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Coach's Corner



SUMMER SAFETY

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It's that time of year again! The temperature is rising, school is ending, and summer activities are commencing! Many children will be spending more time outdoors enjoying all that the summer season has to offer. While this is a fun-filled and adventurous time of year, it also comes with some additional risks. But not to worry, we are here with some tips to ensure that your program has a happy and safe summer!



The best way to address summer safety is to prepare in advance. Many programs are shifting from their school-year planning to a more relaxed “summer camp” atmosphere. This is an opportune time to review summer safety guidelines with staff, families, and children. While there are plenty of program-specific things to consider, we will review a few general safety considerations.

HEAT EXPOSURE

It is important to monitor the weather during the summer to stay aware of any heat index warnings. These warnings indicate that it could be dangerous to have prolonged heat exposure. The heat index is determined by looking at the temperature and the relative humidity. Most smart phones have weather apps that can send alerts when the heat index is high.

Tip:

On days when the heat index is predicted to be high, take the children outdoors early in the morning. This will ensure that they have some time to enjoy outdoor play without the dangers of a high heat index. Another idea would be to go outside more frequently but in smaller intervals. There are many apps to download but some of the most popular ones are listed below:

- The Weather Channel
- AccuWeather
- Weather Bug

SUN PROTECTION

It's important for children to be protected from the sun when they are playing outside. For sunscreen, it is best to request that parents apply the sunscreen in the morning prior to drop off. Administrators can add this to the sunscreen policy. It is also important for each child to have their own individual bottle of sunscreen for reapplication during the day, as sunscreen should be reapplied every two hours. Be sure to have families complete the Medication Administration Record (as needed/emergency use) prior to using sunscreen.

Tip:

The sunscreen bottles can get a little slimy, making it hard to write names on them because the writing rubs off. Use a label maker or a piece of masking tape to write the child's name on the sunscreen bottles or put the child's name on the bottom of the sunscreen bottle. Be sure to store the sunscreen out of the reach of children. Some other ideas for sun protection can include sun hats or rash guard type swimsuits.

WATER SAFETY

Water safety is an important part of preparing for summer. Young children are at potential risk for drowning in as little as 2 inches of water. As per the DELACARE regulations, wading pools are not permitted. A good alternative would be a sprinkler, water table, or other smaller, individual containers of water. Remember, any type of water play requires vigilant supervision.

Incorporation Summer Safety into Daily Lessons

While focusing on preparing for summer activities and addressing any safety concerns, consider involving the children. This will help them to understand and take summer safety more seriously.

Summer safety rules

Create a list of summer safety rules for the classroom. Invite the children to help come up with the rules. Once you have completed the list, hang it in the classroom. Share the list with parents as well, so that they can reinforce the rules at home.

Summer safety kit

Another idea is to have the children help to create a classroom summer safety kit. Talk to the children about what should be in the summer safety kit. Some ideas may include:

- First aid items- bandages, anti-biotic ointment, instant cold packs, antiseptic wipes, etc.
- Bottles of water
- A few extra diapers, if applicable.
- Wipes
- Extra sunscreen
- Bug spray

Temperature check

Consider adding a thermometer (if possible) outside the classroom window. Each morning invite children to check the temperature and then talk about what that will mean for their day.

Activity Ideas

Typically summer curriculum is more relaxed than during the school year. This is a great time to introduce some new activities! Educators can also move tried and true activities, such as painting, to their outdoor space. Below are some activity ideas to add some variety to your summer planning!

Squirt gun painting

Grab some cheap water guns or spray bottles from the dollar store and fill them with watered-down paint. Put some white paper on the ground or attach it to a fence or easel and let the kids spray the paint!



Chalk obstacle course

If your program has a concrete area, create an obstacle course! Use the chalk to write or illustrate different actions for the children to do. If your program has school-age children, invite them to create the obstacle course. For toddlers, create a shorter, simpler obstacle course.

Break the ice

Freeze some small toys in ice cube trays or small cups. Let the children use toy hammers or sticks to try to break the ice and get the toy. This activity would be geared more towards older children as there could be choking hazards.





Flower Market

This activity is perfect for a rainy day. Grab some cheap, fake flowers from the dollar store and create a flower market in the dramatic play area. Have the children take turns making the bouquets and being the customers.

Paint with water

For toddlers who aren't yet ready for full-on water play, let them paint with water! Fill some small containers with water and give them paintbrushes. They can paint the concrete, fences, or even the play equipment!



Hopefully some of these tips will be helpful for summer planning! We wish all of our programs a happy and safe summer!

Professional Development (PD):

- Outdoor Classrooms: Wonder, Explore, Learn (Self-paced) - DIEEC
- Creating a Cost-Effective Outdoor Learning Environment for FCC Educators (Hybrid- Zoom and in-person) - DIEEC
- Multi-Age Nature-Based Learning for FCC Educators (Hybrid- Zoom and in-person) - DIEEC

to register for any of these workshops visit: www.dieecpd.org

Resources

- [Tips for Sun Safety- NAEYC](#)
- [Summer Learning- NAEYC](#)
- [Water Safety for Children- Zero to Three](#)
- [Summer Fun- Zero to Three](#)
- [Summer Safety Tips for Early Care and Education Programs- National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness](#)