Child Care Weather Watch

Wind-Chill

-30° is chilly and generally uncomfortable
-10° to 0° is cold
-20° to 0° is bitter cold with significant risk of frostbite
-20° to -60° is extreme cold and frostbite is likely
-60° is frigid and exposed skin will freeze in 1 minute

Heat Index

-80° or below is considered comfortable
-90° beginning to feel uncomfortable
-100° uncomfortable and may be hazardous
-110° considered dangerous

All temperatures are in degrees Fahrenheit

Child Care Weather Watch

Watching the weather is just part of the job for child care providers. Planning for playtime, field trips, or weather safety is part of the daily routine. The changes in weather require the child care provider to be alert to the health and safety of children in their care. What clothing, beverages, and sun screen are appropriate? Does the child maintain a comfortable body temperature (warm weather — lightweight cotton, cooler weather — heavier layers of clothing)? Drinking beverages helps the body maintain a comfortable temperature. Water or fruit juices are best. Avoid high sugar content beverages and soda pop. Sunscreen may be used year-round. Use a sunscreen labeled as SPF-15 or higher. Apply sunscreen generously and frequently. Read the label of the sunscreen product. You can also use sunscreen to block harmful rays from the sun. Look for sunscreen with UVB and UVA ray protection. Have children play in shaded areas or create shade in the play area.

Condition GREEN: Most children may play outdoors and be comfortable. Child care providers should watch for the child that becomes uncomfortable while playing outdoors.

INFANTS AND TODDLERS: Infants/toddlers are unable to tell the child care provider if they are too hot or cold. The infant/toddler may become happy when uncomfortable. Infants/toddlers need shorter periods of outdoor play. Use lightweight clothing in winter or light cotton in summer during the warmer months. In cooler or cold months dress infants in layers to keep them warm. Protect infants from the sun by using sunscreen and staying in shaded areas. Give beverages while playing outdoors.

YOUNG CHILDREN: Use precautions regarding clothing, sunscreen, and beverages. Young children need to be reminded to stop and drink a beverage and apply more sunscreen.

OLDER CHILDREN: Use precautions for clothing, beverages, and sunscreen. Older children need to apply sunscreen and give themselves a break while playing outdoors.

Condition YELLOW: This means the child care provider should use caution and closely observe the children for signs of being too hot or cold while outdoors. Clothing, sunscreen, and beverages are important. Shorten the length of outdoor time.

INFANTS AND TODDLERS: Child care providers should use the precautions outlined in Condition Green. Clothing, sunscreen, and beverages are important. Shorten the length of time for outdoor play.

YOUNG CHILDREN: Use the precautions regarding clothing, sunscreen, and beverages. Younger children may insist they are not too hot or cold because they are enjoying playtime. Child care providers need to stress the length of time for outdoor play for the young child.

OLDER CHILDREN: Use precautions for clothing, sunscreen, and beverages. Use a firm approach to wearing proper clothing for the weather (they may want to play without coats, hats, or mittens). Apply sunscreen and drinking liquids remain important while playing outdoors.

Condition RED: Most children should not play outdoors due to the health risk.

INFANTS AND TODDLERS should play indoors and have a ample space for large motor play.

YOUNG CHILDREN may ask to play outside and do not understand the potential danger of weather conditions. OLDER CHILDREN may play outdoors for very short periods of time. Child care providers must vigilantly monitor proper clothing, beverages, and use of sunscreen.

Understand the Weather

The weather forecast may be confusing unless you know the meaning of the words used by your weather forecaster.

- Blizzard Warning: There will be snow and strong winds that produce a blinding snow, deep drifts, and life-threatening wind chills. Seek shelter immediately.
- Heat Index Warning: How hot it feels to the body when the air temperature (in Fahrenheit) and relative humidity are combined.
- Relative Humidity: The percent of moisture in the air.
- Temperature: The temperature of the air in degrees Fahrenheit.
- Wind: The speed of the wind in miles per hour.
- Wind Chill Warning: There will be sub-zero temperatures with moderate to strong winds expected which may cause hypothermia and great danger to people, pets & livestock.
- Winter Weather Advisory: Winter weather conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous. If caution is exercised, the situations should not become life-threatening.
- Winter Storm Warning: Severe winter conditions have begun in your area.
- Winter Storm Watch: Severe winter conditions are possible within the next day or two.