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**Standards
for the
Regulation of
Early Childhood
Services
in Antigua
Barbuda 2008**
under the Education Act



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Regulation of
Early
Childhood
Services
in Antigua
Barbuda
2008

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INTRODUCTION

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES, STANDARDS AND INSPECTION CRITERIA FOR PROVISION FOR CHILDREN FROM BIRTH TO FIVE YEARS

- ▶ The provisions which govern the operation of Early Childhood Services (ECS) are set out in The EDUCATION ACT 2002. These provisions are designed to ensure that all service providers offer a safe and stimulating environment in which children can play and learn according to their individual needs

Who has responsibility

- ▶ With these primary responsibilities in mind, the following ECS Standards have been drawn up. The MINISTRY of EDUCATION has the responsibility for ensuring that all ECS Providers meet these standards.

Definition of Early Childhood Centre

- ▶ For the purpose of this document the term Early Childhood Centre will be used to refer to all facilities which provide learning support, care and development services to children under the age of five including pre-schools and day care centres.

Definition of licensed Provider

- ▶ The “licensed provider” is whoever is causing the ECS to be provided and may therefore be a person, a partnership, a group, a church, a committee, a non-governmental organisation or a company. Care will need to be taken to ensure that any application is made correctly as the licensed provider ultimately

bears the legal responsibility.

- ▶ The following list of statements represents the minimum standards to be applied by The MINISTRY OF EDUCATION and associated ministries and departments in deciding on the suitability of ECS provision for licensing under the EDUCATION ACT. They constitute the basis of the requirements imposed by the EDUCATION ACT 2002 on licensed providers of ECS.

Procedures

- ▶ Prior to licensing, applicants must be able to demonstrate how these Standards are to be met.
- ▶ Inspection of licensed ECS is the method of ensuring that providers continue to adhere to the standards contained in this document. The MINISTRY OF EDUCATION has a duty under the Act to ensure that each provision is inspected annually. It is a requirement of registration that the licensed provider co-operates with the Inspection Unit in arranging a date each year for the formal inspection within two months of the date first proposed. *Inspections will be done by a multi-disciplinary team comprising officials from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Fire Department and other relevant ministries and departments.*



- ▶ It is acknowledged that some centres already exceeds these minimum standards. The role of the inspectors under the EDUCATION ACT will be to encourage initiatives and practice developments which aim to improve standards.
- ▶ Where existing provision falls short of the standards, the role of the inspectors will be to negotiate changes with the licensed providers within realistic, jointly agreed time scales.
- ▶ The approach to licensing and inspection will be in the context of the wider framework of the EDUCATION ACT and the regulations and guidance governing its implementation.
- ▶ The MINISTRY of EDUCATION has approved a policy of evenhandedness'. This means that the standards required are the same for the governmental and the independent and non-governmental sectors. All will be inspected by these Standards and expected to comply.
- ▶ It is the responsibility of the licensed provider to ensure compliance with the statutory requirements of the legislation listed below.

(LAWS THAT APPLY eg Public Health, Child Welfare, Environmental Health, Building Regulations, Fire etc).

VARIANCES

- ▶ The EC Standards aim for a consistent level of practice within ECS provision. There must, however, be scope for a degree of flexibility in the application of the Standards. This can be achieved via a variance that can permit an individual provider to depart from the generally accepted Standard, where there is sufficient justification in order to fulfill the aims of the provision. (See Appendix 1).
- ▶ Any request for a variance to a ECS Standard must be made on the appropriate form by the service provider. The overriding criteria for consideration will be the welfare and best interest of the children.
- ▶ A variance can be made which will remain valid for the foreseeable future where this supports the aims and objectives of the provision. In other circumstances a variance can be made for a time limited period for example to allow time for already existing provision to improve its standards without having to cease operating.
- ▶ Licensing and inspection fees will be required.

Section 1: Staffing

Section 1: Staffing

Personal Suitability of Licensed Providers, Supervisory Staff/Teachers in charge and Staff Members.

1.1.1 The government has to satisfy itself that anyone who either applies for, or is licensed to be an ECS provider is 'fit' to do so; furthermore that any person employed or living in the premises is 'fit to be in the proximity' of young children.

1.1.2 Applicants for registration as providers of ECS will be required to furnish the names and addresses of two referees who can provide evidence of business competence and personal integrity.

1.1.3 In the case of an application from a company, committee or group, a list of the Board of Directors, officers or members of the group will be required, and a clear statement of who will hold responsibility for ensuring that the standards are met. This list will need to be updated annually.

Each member staff must model good deportment and appropriate behavior to the children.

1.1.4 Before appointment, the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda will vet all staff members and anyone who lives or works on the premises used, or who may come into regular contact with the children. This applies to such persons aged 16 years and over. The Royal Police Force of Antigua

and Barbuda will provide Certificates of Character to suitable applicants. Certificates of character should be reviewed on an annual basis.

1.1.5 Consideration will be given to any cautions, convictions or bindovers that have been disclosed and may subsequently be a reason for not registering. In the event of an ECS being proposed in an applicant's own home, checks will be made on every member of the applicant's household aged 16 years and over and any person aged 16 years and over who may come into regular contact with the children in the applicant's own home. No one under the age of **16 should be used to monitor children in a child care center.**

1.1.6 Applicants are advised that they would not be licensed if they or any person coming into regular contact with children on the premises has ever been convicted of any offence against children. Applications for licensing will also be declined if the applicant or anyone mentioned above has been convicted of any offence of a sexual nature or any serious violence or drugs related offence.

1.1.7 Licensed providers /supervisors and each member of staff must be able to demonstrate that they can cope emotionally and physically with the varying demands of caring for young children. They are required to have good health, be physically and emotionally sound in mind and character. Members of staff should be creative, flexible and energetic. Staff will be asked to complete a health statement that will need to be signed by their General Practitioner. Licensed providers must ensure all the staff members recruited are able to meet this requirement.

1.1.8 Licensed providers/supervisors must have a practical understanding of the needs and behaviour of children. Licensed providers/managers must ensure any staff they recruit, are suitable to care for, or come into regular contact with, children as per the profile in **Appendix 2**.

1.1.9 The licensed provider's/supervisor's attitude to discipline and control will be discussed by the inspector and guided by the provisions in **Appendix 3**. In addition their views on the importance of allowing children's individuality to be expressed and meeting their individual needs with regard to gender, religion, language, ability and cultural identity will be sought.

1.1.10 Licensed providers must be committed to providing an environment in which children can develop positive attitudes to differences of culture, language, religion, gender, and ability. They must appoint staff members who are able to carry out this commitment.

Staff to Children Ratio

1.2.1 The staffing ratio required will depend on the qualifications and experience of the staff employed, but will not be less than:

Age	Allowed	Desirable
Birth to 1 year	1:4	Desirable:1:3
1-2 years	1:6	Desirable:1:4
2-3 years	1:8	Desirable:1:5
3-5 years	1:15	Desirable:1:10

Where children with special needs are attending, higher staff ratios may be necessary and will be negotiated on an individual basis.

1.2.2 Where the service provided exceeds 3 hours in a day, and is provided outside of term time, there must be sufficient staff to provide the required ratios to cover staff breaks, shifts, sickness and holidays. Staffing ratios should be maintained at all times. Where this is not possible over lunch breaks, managers must ensure that the ratios are sufficient to enable the children to be cared for safely. Low supervision activities should be scheduled and there must be options to call on members of staff that are on a break, if they are needed.

1.2.3 There must be a minimum of two staff on the premises at all times, however few children are present. One of these members of staff must be qualified and nominated as the designated person in charge.

1.2.4 The supervisor must not be counted in staff/child ratios if the ECS has more than 25 places.

1.2.5 Support staff employed as *administrators, cleaners, cooks or handypersons must not routinely* be counted in staffing ratios. There must be sufficient support staff employed to avoid staff having to carry out tasks that are inappropriate to their role and responsibilities. Regular volunteers, or parents/guardians who are regularly supporting employed staff on a rota basis, may be included in the overall ratio, but at least half of the staff must be qualified (see 1 . 3)



1.2.6 The Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda must be informed of the proposed appointment of all staff prior to confirmation of their position, so that appropriate checks can be made. This also applies to regular volunteers.

1.2.7 As long as prior written consent to check is received by the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda, *new staff members may take up employment pending the outcome of the checks. If these checks indicate anything that would be contrary to the interests of children then the individual concerned would be contacted to discuss and/or confirm the details. If decided by the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda that this person was “unfit to be in the proximity of children under five”, it would be expected that employment or placement at the ECS would be terminated.*

1.2.8 The licensed provider/supervisor must maintain staffing levels and have a strategy for emergency cover.

1.2.9 Any difficulties experienced by the licensed provider/supervisor with regard to staffing and the adequacy of staff cover must be discussed with the Royal Grenada Police Force who may approve temporary arrangements.

1.2.10 When children of staff attend the setting, care should be taken to ensure that they are of an appropriate age so that they are safe and that the member of staff can carry out his or her duties towards the other children properly.

1.3 Qualifications of Staff

1.3.1 At least *half the staff must be appropriately qualified and experienced in working with children* less than five years of age whenever children are being cared for in the setting.

1.3.2 The Supervisor must be qualified as specified by the government as appropriate for the ECS. Appropriate knowledge or experience must include:

- *All aspects of young children’s play and learning*
- *The practical aspects of play*
- Organisational and financial management procedures*
- *Health and safety*
- *Food hygiene practices Nutrition*
- *Child protection issues*
- *Equal opportunities*
- *Working co-operatively with parents/ guardians, families and the community.*

1.3.3 Staff with food handling responsibilities must hold a relevant Food Handler’s Card

1.3.4 All staff must have an understanding of quality in child-care and education practice as set out in these standards.

1.3.5 It is desirable that the licensed provider will be experienced in child-care. If this is not the case, or the licensed provider does not wish to be the supervisor, responsibilities between him or her and the supervisor must be clarified as follows:

- The licensed provider is responsible, by the act of licensing, for ensuring that the ECS Standards are implemented on site.
- The supervisor is responsible for standards of daily care and education in the setting. The supervisor should also encourage and support the education and training of non-qualified staff and also ensure that appropriate training opportunities are available to all.
- For all other responsibilities, the differing roles should be clearly defined. Both supervisors and licensed providers must have some input into decisions on staff recruitment and budgets.

Where the licensed provider is a group, committee, organisation or company it must be made clear which designated person has the responsibility for overseeing the setting and how this will be carried out.

1.3.6 Specialist support to meet children's medical, speech and language or behavioural needs may be required, and it will be necessary for staff to liaise with relevant colleagues in other services.

1.3.7 For employment as a Pre-Primary teacher a person must have passed in at least 3 GCE or CXC O' Level subjects including English Language, or any other subjects or qualifications accepted by the Education Advisory Council.

Caregivers who provide care and development in the day care centres must have TVET Levels 1&2 or the equivalent.

1.4 Personnel Practices for licensed Providers of Early Childhood Services

1.4.1 The licensed provider must have a written personnel policy, setting out recruitment and selection procedures.

1.4.2 All staff must have a contract of employment and a job description. This must specify general and specific duties and accountability. There must be written disciplinary and grievance procedures. A form of written agreement must also be available for regular volunteers and students.


1.4.3 An induction process must take place that introduces new staff/volunteers/students to colleagues, children, parents/guardians, relevant agencies, policies and procedures. An induction pack is desirable to facilitate this.

1.4.4 The licensed provider and supervisor/ teacher in charge must ensure effective communication systems are in place to check they are meeting the aims of their setting. They will need both to plan ahead and to review the past. The systems should include staff meetings and individual supervision or appraisal.

1.4.5 The Supervisor/Teacher in charge must

Did You Know ?

- The Royal Antigua & Barbuda Police Force must vet all staff.
- A minimum of two staff must be on permises at all times.
- Support staff should not be routinely counted in staffing ratio.
- New staff members can take up duties pending check by Royal Antigua & Barbuda Police.
- All pre-primary teachers should have passes in at least 3 GCE or CXC O'level Subjects.



be concerned with providing a high quality service, and must, therefore, demonstrate at the annual inspection visit:

- The effective development of staff
- Effective staff supervision
- A system of planning and decision making which allows the views of all relevant persons to be heard
- Awareness of the need for staff to be able to work with and share respect for the families of the children attending the ECS
- Awareness of the need to work with other agencies such as Health and Community organisations
- A knowledge of relevant legislative requirements

1.5 Written policies and procedures

The setting must have clearly written policies and procedures, which are used to clarify and reinforce expectations and responsibilities of staff and thereby maintain good standards of practice. *These should include:* All staff must have full understanding of the policies, procedures, standards and regulations for early childhood settings. They should have some understanding of international agreements related to children's development e.g. the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

- Admissions (settling in) and Transition (moving on)
- Materials, equipment and room arrangement
- Daily routine, including before and after school arrangements
- Curriculum statement and policies
- Assessment (observation, record keeping, planning)
- Meal times and supervision of breaks
- Outings
- Team work
- Discipline
- Equal opportunities
- Confidentiality
- Special needs
- Partnership with parents/guardians (including PTA)
- Handling school funds
- Child protection
- Complaints
- Children's illness/medicine/accidents
- First aid and Infection control
- Emergency procedures and Fire precautions
- Drop off and pick up arrangements

The above list is not exhaustive, and providers may wish to include other areas.

Section 2: Child-care Practice

2.1 Equal Opportunities & treatment of all Children

2.1.1 Mandatory equal opportunities must be promoted for adults and children of both sexes with regard to employment, training and admission to the service provided.

2.1.2 All members of staff must treat the children and families, for whom an ECS is provided, with equal concern and, in doing so, must in the care that they give to each child, acknowledge and respect their specific needs with regard to religious persuasion, political persuasion, culture and linguistic background and gender and ability. They must attend and respond to children equitably and fairly.

2.1.3 All settings must show evidence of how they carry out the standards above. They must have a policy statement and guidance for staff members about how this should be implemented

2.1.4 It is important that children are called by their own names as they appear on their birth certificates, or by the names, or “nicknames”, agreed with their parents/guardians, and that this is not corrupted or shortened.

2.2 Children with Special Needs

2.2.1 Every child benefits from the stimulation he or she receives from contact with other children and those with a physical or learning disability are no exception. Children gain from planned care and education that integrates able-bodied children and children with special needs. This contact at an early age may facilitate understanding that all people have equal value irrespective of ability or mobility. Parents/guardians of children with special needs should be educated on handling children with special needs and may also benefit from the support they can gain from the setting.

2.2.2 All settings should be willing to consider children with special needs and ensure wherever possible that appropriate facilities, e.g. ramps, rails, conversion of toilets, wheelchair access, is available if existing physical boundaries permit. Higher staff ratios may be necessary and negotiated on an individual basis.

2.2.3 Where children with special needs are being integrated into a setting, the providers should consult and liaise with staff of special education institutions to assist them in identifying and assessing special needs children and in the development of relevant programmes for children and the sensitization of staff. Centres should have access to.

2.3 Discipline

2.3.1 Staff must treat all children with respect.



A child must not be smacked, shaken or treated roughly. There are no circumstances in which such a punishment can be justified and staff must be subject to disciplinary proceeding should such an occasion arise.

2.3.2 Staff must draw up guidelines for running the ECS that indicate what types of behaviour would be considered unacceptable and how such behaviour should be dealt with. *These must present a positive and consistent approach to discipline that is not destructive or damaging to the child.*

2.3.3 Parents/guardians must be informed about these guidelines and the setting's policy with regard to discipline.

2.3.4 Any action that is inhumane, degrading or humiliating must never be used.

2.4 Child protection

2.4.1 All members of staff have responsibility to be aware of the government's law and policy regarding Child Protection. This involves recognising, recording and reporting signs of child abuse and/or neglect (see Appendix 4).

2.4.2 Written internal procedures must be in place for staff to pass any concerns on to supervisors within the setting, so that they can be recorded and acted upon as appropriate.

All settings must have a mission statement

2.5 Confidentiality

2.5.1 Staff must respect the right of the child and his/her family to complete confidentiality unless there are child protection concerns, in which case the government's policy applies.

2.5.2 Confidential records, including computer records, must be secured for a minimum of five (5) years.

2.5.3 Care must be taken over the disposal of old records on children who have left the setting as these may contain confidential information. (See 5. 3. 3. Accident Records)

2.6 Partnership with parents/guardians

2.6.1 A policy of partnership between parents/guardians and the setting must be developed, offering parents/guardians a variety of ways to support and/or become involved in the setting's operation, as well as in the individual development of their own child.

2.6.2 Written information for parents/guardians must be available and include the following:

- ⇒ Name, address, telephone number of setting, with registration and insurance details
- ⇒ Names of the provider and the supervisor and qualifications
- ⇒ Admission criteria
- ⇒ Ages of children admitted and the

- number of places available
- Hours of opening and periods of closure for holidays
- Fees, methods of payment, arrears and non payment
- Attendance and health rules
- Settling-in procedure for new children
- Arrival and departure procedures
- Information on the curriculum
- What the children will do (activities, play materials and routines).
- Assessment procedures
- Arrangements for children with special educational needs
- Outings
- Discipline policy and behaviour guidelines
- Equal opportunities policy
- Child protection responsibilities
- Partnership with parents/guardians
- Arrangement for festivals and birthdays
- Illness/accident procedures
- Complaints procedures
- Any expectations of parents/guardians e.g. spare clothing, nappies, etc.
- Accessibility of other written policies and procedures
- Administration of medication
- Community development
- Disaster preparedness

2.6.3 Written placement agreements/contracts must be made and reviewed as appropriate.

2.6.4 Ways must be sought of sharing information, including those items listed above, with parents/

guardians, e.g. notice boards, newsletters, leaflets, parents'/guardians' meetings, etc.

2.7 Supervision

2.7.1 Children must be adequately supervised at all times (including meal and rest times and during outside play) in accordance with aforementioned staff ratios.

2.8 Physical Care of Children

2.8.1 Children must be physically well cared for. Particular attention must be paid to hair, skin and oral care of all children, as agreed with the parents/guardians.

2.8.2 Appropriate treatment for children with a physical complaint must be followed in consultation with parents/guardians.

2.9 Meals and Snacks

2.9.1 Meals must provide a healthy balanced diet and meet children's nutritional needs. *Care should be taken with regard to allergies and the use of additives.*

2.9.2 If EC provide meals, menus must be planned in advance and offer a range of foods that meet the medical, religious and cultural dietary requirements of children in the setting. The occasional provision of food from different countries and cultures gives positive recognition to children of that culture and also encourages children to learn, enjoy and respect

Did You Know ?

- All EC settings should consider children with special needs & where possible provide appropriate facilities.
- Corporal punishment is not allowed in EC settings.
- Staff are required to report signs of child abuse.
- Menus should be displayed for parents to see.
- Children should carry identification when going on outings.



other traditions and cultures. Menus should be in keeping with National Food guidelines and must be approved and/or monitored by Early Childhood Center Officials and/or Health Officers.

2.9.3 Eating styles should be culturally and socially appropriate. Children must be allowed to eat in a way they would naturally eat at home, e.g. spoons or knife and fork. This must be carefully discussed with parents/guardians as ‘conformity’ may be required when children leave the setting to attend school.

2.9.4 There must be sufficient space for the children to eat safely and comfortably in small groups.

2.9.5 Staff should eat with the children, with meal times being regarded as a time to talk and share news.

2.9.6 A menu must be displayed for parents/guardians to see.

2.9.7 Adequate contingency plans must be made to provide meals in the event of the planned menu becoming unavailable.

2.10 Outings

2.10.1 Planning for outings must ensure the safety of the children.

2.10.2 Staff members should have knowledge of local community resources.

2.10.3 Staffing ratios for outings will be dependent

on where the group is going and how they are getting there:

For local familiar outings	1 adult : 3 children (birth -5 years)
Special outings	1 adult : 2 children (2-5 years) or using public transport - 1 adult : 3 children (birth -2 years) 1 adult : 10 children (3-5 years)
Swimming	1 adult : 1 child (birth -5 years)

2.10.4 Children must wear identification in case they get lost. Some suggestions are:

- Identification pendants, necklaces or bracelets.
- Plan coloured badges, identifying the setting and giving the telephone number.

2.10.5 Careful consideration must be given in the planning of any outing to the need to take first aid equipment and qualified First Aiders. This will depend on the length of the outing and the availability of immediate and appropriate assistance. First Aid support must normally be taken on group trips outside the immediate locality.

2.10.6 A list of children taken on outings must accompany the group with a copy left at the setting.

2.10.7 Parents/guardians must give written consent or signed permission slips for outings. Specific consent for special outings will be needed and parents/guardians need to know when and where their children are going

2.10.8 All vehicles used should be fitted with seat belts that should be used. Booster seats and/or car seats should be provided and used as appropriate. Vehicles must be properly maintained and the drivers adequately insured.

2.10.9 Each adult must be clear which child he or she is responsible for. There must be register checks at the start of the outing and on leaving the destination, with regular head counts during the outing.

Section 3: Quality of Care and Educational Provision for children from birth to three years

Section 3: QUALITY OF CARE OF CHILDREN BIRTH TO 3

Factors that influence quality of care are:

- ↻ The relationships between adult and child
- ↻ The relationships between children
- ↻ Group size and number of staff

- ↻ Continuity, training and experience of staff
- ↻ Recognition of the child's developmental needs
- ↻ Quality of partnership between parents/guardians and staff
- ↻ Ability to structure and support the child's learning
- ↻ The activity programme, including elements of imagination, challenge and adventure.
- ↻ Equality of opportunity policy in employment and service delivery.
- ↻ Children's involvement in planning and choosing activities and projects, through observation of children's interests and in consultation with them
- ↻ Organisation, display and accessibility of equipment, toys and materials.
- ↻ Attention to health, safety and type of physical environment.

A licensed provider who decides to offer care for under 3's must ensure that the following criteria are satisfied.

3.1.1 Groups of children aged birth to 3 (0-3) must be cared for in their own room, with proper facilities for nappy changing and preparation of feeds and sterilisation of equipment close to it.

3.1.2 Staff rosters must be organised so that there is as much continuity of caregiver as is reasonable given the circumstances to ensure adequate staffing at all times.

3.1.3 Ideally child aged under 3 years should be looked after by the same person during each shift.

Section 3: QUALITY OF CARE OF CHILDREN BIRTH TO 3



3.1.4 The Supervisor and the staff looking after these children must have a knowledge of child development especially the very young

3.1.5 Nappy disposal must be by use of plastic bags and special refuse collection.

3.2 Interaction

3.2.1 Interaction between adults and children must be warm, natural and responsive. Children must be listened to and talked to with respect. Adults should extend children's thinking and learning by appropriate communication strategies.

3.2.2 An environment which encourages children to play and explore together, promoting collaborative activity, must be provided, as children learn from each other.

3.3 Organization

3.3.1 Each staff member should be able to work with each child. Through such continued contact caregivers are able to learn and respond to each child's individual needs.

3.3.2 The daily routine must be consistent, and offer opportunities for child-initiated and adult-initiated times, indoor and outdoor play, active and quiet times, and the opportunity to play alone or within groups.

3.3.3 Children must have opportunities for play which build on their own interests and experiences and are developmentally appropriate. To facilitate

this the play environment must be rich in learning resources, materials and equipment. These need to be available and accessible to enable choice, exploration and discovery, fostering each child's independence, problem-solving and decision-making skills. As a minimum, there should be a creative area (*sand, water, paints, malleable*), *role play area, quiet area (books, puzzles) and construction area (blocks, construction, small works)*. *Access to an outdoor area is essential for children looked after for longer than 3 hours a day.*

3.4 Physical resources

3.4.1 Toys and equipment must be in good repair, safe and sufficient for the number of children present. All edges should be blunt and not sharp. The materials chosen should not be made of hazardous substances or be hazardous for other reasons.

3.4.2 There must be sufficient floor space for uninterrupted play and low level storage to promote children's independence and choice. The use of rugs and cushions should be promoted to create cosy areas ensuring appropriate provision for children with allergies. There must be sufficient numbers of child-sized chairs and tables. There should be edges around learning centres and tables so that objects and liquids do not fall off.

3.4.3 Equipment and toys must be chosen to enable children to develop their social, emotional, cognitive and physical skills. Objects and teaching aids should be made accessible to children with visual impairments (embossed labels or symbols for

identification purposes, stored at child's level and in a consistent organised way). Real items and natural materials should be included as well as commercial toys.

3.4.4 Materials and equipment must be consciously drawn from a wide variety of cultures, and concepts common to all cultures should be considered (such as foods, music, dance, language, families, shelter, dress etc.) when providing opportunities for play.

3.4.5 There should be opportunities for learning about festivals from various cultures and major world religions, to include the involvement of parents and other persons in the community.

3.4.6 Books, posters, jigsaws, rhymes etc. must show positive images of various races and cultures and avoid racial stereotyping. This approach must be inherent in child-care practices, whether or not children from different cultures attend the setting.

3.4.7 The approach of staff to the children's use of play materials must be non-sexist and children of both sexes must be actively encouraged to use all the equipment and materials available. Children's preferences and not their gender must be the deciding factor in what they do.

3.4.8 There must be adequate equipment for outdoor play, on grassed or paved area as appropriate. Fixed climbing frames must be securely anchored to the ground. Surfaces in and around the building should be skid proof.

3.4.9 Where a government standard exists, equipment and furniture must conform to it.

3.4.10 Displays should be used to acknowledge and value children's work, promote self-esteem by the use of photographs and posters, enhance interests and promote discussion.

3.5 Learning Opportunities for the Under 3's

3.5.1 Adults must create an environment where the following learning opportunities can occur and then recognise, support and build on them when they do.

Emotional and Social Development

- Self help skills
- Development of sense of self
- Relationships with adults and peers
- Interests, making and expressing choices, preferences and decisions
- Confidence in his/her use of space and equipment both indoors and outdoors

Physical Development (gross and fine motor skills; hand/eye coordination)

- Awareness of hands, fingers, feet and toes
- Fine finger use, holding and using a range of tools
- Lying, rolling, sitting, reaching, crawling, walking, climbing, running
- Using wheeled toys, throwing, kicking, catching, balance.

Communication (early language and literacy)

- Use and understanding of spoken and or gestured language; eye contact, body language, indicating needs, expressing feelings, describing what is happening
- Making marks on paper (crayoning, painting, drawing) and other early attempts at

Did You Know ?

- Children should have a consistent daily routine.
- Children should have sufficient floor space for uninterrupted play.
- Centres should have adequate equipment for outdoor play.



expression and writing

- Looking at books and listening to stories, rhymes and songs
- Recognising pictures, symbols and letters, re-telling familiar stories.

Discovery and Exploration (very early maths, science and technology)

- Exploring objects with mouth, hands, feet, eyes and ears
- Awareness of colour, shape, size, number, volume and weight
- Exploring and noticing differences, similarities and changes in the properties of materials
- Finding out about things and how they work.

Creative Development

- Pretending and role play
- Music and movement
- Exploring construction, craft, natural and malleable materials

3.6 Observation, Record Keeping and Planning

3.6.1 Written observations of children's significant progress must be made. They must be dated and categorised into areas of learning to show where children are and inform planning.

3.6.2 Observations must be noted routinely by all staff and shared with colleagues in group meetings. Workers are responsible for recording observations and sharing them with parents/guardians. Where

any concern arises about a child this should be raised with the supervisor in the first instance.

3.6.3 There should be both long and short term planning to ensure and evidence a broad and balanced curriculum. Short term planning should identify the intended learning and the materials and adult support needed. It should be based on observations so as to build on children's interests and to enable continuity and progression. Specific plans to meet individual needs should be noted.

3.7 Rest periods

3.7.1 Adequate resting or sleeping facilities must be provided for all children. Mattresses and bedding must be clean and hygienic. Where children are not toilet trained, mattresses must be covered with a water proof covering.

3.7.2 The need for and value of adequate rest for each child needs to be discussed with parents/guardians individually. Particular care needs to be taken to discuss children who appear not to want to rest or sleep, if their parents/guardians are requesting that they do so.

3.8 Transition

3.8.1 Children's transition through the setting must be planned and prepared for through relevant communication and sharing of records between past and future worker and parents/guardians. Transitions should be gradual and planned individually according to the child's need.

Section 4: Quality of Education Provision for 3-5 Year Olds

4.1. Provision must be made to develop children's knowledge, understanding and skills in 7 areas of learning:

- Spiritual and emotional development
- Personal and social development
- Language and literacy
- Mathematics
- Knowledge and understanding of the world-- physical development
- Physical development
- Creative development

4.1.1. Spiritual and emotional development

All children need help and guidance in order to grow spiritually. They need guidance in order to develop healthy attitudes and capacity for reverence. They need to experience love, appreciation and gratitude to make their attitudes firm and stable in order to develop healthy relationships. An awareness of the importance of values, honesty, courage and justice would be more clearly exhibited among our children if they have knowledge of a supreme being.

A child's emotional development is crucial to his or her all round development. Emotional stability, confidence and a positive self-concept are central to a child's success both in and out of school. These

attributes are essential to the child in helping him to recognise, understand, express and control his or her feelings appropriately, and to guide him or her towards acceptance of them.

4.1.2. Personal and Social Development

A well-planned programme of personal and social development helps children to work, play and cooperate with others.

This area of learning encompasses important aspects of moral and ethical development, including the development of personal values such as honesty, fairness and respect and an understanding of self and of others. It should help children to show feelings of wonder, pleasure or sorrow. There should be opportunities for children to respond in different ways to their experiences of the world and to take part in appropriate celebrations and festivals.

High expectations for behaviour should be set. Well chosen stories and sensitive discussion of incidents that arise should help children to distinguish between good and poor behaviour to develop self control and a sense of responsibility, and to relate well to adults and their children.

The pattern of activities each day should provide opportunities for learning in which children work, talk and play alongside each other in small and larger groups, learning to take turns and share fairly when necessary. The range of activities should include some in which there is an evident expectation that children should concentrate, persevere and use their initiative.



During work and play, and in daily routines, children should be encouraged to develop personal independence, for example, in matters of dressing, hygiene and health.

Prayer, choruses, bible stories bible scriptures, flannel board character displays should be done by care-givers to ensure spirituality is addressed.

4.1.3. Language and Literacy

Language development and communication skills should be given a strong focus. Opportunities for children to develop and practise the four elements of language and literacy (*speaking, listening, reading and writing*) should have a high priority, with the emphasis on learning through talk. The choice of stories, songs and poems to support language and literacy can also make a powerful contribution to children's cultural and moral development.

Conversations with children should be in dialect and in Standard English, offering children plenty of opportunity to hear experience and speak in both languages. This process will ensure respect for and the development of expressive ability in both languages children need and use.

The staff should respond to children's spontaneous talk and questions and make timely interventions in children's play. In addition, the planning and teaching of the programme should allow children to:

- Participate in conversation, speaking confidently and clearly;
- Communicate with others in imaginative play;

- Speak softly and become increasingly aware of the need to control noise levels
- Use talk that is related to their own investigations;
- Listen to and make up stories, songs and poems;
- Re-tell and act out stories, rhymes and their own experiences;
- Plan and organise events and learn about time;
- Handle and look at books and share reading;
- Write, draw and paint with increasing control, including such features as the recognition and writing of letters and symbols and their own name.

Staff should engage children regularly in both planned and spontaneous conversations which help children to listen and respond appropriately. For example, they should take part in children's role *play, read and share books with individuals, and talk with children as they work about their drawing and their use of related symbols, letters and words.

Children will be at very different points in their language development. Nevertheless, the programme should encourage them all to use and enjoy books. There should be a comfortable book corner and listening area where children can have stories read to them by an adult or on tape, or where they can retreat and browse through books. Also, there should be a well resourced language arts area to encourage creative expression of stories they have heard.

4.1.4. Mathematics

The mathematical area of learning should be planned within three broad areas: *number; shape, space, colour and position; and comparison of measures, including time*. Every opportunity needs to be taken during practical activities to develop children's awareness and use of mathematical language for example, words like *more, less, fewer, how many, altogether, add, take away, share out, longer, shorter, before, after, between*.

An important element of young children's mathematical development is the exploration of everyday materials and equipment. Quite often, opportunities for counting or sorting, or discussion of shapes, sizes or of colours will arise as an incidental part of other activities: for example, making cakes or counting out the cups for snack time. Staff should capitalise on children's self-chosen activities: for example,

(1) encouraging children to compare the heights of brick towers;

(2) suggesting that they lay the table in the home corner for four people. These opportunities should be exploited as fully as possible.

The program of activities should allow children to:

- develop their mathematical vocabulary through taking part regularly in discussion about a variety of mathematical ideas and activities;
- sort and match objects, compare them and put them in order;

- count objects and read and write numerals;
- learn about the number system: for example through handling money, taking part in number games, singing and reciting number songs and rhymes, and listening to stories;
- talk about and solve simple mathematical problems that arise in practical situations, particularly those that involve making comparisons between numbers or measures or adding more or taking away;
- develop their spatial awareness through movement and handling objects;
- develop their sense of time through planning activities, looking back at what's completed and forward to what is to come
- Learn about properties of shapes and relationships between shapes and describe them clearly and precisely: for example, through using building blocks, equipment for matching shapes, jig-saws or construction kits.
- Make and describe mathematical patterns (in shape and colour).

4.1.5. Knowledge and Understanding of the World

This area of learning concerns children's developing knowledge and understanding of their environment, other people and features of the natural and man-made world. It provides a foundation for historical, geographical, scientific and technological learning and can contribute to children's awareness of social issues. It should show the relationship between the degradation of the environment and the increase in disasters, and how children can protect the environment.





The activities planned for this area may be connected to a theme such as 'our homes' or 'things that grow'. Walks and visits are often included to encourage children to observe, ask questions and talk about features of their local community and environment. The stories children are told, their imaginative play, and their discussions with adults all play a part in helping them towards a better understanding of their world and their part in it.

Most children naturally show an interest in their environment, people, their families and homes, and the community in which they live. They are also curious about the past. They are usually keen to use computers, telephones, programmable toys and other technology. The program of activities should provide a range of opportunities for children to:

- Investigate and talk about similarities and differences in their environment, including textures and colours;
- Talk about where they live, and about other people in the Centre and community;
- Handle artefacts and talk about past events;
- Explore the natural environment;
- Experiment and try things out;
- Ask questions about why things happen and how things work, and suggest their own explanations; Hear stories of the history of disasters of the community in which they live, so as to better understand the reality of their immediate world, and the way in which disasters do not discriminate between or spare children
- Choose suitable materials and use simple tools appropriately to make things;

- Use a tape recorder and other technology (such as computers if possible) and talk about their experience; and
- Talk about and record their observations in pictorial form

4.1.6. Physical Development

This area focuses on children developing physical control, mobility, spatial awareness and manipulative skills in both indoor and outdoor environments.

Young children are interested in increasing their own physical skills, and often exploit opportunities adventurously. Effective provision builds on these trends through indoor and outdoor activities that are safe while encouraging the children to respond confidently to physical challenges.

Teaching should meet young children's need to be able to move around easily. There should be a carefully planned outdoor area and internal space where this can happen. Staff should be teaching and supporting children in their use of large apparatus and helping them to gain confidence in using the space and equipment imaginatively. Staff should also be showing children how to use tools, equipment and materials carefully by working with them.

If settings do not have easy access to outdoor play space, arrangements should be made to enable children to use large apparatus and to move with confidence, control and awareness of space.

The programme of activities should provide a range of opportunities for children to:

- Use small and large apparatus and equipment;
- Use a range of tools and materials safely;
- Improve their fine manipulative and co-ordination skills;
- Run, jump, hop, skip, stride, climb, balance, throw, and catch;
- Play group games, especially ring games;
- Develop increasing control over their physical movements;
- Use apparatus and equipment, tools and materials with confidence and imagination.

4.1.7. Creative Development

This area of learning focuses on developing children's ability to express ideas and feelings in creative ways. It includes a wide range of experiences in art, craft, music, dance, story making and imaginative play. These activities can make a strong contribution to children's cultural awareness and development.

The programme of activities should provide a range of opportunities for children to respond to and represent their ideas through *drawing, painting, use of malleable materials, retelling stories, imaginative play, dance and music, puppetry and folklore*. The programme should include a wide range of materials and opportunities to use their senses, and to express their feelings and ideas in creative ways: for example, by acting out a story they have been told, by using paint, glue and other materials to create

a large 3D model, or by moving to or creating their own music.

The activities should encourage children to:

- Express their ideas and feelings using sound, colour, texture, shape, form and space in two and three dimensions;
- Use their senses to respond to a range of stimuli; use a range of materials, tools and other resources.

4.2. There should be long term planning supplemented by more detailed short-term plans.

4.2.1. Overall planning of the educational programme

Planning can take many forms. The most effective plans are written down and are often displayed for parents/guardians to see. Plans are at their best when they;

- Identify the purpose of activities clearly and what children are intended to learn;
- Summarise what children are to do, how they will be grouped, how staff are to be deployed and the resources needed;
- Show how children's knowledge and understanding can be extended and the work adapted to suit children who learn at different rates or who have particular needs;
- Are based on the assessments made by staff of children's progress





4.2.2 Balance

The educational programme should be broad, balanced and coherent and should cover seven areas of learning. There should be balance both within and across the seven areas, with sufficient emphasis and time given to language and literacy and mathematics.

In addition to plans that describe the educational programme and activities, there will be further evidence in observed activities, in children's work on display, in photographs of events and in records.

4.2.3. Continuity and Progression

The programme should take account of the ages and stages of development of different children, including any who have special education needs. It should build systematically on what has gone before and children's existing knowledge, understanding and skills.

The continuity of the programme should help every child to make steady progress. It should provide opportunities and experiences, both indoors and outdoors, that will form the foundations of learning at compulsory school age (five years old).

4.3. Assessment, designed to note each child's knowledge, understanding and skills in 7 areas of learning, should be used to inform planning.

4.3.1. Effective ways of assessing children's attainment and progress.

Careful assessment based on regular observation is the key to ensuring that children make good progress. Assessment is better when it is based on the shared observations of all who work with the child, including parents/guardians. It should help staff and parents/guardians to listen and respond to children, encourage and praise them, build on their responses and steer them towards new learning or clearer understanding, both in the setting and at home.

4.3.2. Use of assessment information in planning

Day to day interactions with children should be used to help staff plan suitable activities and tailor subsequent work to build steadily on children's previous successes.

In some settings children are given a wide degree of choice for much of the time, so as to use their time effectively and to capitalise on their interests. This can mean, however, that even where a broad and balanced curriculum is offered, the "take up" by children may be narrow. The monitoring of children's activities through observation and discussion is crucial to ensuring breadth, balance and continuity for all children as they progress.

The setting should identify children's special needs, and procedures should result in effective intervention and support for the children. The regular assessment of children with special needs should be used to help them work steadily and progressively towards clear learning targets which, in some cases, may be identified in individual education plans.

4.3.3. Records

Records should be kept which provide information on children's progress across the curriculum for parents/guardians and the next setting as well as to help staff monitor the breadth and balance of the curriculum.

4.4. Staff expectations for progress and attainment

4.4.1 Staff should have well-matched expectations for children refined by information from parents/guardians about children's achievements at home. Some children may have considerable facility with language and/or with number. They may be capable of reading and writing simple words, phrases or sentences, of counting reliably to 10, 20 or more, reading and writing numerals and responding correctly to questions of adding one or two more, or taking one or two away. Planning and teaching should enable these children to make progress.

4.4.2. Staff should show awareness of gender issues. Staff should make sure that all children take part in activities and address any situations where individual girls or boys dominate or are passive.

4.4.3. Staff should show awareness of the significance of cultural difference

4.5. Teaching methods used to promote children's learning

4.5.1 Children should be grouped to allow for

individual and small group as well as large group activities.

4.5.2 Resources should be organised to allow independent access for children. Consideration should be given to allow children to develop their areas of interest. The range of materials, equipment and apparatus should be sufficient and appropriate to support good teaching in each of the seven areas of learning. The resources should support the learning of all children, including any with special needs. The accommodation and play space, indoors and outdoors, also need to be suitable.

The basic range of learning resources should include:

- An attractive and comfortable place to sit with a variety of books,
- A writing area with a variety of paper and tools to make marks and write.
- An imaginative play area with a variety of resources to promote and extend role play;
- Dry and wet sand and a water tray, each with suitable equipment for filling, pouring, measuring, and so on;
- Growing and living things to observe and care for;
- Collection of interesting objects to sort, count, feel and describe;
- Equipment to promote early mathematical and scientific investigations;
- A variety of small and large construction equipment;
- Cooking equipment and materials;
- A range of creative media such as paint, clay wood and junk materials;

Did You Know ?

- During work & play children should be encouraged to develop personal independence.
- Children should be engaged in both planned & spontaneous conversation.
- Providers should keep records which shows children's progress across the curriculum.



- A range of musical instruments (home made, durable) and tapes for listening to music;
- Artifacts and pictures which reflect both the local and the wider community.

The indoor area should be enhanced with labelled displays at children's eyeline which include *children's work, pictures and posters, letters of the alphabet, a number line with the numerals 1 to 10, and mini-exhibitions* with which children can interact. The outdoor area should, if possible, have different surfaces and a garden area for planting and growing things, and be equipped with climbing and balancing apparatus and wheeled toys. Where there is no direct access to outdoor space, arrangements should be made by the setting to ensure opportunities are provided for children's physical development.

4.5.3. Display should be used to stimulate as well as highlight children's representational skills.

4.5.4. Staff should use good interpersonal skills to encourage children to communicate their own ideas.

4.5.5. Opportunities for active, first-hand experience both indoors and outdoors should be provided.

4.6. Links

4.6.1. Effective links between parents/guardians and staff should be established which contribute to children's learning, and allow for informal feedback.

Where staff and parents/guardians and community work together to support a child's early childhood education, the results can have a lasting effect on the child's achievement. To be successful, this partnership needs to be a two-way process with chances for knowledge, information and expertise to flow both from the home to the setting and from the setting to the home.

Communication with parents/guardians is critically important. There should be a notice board displaying helpful information about the setting and its daily events. There may be booklets for parents/guardians about the setting and how to help their child at home. These written forms of communication need to be complemented by informal and verbal communication initiated by staff as frequently as possible. Parents/guardian should be welcomed into the setting and encouraged to share their particular insights and expertise. Many settings actively promote a partnership with parents/guardians by encouraging them to help in rooms and with educational visit. Parent should participate in monitoring children's progress in communication and in the development of communication skills at home.

4.6.2. Professional contact with other relevant agencies (*local, regional and international*) should be encouraged.

4.6.3. Information about children should be shared with the previous and next settings. All records should be passed to the school as part of the preparation process for transition.

4.7. Systems For Monitoring The Quality Of Teaching*

4.7.1. Systems for monitoring the strengths and weaknesses of teaching should be in place.

The success of a setting depends, in part, on the ways in which the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching are monitored and assessed. Monitoring should also cover planning and assessment, since these are both part of teaching.

Much of the monitoring may be informal. Staff may work together in the same room and will be generally aware of what others are doing. There may be regular, informal meetings in which staff discuss children's responses to the activities provided and in which they plan the next phase of work. Joint work of this nature helps to ensure consistency in planning, teaching and assessment. It is more successful if from time to time, individual members of staff are given feedback by the supervisor of the setting on the quality of their work.

A more formal approach occurs when the supervisor of the setting regularly collects and studies teaching plans and records to see how consistent they are in quality. The formal approach may include annual appraisal, or regular supervision sessions, in which the supervisor of the setting has a discussion with an individual member of staff about his or her work and training needs. Targets may be set as an outcome of the discussion. Appraisal may include a formal observation of the work and teaching of the member of staff.

The setting may have a development plan or action plan which sets out the steps that are being taken to improve provision. This is usually based on a formal or informal evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the planning and teaching, or on inspection findings.

*(*Teaching in this context is not confined to teachers but describes the role the adult plays in extending the child's learning)*

5. RECORDS

5.1. Children's records

5.1.1. Individual children's records must include:

- The name, address, telephone numbers and date of birth of each child attending the setting
- Position in the family.
- The name, address, telephone numbers and other relevant contact information of the child's parent (s)/guardian(s).
- The name, address, telephone numbers and other relevant contact information of the parent(s)/guardian(s) at work where applicable.
- The name, telephone number and other relevant contact information of an additional emergency contact person.
- The name(s)/and address (es) of other adults authorised to collect the child
- The name, address and telephone number of the child's doctor





- Details of immunisations, allergies and relevant information on any medical condition(s).
- Details of religion
- Details of any specific needs in relation to language, physical needs and development.
- Notes on children's progress across the curriculum (see section 4.1.4)
- Details of a child's dietary requirements
- The child's starting date
- Signed consent from parent(s)/guardian(s) for outings and to seek emergency medical treatment.
- Details of conditions requiring particular care e.g. epilepsy, sickle cell, asthma.

5.1.2. A daily attendance register of children must be kept.

5.1.3. A record must be made of all medicines/ treatments to be given with signed consent from parent(s)/guardian(s)

5.2 Staff records

5.2.1. Individual records must be kept on all people employed at the setting. These must include:

- The person's name, address and telephone number
- Details of all relevant qualifications and experience
- An emergency contact number.
- The person's starting date
- Personnel information. Eg, references, salaries etc. (This may be kept separately

off the premises, but will need to be available for inspection)

5.2.2. For volunteers and students a record must be kept of their name, address and telephone number.

5.2.3. The name and telephone number of the licensed provider responsible for maintenance of premises will need to be easily accessible.

5.2.4. A record must be kept of the names of any people living on the premises

5.2.5. Supervision and training records need to be kept for the staff, volunteers and students.

5.2.6. A daily staff attendance register must be kept.

5.3. Accident/incident records

5.3.1. All accidents/incidents to children and adults must be recorded detailing:

- Date, time and place
- Name of injured person
- Circumstances of accident/incident
- Nature of injury sustained
- Action taken and by whom
- Confirmation of notification to parents/ guardians

5.3.2. *The Ministry of Health must be notified immediately of any:*

- Outbreak of notifiable diseases, including

- food poisoning
- Serious accident or injury to staff or child
- Sudden death

5.3.3. Accident/incident records relating to any incident in which a child has received an injury should be kept for the licensed provider's own protection until there is no risk of claim against the licensed provider and/or their insurance.

5.3.4. A list of agencies involved in emergency response, with the names of contact persons and telephone numbers should be displayed prominently.

5.4. Miscellaneous records

5.4.1. The Certificate of Registration must be displayed at all times.

5.4.2. A record of fire drills and tests of for safety equipment must be kept in a book retained solely for this purpose.

5.4.3. Details of maintenance contracts for fire fighting equipment systems must be available for inspection.

5.4.4. A record must be available detailing each piece of portable electrical equipment in the setting with the appropriate test and repair dates.

5.4.5. Menu records must be kept.

5.4.6. There must be evidence of a written tenancy agreement (if applicable).

5.5. Access to records

5.5.1. Parents/guardians and staff members must be made aware of their rights of access to their records and how to exercise that right.

5.6. Insurance

5.6.1. All ECS should have in place Public Liability Indemnity Insurance to provide protection in the event a school child, or staff member is injured or dies on the premises of the school or while taking part in a school organized activity.

5.7. Complaints and suggestions

5.7.1. A standardized national procedure for handling complaints will be established. Every ECS establishment must have a written copy of this formal Complaints Procedure explaining how complaints from users and representatives will be investigated, redressed and recorded. This must be made available to all users.


5.7.2. This procedure must contain a statement to the effect that if the complainant remains dissatisfied, they can take their complaint to the MINISTRY OF EDUCATION. Telephone numbers must be given on the written procedure.

5.8. Financial records

5.8.1. Fees taken from parents/guardians for individual children must be recorded by the supervisor and held safely on a day to day basis.

Did You Know ?

- Records must be kept of all children.
- Records must be kept of all staff employed at the centre.
- Records must be kept of all accidents/ incidents of children
- Records must be kept of all menus
- Certificate of registration must be displayed at all times
- Records of all fees collected must be kept.



5.8.2. Basic book-keeping of income, expenditure transactions, records of bank deposit and withdrawals, bills received and payments made, records of donations and fundraising receipts must be maintained by the supervisor on a day to day basis.

5.8.3. Day to day transactions and financial record keeping must be monitored and approved by the licensed provider.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY

6.1. Health and Safety Provisions

6.1.1. The ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA LABOUR CODE governs health and safety at work and applies to all persons at work, including the self-employed. i.e, the working licensed provider of the settings. Licensed providers will need to be aware of the provisions as they relate to both management and staff of settings. The guidelines of the Ministry of Health regarding safety precautions to be followed regarding transmittable diseases must be followed at all times (see Appendix 5).

6.1.2. The licensed provider must have a written Health and Safety Policy for the setting. He/she should ensure that this has been read by all staff.

6.1.3. A manual must be provided containing clear operating instructions for the plant, e.g. duties, responsibilities and liabilities for staff. This should specify comprehensive planned maintenance and monitoring procedures.

6.1.4. The licensed provider/supervisor must ensure that there are adequate supplies of appropriate protective clothing available to staff at all times. In particular, *disposable gloves must be used for tasks involving possible contact with body fluids*, e.g. blood, faeces, urine, etc.

6.1.5. All portable electrical equipment (*anything which can be plugged into an electrical socket outlet, whether fixed or mobile*) must be inspected and, if necessary, tested by a qualified and competent person, before use and subsequently every six months, to comply with the EDUCATION ACT and a register kept of equipment and inspections.

These regulations apply to all equipment within the setting, including staff property.

6.1.6. All cleaning and corrosive materials must be kept in a locked cupboard, which should be out of the reach of children.

6.1.7. It is the responsibility of the licensed provider/supervisor to ensure that manufacturers' instructions (Hazard Data Sheets) are readily available on all chemicals used in the settings.

Treatment or spraying with pesticides should be done on weekends or holidays, allowing 48 hours or longer before the site is in use again. Operators should ensure that equipment is cleaned after spraying is completed. Licensed providers should check with the pesticide board as to recommended use of individual pesticides.

6.1.8. The licensed provider/manager must ensure

that all staff wear shoes suitable for working safely.

6.1.9. No items may be stored on or under the stairs.

6.1.10. The Health and Safety Policy must cover how to care for those with Aids, HIV or any other transmittable disease such as Hepatitis B. It must also cover issues arising when an employee or child is known or not known to have a transmittable disease. (See Appendix 5)

6.2. Emergency procedures

6.2.1. Hazard identification and risk assessments should be carried out and inform the selection of the most appropriate response measures.

6.2.2. All settings must have written plans and procedures to be activated in the event of an emergency. These should include:

- Clearly established escape routes
- Designated safe place to meet in the event of an emergency
- Availability of basic disaster supplies such as First Aid Kits that contain, inter alia:
 - Sterile adhesive bandages
 - Latex gloves
 - Thermometers
 - Sissors
 - Non-prescribed drugs such as paracetamol. Laxatives should not be used on children unless prescribed and authorization for use given by parents.

6.2.3. Should a serious accident/illness requiring urgent medical attention occur, staff must operate the following procedure:

- One person to stay with the injured child.
- One person to telephone for an ambulance and the child's parent(s)/guardian(s); it may be appropriate to transport the child direct to hospital.
- At least one person, preferably more, to take care of the other children.
- If the ambulance arrives before the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) the person who has been looking after the child should accompany him/her in the ambulance if at all possible.

6.2.4. All accidents/incidents must be recorded in an Accident/Incident Book stating the time and the nature of the accident/incident and the action taken.

6.2.5. The Ministry of Health and the Police Department must be notified within 24 hours of any accident to children requiring hospital attention.

6.2.6. Accidents which do not require medical treatment must be reported to parents/guardians on the day they occur and, except for minor cuts and bruises, notification should be immediately following the accident. Regular drills in responding to emergencies must be conducted.

A ready to implement counseling service plan should be prepared. This should include names of organisations and personnel from which the





necessary appropriate help can be obtained.

6.3. First aid

6.3.1. A fully equipped First Aid Box must be provided which is clearly labelled and readily visible and available, but not accessible to the children. (See Appendix 6)

6.3.2. One or two members of staff must be trained and qualified to administer first aid at the “First Response” level (through training from St John’s Ambulance, Red Cross or equivalent). One should always be present on site.

6.4. Hygiene Practices

6.4.1. Staff must be rigorous in their hand washing procedures and in their use of disposable plastic gloves to protect against a range of minor and some more serious infections. *Body fluids and body products must be regarded as potentially infectious and the same control of infection procedures should be used for everyone.* The following universal precautions for dealing with blood and body fluid spillages are suggested:

➤ At all times be “skin-care conscious”. Check for cuts/breaks in your skin and always ensure that you have a waterproof dressing adequately covering the break. (Staff who has an eczema condition /affection must always wear gloves). Staff must ensure that the children are briefed regularly on not touching blood spills and other body fluids (but must get help from caregiver/ teacher).

- Always use disposable gloves when dressing cuts, wounds, etc. or when cleaning up spillages of blood. Disposable cloths should be used for cleaning such spillages.
- Spillage of blood/body fluids must be cleaned up promptly using 1 part bleach to 10 parts water, or hot soapy water (too hot to put a hand in) on carpets and fabrics.
- Disposal of materials soiled by body fluids and blood should be by the use of plastic bags and special refuse collection, or by incineration.
- Always wash hands thoroughly in warm, soapy water after dressing an injury and disposing of gloves, cloths, etc.

6.5. Medicines and illness

6.5.1. The only medicines that should be given are those prescribed by a physician. When medicines are given at the setting there must be:

- Written consent from parents/guardians
- A record kept of what was given, when and by whom
- Safe storage
- Refrigerator

6.5.2 If a child becomes unwell at the setting, his/her parents/guardians must be contacted and the child given extra care and attention in a quiet place. All centres must have the description and treatment of illnesses common to children. Examples of illness common to children or common symptoms include fever, vomiting, minor cuts

and bruises. *(This information must be provided by the Ministry of Health).*

6.5.3 The Medical Officer of Health or the Chief Health Inspector must be contacted about suspected food-related outbreaks. All settings should have information on the nature of food borne illnesses and should be prepared to provide the following information when reporting suspected food-related outbreaks:

- Time when vomiting or any other symptom started;
- What food had been eaten;
- What time food had been eaten – at home or at school;
- If at school, did child share with other children.

Settings can obtain advice from the Ministry of Health on this and any other health matter.

6.6. Fire precautions and evacuation procedures

6.6.1 The Fire Officer will make recommendations regarding necessary fire exits and safety equipment and these must be strictly observed.

6.6.2 There must be an alarm system or means of raising the alarm. The Emergency Alarm must be painted RED.

6.6.3 The licensed provider/supervisor must ensure that all staff, users and children are aware of the procedures to be adopted in the event of fire. These procedures must be taught in detail and pictures

affixed throughout the centre. *These must include a minimum of two ways to get out of the building (the two escape routes) and a safe meeting place outside the building (Rendezvous)* Therefore, fire drills must be carried out regularly *(at least once a term and on one other occasion in the year for pre-schools, quarterly for all year round provision such as day care centres)* so that all children and staff are familiar with the evacuation procedure.

6.6.4 The teacher or care-giver must take with him or her the daily register of children on evacuation of the building. The register should be called as soon as children have reached the Rendezvous. Particular care must be taken by all staff to assist children of this age group to evacuate, remain in the meeting place, and to respond to their names on evacuation because of the disorientation and fear caused by emergencies. Children should be required to hold hands and to sit. Parents need to know the safety zones in advance.

6.6.5 Children should be taught “STOP, DROP, ROLL” (see Appendix 7) as the emergency procedure to follow in the event that their clothes catch fire, and “STAY LOW AND GO” as the most effective means of avoiding smoke inhalation.

6.6.6 Children should be taught the life saving procedures to follow in the event of all emergencies – floods, fire, crime, civil unrest such as hurricane or earthquake. The Disaster Co-ordinator and the Police should be consulted as to the most appropriate procedures to adopt both for this age group and for the particular location of the centre concerned **(National Office of Disaster Services, American Road, St. John’s, Tel. # 562-1551). Safety and**





evacuation procedures should positively be reinforced continuously.

6.6.7. Copies of the standard instructions for summoning the Fire Brigade must be prominently displayed in each Centre. These must include the following emergency numbers: 911, 462-0044.

6.6.8. Soft furnishings should be fire retardant.

6.6.9. All fire fighting equipment must be checked *every six months*.

6.6.10. All electrical fittings near wash hand basins must comply with the recommendations of the Officer in Charge of the Antigua Fire Service.

6.6.11. Escape routes and fire exits must be labelled and kept free from obstructions. *There must be separate entrance and exit.* The labels should be written and in symbol form, and should be embossed for identification purposes by the visually impaired. They must provide an adequate escape route to a width required for access by groups of children and by those requiring wheelchair access.

6.6.12. Documentary evidence of an annual maintenance programme for gas appliances must be available. Fixed electrical wiring must be inspected *every six months*.

6.6.13. All fans, air condition units, vacuum cleaners, cookers and other electrical equipment must be properly turned off after use.

6.7. Safety precautions

6.7.1 Glass doors and windows at low level must be fitted with safety glass or covered with Safety film.

6.7.2 Staircases must be of a safe design with a banister and uprights appropriately spaced. Stairgates may be required.

6.7.3 Power points within children's reach must be fitted with child resistant covers.

6.7.4 Children's access to the kitchen must be restricted

6.7.5 All dangerous substances and equipment must be inaccessible to children, i.e. medicines, household cleaners, bleach, knives, etc. Members of staff should have somewhere safe to store their personal possessions as these may contain dangerous items (eg cigarette lighters).

6.7.6 First floor windows must be fitted with opening restricters

6.7.7 Step ladders must be properly stored away after use.

6.7.8. Door handles must be raised where necessary. Children must be given clear and simple explanation of all safety rules.

6.8 Hazardous Chemicals

6.8.1. Storage areas should be isolated from

working areas where possible. Exposure to heat or sunlight should be avoided.

6.8.2. Employee chemical hazard training and documentation

6.8.3. Chemicals should not be stored on floors and benches since they could be knocked over.

6.8.4. Hazardous chemicals must be stored carefully and must be labeled. They should not be placed in soft-drink bottles or water bottles.

6.8.5. Cabinets should be properly vented

6.8.6. The quantity of hazardous chemicals on the premises should not exceed 3 months supply.

6.8.7. No potentially dangerous chemicals should be kept on the premises.

6.8.8. Any chemicals (disinfectants, bleach etc), should be stored in sealed and locked containers beyond the reach of children.

6.9 Smoking

There should be **NO SMOKING** at any child care service center.

6.10 Pet hygiene

6.10.1 Any pets are to be kept healthy and safe without a hygiene risk to children.

6.10.2 Pets are not allowed in the kitchen.

Regular drills in responding to emergencies must be conducted.

7. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

7.1. Premises

7.1.1. The licensed premises must be under the sole control of the licensed provider and must not be used for any other activity during the day or for any activities at any other time which are likely to cause deterioration of the premises or equipment, or to affect the general running of the setting.

7.1.2. In residential/business property, any other accommodation must be occupied by persons connected with the setting or it must be self-contained. Separate entrances will normally be required.

7.1.2.1. All early childhood settings should be located in areas which have minimal vulnerability to flooding and storm surges. They should not be located in areas close to industries which use hazardous materials, substances or chemicals. It is the responsibility of the licensed provider to ensure that the premises are not vulnerable to such hazards and to take appropriate measures to reduce vulnerability, including moving to a more appropriate location where necessary. The National Disaster Co-ordinator should be consulted for advice where necessary at the National Office of Disaster Services, American Road, St. John's, Tel.# 562-1551.

Did You Know ?

- Providers must ensure there are adequate supply of appropriate protective clothing for all staff.
- All EC settings must have written plans to be activated in the event of an emergency & children should be taught what to do in an event of an emergency
- Any accidents to children requiring hospital attention must be reported to the Ministry of Health & to the Police within 24hrs
- All EC settings must have a fully equipped First Aid Box & at least one staff member trained to administer First Aid at the Response level.
- Smoking is not allowed at any EC centre



7.1.3. All external and internal building work, decorating, fitments, etc must be completed before registration and before children are admitted. This includes any work required by the Police Officer with responsibility for Fire Safety and the Environmental Health Officer. All work must conform to the necessary Building Regulations.

7.1.4. The premises must be maintained in a good state of structural repair and decorative order. All walls and ceilings should be made of suitable materials that can be easily cleaned and painted in light bright colours.

7.1.5. External areas of the premises must be secure (i.e. they must be enclosed /fenced and the dust must be kept to a minimum).

7.1.6. The premises must be kept clean, light and decorated in a child-centered way.

7.1.7. New buildings must be built so that they are fully accessible throughout for those with special needs and disabilities. Special installations should include ramps and rails fitted where needed (*entrances, toilet areas etc*).

7.1.8. A prominently displayed, easily readable sign should display the name of the setting.

7.1.9. There must be safe and secure methods of checking who enters the setting.

7.1.10. The building must be adequately secured when not occupied

7.1.11. There should be separate provision made in the environment for quiet and noisy play

7.1.12. There must be a separate room for children aged 3 years and under with individual nappy changing and food preparation areas close by.

7.1.13. There should be an office and separate toilet facilities for staff.

7.1.14. It is desirable that there should be somewhere where parents/guardians can meet together.

7.1.15. There must be access to outside play space and preferably this should include a grassed area.

7.1.16. Children must not be able to leave the premises unsupervised. External doors and windows and any exits from the outside play space must be childproof. Doors and windows should be meshed to prevent insect infestation and will also promote proper ventilation) windows must be childproof. Gates and doors must open outwards and properly latched.

7.1.17. There must be somewhere for children to hang/ put their bags.

7.1.18. Embossed labels or symbols should be used for identification purposes to ensure that all children, particularly those with visual impairments, are able to locate their possessions and the learning materials easily.

7.1.19. There must be storage available for supplies, cleaning materials, outdoor equipment and buggies/ pushchairs.

7.1.20. The physical environment, internal and external, must be kept clean on a daily basis and free from animals (*unless pets are being kept in which case regulations in section 6 above apply*).

7.2. Space standards

7.2.1. The following space must be provided:

The number of children that can be cared for on the premises will be agreed based on the floor space available.

7.2.2. Free space is defined as clear, usable play space and is usually calculated as the total floor area minus one-third for fittings and storage units, unless there are none in the area in question. This calculation is discretionary.

Age of Children	Amount of free space per child
Birth – 2 years	3.7 sq. metres(40 sq. ft.)
2 – 3 years	2.8 sq. metres(30 sq. ft.)
3 – 5years	2.3 sq. metres(25 sq. ft.)

7.2.3. When children with special needs are attending, these space standards would be negotiated on an individual basis.

7.2.4. It is preferable that ground floor accommodation is provided for children in the setting, but where this is not feasible children must always be accompanied up and downstairs.

7.3. Ventilation and lighting

7.3.1. All rooms used by children must have adequate ventilation so as to provide a fresh supply of outside air.

7.3.2. Exhaust from combustible equipment should not vent into classrooms

7.3.3. The temperature in classrooms should be maintained between 730F and 790 F to allow for thermal comfort.

7.3.4. Usable areas must have natural light.

7.3.5. The lighting system must provide good lighting throughout. Special attention must be paid to toilets, stairs and corridors.

7.3.6. Luminaries should be constructed for ease of maintenance, cleaning and to suite the ceiling system.


7.3.7. The levels of artificial lighting should accord with prescribed standards. Fluorescent colours should be used where necessary to give ease of access to children with visual impairments.

7.3.8. The use of mercury vapor, metal halide and other lamps with the potential to cause harm should be avoided, especially when ultraviolet filters are not installed.

7.3.9. Inspection and maintenance record must be kept.

Did You Know ?

- All internal & external buildings work must be completed before applying for registration of EC centre.
- All EC centres shall have a separate room for children 3 years & under.
- All EC centres should have an office & separate toilet facilities for staff.
- Where an EC setting has upstairs & downstairs, children must always be accompanied up & down the stairs.
- Centres providing meals must be licensed with the Ministry of Health



7.3.10. School should be provided with natural and artificial lighting.

7.4. Bathroom facilities

7.4.1. There must be *one toilet for every fifteen children, with a minimum of two toilets being provided separate from each other, one for each sex.*

The toilets should be child sized with partitioning for privacy, plus extra potties as appropriate. A staff toilet should be separately provided, one for every ten staff. *Pit latrines are not acceptable.*

7.4.2. There must be one hand basin for every ten children and appropriate hand drying arrangements.

7.4.3. There must be an adequate supply of running water for washing.

7.4.4. There must be adequate storage for creams/lotions and space for clothes etc.

7.4.5. There should be a children's bathroom on each floor that has a children's playroom.

7.5. Kitchen facilities

7.5.1. Premises providing food (other than simply drinks and biscuits) must be licensed with the MINISTRY OF HEALTH under the PUBLIC HEALTH ACT. New premises must register at least 28 days prior to opening. All kitchens must meet the requirements of the PUBLIC HEALTH ACT and have the facilities to:

- ensure and provide for the proper cooling of foods;
- ensure and provide for safe hot- holding practices;
- ensure and provide for safe cold-holding practices;
- ensure and provide for the thorough and safe cooking of potentially hazardous foods;
- ensure and provide for safe thawing of potentially hazardous foods;
- ensure and provide for safe heating and reheating of potentially hazardous foods;
- ensure against and prevent cross-contamination;
- prevent contamination by workers;
- ensure and carry out safe and sanitary operations;
- protect food from contamination and spoilage;
- maintain a clean food safety environment especially tableware, kitchenware and equipment;
- ensure for the safe storage of foods (freezer, refrigeration and dry storage);
- provide separate sanitary facilities for male and female;
- provide adequate hand washing facilities;
- provide for the sanitary storage and disposal of solid waste;
- ensure the treatment and disposal of wastewater (sewage);
- ensure the treatment and disposal of grease ;
- provide for sound structure and repair of facilities and the equipment;

- generally ensure that foods are kept clean, separate raw and cook foods, cook food thoroughly; keep foods at safe temperatures and use safe water.

7.5.2. *Each kitchen area shall be provided with at least the following equipment:*

- A stove
- A refrigerator with a thermometer either built into the unit or provided separately.
- A double compartment sink with draining board and a portable water supply
- A wash hand basin provided with water, or soap, and disposable paper towels, or other suitable hand drying facilities.
- Adequate work surfaces that must be smooth, impervious and capable of being easily cleaned. Laminate type finishes with edging strip or stainless steel, are preferred.
- Separate cutting boards and utensils for preparing raw and cooked foods
- Sufficient crockery and cutlery which is in good condition
- Adequate storage for cold, frozen and dry foods.
- Refuse bins with fitted lids.

7.5.3. *A written schedule must be provided to include the following:*

- All surfaces to be cleaned
- The frequency of cleaning
- The material and method used for cleaning
- The staff responsible for cleaning

7.5.4. Food handlers must wear clean, washable overclothing whilst preparing food. This overclothing

must be stored separately from normal clothing. Food handlers should also remove all jewelry when handling food and avoid using nail polish or false nails and will be required to:

- Maintain personal cleanliness
 - Proper bathing
 - Hair washing
- Wear proper work attire
 - Clean hat or hair restraint
 - Clean clothing
 - Appropriate shoes
 - Removing jewelry
- Follow hygienic hand practices
 - Hand-washing
 - Proper use of gloves

7.5.5. There should be no wash cloths or rags for universal use by all students – except if students are asked to bring along their own wash cloths/rags. In that instance it must be changed regularly.

7.5.6. Smoking is prohibited on the premises.

7.5.7. All workers at EC setting must have a food handler's card, and food safety training. Details of these courses may be obtained from the Central Board of Health. *Also all cooks must have medical clearance.*

7.5.8. Food handlers must inform their employer (licensed/provider/supervisor) at once if they, or any of their immediate family is suffering from diarrhoea and/or vomiting, and they should not prepare meals





until given medical clearance. Kitchen staff must also inform their employer if they are suffering from septic cuts or sores, boils, whitlows and any discharge from the eye, ear or nose and employers must monitor this very carefully. This is essential to prevent the spread of infection to the children. If in doubt, licensed providers/managers should contact Environmental Health.

7.5.8 Food should be stored in clean and covered containers.

7.6. Laundry facilities

7.6.1. A laundry area must be provided if laundry is washed on the premises

7.6.2. Laundry equipment must be located in such a position that soiled articles, clothing and linen are not carried through areas where food is stored, prepared, cooked or being eaten.

7.6.3. A suitable method of dealing with soiled clothing must be approved by the MINISTRY OF HEALTH.

7.6.4. A wash hand basin with water, soap, and towel must be provided within the laundry area.

7.7. Water, utilities and maintenance

7.7.1. Procedures to control pest infestations, including mosquitoes, roach and rats, must be implemented safely.

7.7.2. Garbage must be securely covered and stored in an animal tamper proof facility. Garbage should be disposed of in plastic bags before being placed in the garbage facility.

7.7.3. Garbage should be collected by the Solid Waste Management Authority or other company for disposal at the Cooks Sanitary Landfill, after children have left the premises.

7.7.4. Garbage facility and storage areas should be disinfected twice weekly.

7.7.5. Water should be available on site and be pipe borne from an approved source.

APPENDIX 1

PROTOCOL FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS TO APPLY FOR A VARIANCE TO THE REGISTRATION AND INSPECTION STANDARDS

A variance is an exception to a standard. It can be a permanent exception agreed in a particular set of circumstances. This protocol does not cover disagreement about the setting of timescales in order to achieve standards.

Application for variances to a standard will not be accepted in the following circumstances:

- If the standard is directly linked to a legislative requirement.
- If the variance requested would involve the MINISTRY OF EDUCATION condoning the delivery of poor physical or emotional care to an individual service user or group of service users.

Any request for a variance to a standard must be made on the appropriate form by the service provider.

Each request for a variance must be on a separate form.

The request must clearly state what type of variance is being applied for and the reasons why.

The application will initially go to the MINISTRY OF EDUCATION for decision

If agreed, all variances will be reviewed annually.



APPLICATION FOR A VARIANCE FROM STANDARDS:.....

NAME OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTING:.....

PREMISES ADDRESS AND TEL. #:.....

NAME OF LICENSED PROVIDER:.....

NAME OF SUPERVISOR:.....

LICENSED AS A:.....

STANDARD TO WHICH A VARIANCE IS APPLIED FOR:.....

(Please state section, page, title and number)

APPLICANT'S NAME:.....

POSITION:.....

DATE OF APPLICATION:.....

REASONS FOR THIS APPLICATION:.....

Signature of Applicant:..... Date:.....

DECISION OF.....(NAME)

Signature:..... Date:.....

APPENDIX 2

The profile and preparation of persons providing care and learning experiences for children requires:

- A warm, nurturing, pleasant and caring disposition
- Capacity to attend and respond to all children equitably and fairly, without discrimination
- Good interpersonal and communication skills
- Ability to work in and contribute to a team
- Good health physically and emotionally, sound mind and character
- Good deportment and appropriate behaviour modeling for children
- Tolerance and acceptance of individual differences
- Energy, flexibility and creativity

- Knowledge and understanding of:
 - the policies, procedures, standards and regulations for early childhood settings
 - the international agreements related to children's development e.g. the Convention on the Rights of the Child
 - the characteristics and development of young children and how to plan for them
 - knowledge of child development of infants and toddlers where staff are working with children two years old and under

Ability to:

- support a learning environment and schedule of activities to encourage discovery, choice and independent learning
- learn/be trained in key areas such as extending children's learning, early detection of special needs, management of challenging behaviours and support to children through difficulties in their lives
- Teaching or care assistants in early childhood settings further require the ability to work under the supervision of a certified caregiver or teacher.
- Staff further require successful completion of secondary education and prior certification in early childhood care, education and development at the appropriate level as follows:
 - Certification at tertiary level for the management of services for children from 3-5 years of age (e.g. TVET Level 3; Associate/Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Development/ Education)
 - Certification as a teacher who is qualified to provide a programme of learning and development in early childhood settings for children 3-5 years old, specific to each country e.g. National Diploma in Early Childhood Education
 - Certification as a caregiver for providing care and development in early childhood settings for children from birth to school entry e.g. TVET Levels 1 & 2
- Regular upgrading of skills and competencies

APPENDIX 3

The management of positive discipline practices and challenging child behaviours requires:

- Identification and encouragement of children's positive behaviours
- Encouragement to use social graces and good manners
- Encouragement of self regulating behaviour through focusing and maintaining attention, persisting at tasks and gaining control of physical impulses
- Active encouragement of peer interaction and inclusion of children who appear isolated
- Encouragement of the development of cooperative skills and how to take turns
- Prompt recognition of conflicts and negative peer interactions and intervention to assist children to identify and label the problem and find solutions
- Written policies regarding discipline and punishment that are discussed with every parent, assistant and member of staff, including measures to deal with contravention of policies and procedures
- Expectations of children's behaviour are communicated to parents verbally and in writing
- Expectation of children's behaviour, including clear instructions and the setting of limits, are given to children appropriate to their age and understanding
- Disciplinary measures are explained and discussed with children prior to action being taken in order that children understand that there are consequences for unacceptable behaviour
- Redirection and positive guidance in addressing challenging behaviours, using a soft firm tone of voice, to assist children to identify and label unacceptable behaviours
- Time out is used to address inappropriate behaviours
- No corporal punishment, physical or emotional abuse, physical or emotional neglect, is used at any time, nor is it threatened.
- Physical restraint, in accordance with agreed training and procedures, can be used by a senior staff member where a child is creating a danger to himself or herself or to others and when all other disciplinary measures have failed
- An identified staff member within the setting with responsibility for behaviour management issues and has the skills to support staff and access expert advice if ordinary methods are not effective with a particular child
- Policies detailing persistent challenging behaviours and how the setting should deal with them, including referral to specialist assessment and treatment services, are documented and discussed with parents and staff

APPENDIX 4

CHILD PROTECTION – A GUIDE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICE PROVIDERS

It is important when considering the possibility of child abuse to respond appropriately. ECS Providers can play an important role in protecting and helping children. However, it is equally important that all factors are considered before further action is taken.

The Citizens Welfare Division (Chief Welfare Officer), Cnr. Redcliffe Street and Corn Alley, Tel.# 562-5495 should be contacted in cases of suspected child abuse.

A child may be deemed in need of care or protection if she or he is being abused. It is important for early childhood service providers to be alert to the signs of abuse and to take appropriate action when concerns arise. *It is important to be aware that the definition of abuse in relation to children includes neglect and abandonment also.*

The main forms of child abuse are:

Physical abuse:

This occurs when adults deliberately injure or hurt a child by hitting (with their hands, stick or strap), shaking, squeezing, burning with a cigarette or holding the child against a fire or biting. If a child has been given alcohol or inappropriate drugs or poison, this is also classified as physical abuse.

Attempted drowning (adults have been known to hold a child's head under the water for periods of time as a form of punishment) or suffocation are also forms of physical abuse.

Sexual abuse:

This is when boys and girls are abused by adults who use these children to satisfy their own sexual needs or those of onlookers. This includes not only sexual intercourse, but also fondling, oral sex, anal intercourse and masturbation. Child pornography and prostitution are also included as well as showing children pornographic magazines or videos.

Emotional abuse:

Persistent coldness, hostility or rejection by an adult, particularly one in a close relationship with a child such as a parent or care-giver will damage the child emotionally. Being constantly shouted at threatened or taunted can have an adverse affect on the child's development.

Neglect:

This is when the child's basic needs are not being met perhaps through lack of food, medical attention or appropriate care for skin. Children may also be constantly left unattended. Failure or refusal by adults to give their children love and affection is also emotional abuse.

What are the signs of abuse?

It is impossible to be certain that child abuse has taken place. The check-list below is not exhaustive, and is only an indication that abuse might have taken place.

Some signs of abuse:

- Unexplained failure to thrive
- Loss of weight
- Burn marks, especially cigarette burns or marks that would be caused by prolonged contact with an object
- Bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if these are on parts of the body not normally injured in accidents, e.g. trunk, lower back, inner thigh.
- Bite marks- especially adult size
- An inappropriately dressed or ill-kempt child
- Dirty or smelly children
- Sexually explicit behaviour (e.g. playing games and showing awareness which is inappropriate for the child's age)
- Continual masturbation, aggressive and inappropriate sex play
- The child only seems happy with you
- Does not trust adults, particularly those who are close
- "Tummy pains" with no medical reason
- Eating problems, including over-eating, loss of appetite
- Disturbed sleep, nightmares, bedwetting
- Running away from home, suicide attempts, self inflicted wounds
- Reverting to younger behaviour, depression, withdrawal
- Relationship between adults and children which are secretive and exclude others

Once gain it is important to stress that the above signs do not necessarily indicate that a child is being abused. However, if you are concerned then you will need to take further steps to protect the child

What should you do if you suspect abuse?

Firstly if you as a ECS Provider are concerned about a child's behaviour or an injury, you should ask the parents/ guardians for an explanation. If you are not satisfied with the explanation given then you should approach a child-

care professional at the MINISTRY OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION.

If you suspect child sexual abuse, or serious physical abuse you must contact a child-care professional to discuss your concerns, before raising them with the child's parents/guardians. This may be a difficult decision for you and it may conflict with your aim of working in partnership with parents/guardians. For some investigations it is important that parents/guardians are not pre-warned of concerns as this may provide an opportunity to 'agree a story' with the child before an investigation. You may quite properly though need to clarify matters with a parent before confirming or removing any provisional suspicions you may have of sexual abuse.

Following investigation, if a child's name is placed on the Child Abuse Register of Antigua and Barbuda there will be frequent monitoring of the child and the ECS provider may be asked to assist with providing both care and monitoring.

APPENDIX 5

POLICY ON COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

A communicable disease is an illness caused by the transmission of an infectious agent or its toxic product from an infected person, animal or inanimate reservoir to a susceptible host.

Transmission may be direct or indirect. Furthermore, an organism may have more than one mode of transmission:

- Direct transmission occurs when the reservoir and the susceptible host are in contact or close proximity.
- Indirect transmission occurs when the reservoir and the susceptible host are separated.

It is recommended that child care providers contact the nearest Health Center or Medical Station immediately to report any outbreak or suspected outbreak of a communicable disease at a child care center or school. Local health personnel will note the information and provide any needed assistance.

The following is a list of common reportable communicable diseases

- Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)
- Chicken pox
- Conjunctivitis.
- Dengue
- Diphtheria
- Food borne Disease

- Gonococcal Infections
- Hepatitis (all types)
- Malaria
- Measles (Rubeola)
- Meningococcal Infections
- Mumps
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
- Poliomyelitis, Paralytic
- Rabies (human)
- Rubella (German Measles)
- Rubella Syndrome, Congenital
- Scabies
- Syphilis
- Tetanus
- Tuberculosis
- Typhoid Fever, Cases and Carriers
- Yellow fever

IMMUNIZATIONS

(a) Prior to admission to a child care center, children shall be immunized according to the National Immunization Program. The required immunizations for admission to, and attendance at, a public or private elementary or secondary school, child care center, day nursery, nursery school, or family day care home, shall be those set forth, according to age, in Table 1.

(b) The Public Health Law requires that:

Any pupil seeking admission to a given public or private elementary or secondary school, child care center, day nursery, nursery school, family day care home, or development center who lacks documentation of having received all the required vaccine doses against poliomyelitis, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, measles, rubella, Haemophilus influenza type B, mumps and hepatitis B as specified in Table 1, and has not obtained a permanent medical exemption or a personal beliefs exemption to immunization, may be admitted conditionally if:

- (1) He or she has not received all the immunizations required for his or her age group but has commenced receiving doses of all the vaccines in accordance with Table 2, is not currently due for any doses at the time of admission (if he or she is due for any doses at this time they must be

obtained before admission), and the pupil's parent or guardian is notified of the date by which the pupil must complete all the required immunizations in accordance with Table 2; or

- (2) He or she is under age 18 months and has received all the immunizations required for his or her age group but will require additional vaccine doses at an older age, and the pupil's parent or guardian is notified of the date by which the pupil must complete all the remaining doses when they become due in accordance with Table 1; or
- (3) he or she has obtained a temporary medical exemption from immunization, and the pupil's parent or guardian is notified of the date by which the pupil must complete all the required immunizations when the temporary exemption terminates; or

TABLE 1. IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Age	Vaccine	Doses Received	Remarks
Two (2) months	1. Polio* 2. DTP/Hib/ Hepatitis B**	1st dose	
Four (4) months	1. Polio * 2.DTP/Hib/ Hepatitis B**	2nd dose	If a child is given the (1st) and (2nd) doses HIB, Hep B and DPT and returns to clinic after a year continue with 3rd dose. Do not start over from 1st dose again
Six (6) months	1. Polio* 2. DTP/Hib/ Hepatitis B**.	3rd dose	
1 year old	MMR		
18 months	1. Booster Polio 2. Booster DTP	1 dose 1 dose	Only one dose Only one dose
4 years-5 years	1. Booster Polio 2. Booster DT 3. MMR		These boosters doses should be given before children enter primary school for the first time.
14 – 15 years	Booster Tetanus/ And Diphtheria		Continue booster every 10 years or as required

* Trivalent oral polio vaccine (TOPV)

(d) The licensed provider shall be permitted to exempt a child from immunization requirements provided that one of the following criteria is met and the related documentation is kept in the child's file:

(1) A physician provides a written statement that an immunization(s) should not be given to the child and specifies how long this exemption is expected to be needed.

(2) The child's parent or guardian provides a written statement that immunizations are contrary to his/her personal or religious beliefs.

(e) As required by law a child who does not meet any of the requirements in the Sections above shall not be admitted to a child care center or school.

(f) The licensed provider (i.e. Nurse or Doctor), shall document each child's immunizations and shall maintain such documentation in the center or school for as long as the child is enrolled.

(g) Each child care center or school shall report to national and/or local health departments on the immunization status of new entrants annually or when needed to determine immunization status such as during an epidemic or potential epidemic.

ALL STAFF MUST ALSO BE FULLY IMMUNIZED

DAILY INSPECTION FOR ILLNESS

(a) The licensed provider shall be responsible for ensuring that children with diarrhea and other obvious symptoms of illness including, but not limited to, fever or vomiting, are not accepted.

(1) Additional attention shall be paid to children who:

(A) Have been absent because of illness.

(B) Have been exposed to a contagious disease.

- (b) The licensed provider shall develop and implement a written inspection procedure that shall include the following:
 - (1) No child shall be accepted without contact between center staff and the person bringing the child to the center.
 - (2) The person bringing the child to the center must remain until the child is accepted.
 - (A) After the child has been determined to be without obvious signs of illness and has been accepted, the center shall require that the person sign the child in.

ISOLATION FOR ILLNESS

- (a) A center shall be equipped to isolate and care for any child who becomes ill during the day.
 - (1) The isolation area shall be located to afford easy supervision of children by center staff.
 - (2) The isolation area shall be equipped with a mat, cot, couch or bed for each ill child.
 - (3) The isolation area shall not be located in the kitchen area.
- (b) The child's parent or guardian shall be notified immediately when the child becomes ill enough to require isolation, and shall be asked to have the child removed from the center as soon as possible.

OBSERVATION OF THE CHILD

- (a) The behavior and health of the child shall be continually observed throughout the period of attendance.
- (b) Any unusual behavior, any injury or any signs of illness requiring assessment

and/or administration of first aid by staff shall be reported to the child's parent or guardian and recorded in the child's record.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

Staff and children must observe hand washing guidelines at appropriate times including:

- 1 Before and after eating or handling food
- 2 After using the toilet or changing diapers
- 3 After handling body fluids or dressing a skin infection.

Adequate provision must be made in the E.C. Centres to allow children to receive psycho- social support and Counseling.

Programmes must include activities which will involve children and help to reduce trauma damage.

APPENDIX 6

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES – FIRST AID LIST

Your First Aid box should contain:

Item	Minimum quantity
1. Accident record book	
2. Assorted sterile hypoallergenic plasters	20
3. Sterile eye pads	4
4. Individually wrapped triangular bandages	3
5. Melolin sterile dressings – small	5
6. Melolin sterile dressings – large	1
7. Micropore tape	
8. Tube gauze (01) and applicator (for fingers and toes)	
9. Small packet of sterile gauze (for cleaning up)	
10. Disposable gloves	
11. Small plastic bag e.g. freezer bags for burns, disposal of dressings, taking samples to hospital	
12. Scissors – blunt ended	
13. Tweezers	

NB: Please ensure that you are aware of any allergies to the above products. The contents of your First Aid box should be checked regularly. It is important to record all accidents to children and notify parents/guardians. If you have any difficulty in obtaining the above items, please consult your pharmacist for advice on equivalent items.

APPENDIX 7

FIRE PROCEDURES FOR SMALL CHILDREN

General Safety Precautions

A FIRE PLAN MUST BE PREPARED AND THE FOLLOWING MUST BE

CONSIDERED:

All corridors must lead directly to an exit or to other corridors that lead to an exit.

1. Exit stairways and passage ways must be unobstructed and should not be used for any other purpose, for example, STORAGE.
2. Doors swinging into corridors that are not recessed must swing 180 degrees so that they stop against the wall and do not restrict the corridor.
3. All banners, signs and similar materials should be flame retardant and should not obstruct or cover exit doors, signs or other egress components.
4. All exit doors must be accessible, unobstructed and, if locked, all relevant keys must be made available to all staff members at all times.
5. All facilities should be equipped with a fire alarm system and a fire extinguisher
6. There should be periodic checks to ensure that protective covers are in place on electrical receptacles in rooms that children use.
7. All facilities should have smoke detectors and an automatic sprinkler system.
8. For evacuation purposes in the case of a fire, while speed is important, it is also critical to concentrate on procedures for ensuring an orderly evacuation.

Evacuation Procedures In The Event Of a Fire

1. Supervisors and teachers should remain calm.
2. Sound emergency alarm to alert everyone.
3. Cut off the electrical mains.
4. Call the Fire Department at telephone numbers 911; or 462-0044/460-0354.
5. Locate an exit away from the fire.
6. Put children in single file (one line), keep them calm and guide them through the exit.
7. If the building is engulfed with smoke you should get everyone to keep very low and crawl outside.
8. If anyone's clothes is on fire, he or she should STOP, DROP and ROLL.
9. Locate and gather all personnel (children and teachers) in a safe meeting place outside of the building and away from the area under fire.
10. Take a roll call at the meeting place and make sure that everyone is accounted for. If anyone is not accounted for, please notify the Fire Department immediately upon their arrival.
11. Do not return to the building once you get out and do not cause or allow anyone to return.

Ministry of Education
Church Street,
St. John's
Antigua and Barbuda

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