Choose Safe Places for Early Care and Education

State agencies can work together to ensure children are better protected from harmful environmental chemicals. Learn how to create a safe siting program in your state.

4 Steps for Building a Safe Siting Program

The problem: The location of an early care and education (ECE) program is sometimes not given enough consideration. Children may be at risk from contamination — left behind from how the building or property was used in the past, from naturally occurring harmful substances, or from nearby sites.

The solution: State health departments, licensing agencies, local planning and zoning departments, and others can collaborate to address gaps in regulations and policies — so ECE programs aren’t at risk from harmful chemicals.

Follow these 4 steps to start a safe siting program in your state.

1. Form partnerships
   ✔ Reach out to other state, county, or local agencies to collaborate
   ✔ Consider partnering with departments of public health, community planning, licensing, environmental protection, and zoning

2. Identity ways to strengthen licensing policies
   ✔ Review current rules, policies, and practices for locating ECE programs in your area
   ✔ Look for environmental health risks that might have been missed

3. Build on existing resources
   ✔ Don’t start from scratch when developing your program — look for ways to create a safe siting program without additional funding or staff
   ✔ Use current programs as models

4. Implement the program
   ✔ Educate staff and other agencies about the value of safe siting and how the program works
   ✔ Find ECE programs and locations with potential issues — and if you find problems, follow up
   ✔ Track your successes — and refine your program based on feedback

Learn more

ATSDR’s Choose Safe Places for Early Care and Education offers state agencies the resources they need to create new safe siting coalitions. We’re dedicated to making sure that ECE programs are located safely — and that children are protected from dangerous chemicals during their care.

Check out our Choose Safe Places for Early Care and Education Toolkit. You’ll find a tool for choosing a safe location, a copy of our complete guidelines, and more essential information.

www.atsdr.cdc.gov/safeplacesforECE