

Choose Safe Places for Early Care and Education

Planning. Guidance. Protection

Call with Prospective Applicants to the
ATSDR's Partnership to Promote Local Efforts To Reduce
Environmental Exposures (APPLETREE) Program
December 7, 2016

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

Objectives

➔ Provide prospective applicants:

- ✦ Background information on early care and development (ECE) siting issues
- ✦ An overview of ATSDR's objectives and elements of safe siting
- ✦ Building a program
- ✦ A review of safe siting in FOA
 - Strategies and actions
 - Evaluation of safe siting
 - Work plans for new and exiting safe siting programs

How ATSDR became involved

- ATSDR became involved with ECE siting out of our traditional site work
- Across the country, we worked on sites where we were asked for assistance after ECE centers were found on or adjacent to incompatible sites, and children were exposed to environmental contaminants
- Developing an approach to prevent environmental exposures at ECE locations

Early Care and Education

- ✦ ATSDR focus is on facilities where ECE programs operate
- ✦ Includes child care centers, daycares, preschools, nursery schools, and Head Start
- ✦ Includes for-profit, nonprofit, and publicly funded
- ✦ Homebased or “family” programs can be included



Children with bubbles from author's personal photos

ATSDR's Safe Siting Mission

Ensure that ECE programs are located where chemical hazards have been considered, addressed, and ruled out or mitigated to best protect children's health.



Children playing from CDC public photo library

Why be concerned about location?

- Before 2015, most ECE programs were NOT conducting a site history, environmental site assessment, or environmental audit to obtain a license
- In 2015, the HHS Agency for Children and Families (ACF) required minimum health and safety standards for early care and education

Kiddie Kollege – NJ

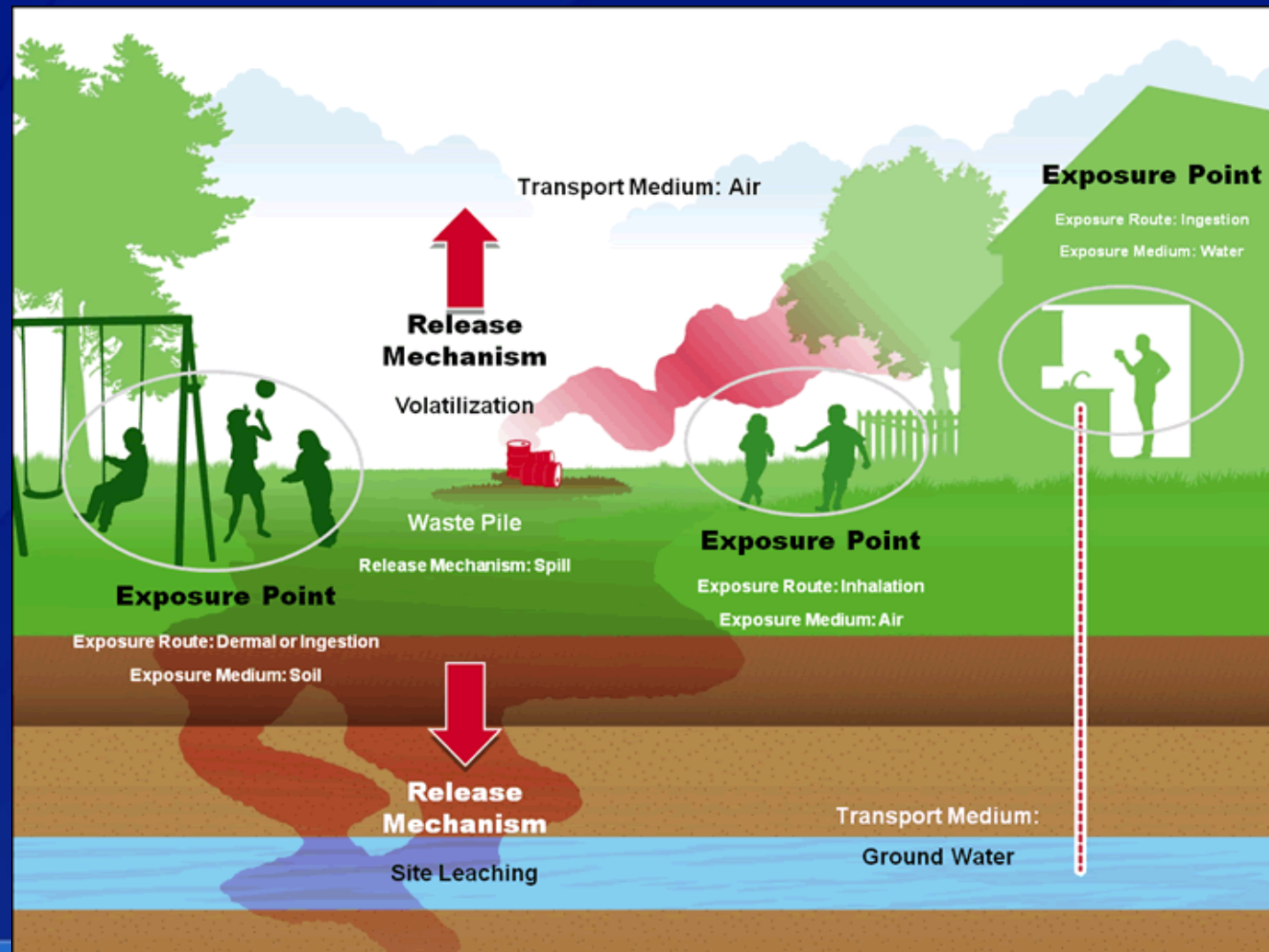
Child Care Center located in former mercury thermometer factory



Photo of Kiddie Kollege from http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/19/nyregion/19mercury.html?_r=0

Types of Environmental Exposures

Routes of Exposure to Chemicals Found in Soil, Water, Outdoor Air, and Indoor Air



ATSDR Safe Siting Objectives

- ✦ Development of **guidance manual** for safe siting for early care and education programs
- ✦ Inclusion of safe siting considerations in **licensing at state level**
- ✦ Inclusion of safe siting considerations in **federally-supported early care and education programs**
- ✦ Implementation of safe siting considerations by **accreditation organizations and large-scale operators**

What Safe Siting Includes

The thoughtful analysis of four key site elements:

- ✦ Former uses of the site that might have left harmful substances
- ✦ Migration of harmful substances onto the site from other sites, nearby infrastructure, or activities
- ✦ Presence of naturally occurring harmful substances
- ✦ Access to safe drinking water

How to Build a Safe Siting Program

Some elements of a successful program include:

- ✦ Building partnerships
- ✦ Identifying problematic sites
- ✦ Following up on problematic sites
- ✦ Providing education, outreach, and awareness

FOA Safe Siting Strategies and Activities

- Assess current safe siting landscape
- Develop partnerships with key stakeholders
- Select policy and/or practice approaches to address safe siting for prospective ECE centers
- Implement and evaluate chosen approaches

FOA Evaluation of Safe Siting Activities

- Estimate number of children protected from harmful exposures
- Estimate disease burden prevented as data allows
- Capture information in ATSDR's Site Impact Assessment Database

FOA Safe Siting Work Plans

- ➔ **New Safe Siting Programs for Prospective ECE Programs**
 - ✦ Year 1: Define the landscape
 - ✦ Year 2: Develop a program plan
 - ✦ Year 3: Implement a pilot program
- ➔ **Existing Programs are Encouraged to:**
 - ✦ Maintain programs
 - ✦ Better evaluate programs
 - ✦ Consider ways to expand (examples given in FOA)

Helpful Resources

➔ **ACF – Data Explorer and State Profiles**

<https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/data#tab-ece-state-profiles>

➔ **ACF - Caring for Our Children Basics: Health and Safety Foundations for Early Care and Education**

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/caring-for-our-children-basics>

Conclusions

- Environmental exposures to children and staff in ECE programs are preventable with safe siting considerations
- ATSDR is creating the Choose Safe Places Guidance Manual to provide guidance on key elements of choosing safe ECE locations
- Safe siting programs can strengthen partnerships between child care licensing, health departments, and others
- Safe siting programs can be started with few resources and have positive impacts

Questions?



For more information, or if you have additional questions, please contact:

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