



ACTIVE SUPERVISION AT-A-GLANCE

SIX STRATEGIES TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE

The following strategies allow children to explore their environments safely. Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers must be directly supervised at all times. Programs that use active supervision take advantage of all available learning opportunities and never leave children unattended.

Set Up the Environment

Staff set up the environment so that they can supervise children at all times. When activities are grouped together and furniture is at waist height or shorter, adults are always able to see and hear children. Small spaces are kept clutter free and big spaces are set up so that children have clear play spaces that staff can observe.

Position Staff

Staff carefully plan where they will position themselves in the environment to prevent children from harm. They place themselves so that they can see and hear all of the children in their care. They make sure there are always clear paths to where children are playing, sleeping, and eating so they can react quickly when necessary. Staff stay close to children who may need additional support. Their location helps them provide support, if necessary.

Scan and Count

Staff are always able to account for the children in their care. They continually scan the entire environment to know where everyone is and what they are doing. They count the children frequently. This is especially important during transitions, when children are moving from one location to another.

Listen

Specific sounds or the absence of them may signify reason for concern. Staff who are listening closely to children immediately identify signs of potential danger. Programs that think systemically implement additional strategies to safeguard children. For example, bells added to doors help alert staff when a child leaves or enters the room.

Anticipate Children's Behavior

Staff use what they know about each child's individual interests and skills to predict what he/she will do. They create challenges that children are ready for and support them in succeeding. But they also recognize when children might wander, get upset, or take a dangerous risk. Information from the daily health check (e.g., illness, allergies, lack of sleep or food, etc.) informs staff's observations and helps them anticipate children's behavior. Staff who know what to expect are better able to protect children from harm.

Engage and Redirect

Staff use active supervision skills to know when to offer children support. Staff wait until children are unable to solve problems on their own to get involved. They may offer different levels of assistance or redirection depending on each individual child's needs.

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/safety-injury-prevention/active-supervision.html>

