Animals in Child Care

There are many benefits to human-animal contact. Animals are good teaching aids. They can help children learn to care for others, and to be kind. Nevertheless, having animals may bring risks. Some animals carry infectious diseases. Some animals can become aggressive and cause injuries to adults and children. Some people are allergic to animals.

Diseases that humans get from animals are called zoonoses. Some examples of zoonoses are rabies, salmonella, and ringworm. Animals that carry infectious organisms may not appear ill.

Many different types of injuries can occur when humans have contact with animals. The animals may bite, kick, scratch, or sting the humans. Even a calm animal may act unpredictably around children or in a new setting. Children may frighten the animal into a behavior that causes injury.

Many children are allergic to animals. In particular, they may be allergic to the animal’s feathers, fur, body waste, or saliva. Children who have animal allergies may have an allergic reaction when they come into contact with an animal. These reactions can range from sneezing and itchy eyes to rashes, difficulty breathing, and wheezing.

Some animals are not appropriate for the child care setting. These animals include wild or exotic animals (such as tigers or ocelots), non-human primates (such as apes and monkeys), venomous or toxin-producing animals (including spiders and amphibians), reptiles that carry salmonella, stray animals with unknown health and vaccine histories, and mammals at high risk for carrying rabies. (bats, raccoons, skunks, foxes, and coyotes).

(Continued on page 2)
Buckle Up For Every Ride!

Recent National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) statistics have shown an increase in occupant fatalities in motor vehicle accidents for children between the ages of birth and 15 years old. National data also show that preteens or “tweens” between the ages of 8 and 12 years are less likely to be buckled up than younger children. These statistics point out why it is important for all children to be properly restrained in an age appropriate child restraint system. Early education programs that transport children need to follow these guidelines and share this information with families.

For transport of children 4 years of age or younger, PA DPW child care regulations require compliance with 75 Pa. C.S. §4581, related to restraint systems. Under the state’s child passenger law, all drivers are responsible for securing children in the appropriate child restraint system. The PA Traffic Injury Prevention Program suggests:

• Read both the child safety seat instructions and the vehicle owner’s manual before installing a car seat.
• All children under age 13 years should ride in the back seat.
• When installing a child’s car seat, place your weight on the car seat once it is in position. Lock the seat belt or LATCH system according to the vehicles instruction. Allow no more than 1 inch of side-to-side or forward motion. (LATCH = Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children)
• Infants should ride rear facing and semi-reclined to no more than 45 degrees until at least both 1 year old and 20 pounds. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends keeping children rear-facing to the highest weight or height allowed by the child safety seat’s manufacturer.
• Toddlers ride forward facing and upright once they reach at least 1 year and 20 pounds. They should stay in the forward-facing seat with harness until they are 40 pounds. NHTSA recommends that all children who have outgrown child safety seats be properly restrained in a booster seat until they are at least 8 years old and 4 feet 9 inches tall.
• BUCKLE UP EVERY TIME, EVERY RIDE!

Check out a new publication on Child Passenger Safety at http://www.chop.edu/traumalink/download/2005/pcps_cpsrprt_05.pdf. For more information on passenger safety, car seat loaners, and car seat installation, call 1-800-CAR-BELT.
ECELS Q & A

Q: Is it OK to use disinfecting wipes to clean children’s toys, car seats, etc. when transporting children? Is it OK to use them when away from the childcare facility if there is no access to water?

A: Disinfecting wipes can be a handy way to clean and sanitize objects. Most of these wipes contain quaternary ammonium amines as the active ingredient for cleaning and sanitizing. These chemicals work well, but may be toxic. If you use such wipes, be sure to read the label carefully. Use them as the label directs. Most require that the surface remain visibly wet for some time. One popular product requires surfaces to stay wet for 30 seconds to sanitize and 5 minutes to disinfect. Then the surface must air dry. Surfaces that will come in contact with food must be rinsed with safe water after the drying step.

When away from the facility, you can clean objects with diaper wipes or wet paper towels. You can carry a travel kit with some paper towels, a squirt bottle with clean water, and some plastic bags. If the object should be sanitized, it may be best to take it out of use until you are where you can do so easily.

Q: Is tummy time important for infants?

A: Tummy time is very important for infants. All infants should have tummy time several times throughout the day. Children should never be placed on their tummies to sleep. However, when they are awake, they should have supervised time on their tummies for 5-10 minutes at a time, 3-4 times a day. This tummy playtime will help to keep infants’ heads from getting too flat in the back. Also tummy time helps infants strengthen their trunk and upper body muscles. It lets them experience the world from a different perspective than when they are lying on their backs or sitting in infant seats.

Remember, Back to Sleep, Tummy to Play!

Q: Should early childhood programs offer a second helping? Should every child be entitled to one if requested?

A: Yes. Initially, serve standard portion sizes for the age of the child. Children of the same age may have different body sizes and all growing children’s appetites may vary from day to day. Therefore, meals need to be planned so that teachers can offer second helpings and give another portion to any child who requests one.

What’s for Lunch?

Create a delicious, nutritious lunch menu with help from ECELS and the Self-Learning Module (SLM) Food for Thinkers.

Learn how to create a nutritious menu in a child care setting by viewing a video on menu planning, developing a nutritious one week menu and evaluating the menu according to Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Guidelines. For training credit, users complete and submit the one-week menu and the evaluation form from the self-learning module. PA providers may order this self-learning module from ECELS at www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org. Select “Child Care Provider Training,” then select “Request Self-learning Module,” and follow the steps. To request self-learning modules by phone, call 800-243-2357 or 484-446-3003. Note - Video material must be returned to ECELS within 10 working days. (K7C2-Topic code 79; 2 Hours Training Credit)
ECELS OBESITY TASK FORCE

The percentage of obese children has more than doubled over the last thirty years. With obesity came health problems such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes. Until recently, health professionals considered these diseases to be adult conditions. Now, children are developing obesity-related health problems too. As with most public health issues, prevention provides the best hope for reversing this disturbing trend.

In December 2004, PA AAP, ECELS-Healthy Child Care PA organized a workgroup in Harrisburg to brainstorm strategies for prevention of obesity in early childhood. This state-wide group of stakeholders and experts recognized great opportunities for prevention education involving early education professionals, advocates, young children and their parents.

To foster prevention education, ECELS offers updated resource files and instructional videos on obesity prevention in early childhood. Also, with the help of the workgroup, ECELS developed a workshop called “What Adults Can Do To Reduce Childhood Obesity.” In the spring of 2005, health professionals taught the new workshop at two early childhood education conferences. Now, it is available from ECELS on request. The workshop addresses:

- factors responsible for the obesity epidemic
- science related to reducing the risk of obesity
- the federal government’s Guidelines For Americans 2005, the new MyPyramid (which replaced the Food Guide Pyramid this year,) and The Nutrition Facts Food Label, and how to use these tools for planning healthy meals and snacks and for educating children, staff and parents
- guidelines for what teachers and other caregivers can do to reduce the risk of obesity

For more information on the new materials or to arrange a workshop, please contact ECELS by completing a website request at www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org, or you may phone, e-mail or fax your request using the contact information on page 8.

Thelma Herlich, RD, MD, FAA

WEB WANDERINGS

Nutrition:

For information on nutritious eating, including a food tip of the day and a tip of the month from the American Dietetic Association, go to www.eatright.org.

The Food and Nutrition Information Center has an excellent website with many resources just for child care programs. At www.nal.usda.gov/fnic, look for recipes, food program management tips and how to teach food safety to children and adults. Go to the website of the Iowa Department of Health that has great ideas and materials about how to get kids to pick nutritious snacks: www.idph.state.ia.us/pickabettersnack.

Another source is Bright Futures, a federally funded program to foster wellness of children from infants to adolescents. The Bright Futures website has age appropriate handouts on nutrition, feeding, and mealtimes. Go to www.brightfutures.org, click on Bright Futures Family Material, and then scroll down to Bright Futures Family Fact Sheets. Download these sheets for teachers and families to use.

Safety Activities:

For fun things to do with children from preschool to school-age, go to the website of the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) at www.nfpa.org. From the home page, click on Risk Watch® for safety lessons with classroom and school-to-home activities. The newest materials are about national disasters. Also, click on Sparky the Firedog to find lots of cool-to-do-and-learn activities. Sparky the fire dog is the mascot for the NFPA. For example, Sparky’s pages include instructions for making a snow dog in the snow or indoors with food. Another page is a handout for children to do a find-the-word message on bicycle safety. As a March Poison Prevention activity, use the NFPA instructions to have the children hunt for poisons that grown-ups should put out of reach.
Iron: Healthy Blood and Healthy Brains

Iron is an essential nutrient. It is part of Hemoglobin, a chemical in red blood cells. Hemoglobin carries oxygen to all the cells of the body. Iron also helps the brains of babies develop. When the body does not have enough iron, the body has too few and poorly filled blood cells. This condition is called anemia.

We get iron from the things we eat. Babies get iron from breast milk. Commercial formulas also provide iron for growing infants. (The low-iron formulas don’t have enough iron to meet a baby’s daily need.) Unfortunately, there isn’t much iron in cow’s milk. Once children start eating solid foods, these foods should include some nutritious sources of iron.

Here is a list of some iron-rich foods to offer to children when they are age-appropriate:

- Enriched Cereals and Whole Grains
- Lean Meats
- Liver
- Egg Yolks
- Beans
- Green Leafy Vegetables
- Dried Fruits
- Nuts
- Shellfish

VISION SCREENING

In July 2005, the National Eye Institute released a study which showed that trained volunteers could effectively screen preschool children for vision problems. Treatment for eye disease is most successful when problems are detected early. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children have their vision checked as newborns and at every well child visit. Starting at age 3, a child’s vision should be evaluated objectively using standard vision testing tools.

Prevent Blindness America suggests that parents and caregivers use these guides to look for vision troubles:

What do the child’s eyes look like?
- Do the eyes line up, or do they appear crossed or looking out?
- Are the eyes frequently red-rimmed, crusty, or swollen?
- Are the eyes watery or inflamed?

How does the child act?
- Does the child rub his eyes a lot?
- Does the child tilt her head when looking at things?
- Does the child squint often?

When there is concern about a child’s eyes, ask the family to take the child to their child’s primary care provider for further evaluation. For more information on vision screening in preschoolers, go to: www.nei.nih.gov/vip.

How to Use the New ECELS-Healthy Child Care PA Automated Telephone System

In July, ECELS started using an automated telephone system to better serve you. When you call 484-446-3003 or 800-24-ECELS during regular business hours, a recorded message provides a brief overview of ECELS’ services followed by several menu options. You may leave your requests on voice mail at any time. ECELS answers calls from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. We check our voice mail regularly during these hours.

Please leave information about what you need, so the staff can give you good service when returning your call. If you have a call-blocking feature on your phone, be sure to turn off this feature so we can return your call. We welcome your feedback about this change.
Development Quiz:

Different ages have different stages of development. Can you match the developmental skill or milestone with the correct age? Not all kids master skills at the same rate, but most kids of a certain age should be able to …

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hop on one foot</td>
<td>15 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walks backward</td>
<td>4 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stack blocks</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring hands together</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Button a button</td>
<td>18 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the correct answers, see page 8.

There may be a fungus among us!  
It could be mold, so I’m told!

Molds are an important, natural part of our ecosystem. They are small organisms that break down dead organic material such as dead trees and leaves. Unfortunately, when molds land on a wet surface indoors, they may grow. Sometimes these molds can cause health problems. They may cause allergic reactions or may be irritating to our skin, nose, lungs or eyes. They may be toxic.

If you smell mold, if you have water damage in your center, or if you have areas of condensation where water collects, then you may have molds growing in your facility. The best way to get rid of mold is to clean up the area and prevent any more water damage.

Here are some tips on mold clean-up:

♦ Scrub mold off surfaces using detergent and water, and then dry completely
♦ Throw away any absorbent materials (such as carpeting) if they are moldy
♦ Wear goggles and gloves when cleaning moldy surfaces
♦ Vent appliances that produce moisture, such as clothes dryers, stoves, and kerosene heaters, to the outside when possible
♦ Use air conditioners and/or de-humidifiers to dry humid air
♦ Consult a specialist if you are unsure how to clean the area

The Environmental Protection Agency has a helpful Guide to Residential Mold Problems. For more information go to www.epa.gov/iaq/molds or call 1-800-438-4318.
Handy Resources

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has information about obesity on their new website, Fit Source: Physical Activity and Nutrition in Child Care Settings: A Web Directory for Providers, at http://nccic.org/fitsource. This website has information about nutrition and physical activity targeted to child care and after school programs. The Fit Source website homepage has 2 main sections. You may search for information by topic or by age group (Infant/toddler, Pre-school, School-age.) Some of the topics are Lesson Plans, Activity and Game Ideas, Healthy Menus, and information to share with parents.

Remember Flu Shots!

The Centers for Disease Control recommends flu vaccine for those at greatest risk. Note that infants and toddlers (6 months to 23 months) and their teachers are on the list as top priority for flu shots.

For fact sheets on influenza, meningococcus, and other vaccines, visit the Vaccine Education Center at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia website at http://vaccine.chop.edu. (In English and Spanish.)

ECELS Help-Line — Call for free health and safety advice.

Do you have a health or safety question? ECELS provides telephone assistance to child care providers on health and safety issues. Call ECELS 800-243-2357 (PA only) or 484-446-3003.

REQUESTING PRINTED MATERIAL AND ADVICE ON HEALTH AND SAFETY

ECELS ORDER FORM

(Pennsylvania Child Care Providers & Pennsylvania Health Consultants Only)

To receive the handout listed below, check the box and return the form with a self-addressed, stamped business envelope. Send a mailing label for the self-learning module. Return the order form to ECELS-HCCPA, PA AAP, Rose Tree Corporate Center, Bldg. 2, Suite 3007. 1400 North Providence Road, Media, PA 19063.

Handouts: (One copy per organization)

☐ Safe Transportation of Children With Special Needs: A Guide for Families

☐ Helpful Tips for Hungry Children: Feeding 3-5 Year Olds

Health & Safety Training Opportunities: See the newly revised training brochure information on the ECELS website, or request a brochure from ECELS.

To request training, send an e-mail to ECELS@paaap.org, use the ECELS website order form that you will find at www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org, or call ECELS at 800-24-ECELS (800-243-2357)
Updated ECELS Self-Learning Modules

Please note that ECELS has updated 3 of our self-learning modules, *Illness in Child Care* (now *Common Illness in Child Care*); *Family Child Care Health and Safety*; and *Oral Health*. The Oral Health module can be downloaded from the ECELS web site. PA providers may order these modules from the web site at www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org, select Child Care Provider Training, select Request Self-learning Module and follow the steps. To request these self-learning modules by phone, call: 800-243-2357 or 484-446-3003.

Answers to the quiz on p. 6:
- Hop on one foot = 3 years
- Stack blocks = 15 months
- Bring hands together = 4 months
- Button a button = 4 years
- Walk backwards = 18 months

**IN THIS ISSUE:**
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- Disinfectant Wipes
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- Tummy Time
- What’s for Lunch
- Obesity Task Force
- Iron
- Vision Screening
- Automated Phone System
- Developmental Quiz
- Fungus & Mold

Dear Health Link Reader:

Thank you for your years of loyalty to *Health Link*. Our statewide surveys tell us that nearly all child care providers and health professionals who work with early educators rely on *Health Link* for health and safety information. Starting with the Winter 2006 issue, ECELS will bring you more timely news about health and safety in early education and child care with *Health Link Online*, an electronic-only format. Publishing *Health Link Online* on our website will make *Health Link* an even better tool than the quarterly print version.

*Health Link* will be available only in the online format. Funding is no longer available to print and mail the hard-copy version. We hope you will print out, copy and share articles that you find helpful.

To make sure you know when new articles are posted, ECELS will send e-mail alerts to those who register an e-mail address with us. Sign-Up for e-mail alerts by clicking on “Contact Us” at www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org or send us an e-mail message (ecels@paaap.org) asking to receive update alerts.