

Pennsylvania Standard Area 7 Health and Safety

Early childhood education settings have a unique opportunity to influence children's healthy eating, physical activity habits and well-being. Teachers plan adequate opportunities for children to exercise and engage in active play. Teachers carefully plan menus that offer healthy foods and limit snacks and extras to nutritionally-appropriate selections. Teachers work with their program administrators and their families to introduce and sustain healthy choices and habits to influence children's ongoing development and school success. Teachers model healthy and safe practices and promote healthy lifestyles for children. Children's health, safety, and ability to learn are inextricably linked. Health and safety activities, integrated throughout the day, provide a means to support children's cognition.

Standard Area 7: Health and Safety

Key Competencies and Supporting Explanations

Standards

7a: Understand the importance of physical health and safety in creating environments that support young children’s learning and development.

According to The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC), “learning and health are interrelated” (2014, 3). Health-promoting environments early in life are critically important for building a strong foundation for learning. Basic physical health and safety management procedures contribute to the prevention of childhood illness and communicable diseases. A safe environment prevents and reduces injuries. Early childhood programs keep children safe when their facilities, materials, and equipment are hazard-free and all staff use safety practices such as active supervision.

7b: Understand and implement healthy nutrition practices that promote young children’s learning and development.

Nutrition is important at every age. Young children need proper nutrients to grow and stay healthy and strong. Nutrition for children can also help establish a foundation for healthy eating habits and nutritional knowledge that can apply throughout life. Proper nutritional practices afford children with more energy, a greater interest in learning and positively influences cognitive development and academic performance.

7c: Understand and support the connection between staff mental health and effective teaching practice.

Mental health is integral to living a healthy, balanced life. Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Research confirms the critical connection between the health and wellbeing of children and the adults caring for them. Because of this important link, it is essential that adults take care of themselves so that they are able to provide high quality care to the children in their lives (Devereux Foundation, 2020).

7d: Understand and support the connection between child and family mental health and positive learning experiences and environments.

Mental health, an essential part of children and family’s overall health, has a complex interactive relationship with physical health and the ability to succeed in school, at work and in society. These competencies assist educators in supporting the mental health of each and every child and family.

Standards and Competencies by ECE Designation

	ECE I	ECE II	ECE III
<p>7a: Physical Health and Safety According to The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC), “learning and health are interrelated” (2014, 3). Health-promoting environments early in life are critically important for building a strong foundation for learning. Basic physical health and safety management procedures contribute to the prevention of childhood illness and communicable diseases. A safe environment prevents and reduces injuries. Early childhood programs keep children safe when their facilities, materials, and equipment are hazard-free and all staff use safety practices such as active supervision.</p>	Identify policies and procedures that ensure all children’s maximum healthy participation within the classroom.	Explain policies and procedures that ensure all children’s maximum healthy participation within the classroom.	Evaluate policies and procedures to ensure all children’s maximum healthy participation within the classroom.
	Identify and follow sanitation practices that reduce the spread of germs.	Identify and follow sanitation practices that reduce the spread of germs.	Identify and follow sanitation practices that reduce the spread of germs.
	Identify essential health habits and provide daily opportunities for physical fitness activities (individually, age, and ability appropriate) for children that help them develop and maintain physical fitness.	Identify essential health habits and provide daily opportunities for physical fitness activities (individually, age, and ability appropriate) for children that help them develop and maintain physical fitness.	Identify essential health habits and provide daily opportunities for physical fitness activities (individually, age, and ability appropriate) for children that help them develop and maintain physical fitness.
	Develop and implement individualized plans that meet the health-related needs of children, by collaborating with families and other professionals.	Develop and implement individualized plans that meet the health-related needs of children, by collaborating with families and other professionals.	Develop and implement individualized plans that meet the health-related needs of children, by collaborating with families and other professionals.
	Describe the importance of and assist in the completion and maintenance of health information for children in the classroom.	Describe the importance of and assist in the completion and maintenance of health information for children in the classroom.	Describe the importance of and assist in the completion and maintenance of health information for children in the classroom.
	Identify and follow relevant laws and regulations related to child supervision practices to protect children and minimize risk.	Identify and follow relevant laws and regulations related to child supervision practices to protect children and minimize risk.	Identify and follow relevant laws and regulations related to child supervision practices to protect children and
	Describe and apply the procedures for reporting Identified health and safety risks in the environment.	Describe and apply the procedures for reporting Identified health and safety risks in the environment.	Describe and apply the procedures for reporting Identified health and safety risks in the environment.
	Arrange indoor and outdoor classroom environments that are physically safe and meet regulatory/safety requirements.	Arrange indoor and outdoor classroom environments that are physically safe and meet regulatory/safety requirements.	Arrange indoor and outdoor classroom environments that are physically safe and meet regulatory/safety requirements.

	Identify key components of an effective emergency preparedness plan.	Identify key components of an effective emergency preparedness plan.	Identify and evaluate key components of an effective emergency preparedness plan.
	Identify and follow current laws, regulations and professional obligations to report suspected child abuse and neglect.	Identify and follow current laws, regulations and professional obligations to report suspected child abuse and neglect.	Identify and follow current laws, regulations and professional obligations to report suspected child abuse and neglect.
	ECE I	ECE II	ECE III
7b: Nutrition Nutrition is important at every age. Young children need proper nutrients to grow and stay healthy and strong. Nutrition for children can also help establish a foundation for healthy eating habits and nutritional knowledge that can apply throughout life. Proper nutritional practices afford children with more energy, a greater interest in learning and positively influences cognitive development and academic performance.	Describe the dietary needs associated with age-related development and ways to accommodate children’s and families’ special needs and preferences, following what families practice at home.	Identify ways to ensure the provision of nutritious meals that meet required guidelines and accommodate children’s and families’ special needs and preferences, following what families practice at home.	Identify ways to ensure the provision of nutritious meals that meet required guidelines and accommodate children’s and families’ special needs and preferences, following what families practice at home. Educate and raise awareness with families about the importance of nutrition for optimal child development.
	Describe ways to provide safe, healthy, and enjoyable feeding and mealtime experiences, following what families practice at home.	Describe safe, healthy, and enjoyable feeding and mealtime experiences, following what families practice at home.	Describe safe, healthy, and enjoyable feeding and mealtime experiences, following what families practice at home.
	Describe and apply safe food handling procedures.	Describe and apply safe food handling procedures.	Describe and apply safe food handling procedures.
	ECE I	ECE II	ECE III
7c: Mental Health and Wellness: Staff Mental Health Mental health is integral to living a healthy, balanced life. Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Research confirms the critical	Develop self-care habits for one’s own well-being and to be better able to build responsive relationships with children, families and others.	Develop self-care habits for one’s own well-being and to be better able to build responsive relationships with children, families and others.	Develop self-care habits for one’s own well-being and to be better able to build responsive relationships with children, families and others.
	Seek ongoing support and guidance when feeling stressed and overwhelmed.	Seek ongoing support and guidance when feeling stressed and overwhelmed.	Seek ongoing support and guidance when feeling stressed and overwhelmed.
	Use reflective practice to understand own emotional response to work with children and families.	Use reflective practice to understand own emotional response to work with children and families.	Use reflective practice to understand own emotional response to work with children and families.

<p>connection between the health and wellbeing of children and the adults caring for them. Because of this important link, it is essential that adults take care of themselves so that they are able to provide high quality care to the children in their lives (Devereux Foundation, 2020).</p>			
	ECE I	ECE II	ECE III
<p>7d: Mental Health and Wellness: Child/Family Mental Health Mental health, an essential part of children and family’s overall health, has a complex interactive relationship with physical health and the ability to succeed in school, at work and in society. These competencies assist educators in supporting the mental health of each and every child and family.</p>	<p>Encourage families to communicate their needs and seek ongoing support when feeling stressed and overwhelmed.</p>	<p>Encourage families to communicate their needs and seek ongoing support when feeling stressed and overwhelmed.</p>	<p>Encourage families to communicate their needs and seek ongoing support when feeling stressed and overwhelmed.</p>
	<p>Engage in active listening and reflective practice when working with children and families.</p>	<p>Engage in active listening and reflective practice when working with children and families.</p>	<p>Engage in active listening and reflective practice when working with children and families.</p>
	<p>Assist families in accessing health services, social services and/or community supports for family well-being.</p>	<p>Assist families in accessing health services, social services and/or community supports for family well-being.</p>	<p>Assist families in accessing health services, social services and/or community supports for family well-being.</p>