
Safety Health and Hygiene in childcare centre

The observed centre

The centre has hold the SPARK certification for a couple of years and has recently participated and gotten the Healthy Meals in Pre-schools Programme (HMPP) (Health Promotion Board (HPB), 2018). This programme, centres will have to follow the guidelines of healthy eating and to serve healthy meals.

Key Findings

Safety Measures

Inside one of the classroom, I've noticed that there's a part of the ceiling's paint is peeling (figure?). The teacher had only verbally reminded the children to stay away from the area every time when they are doing activities. This is a potential hazard for the children as when the paint peels and falls, children might pick up and ingest it.

Whenever, teachers laminate some song charts or any learning corners task cards, they will make sure to cut away the sharp edges on the four corners. So that, children won't cut themselves while they are engaging in the activities.

Centre does not have its own outdoor playground, but they have an indoor playground. The indoor playground has climbing equipment, but it is not placed on soft/cushioned surfaces. Children might slip and fall when they are climbing, and without any soft surfaces, they will get injured.

Having a proper playground surface is one of the factors in reducing injuries. By having a proper soft or cushioned surface, it could lessen the injury of the child if he happens to fall (Yamini Durani, 2014, Surfaces section).

Outdoor Safety Measures

As the centre does not have any outdoor playground, so they usually go to a public playground within walking distance. Teachers will go and take a look at the playground before bringing the class down. They will check for any debris, litter and faulty equipment.

Supervision of Children

One thing I've observed is, if there are one or two children that want to go toilet during lesson time and no assistant teachers to help, teachers will partner the child with another child. They form a buddy-system so that the children can look after each other, and teachers won't have to stop the lesson to bring the whole class out to the toilet.

Fire/Emergency Precautionary Process

The emergency escape route is placed in all classrooms. Medical and accident procedures are all inside the Principal's office (in a file). The office is quite cluttered with many files, to find the procedures file, teachers will have to spend some time finding it.

There are two first aid kits, one in the staff room and another is in the Principal's office. Inside the first aid kit, there's a list of items with their respective pictures and descriptions. It would allow the teachers to know how the first aid item looks like. However, it is not labelled clearly enough to recognize as first aid kit (figure).

Health and Hygiene Practices

The cleaner aunties will help to clean the mattress in the mornings and after the children wake up from their nap. We have to disinfect the mattress because when children sleep, they sweat. For younger children, their diapers might leak or overflow of urine.

For cleaner aunties, there's a cleaning checklist that they have to check against. Regular cleaning of the environment and equipment lowers the risk of infection (Ministry of Social and Family Development, 2016).

After hand-washing, children usually flick the water on the floor or wipe their hands on their uniform. It increases the chance of children slipping and falling. By wiping their hands on their uniform, it increase the chance of having harmful bacteria and germs as the uniform is exposed to the surrounding. It is important to follow hand washing procedures as to avoid the transmission of harmful germs and prevent any infections.

Menu Planning and Serving of Food

There's a variety of food in the menu and it changes every day and the menu set weekly. There's no processed food in the menu. The centre emphasis on healthy eating and participates in the HMPP (HPB, 2018). The children's food allergy lists are in the kitchen and also inside the class file.

Recommendations

Safety Measures

The paint peeling from the ceiling is a concern as children might ingest it if it drops to the ground. Sometimes, the paint might just fall right into a child's eye if the child looking up at the ceiling. The cause of the peeling paint could be due to too much moisture on walls or poor paint application methods. The centre should engage a painting contractor to access and fix the ceiling paint.

Fire/Emergency Precautionary Process

We need to place the procedures where they can be seen easily. We wouldn't want the teachers to panic and be searching for the procedures when they should be calm and attending to the children.

A board containing all the procedures could be placed near a common area that teachers will go

to (e.g. teacher's room or close to the main gate). It would be easier, faster and more efficient for teachers to refer to when there's an emergency, rather than having to search for it.

For the first-aid kit, the centre should have put labels on the kit to show that it is the first-aid kit. It would allow teachers to get the necessary items fast in any case of emergency.

Health and Hygiene Practices

Uniforms are exposed to the environment, and it may come into contact with germs and bacteria. Teachers should model good hand-washing technique and also to remind children to clean their hands with a clean paper towel instead of on their uniform. Teachers could also come up with a lesson or activity on reinforcing the hand-washing steps.

Conclusion

Health, safety and nutrition comes hand in hand in child's development and growth. Every child should be raised with balanced nutrition, good health and safety. As the child is only beginning to understand and recognize dangerous situations or objects, safe environment prevents and reduces injuries for the child.

Overall, the centre has met the requirements of Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA).