Consider the following when moving an ECE program to a site used for other activities:

- Prior activities at the site that could have contaminated the inside of buildings.
- Contamination of the outdoor. Places like auto junk yards or residual pesticides from farming. Prior use, storage, or disposal of hazardous substances on site.
- Potentially hazardous building materials in structures.
- Use of contaminated fill on the site anytime in the past.
- Vapor intrusion of chemical contaminants in groundwater or soil from past activities on the site.

Naturally-occurring hazards might be in air, soil or water.

In some places, hazardous substances on a site can occur naturally.

Natural occurring substances can include arsenic or nitrite in groundwater and radon in the ground.

Near-By Locations

When considering a site for an ECE program, observe nearby sites and activities that might create environmental exposures.

Some nearby sites might warrant attention include the following:

- Designated hazardous sites
- Nearby business, service, or facility that might release hazardous materials into the environment, like:
  - auto repair or paint shops
  - battery recycling plants
  - hair or nail salons
  - gas stations
  - factories
  - farms
  - drycleaners

Contact Texas Choose Safe Places Program
Department of State Health Services
Texas Choose Safe Places Program
Mail Code: 1964
PO BOX 149347
Austin, TX 78714-9347

epitox@dshs.texas.gov

1-888-681-0927

dshs.texas.gov/safesiting

TEXAS Health and Human Services | Texas Department of State Health Services

TEXAS Health and Human Services | Texas Department of State Health Services

Texas Choose Safe Places Program

Texas Choose Safe Places Program

In the United States, about 8.3 million children are in licensed early care and education (ECE). ECE programs are places where caregivers take care of children outside their home. Many of these ECE buildings are located in non-residential areas near other businesses.

Exposure to harmful chemicals at a young age could greatly affect a child's development.

When an ECE program is not in a safe place, children may breathe in harmful chemicals that are in the air, or in the water they drink, or the soil they touch or swallow.

Why the concern?

Children are in licensed ECE programs for an average of 36 hours per week. And they are more likely to get sick from harmful chemicals than adults.

- Exposure to harmful chemicals at a young age could greatly affect a child's development.
- Common hand-to-mouth behavior and playing on the ground can lead to more contact with chemicals.
- They eat more food and drink more water relative to their body size.

DSHS TX Choose Safe Places Program can help!

We can help you determine if a potential facility site is safe from known environmental contamination.

Visit our website at **dshs.texas.gov/safesiting**
Complete the voluntary questionnaire.

You will need:

- Address of the site
- Age of the building
- Building or site past use, if known
- Complete and submit the questionnaire.

We use a customized map to check the location against known hazardous sites.

Who is eligible for assistance?

- licensed child care centers
- licensed or registered child care homes
- school-age before and after school programs
- people interested in starting a childcare center or home

1-888-681-0927
Environmental Surveillance and Toxicology Branch Toll-Free Number

Safe Location of Daycare

Past uses of a site can leave contamination on the property. This can expose people who are currently using the site. Some contaminants left on a site might disappear quickly. Others might stay on the site long into the future.

In many urban and suburban areas, it might be hard to find sites for ECE programs that were never used for some industry or business. Reuse of a site is often a good use of land and buildings.

Even if a site seems clean or unused, it might not be free of chemical or radiological hazards. It is important to take the proper steps in determining whether a site is suitable for an ECE program.

Safe Drinking Water

Safe drinking water is important for children in an ECE program. For infants, drinking water is a large volume of their diets when formula is mixed with water. Contaminants can get into drinking water in a variety of ways. Copper, lead, or other chemicals can get into drinking water as it travels through pipes to the faucet.

ECE program operators need to know where the drinking water in their facility comes from. Know if it from a groundwater well or from a municipal public water supply.

Where the water comes from dictates who handles maintaining the quality and safety of the water. Testing water may be necessary to ensure the water is safe from contaminants.