

# Making Your Child Care Centre a Healthy Environment



## A Fact Sheet for Child Care Operators and Staff

York Region Community and Health Services is mandated to inspect all child care centres to ensure compliance with food safety regulations, infection control and safe water standards. This fact sheet is provided for information and guidance to child care centre operators.

### Craft Materials

To ensure optimum safety for the children at your child care centre, special consideration must be given to the materials that are being used for crafts. Research has shown that children are easily affected by toxic substances which can be inhaled, ingested or absorbed through the skin. Therefore, children should only work with materials that are known to be safe and labeled for children's use. The following are recommendations for using craft materials:

- It's a good idea to use craft/art materials that have the CP Certified Products Seal and/or the AP Approved Products Seal of the (American) Art and Craft Materials Institute
- Examine the labels of all materials carefully to see whether they contain hazardous ingredients - labels include hazard symbols, statements about the nature of the hazard, precautionary measures and first aid treatments
- Do not use products that bear a label indicating "keep out of reach of children" - examples of these include: laundry detergent, starch-based laundry products, shaving cream and plaster of Paris (also called gypsum plaster)
- Avoid items that can create dust like powdered clay, chalk or dry-erase markers - use talc-free, premixed clay, dustless chalk and crayons
- Choose water-based, unscented products (such as paints, white glue and markers) whenever possible
- Keep materials in their original containers whenever possible; clearly label transferred materials & keep the original container nearby
- Egg cartons and trays (e.g., styrofoam meat trays) previously used to store hazardous food items should not be used for crafts as they cannot be properly cleaned and disinfected
- Use balloons with discretion - they are one of the leading non-food causes of choking death in children
- Discard grains, cereal products and play dough after one week of use; if they become wet, discard immediately
- Always ensure that children properly wash their hands using the six-step hand washing procedure once the craft has been completed (see Correct Hand Washing Procedure poster)



Sources: "Safe Use of Arts & Crafts Materials", Health Canada, Dec.2010; "Resource Sheet: Safety in the Arts", Canadian Child Care Federation, 2001

March 2011

For more information, please call  
**York Region Health Connection 1-800-361-5653 TTY: 1-866-252-9933**  
**www.york.ca**

**York Region**