

Dear Parent or Legal Guardian:

The 2002 Minnesota Legislature passed a bill that allows portable wading pools to be used by family and group family child care providers when certain requirements are met.

A portable wading pool is defined as a pool with a maximum depth of 24 inches that is capable of being manually emptied and moved.

These portable wading pools may only be used after:

1. The parent or legal guardian of the child has provided written consent to the license holder; and
2. The written consent includes a statement that the parent or legal guardian has received and read the document written by the Department of Human Services and the Department of Health titled: "Fact Sheet: Risks of Wading Pools at Family Child Care Homes."

Please read the Fact Sheet, and decide whether or not to permit your child(ren) to use a wading pool while under the care of your family child care provider.

If you have questions about the changes regarding wading pools, please contact your local public health department or the Minnesota Department of Health at (612) 676-5414. If you have questions about child care licensing you should contact your local county Social Services Agency, or you may call the Minnesota Department of Human Services at (651) 296-3971.

After completion, please give this form to your child care provider. Your child care provider will be monitored for compliance with these requirements, and this form will document your decision.

FACT SHEET

RISKS OF WADING POOLS AT CHILD CARE HOMES

The use of wading pools in home child care settings could facilitate the transmission of infections among children and cause serious disease.

Guidelines for out-of-home child care programs have been jointly developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Public Health Association and published by the National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health. These guidelines state that "small portable wading pools shall not be permitted" because they do not permit adequate control of sanitation and safety and provide a superior means of transmission of infectious diseases."

In Minnesota, we are particularly concerned about the potential for the enhanced transmission of E. coli 0157:H7. This bacteria is passed in stool and is readily transmitted among children when contaminated hands or toys are placed in the mouth or contaminated food or water are consumed. Wading pools can easily become contaminated with stool.

Infection with E. coli 0157:H7 is the primary cause of hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), the most common cause of kidney failure in children in this country. This syndrome usually involves prolonged hospital stays and is fatal in up to 5% of cases. During 2000-2001, 4 Minnesota children (ages 1-6 years, all previously healthy) died as a result of HUS.

Each year several E. coli 0157:H7 outbreaks are identified in Minnesota in both child care homes and centers. These outbreaks often cause a disruption of parents' schedules and income for the child care provider because infected children need to be excluded from child care until they are no longer carrying the bacteria, which can take as long as 1-2 months. Several other disease-causing agents, including Giardia, Cryptosporidium, and Shigella are also efficiently transmitted in wading pools. All of these agents can cause severe illness in children and are common in Minnesota. In 2000, hundreds of cases of laboratory-confirmed infectious diseases were reported to the Minnesota Department of Health, including 1,227 persons with Giardia, 1,079 with Campylobacter, 904 with Shigella, 612 with Salmonella, 216 with E. coli 0157, 197 with Cryptosporidium, and 197 with viral hepatitis A.

The transmission of these infections can occur even under the care of the most diligent and thoughtful child care providers as the infections can be spread even with mild symptoms.

Wading Pools Present the Risk of Drowning or Other Submersion Incidents.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission warns that young children can drown in small amounts of water, as little as two inches deep. Submersion incidents involving children usually happen in familiar surroundings and can happen quickly, even in the time it takes to answer the phone. In a comprehensive study of drowning and submersion incidents involving children under 5 years old, 77% of the victims had been missing from sight for 5 minutes or less. The Commission notes that toddlers in particular often do something unexpected because their capabilities change daily, and that child drowning is a silent death; there is no splashing to alert anyone that the child is in trouble.

MDH/DHS 5-02

By signing this form, I am acknowledging that I have read the document written by the Department of Human Services and the Department of Health titled: "Fact Sheet: Risks of Wading Pools at Family Child Care Homes." I have been given the opportunity to talk with my child care provider about the use of a wading pool, and I understand the risks associated with the use of a wading pool by my child(ren) while they receive child care services.

____ I do consent to my child care provider's use of a wading pool with my child(ren).

____ I do not consent to my child care provider's use of a wading pool with my child(ren).

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian

Date

Name(s) of child(ren)

Signature of Child Care Provider

Date