **Learning Objectives for Lesson 1**

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- Explain the GSA Child Care Program mission and goals
- Identify key stakeholders and their roles and responsibilities

Topics covered in this lesson include:

- Program mission and goals
- Authorizing legislation
- GSA's Child Care Inventory
- Resources for Property Managers
- Stakeholder roles and responsibilities
- Agreements

### **Program Mission and Goals**

The primary mission of the GSA Child Care Program is to serve our partners and their employees with access to quality child care. The Child Care Program supports GSA's goal of providing expert workplace solutions.

Through offering efficient, high-quality child care in GSA controlled space, our partner agencies and Federal employees can focus on their core mission. Demand for work-site child care is customer driven.

### **Did You Know?**

Child care is a very powerful recruiting and retention tool.

When work-site child care is available, employees tend to:

- Stay with organizations that support work-life programs
- Be more productive at work knowing their child is well cared for when work-site child care is available, employees tend to:
- Be less likely to miss work due to failure in child care arrangements.

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## Authorizing Legislation

- The Tribble Amendment, Title 40 U.S.C Section 590, authorizes GSA to provide space and services for child care programs to operate in federally controlled space.
- GSA does not directly operate or contract for services at the child care centers.
- GSA grants authority for the day-to-day program management to a board of directors or a child care provider
- GSA uses a Revocable License for Non-Federal Use of Real Property (GSA Form 1582) with special conditions to grant authority to the provider to operate a child care program in GSA space.

## Child Care Facilities Location

There are more than 100 GSA Child Care Centers across the country serving over 8100 children."

To access the child care inventory list, go to, [www.gsa.gov/childcare](http://www.gsa.gov/childcare)

## Did You Know?

- GSA uses the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) as the measure for quality child care.
- As of May 2013, 96% of GSA child care programs were accredited (compared to only 9% in the private sector).
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## Resources for Property Managers

As a Property Manager of a child care facility, you should be aware of the unique needs of child care.

Children spend up to 10 hours a day in a child care facility and have different needs and requirements than the typical building tenant. Your two primary resources are the Regional Child Care Coordinator (RCCC) and the Property Managers Child Care Desk Guide. Click on the title boxes below to learn more about how these resources can support you in managing a child care facility.

The Regional Child Care Coordinator (RCCC) is your primary resource for guidance on child care policies and practices. It is recommended that you schedule a walk-through visit with the RCCC to learn more about the specific needs of the child care program in your facility.

The Property Managers Child Care Desk Guide contains information and criteria to assist with the management of child care facilities within GSA-controlled space. It covers policy and guidance, as well as the unique requirements of the GSA Child Care Program.

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## **Roles and Responsibilities**

GSA child care centers function under the guidance and oversight of the following key stakeholders:

GSA:

- Customer Agencies
- Board of Directors
- Child Care Providers
- Parents
- and the Federal Protective Service (FPS)

GSA child care centers function under the guidance and oversight of the following key stakeholders:

### **Customer Agencies**

The GSA Child Care Program's customers are the federal agencies that sponsor a child care center for the support of their employees.

Federal Agencies pay GSA rent for this space, which is generally assigned as joint use space.

In addition to sponsoring a child care center, agencies may also:

- Offer tuition assistance to their Federal employees
- Allocate recycling sales proceeds for tuition assistance.
- Provide space for fund-raising activities
- Pay for equipment and services. (In a delegated or single tenant agency sponsored leased center, the tenant agency is responsible for maintenance, repair and replacement of equipment unless otherwise stated.)

### **Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors is a nonprofit volunteer organization that contracts with and oversees the Child Care Provider.

The Board of Directors role is to:

- Select and contract with the provider
- Raise and administer tuition assistance funds
- Market the child care program
- Act as liaison between the Government, the provider, and the parents
- Monitor child care program goals

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## **Child Care Providers**

Child Care Providers are independent operators who manage child care programs within GSA space.

Providers:

- Selected by the local board of directors with the RCCC
- Licensed by GSA and contracted by the board of directors
- Can be for-profit or nonprofit, large or small organizations
- Manage their own program and staff and establish the curriculum
- Market the program to Federal employees
- Comply with State and local licensing requirements, GSA license requirements and other GSA child care initiatives.

Providers have the following funding responsibilities:

- Collect tuition fees from parents
- Pay for their own supplies and consumables, including office supplies, food, educational materials and props.
- Pay their overhead costs, including child care staff, liability insurance, professional services and other program related costs.

## **Parents**

Parents are the actual users of the child care center and they are our customers, too. The parent's role is to:

- Contract for child care services with the provider
- Pay tuition and other program related costs directly to the provider

First priority goes to Federal employees Non-Federal employees can enroll if there are any vacant slots. The business arrangement is between the provider and the parent (s). If a parent (s) contacts you with issues, please refer them to the center director or contact the RCCC if necessary. Parents are the actual users of the child care center and they are our customers, too.

## **Federal Protective Services (FPS)**

FPS provides security-related support and resources to GSA child care centers. FPS's role is to:

- Perform facility security assessments
- Conduct background checks for child care workers
- Respond to emergencies
- Assist with OEP development and provide general training support and if the child care center has a delegation, then the delegated agency may also perform these security functions.

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- Conduct background checks for child care workers
- Respond to emergencies, and to
- Assist with OEP development and provide general training, and
- If the child care center has a delegation, then the delegated agency may also perform these security functions.

## **GSA Roles and Responsibilities from the child care side**

GSA plays many roles in delivering a quality child care program. From the child care division:

The Regional Child Care Coordinators Responsibilities are to:

- Serves as point of contact with provider and board of directors.
- Monitors provider's compliance with the license agreement.
- Monitors compliance with child care requirements and standards.
- Selects equipment and manage equipment budget.
- Serves as liaison between the provider and Property Manager.
- Train and provide guidance to local property managers, boards of directors, agencies and providers.

Central Office Child Care Responsibilities:

- Set policy and manage program nationwide.
- Develop training and guidance for property managers, boards, agencies, and providers and manage national equipment budget.
- Review and approve all design and alteration projects.
- GSA plays many roles in delivering a quality child care program. From the child care division
- The Regional Child Care Coordinators Responsibilities are to:
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- Monitor provider's compliance with the license agreement.
- Monitor compliance with child care requirements and standards.
- Select equipment and manage equipment budget,
- Serve as liaison between the provider and Property Manager, and train and provide guidance to local property managers, boards of directors, agencies and providers.

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## **GSA Roles and Responsibilities: within the service center**

Roles within the service center, field office and region include the Property Manager and the Asset Manager.

The Property Managers Role includes:

- Provide day-to-day facility and playground maintenance including equipment, cleaning, and repair and alterations.
- Support child care requirements and events, such as NAEYC accreditation, Week of the Young Child VIP visits, and ribbon cuttings.
- Offer child care provider opportunities to market services to tenant agencies, such as communication via building bulletin boards, tenant meetings, tenant newsletters, and electronic reader boards.
- May participate in board of directors' meetings as a nonvoting member.

The Asset Managers Role:

- Plan and coordinate (with the RCCC and Property Manager) cyclical repair and alterations for ongoing upkeep of the child care center.

## **Who pays for what within GSA?**

Central Office Child Care Funds pay for:

- Equipment such as children's furniture, office furniture, playground equipment, appliances, computers, and copy machines
- Can include labor and services associated with equipment, Program and health reviews, Special projects, NAEYC accreditation fees

Regionally Funds pay for:

- Repairs, alterations, and modernization work including playgrounds
- Maintenance and cleaning, including repairs and general upkeep
- Painting, Inspections and surveys, including playground inspections
- Playground equipment installation and maintenance
- Blast protection, including replacement
- Telephone service
- RCCC's regional travel
- Personnel costs for RCCC including travel and training

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Either Central Office Childcare funds or Regional funds will depend on a coordinated decision between central office and the region.

Either includes:

- Copy machine, Large appliances, including repair & replacement, and Playground equipment
- Security equipment and repairs, Accessing and disposal of equipment

The authority for use of appropriated funds is established by U.S.C code 40, section 590

## **GSA License Agreement**

Revocable License for Non-Federal Use of Real Property with Special Conditions.

The GSA Revocable license, GSA Form 1582, is the tool used to legally assign space and document the provider's requirements.

This license is:

- The principle document to deliver continuity of child care services,
- Issued from GSA by appropriate authority as determined by region to either the provider, the board or the agency.
- It is Specific in terms of the attached Special conditions.
- It includes mandatory terms like, background checks, accreditation and negotiable items such as hours or training days.
- It is overseen and monitored by the RCCC and the revocable license is not a service contract and not subject to contracting regulations.

## **Other Supporting Documents;**

- GSA/Board Memorandum of Understand (MOU)
  - There may be an MOU agreement between the board of directors and GSA (or other sponsoring agency) to ensure accountability is clear.
- Provider/Board Contract
  - The Contract is the agreement between the provider and board of directors on the scope of services and board of directors' oversight. The provider and the board of directors are free to negotiate terms of the contract as long as the terms do not negate the basic requirements in the GSA license. The terms must support other agreements (if GSA revokes the license, the provider and board of directors must have means to cancel the contract). This contract is not subject to Federal contracting laws and regulations.
- Interagency Agreement (IAA)
  - There may be an agreement between agencies that share sponsorship of a facility. The IAA would address one-time or on-going financial commitments and other agency roles and responsibilities.
- Consortium Agreement

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- There may be an arrangement between the child care center, an agency, and a non-Government entity. The terms of the relationship must be documented in an agreement.
  - Delegation Agreement
    - Some agencies have authority to operate and maintain the child care center in their assigned space. Delegation responsibilities vary such as security, maintenance, and board oversight. Refer to the specific child care terms of the delegation agreement.

## **Lesson 2 Maintaining a Child Care Center**

### **The learning Objectives for lesson 2**

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- Explain why and how GSA maintains child care facilities
- Identify maintenance issues unique to child care facilities
- Plan inspections and maintenance schedules, and
- Plan and budget for general maintenance and cyclical work

Topics covered in this lesson include:

- Cleaning
- Preventive Maintenance
- Inspections
- Repairs and Alterations
- Child Care Design Guide, PBS-140
- Equipment and childcare leases

### **Why does GSA Maintain the Child Care Space?**

Why does GSA maintain the child care space?

Child care centers are considered "GSA space" unless there is a single sponsoring tenant agency. GSA assigns child care centers as joint use (public good amenities) and collects rent for child care space from customer agencies. GSA has the responsibility for continuously updating the space, equipment and personal property. See the Pricing Guide for more information on child care pricing.

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## Preventative Maintenance

The Property Manager should provide a level of maintenance that ensures all GSA-owned child care property and equipment, including playground and kitchen equipment, is safe and well-maintained. Equipment should be free of missing components or defects that affect the safety, appearance, or intended use. Preventive maintenance on all equipment must be performed in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and state and local codes. All preventive maintenance performed within the child care center must be coordinated in advance with the center director and only performed when children are not present in the area. Tools, supplies, materials, parts, or debris must be inaccessible to children.

Tip: Consider requiring operations and maintenance (O&M) contractors to wear disposable booties when entering classrooms to prevent tracking in dirt and debris.

## Maintenance

Property Managers should budget \$5,000 to \$10,000 annually for upkeep, repairs (including playgrounds and above-standard cleaning), and other miscellaneous service type items.

Please keep in mind:

- Children are not your typical tenant working at a desk.
- Large groups of children have a significant impact on the space which accelerates wear and tear.

## Common Maintenance Issues

Wall damage is a common problem in child care centers. Displaying children's work throughout the child care center is a NAEYC accreditation standard. It is common for teachers to want to tape artwork to wall surfaces.

You should work with the RCCC and center director to develop appropriate methods for display that do not damage the wall surfaces.

Paint Surfaces:

- Touch up paint as needed and plan to repaint approximately every 3 years or as needed.

Use neutral, warm, "home-like" colors, and finally Use low or no VOC paint only. Color and paint type must be approved by the RCCC and meet Child Care Center Design Guide requirements.

## Cleaning

Sanitizing to kill germs is critical in child care centers because young children are particularly sensitive and susceptible to illness and disease. GSA's Standard Custodial Specification includes the minimum requirements on cleaning a child care center. You should work with RCCC during contract negotiations to ensure cleaning needs are addressed. NAEYC requires a copy of the cleaning contract for accreditation. Please direct any questions on cleaning or health issues to the RCCC.

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## **Did You Know?**

All periodic cleaning both indoor and outdoor must be coordinated in advance with the center director.

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## Inspections

Your help is needed to ensure the child care environment is safe and well maintained.

To ensure GSA delivers high quality, safe environments:

- Regular and consistent inspections are necessary (recommended frequency is monthly.)
- The Property Manager and Center Director should conduct the inspections together.
- The RCCC should participate in this inspection at least once annually.
- A Child Care Center Facility Checklist is a tool to assist (Review Desk Guide Appendix L.).

The GSA Child Care Design Guide recommends a linoleum wainscot to prevent wall damage.

## Sample Maintenance & Inspection Calendar

There is a lot to be done to satisfy all the child care requirements. Please see your RCCC for helpful tools.

## Repairs and Alterations

You will need to work with your RCCC and asset team to plan the cycle of larger repair and alterations projects to ensure a high level of service is provided per GSA's responsibility for joint use space.

- All centers should be on a 10 year cycle for major alterations and repairs.
- All alterations (major and minor) must be coordinated through the RCCC.
- GSA Child Care Architect must approve all major alterations and new construction designs.

## Child Care Center Design Guide PBS-140

Child Care Center Design Guide:

The requirements for child care facility design and alterations can be found in the Child Care Center Design Guide, PBS-140. This comprehensive guide defines design standards, requirements, finishes, and best practices for child care centers and is the definitive resource for all child care center projects, from new construction to alterations of any size.

The Child Care Center Design Guide Scoring Tool measures a child care center's compliance with the Design Guide. Child care centers are scored on design elements and features in various categories.

- A total score of 70 and above is considered passing; however, a higher score of 100 is best practice.
- If a child care center scores below 70, a plan must be developed to correct the deficiencies.
- Centers are scored by the RCCC once to develop a baseline and then again as improvements are made.

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## Equipment

Central Office provides the RCCC with BA61 funding to purchase child care equipment. This funding does not fund services, maintenance or building repairs.

All GSA owned- child care equipment:

- Is purchased with central office funding
- Is coded to the building and charged against the building's funds from operation (FFO)
- Remains in GSA's inventory
- Must be properly excessed through the GSA personal property disposal process
- Is GSA's responsibility to assemble, repair, and replace

The Property Manager should plan and budget for the workload to maintain, assemble and repair child care equipment. Property Managers may choose to repair large equipment and appliances on an as-needed basis; include the maintenance in the operations and maintenance (O&M) contract; or consider service contracts.

## Equipment Replacement

If equipment needs replacing:

- Notify the RCCC so he or she can submit for funding .
- Determine if the RCCC or Property Manager will make the purchase
- Provide assistance and coordination of deliveries, including installation and assembly of new equipment
- Obtain RCCC's concurrence before any equipment is ordered (to ensure all requirements are met.)

When purchasing equipment:

- Apply GSA green procurement and sustainability goals including eco-healthy, low or no volatile organic compounds (VOC) and energy conservation
- Avoid furniture made of laminated wood, pressed wood, plywood, particleboard, and chipboard, which can contain formaldehyde, a probable carcinogen, allergen, and irritant.
- Equipment Replacement and Purchase

## Did You Know?

Furniture over 36" inches must be secured, either to the wall or other furniture to prevent tipping

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## **Child Care Leases**

To ensure a safe, well-maintained leased child care facility:

- Know your lease and special requirements unique to child care (like cleaning, painting, etc.)
- Perform regular lease inspections with the center director.
- Establish clear roles and lines of communication to ensure all parties work together to successfully deliver a quality facility and program.
- Define a process with the RCCC on how to address maintenance or facility type issues.
- Assist with project development and project management.

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## Lesson 3: Playgrounds

In Lesson 3 we will discuss: Playgrounds

### Learning Objectives

The Learning Objectives for lesson 3

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- Explain the importance of playground maintenance
- Define the difference between provider and GSA playground responsibilities
- Identify playground standards

Topics covered in this lesson include:

- Playground inspections and maintenance programs
- Safety fall zones and surfaces, Sand ,
- Playground cleaning and playground standards

### Playgrounds

Playgrounds are happy places for children to develop physical, mental and social skills. A place for adventure and fun! However, playgrounds can also be a place where serious injuries occur.

Consumer Product and Safety Commission estimates 200,000 injuries occur on playgrounds each year. Over half of these injuries are due to poor playground maintenance.

### Playground Inspections and Maintenance

- As Property Manager, you are responsible for maintaining the playground, playground equipment, and landscaping.
- All playground inspections, maintenance requests, and work orders must be well documented.
- Copies should be provided to the center director or the RCCC for NAEYC

Tip: Check your O&M contract to see if it covers playground equipment maintenance.

NAEYC requires a playground inspection and maintenance program, which should be developed by the center director with your assistance.

Child Care Provider:

- The child care staff should be expected to perform regular visual safety inspections and to report maintenance service calls, as needed.

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Property Manager:

- The Property Manager (generally through the O&M contractor) is responsible for preventive and general maintenance.
- GSA Preventive Maintenance Guide provides good overall guidance to ensure equipment is maintained in a safe operating condition, such as checking for rust and lubricating moving parts.

## **Certified Playground Safety Inspections**

- Every child care playground is required to have an official playground inspection conducted by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI).
- When playground equipment is updated or renovated, a new CPSI inspection is required.
- Typically, CPSI inspections are initiated by the RCCC or center director.
- Your assistance may be needed to follow-up on any action items from this inspection.

All playground remodeling and alterations work must be coordinated between the RCCC and Property Manager.

## **Playground Fill Material**

An important part of playground maintenance is making sure the fall zone is appropriately maintained.

If you use a fill material such as wood chips, sand, mulch, or other natural material, the proper depth must be maintained.

Usually these materials need to be replenished annually. Spring is the ideal time to perform annual playground inspections and refresh fill material, plantings and sand.

Poured-in-place rubber surfaces and tiles have varying life spans.

Because exposure to ultraviolet light, sand, and water can detrimentally affect these products, it is important to periodically inspect to ensure the impact attenuation is still adequate.

If rubber is deteriorating, such as crumbling, pitting, or chunking, contact your RCCC for a plan to recap or replace it.

## **Playground Rubber Tiles**

Poured-in-place rubber surfaces and tiles have varying life spans. Because exposure to ultraviolet light, sand, and water can detrimentally affect these products, it is important to periodically inspect to ensure the impact attenuation is still adequate. If rubber is deteriorating, such as crumbling, pitting, or chunking, contact your RCCC for a plan to recap or replace it.

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## Did You Know?

Artificial turf may contain high levels of lead. As the fibers deteriorate, lead dust can become biologically available. GSA has been testing and monitoring the lead levels of all artificial turf on child care playgrounds. If you are putting in a new playground, use the most recent specification to limit the total toxic content of all equipment.

## Sand

A common question from Property Managers...

Do we really need sand? Yes, children use all their senses to learn and need a wide variety of materials. Sand, as messy as it is, is a very valuable medium for children.

If sand is a concern.....

- Use walk off mats at playground entrances to reduce tracking sand indoors.
- Consider benches at playground entrances to allow children a place to sit to empty their shoes before entering the building.

Please keep in mind, you should:

- Replace sand annually (at a minimum) and remove old sand to reduce the risk of contaminants.
- Use silica-free sand intended for children's use (if it is locally available.)
- Expect child care staff to keep sandboxes covered when not in use to prevent entry by children or animals.

## Playground Cleaning

- Climbing structures, slides, and other surfaces should be power washed at least annually.
- The frequency of playground cleaning may need to be increased depending on the location, environmental conditions, amount of pollution, etc.
- Consult with your RCCC for industry standards for cleaning synthetic fall surfaces.
- The overhead clearance zone for playground equipment is 84" from the highest point of the equipment (not the highest play surface) any overhanging trees may need to be trimmed back.

## Did You Know?

Your custodial contract should include daily playground policing each morning before playground activities begin to ensure the area is safe. Unfortunately, playgrounds are commonly trespassed and dangerous objects are found, such as broken bottles or drug paraphernalia.

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## **Playground Standards**

Playground Standards: Playground standards are defined in the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Public Playground Safety Handbook. For more information visit <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/325.pdf>

Playground Standards

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## **Lesson 4: Environmental Health and Safety**

In Lesson 4 we will discuss: Environmental Health and Safety

### **Lesson 4 Learning Objectives**

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- Identify and correct safety concerns
- Implement sustainable and environmentally healthy practices in the child care facility

Topics covered in this lesson include:

- Fire Protection, Physical Safety, Sustainable Child Care Practices and Environmental Health.

### **Fire Protection**

To reduce the risk of fire and injury, please ensure the following:

- Fire protection systems are properly functioning.
- Nothing can be hanging within 18 inches or obstructing the sprinkler systems.
- Children cannot reach sprinkler heads from climbing lofts.
- Gates, furniture or buggies do not block fire exit doorways.
- Cribs used to transport infants in emergencies are clearly identified.

Consult your Regional Fire Protection Engineer for specific guidance on fire protection requirements.

### **Physical Safety**

The Child Care Center Design Guide recommends safety features such as:

- finger-pinch door guards,
- corner guards, and
- water temperature controls

Every time you visit the child care center, be alert for potential hazards. Child care staff may unknowingly create hazards in the center. Please contact your RCCC with any safety concerns.

### **Did You Know?**

All indoor and outdoor gates and doors accessible to children must be fitted with finger-pinch protection.

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## **Sustainable Child Care Practices**

Research shows the first years of children's lives are critical to shaping their future health and development. GSA and child care providers can make small changes that have a big impact. By reducing or eliminating toxins through sustainable design and practice, we reduce our environmental footprint and help to prevent illnesses like asthma, certain learning disabilities and even some forms of cancer. GSA's Child Care Program leads the industry and implementing sustainable designs and practices for many years. We strive to be good earth stewards for the future of the children in our care.

## **Sustainable Approach**

Our sustainable approach includes:

- Integrated design process to plan and develop sustainable, green facilities energy saving, efficient features such as water reduction hardware.
- Natural flooring products such as linoleum and no vinyl
- Area rugs instead of installed carpets
- Green construction materials and products (such as adhesives and solvents)
- Low or no VOC materials and equipment
- Energy star and recycled products
- Recycle and reuse of equipment
- Off-gassing period before space can be occupied
- Integrated pest management
- Green cleaning products (bleach only when required by licensing)
- Sustainable landscapes (living gardens, composting and natural playscapes)
- Shoe-free infant classrooms, and finally
- Training and awareness for providers

## **Eco-Healthy Child Care Program**

GSA participates in the Eco-Healthy Child Care Program to ensure our child care centers are environmentally-friendly. To become endorsed, providers must meet 24 out of 30 standards which address pesticides, indoor air quality, lead, mercury exposure, and more. Three items are considered mandatory to achieve endorsement: integrated pest management; a no-smoking policy; and safe drinking water practices. Please work with your center director and RCCC to achieve endorsement. For more information on EHCC, visit [www.cehn.org/ehcc](http://www.cehn.org/ehcc)

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## Did You Know?

Outdoor environments can pose serious risk to children. Outdoor concerns include pesticides, toxic plantings, and sun exposure.

## Integrated Pest Management

Children are more vulnerable to pesticide exposure because their systems are immature and must be protected.

Exposure to pesticides is linked to learning and developmental disorders. Children are more vulnerable because their metabolic, enzymatic, and immunological systems are immature. Facilities should prevent pest infestations by ensuring sanitary conditions. This can be done by eliminating pest breeding areas; filling in cracks and crevices; repairing holes in walls, floors, ceilings and water leaks; repairing water damage; and removing clutter and rubbish on the premises.

- Pesticides must only be used if integrated pest management or (IPM) practices fail to prevent pest infestations and a serious threat remains.
- Property Managers must ensure targeted, rather than broadcast applications of pesticides are made, beginning with the products that pose the least exposure hazard first.
- Pesticides must never be applied when children are present. Re-entry periods must be adhered to, a minimum of 12 hours. Check local code and manufacturer's instructions for specific time frames.
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- Care should be taken to ensure pesticide applications do not result in pesticide residues accumulating on tables, materials, and items mouthed or handled by children, or soft surfaces such as carpets, upholstered furniture, and stuffed animals.

## Did You Know?

Parents and staff must be notified prior to applying any pesticides, fertilizer or weed killers in the facility or on the playground. Contact your RCCC for local child care licensing and health department notification and application requirements.

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## **No Smoking Policy**

NAEYC accreditation standards require "the facility and outdoor play areas to be entirely smoke free.

No smoking is permitted in the presence of children."

EHCC standards require "no smoking anywhere on the premises or in sight of children."

Both standards are necessary to achieve these certifications. Please be aware, even though a child care center meets GSA's smoking policy, it may not necessarily meet the NAEYC or EHCC smoking standard. Please help ensure the child care center meets all three requirements.

## **Environmental Compliance Testing**

As Property Managers, you are responsible for ensuring all the necessary environmental tests and surveys are performed, documented, and readily available. Centers must have documentation to show they are free of lead, radon, asbestos and other potential environmental hazards. Copies of tests should be kept in the child care center for easy access during regulatory visits. Check with the regional environmental division for information and schedules of required tests and surveys.

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## Lesson 5: Security and Emergency Preparedness

In Lesson 5 we will discuss: Security and Emergency Preparedness

### Lesson 5 Learning Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- Coordinate child care security needs
- Assist child care providers with emergency preparedness
- Identify background check requirements

Topics covered in this lesson include:

- Security requirements unique to child care facilities
- Emergency preparedness, Code Adam and Employee background checks.

### Security Requirements

The Child Care Design Guide addresses the baseline child care security requirements for all GSA child care centers. Site specific security requirements come from the Facility Security Assessment or FSA Facility Security Committee (FSC): The Property Manager should represent the child care center's interests at FSC meetings. Changes affecting access (both pedestrian and vehicular), parking, and drop-off areas could have a direct, negative impact on the operations of the child care center. A balance must be found between security needs and the functional needs of the child care operations.

Window Vulnerability and Blast Protection: A child care centers' exterior windows must comply with the Interagency Security Committee (ISC) criteria for blast protection.

Child care centers that do not meet current ISC standards should be upgraded as appropriate (usually in conjunction with a major project). The Child Care Division tracks the life cycle and glazing replacement needs for child care facilities. A national review was performed in 2006.

### Did You Know?

Blast protection film is typically applied to the interior side of the window. Tape will compromise this film.

Providers should be instructed not to use tape on windows. Suction cups and plastic window clings are generally OK to use. See the manufacturers' recommendations for cleaning and approved adhesive products.

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## Emergency Preparedness

GSA must ensure proper occupant emergency plans or (OEPs) are in place at every child care center.

Property Managers' assistance is needed to:

- Ensure the child care center's evacuation plan is coordinated with the main building's plan. (The child care procedures should be included in the main building's OEP.)
- Assist the center director with OEP development and annual updates.
- Ensure the center director knows the Designated Official (DO) ,who they will turn to for information and is the final authority in an emergency.
- Verify annunciation speakers are audible on the playground.
- Ensure evacuation paths are clear of obstacles year round, including snow and ice.
- Maintain a copy of the child care center's OEP to know all evacuation sites in all types of emergencies.

Drills: Child care centers are required by state child care licensing to practice and document evacuations monthly. You should periodically observe these drills. The child care staff must occasionally practice evacuations to their alternate relocation sites- a longer distance than a typical drill.

### Tip: Security and Emergency Preparedness

Use a real audible alarm for drills to ensure the children and staff are familiar with the sound. Because child care groups spend a large part of their day outdoors, ensure alarms and annunciation speakers are audible on the playground. Consider coordinating the testing schedule with the building's communication panel tests.

How do the centers communicate in an emergency?

All child care centers are required to have a means of communication in emergencies. Typically we use wireless duress units in each classroom and staff office. The locations should be identified in the initial FSA. The child care staff may need to be trained on the devices. You should periodically test the duress alarms to ensure they are working and dispatching the appropriate authorities. The child care staff should also have an emergency communication device when they are outside of the center, such as a cell phone or walkie talkie.

## Code Adam

To help protect children in federal facilities, GSA with the FPS, has adopted the "Code Adam" Program.

"The Code Adam Alert Act of 2003" requires that procedures be established for a child missing in a federal facility. Identify in your procedures how and to whom the child care provider communicates an event of a missing child. For more information visit <http://www.gsa.gov/codeadamalert/>

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## **Employee Background Checks**

Employee Background Check: All child care employees in federal space must have a criminal history background check per the requirements of the Crime Control Act of 1990. The RCCC monitors the process and has the responsibility to ensure child care employees are cleared. Child care employees are issued a facility access card to gain access to the building. Child care employees are not contractors and, therefore, are not cleared through the Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12 (HSPD-12) process.

## **Required Reporting's**

Accidents, Incidents, or Abuse Allegations

The provider must report all criminal incidents and all medical emergencies requiring professional medical attention immediately to GSA and FPS. In addition, they must report to state or local child care licensing agency and NAEYC. If child abuse or neglect is suspected, the child care provider is obligated to report the incident to the appropriate local authority. FPS is not the reporting or investigating authority unless the incident occurred on Federal property.

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## Lesson 6: Program Standards and Quality

### Lesson 6 Learning Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- Describe the pyramid of child care standards
- Discuss why GSA focuses on quality
- Identify child care fund-raising authorities

Topics covered in this lesson include:

- Child care standards
- MARS review, and Cost and quality
- The Learning Objectives for lesson 6.

### Child Care Standards

The following standards apply to all GSA child care centers:

- Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs,
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC): Early Childhood Program Accreditation Criteria (Required)
- Consumer Product Safety Commission: Indoor and Outdoor Safety Standards (Required)
- State and Local Licensing (Required)
- Eco-Healthy Child Care and
- Let's Move Child Care.

### Pyramid of Child Care Standards

The pyramid of child care standards progresses from minimum requirements to recommended best practices. The levels start with your minimum requirements, at the base of the pyramid, state or local child care licensing requirements. The next level, moving upwards, is the consumer product safety commission, followed by the NAEYC Accreditation and finally at the top of the pyramid is Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Standards for Early Care and Education Programs.

#### The first level: State or local Child Care Licensing Requirements

The lowest level of the pyramid is the State or local Child Care Licensing Requirements level. Under the State or local Child Care Licensing Requirements:

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All child care programs must be state or locally licensed. State and local license regulations are usually considered to be the minimum, least stringent requirements.

### **The second level: Consumer Product Safety Commission**

Moving upward is the Consumer Product Safety Commission: The Consumer Product Safety Commission or the (CPSC) provides the standards for indoor and outdoor safety and product recalls.

### **The third level: NAEYC Accreditation**

NAEYC Accreditation our next level up on the pyramid. National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation is the industry measure for program quality. NAEYC Accreditation is designed to ensure quality experiences for children in early childhood programs. Providers are required to operate a program that meets accreditation criteria. Your assistance will be needed to prepare the center for NAEYC “verification visits”, such as scheduling a deep cleaning and providing required documents.

### **The fourth and final level is Caring for Our Children**

Caring for our children is the top of the pyramid and gold star in child care standards. The American Public Health Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics jointly published health and safety standards for child care programs. GSA has adopted this comprehensive set of health and safety standards as the overarching quality benchmark. If there is a question or standard not addressed by NAEYC, GSA or licensing, refer to the guidance in “Caring for Our Children”.

## **Did You Know?**

Each year the knowledge base increases, new scientific findings become available, and new areas of concern and interest arise. As knowledge and innovative practices evolve, child care standards are modified or updated. Standards may not always be consistent or support each other. To ensure all standards are fully met, always apply the most stringent standard.

## **Management Analysis Review System (MARS)**

GSA Child Care Program staff participate in the building MARS review to ensure GSA is providing safe, well-managed, and well-maintained child care centers. The following resources can assist in a MARS review:

- Property Managers Child Care Desk Guide
- Child Care Center Design Guide P-140
- GSA License Agreement with Special Conditions
- Child care center files (including accident reports, parent surveys, OEP, equipment inventory and staff background checklist)

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- State and local licensing inspection reports
  - Applicable NAEYC standards
  - GSA's Standard Custodial Specification
  - Eco-Healthy Child Care standards

## **Did You Know?**

Prior arrangements must be made before any inspection, to avoid interrupting children's schedules. For example, reviews and inspections must never be done in classrooms during naptime.

## **Cost and Quality**

Are you wondering why child care tuition is not free or reduced if GSA provides space and services?

In general, child care space (which the Government provides at no cost to the provider) can reflect between 8 percent to 25 percent of a child care provider's budget. Child care is very labor intensive and like many service industries about 80 percent of the cost in child care is payroll and related staff expenses.

## **GSA's Child care program is focused on Quality**

Because the Federal government invests in the cost of space, services and equipment, child care providers are able to afford NAEYC accreditation. NAEYC accreditation can equate to as much as a 30 percent increase in a center's budget.

It is difficult to find high quality in some communities. The general child care market does not provide an equal comparison to the quality of GSA Child Care Centers. GSA Child Care Centers are 97 percent accredited. In the private sector, approximately 9 percent of child care centers are accredited by NAEYC.

## **Did You Know?**

GSA does not control the cost of care. Tuition fees are set by the provider and are based on the comparable accredited market rate.

Boards of directors and Federal agencies often provide tuition assistance. GSA also administers our own child care tuition assistance program for GSA employees who meet the income criteria.

## **Affordability**

How do we address affordability?

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The tuition assistance program and fund-raising is intended to help more families afford quality child care. Knowing the cost of tuition is too high for many families to afford, GSA has given the board of directors fund-raising and tuition assistance responsibilities. Fundraising activities for child care centers are encouraged and allowed in public areas of federal buildings. If the activity occurs outside of the child care center's assigned space, a permit must be obtained from the property manager. All fund-raising activities must take place outside of the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). However, some child care providers and boards of directors are also CFC approved recipients.

### **Tip: Cost and Quality**

Do you have questions about child care programs fund-raising in federal buildings? See the Property Managers Child Care Desk Guide for resources and the GSA legal opinion on child care fund-raising in federally-controlled facilities.

### **Recycling Proceeds**

Funds from recycled materials can be a valuable source for child care tuition assistance. Federal agencies can use the proceeds from the sale of recycled materials for child care centers. All proceeds (minus a small GSA administration fee) generated from a particular agency are given back to that agency for its disbursement. Each agency, including GSA, uses its own discretion on disbursing funds.

The language of the recycling authority is broad and authorizes recycle funds to be used by "employee programs," which can include child care programs. Check with your recycling coordinator or RCCC for information on how your child care center can benefit from recycling funds.

### **Summary of course**

In Summary Child care is a workforce support program and an integral component of an effective workplace.

GSA strives to provide federal employees with the highest quality child care available. As Property Managers, you are on the front line and an integral part of the team in delivering these high quality facilities. The Property Managers Child Care Desk Guide and your RCCC are key resources to assist property managers with guidance on providing effective, safe, secure, and sustainable child care facilities. Thank you for your support and efforts to provide quality child care to serve our customer agencies, fellow Federal employees, the communities where we reside and, of course, the children.

### **Additional Resources**

The GSA Child Care website provides more resources and tools. Visit the library at [www.gsa.gov/childcare](http://www.gsa.gov/childcare).

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## **Course Completion**

You have completed this course. To print your "Completion Certificate", return to the GSA On-Line University lobby page and click on "My Transcript" in the left navigation bar. Then find this course and click on the "View Certificate" icon and follow the steps to print. To exit this course simply click on the "Close Presentation" button.