

Oregon's CHOOSE SAFE PLACES



EARLY CARE & EDUCATION RESOURCE GUIDE

Oregon's Choose Safe Places for Early Care and Education (CSP) program helps protect the health of children where they learn and play by providing guidance on how to make environments safer for kids. This program was developed with assistance from the Oregon Department of Education's Early Learning Division and with funding support from a federal agency, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

For more information about Oregon's CSP program, check out our website www.HealthOregon.org/ChooseSafePlaces

About this guide: There are many online resources with information about chemical exposures from our federal and state partners. We collected our favorite resources here for you!

Let us know if you have any questions or feedback for us:

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Resource Guide

Oregon’s Choose Safe Places for Early Care & Education

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AIR QUALITY

Outdoor Air Quality

Children are more likely to be active outdoors. They are more sensitive to smoke because their respiratory systems are still developing. Knowing simple and effective ways to check the outdoor air quality in your area can make a world of a difference to safe and healthy outdoor activity time for kids!



- Check the outdoor air quality near you using AirNow's [Air Quality Index \(AQI\) Tool](#).
- Learn more about the [AQI flag program](#).
- Visit Oregon Health Authority's webpage on [wildfires and smoke](#).
- Learn how to [adjust outdoor time](#) when the local air quality index drops.

Indoor Air Quality

Indoor air cleaners filter smoke particles out of the air. There are many particle filters available on the market. To know which filters would do a good job, use the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s [Guide to Air Cleaners in the Home](#) or the [California Air Resources Board guide](#) to air cleaning devices.

- Want to learn more about how to care for your air? Check out the EPA's [Guide to Indoor Air Quality](#) to learn about pollutants, how to improve your air, and more!
- Watch our [short educational video](#) for easy ways to improve your indoor and outdoor air quality

Asthma

Pollen, dust mites, pet and pest dander, wildfire smoke, and poor indoor or outdoor air can be potential triggers for a child with asthma.

- Interested in knowing how well your childcare setting assists children with asthma? Check out this simple checklist developed by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, on [how to make your childcare setting asthma-friendly](#).

ASBESTOS

Asbestos is a fibrous mineral that has been used in walls, ceilings, floors, roofs, siding, HVAC systems, insulation, pipes and more. Intact, asbestos-containing materials pose little or no danger. However, broken, worn, or damaged asbestos-containing materials release tiny hazardous fibers into the air, which may cause lung cancer and other illnesses.

If you perform or manage remodeling, renovation, repair, maintenance, or demolition activities, you need to be aware of the rules that may affect your ability to perform these activities. Before any building is renovated or demolished, all asbestos-containing materials must be identified and properly abated. Abatement includes handling, removing, disposing, repairing, salvaging, enclosing, or encapsulating any asbestos-containing materials.

Visit [Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality \(DEQ\)](#) website for more general information about asbestos, survey requirements, and abatement.

- DEQ Asbestos Information Fact Sheet: [What Contractors and Business Owners Need to Know](#)

Visit the [Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry \(ATSDR\)](#) website to learn more about how asbestos can impact health.

- ATSDR Fact Sheet: [Asbestos in Your Environment: What You Can Do to Limit Exposure](#)

DRINKING WATER

Most childcare facilities get their drinking water from a public or municipal utility company, which is regularly tested to meet safety and quality standards. However, if your facility uses a **private or domestic well**, it is the owner's responsibility to test it every year to make sure it meets safe drinking water standards.



Drinking Water Best Management Practices

These resources from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) offer guidance like information on cleaning water fountains and hot water tanks, testing for copper pipes, and routine measures to reduce lead exposure and follow up on elevated levels.

- [For Schools and Childcare Facilities with their Own Drinking Water Source](#)
- [For Schools and Childcare Facilities Served by Municipal Water Systems](#)

Lead Tests for Drinking Water

The harmful impact of lead exposure is well known and documented. Lead is especially harmful to young children because of the impact on growth and brain development. Lead in water is most harmful to formula-fed infants.

Review [frequently asked questions](#) about lead in tap water from Eco-Health Child Care. Use these resources to test your water and help prevent lead exposure.

- Portland Water Bureau customers that are child care providers [can order free testing online](#) or call 503-823-1870.
- Childcare providers in water districts outside of Portland can contact the [Early Learning Division](#) for testing information: 503-947-5908 or ELD.lead@state.or.us.

Domestic Well Tests for Drinking Water

Childcare providers with private or domestic wells must test their water every year to ensure it meets safe drinking water standards.

- Visit Oregon's Domestic Well Program website information on [testing](#) your domestic well water for arsenic, nitrate, and coliform bacteria.
- Review OHA's Fact Sheet: [How to Collect a Domestic Well Water Sample](#).

LEAD

Crawling toddlers and children age 5 and under are constantly exploring the world around them. The likelihood of them accidentally ingesting leaded dust or soil is high at this age.

Lead can cause learning and developmental issues. The amount of leaded dust it takes to harm a child is invisible to the naked eye.

Review the Oregon Department of Education's Early Learning Division webpage to learn about:

- [Preventing children in your care from being exposed to lead](#)

Visit the OHA Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention webpage to learn about:

- Common and uncommon [sources of lead](#) (some may surprise you!).
- [Lead hazards in schools and childcare facilities](#)
- [Tips to prevent lead poisoning](#)
- [Lead-safe childcare](#)

Or contact the OHA Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program:

- Email: leadprogram@dhsosha.state.or.us
- Phone: (971) 673-0440
- Webpage: www.healthoregon.org/lead

RADON

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that can cause lung cancer. Radon gas moves up through the soil and can be drawn into your building. Once inside, radon becomes trapped and can build up to unsafe levels. You can't see or smell radon, so testing is the only way to know how much is present in your building.

Go to the [Oregon Radon Awareness Program](#) website to find if your zip code has high radon values. Consider ordering a low-cost radon test kit from the American Lung Association. The best time to test for radon is in the winter months, when levels are expected to be at their highest.

- Review OHA's [Interactive map of radon levels by zip code](#).
- Request an easy and low-cost [radon test kit](#) through the American Lung Association.



GREAT RESOURCES FROM EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry:
 - Choose Safe Places for Early Care and Education National [Program Website](#)
- Environmental Protection Agency:
 - Healthy Child Care Website: <https://www.epa.gov/childcare>.
 - Health Schools Environment: [Green Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting: A Toolkit for Early Care and Education](#).
- Children's Environmental Health Network:
 - [Eco-Healthy Child Care Checklist](#).
 - [Eco-Healthy Fact Sheets by Topic](#).