Chapter 3 Frequently Asked Questions

What types of environmental hazards might be found in early childhood education environments that might pose risk?

There are a number of things that might pose risk, including lead, chemicals, cleaning supplies, craft supplies, adequate ventilation, and pets. These environmental hazards might pose risk for poisoning, allergic reactions, bites, burns, and rashes. Children are more susceptible to many of these environmental hazards and care should be taken to prevent risk as much as is possible.

How does the developmental level of children effect how a teacher manages for safety risk?

Prevention is the single most significant factor in risk management for safety. The teacher begins this process by defining the boundaries for indoor safety and screening the environment for hazards with the developmental levels of the children in care in mind. Safety hazards can be broken down by developmental age and vulnerabilities associated with that particular stage.

What is meant by shared space?

Some early childhood education environments are located where they are multipurpose. For example, a church preschool during the week might be a dressing room for a wedding on weekends, or a family child care home that provides child care as well as a family home. Shared spaces are likely to pose greater risk that must be anticipated and continually assessed with good screening measures.

Why are falls one of the most common injuries related to indoor equipment?

A child’s changing abilities to move about and manipulate are major contributors to falls. A baby can wiggle and move and push, and when she is older, she can crawl, roll over, and cruise. Changing tables vary greatly and can be the cause of a fall, as can infant walkers. Toddlers can climb, and preschoolers are coordinated and fast enough to do almost any physical activity. Use of only safe, sturdy indoor equipment, anticipation, and monitoring can help to prevent falls.

How might computer use pose risk to children’s safety in the early childhood education environment?

Computer use in the early childhood environment is becoming a norm and when used appropriately by children it can provide a beneficial learning tool for children. Computer use by young children can also present some safety hazard issues. It has been suggested that there are five possible hazards associated
with the use of computers by children: 1) musculoskeletal injuries; 2) vision problems; 3) lack of exercise; 4) social isolation and 5) other long-term hazards.

**What can a teacher do to bolster toy safety in the early childhood education environment?**

The teacher can assess the toys for hazards such as age-appropriateness, sharp surfaces and small parts. Toys should be examined for their choking, inhaling, suffocation, strangulation, noise, entrapment and lead risk. Regular use of the Consumer Product Safety Commission’s website for recalled toys will also help bolster safety by eliminating toys that are included on this list.

**Why is interpersonal safety an issue in the early childhood education environment?**

Risk to interpersonal safety occurs when injuries to children by other children occur through biting, kicking, scratching, spitting, pushing, threatening, and fighting. Of these, biting is the most upsetting and is common for children under the age of three. Also, violence as a means of handling conflict filters down into early childhood because children see violent behavior modeled on television, in their neighborhoods, and maybe even in their own homes.