

FAMILY BULLETIN

A newsletter for parents, families and care providers from PacificCARE

Enriching the Lives of Children and Families



IS YOUR CHILD CARE LEGAL?



by Kathy Torhjem, Licensing Supervisor, VIHA Central/North

One of the biggest decisions you will make as a parent is choosing appropriate care for your young children. If you are fortunate enough to have supportive family members living nearby, your children may be lucky enough to be cared for by someone you and they already know.

If, however, like most parents you are going back to work when your child is still very young and you do not have available family living close by, then you will be looking to your community for support in finding suitable child care.

In British Columbia, any one who provides care to three or more children not related to the caregiver must be licensed under the *Community Care Facility Act*. Licensing officers are employed by the Health Authority to administer this legislation. Just like you are not able to drive a car unless you have a valid driver's license, so, also, you may not provide care to more than two children (or the children of one family) unless you have a child day care license.

When looking for appropriate care for your children, parents may be wondering what it is they should be looking for. The *Community Care Facility Act* and the *Child Care Licensing Regulation* set minimum standards for the health and safety of children. Licensed child care providers are required to be in good health. They must also have obtained a criminal record check. In addition, they are assessed by licensing officers to ensure they have the training and

experience to meet the needs of young children. Reference letters are also reviewed and a valid first aid certificate is required.

The home or facility in which care is provided must also meet basic health and safety standards. Caregivers are expected to follow practices of good hygiene, ensure nutritious meals are provided, practice positive guidance of children's behavior, and provide programming that meets the developmental needs of young children. Daily outdoor play is also a requirement.

While parents are the best monitors of their child's care in that they are in the facility on a daily basis, they can also feel confident that when their child is in a licensed care facility, licensing officers are also monitoring the facility to ensure that it is following the requirements of the legislation. On Vancouver Island the standard is that each facility has a complete inspection at least once a year, and more frequently if there are issues that need correcting. Furthermore, licensing officers are required to investigate all concerns that they are made aware of. All of us have a responsibility to ensure safe care for children. If you have a concern or questions you wish to have answered you can phone a licensing officer in Nanaimo at 250-714-0424 or in Campbell River at 250-287-2818. A booklet "Parents' Guide to Selecting Child Care" is also available at the Licensing Offices and you can call to have one mailed to you.

I encourage all of you to ensure that you carefully check your child's day care setting so that you can feel confident that your child's and your needs are being met and that the health and safety of your most precious possession is protected and enhanced.

HEALTH CANADA REMINDS CANADIANS ABOUT THE SAFETY OF ITEMS SOLD AT GARAGE SALES

OTTAWA - Health Canada is reminding Canadians about the potential hazards of items sold at garage sales, flea markets and second-hand stores.

Did you know that the sale of some items can be illegal under the *Hazardous Products Act*? This applies even to second-hand products.

Did you know that by selling an item that poses a hazard, you could be liable in a civil court of law?

To help vendors and buyers know what to look for and to ensure that products are safe and used safely, Health Canada is issuing its annual bulletin on the safety of items sold at garage sales.

The bulletin covers products commonly sold at garage sales and provides useful information to

vendors and potential buyers. For example, it tells you that it is illegal to sell a crib made before 1986 and that these cribs should be destroyed. It is also illegal to sell lawn darts with elongated tips. The bulletin also covers items like children's sleepwear, car seats, baby gates, playpens, strollers and sports equipment.

Of special note, as of April 7, 2004, it became illegal to sell baby walkers in Canada -- either new or used. Additionally, anyone with a baby walker is advised to destroy it before discarding it so that it cannot be reused. For more information on the safety of second-hand consumer products, please visit our web site at: www.healthcanada.ca/garagesales or contact the nearest Health Canada Product Safety Regional Office.

(604) 666-5003 Vancouver

Article from Health Canada
www.healthcanada.ca



KOOL-AID® PLAYDOUGH

- 1 cup (250 mL) flour
- 1 tablespoon (15 mL) vegetable oil
- 1 package unsweetened Kool-Aid®
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) salt
- 2 tablespoons (30 mL) cream of tartar
- 1 cup (250 mL) water

Mix flour, salt, cream of tartar and Kool-Aid in a medium saucepan. Add water and oil. Stir over medium heat 3 to 5 minutes. When mixture forms a ball in pan, remove. Knead until smooth. Put in a plastic bag and refrigerate.

WEB SITES

- www.gov.bc.ca/mcaaws -for a listing of licensed child care facilities in your area.
- www.worksafe.com - on-line publication from Workers' Compensation Board: "Information for Homeowners"- hiring people to work in or around your home. E.g. Nannies.

www.pacific-care.bc.ca

- Child care referral form
- Newsletters
- Crafts
- 0-6 Network
- Services for parents
- Workshops

Email: mailbox@pacific-care.bc.ca

Computer internet services available at our downtown Nanaimo office. Please drop by to access this free service. (For child care related use only.)



Looking for child care? PacificCARE offers a FREE child care referral service to the following areas:

Campbell River, Comox Valley, Oceanside, Nanaimo, Ladysmith, Nanoose, Alberni Valley, North Island, West Coast and Powell River.

Call: 1-888-480-CARE (2273) or 716-2022 (Nanaimo)



PacificCARE

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Pacific Child and Family Enrichment Society
Funded by the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services



PacificCARE has services for both parents and caregivers, offering free referrals to parents looking for child care, and providing information on how to choose quality care for their child. Licensed caregivers are regulated by Community Care Facilities Licensing and Licensed Not Required (LNR) and Live-Out-Nannies (LON) allow us to check their documentation (criminal record, references, etc.) and address any health and safety issues. All caregivers on our program have access to support networks and a quarterly newsletter.

