

# CHILD CARE SERVICES

## WHY BE CONCERNED?

Many childcare services are home-based businesses. While these services generate wastes that are similar to domestic wastes generated by any residential home, other issues around the home can become health or environmental concerns. This module is designed to help you identify these possible environmental hazards and provides you with options for preventing or dealing with concerns. It is not intended to address other pertinent health and safety issues. While it may seem that your contribution to pollution is minor, effects of chemicals, runoff, and wasted water from hundreds or thousands of homes in your region can add up. The following pages contain a self-assessment checklist that may be completed to identify potential sources of pollution or environmental hazards.

## IDENTIFY ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Processes and potential wastes associated with childcare services that could harm the environment are listed below. Check  the activities or conditions that apply to your business.

- Soiled diapers
- Trash or solid waste, use of individual disposable food/drink containers
- Hazardous cleaners or swimming pool chemical storage
- Household hazardous waste disposal
- Home has own water supply well
- Home has unused or abandoned well
- Home is older than 1978, could have lead-based paint, lead pipes, lead-based solder, or brass fittings
- Home built before 1980 (could have asbestos)
- Child care is held in the basement (never tested for radon)

## IDENTIFY METHODS OF WASTE DISPOSAL

Check  the waste disposal methods that you use.

- Municipal sanitary sewer
- Septic system or lagoon
- Ground, storm sewer, or surface water
- Licensed hazardous waste disposal option
- Licensed sanitary landfill/transfer station
- Compost
- Recycle
- On-site landfill (prohibited in most cases)
- Incineration/on-site burning (see Solid Waste section)

## BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- Soiled diapers can represent a health and environmental hazard if not properly handled. Always dispose of the fecal contents of the diaper via the toilet, not the trash. Health standards dictate that diapering be done in designated areas that are sanitized accordingly and that the childcare provider always wash his or her hands immediately following a diaper change.
- Solid waste generated as a result of your home-based business needs to be disposed of in a sanitary manner via a permitted solid waste facility at least every seven days. Business wastes should never be burned or buried on site. Several solid waste reduction opportunities exist for this type of business and are listed below.
- If you are on an on-site septic system or lagoon, some cleaners can be detrimental to your system. Consult the label. Minimize use of hazardous cleaners whenever possible. Safely store household cleaners or swimming pool chemicals under lock and key. Use them only according to label directions and for their intended purpose.
- Household hazardous waste storage should be done in an area away from children. It is best to buy only what you can use up and then dispose of the wastes as soon as they are identified so they do not have to be stored.

**Non-domestic sewage from your home-based occupation should not be disposed in a sanitary sewer without written permission from the municipality. Never put wastes in a storm drain or dump on the ground!**

**The Small Business Environmental Assistance Program, SBEAP, is a confidential non-regulatory program funded by the state in an effort to assist small businesses with environmental concerns. Contact the SBEAP at 800-578-8898 or [www.sbeap.org](http://www.sbeap.org) if you have questions.**

Most counties have some type of collection for this waste. Contact your local health or environmental management office for more information.

- If you depend on a private well for drinking water, it is up to you to keep your drinking water safe. At a minimum it needs to be tested each year by a certified laboratory for nitrates and bacteria. You should also inspect your well and the area around it to identify and remove any potential contamination threats. Consult the Water section at the beginning of this book, as well as recommended publications such as Home\*A\*Syst, for helpful assessment checklists. Contact the SBEAP for more information at 800-578-8898.

**Open wells are a safety threat to small children and animals. Unused or abandoned wells should be plugged in accordance with KDHE regulations. Abandoned wells, if not properly sealed, can provide a direct route for contamination to enter the groundwater. A record of the plugging should be filed with KDHE. For more information, consult the general Water section at the beginning of this document or call 785-296-3565.**

- A home that is older than 1978 could have lead-based paint, lead pipes, lead-based solder, or brass fittings. Lead poisoning is one of the most serious threats in and around the home for young children. It can cause learning and behavior problems as well as hearing loss and damage to the central nervous system. If you think you could have sources of lead in your home, especially if it is lead-based paint in poor condition (peeling or chipping), then it needs to be tested and treated or removed by a professional. Several good publications are available to guide you through this process. Simple, inexpensive tests are also available. For more information on the health effects or removal of lead-based paint, contact your local health department or call SBEAP at 800-578-8898.

**It is recommended that all children under six be tested for lead, especially if they live in or go to a daycare in an older home. Recent data indicates that one in twenty American children have too much lead in their bodies, with rates even higher in cities.**

- Homes built before 1980 may have asbestos-containing materials. Intact, these materials are not a health or environmental problem. When they deteriorate or are disturbed by construction

or removal, the small asbestos fibers can be released to the air and cause long-term health problems if inhaled. Removal and disposal issues related to lead and asbestos should be dealt with by a professional and are addressed in the *Property Management* section.

- Several other indoor air issues may be of concern to you, especially if you operate a childcare facility. Issues related to radon gas, combustion sources, ventilation, and mildew are addressed in detail in the Kansas Home\*A\*Syst publication. Contact SBEAP at 800-578-8898 for more information, or download it from [www.sbeap.org](http://www.sbeap.org).

**Childcare centers are subject to licensure through health agencies, both state and local.**

## **POLLUTION PREVENTION AND WASTE MINIMIZATION OPPORTUNITIES**

- Minimize use of disposable items to reduce solid waste generation. Use reusable items that can easily be cleaned.
- Purchase items in bulk, avoiding excess packaging when possible.
- Collect glass, aluminum, tin, paper, and plastics for recycling.
- Avoid use of hazardous cleaners such as solvents or caustics; substitute less toxic or non-toxic substances as cleaning agents. See *Cleaners in the Home*, a KDHE factsheet available through the KDHE Web site or by calling the SBEAP.
- Keep storage and work areas clean and well organized, and keep all containers properly labeled.
- Inventory your chemical storage, and ensure storage in a manner to prevent spills and leaks. Consult material safety data sheets.
- Keep accurate records/inventory of raw material usage. Mark purchase date on each container and practice "first in, first out" so that older materials are used up before new ones are opened.
- Have your well water tested each year and create a wellhead protection area around the well.



- Abandoned wells should be plugged and reported in accordance with KDHE regulations (see Water section).
- Assess your home for sources of lead-based paint, asbestos, and radon.
- Consult the Kansas Home\*A\*Syst publication for other specific pollution prevention opportunities around the home, including indoor air pollution issues. Contact SBEAP for a copy or view it on the Web.

**WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION**

- Your local K-State Research and Extension office, health department, or environmental management department are all helpful resources.
- Home\*A\*Syst at K-State Extension at 800-578-8898.
- The Kansas SBEAP has several publications that address these issues of regulatory compliance

- and pollution prevention. See the list of SBEAP publications at the end of this manual, or go to [www.sbeap.org](http://www.sbeap.org) to view or download.
- For questions, call 800-578-8898. All services are free and confidential.
- A summary of environmental laws is found in the introduction/preface. The following laws may be applicable to this business:
  - wastewater regulations; state, and sometimes local, regulations
  - solid waste regulations
  - state and local health and childcare licensure
- Regulatory compliance information can be viewed or downloaded from the KDHE Web site at [www.kdhe.state.ks.us](http://www.kdhe.state.ks.us).
- See Resources section at the back of this document.

**SOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Kansas Home\*A\*Syst publication

**ACTION STEPS**

What can you do to reduce wastes or environmental risks?	Set target dates for action.

**Notes:**