



Winter Survival Tips for Infant and Toddler Child Care Providers

Winter presents unique challenges for child care providers, especially those working with infants and toddlers. The cold weather can limit outdoor activities, increase the risk of illness, and require additional safety precautions. Understanding these challenges is crucial for effective planning and care.

Health Considerations

During the winter months, respiratory illnesses such as colds and flu are more prevalent. Infants and toddlers have developing immune systems, making them particularly vulnerable. To lower these risks:

1. **Promote Hygiene:** Encourage frequent handwashing among staff and children.
2. **Vaccinations:** Ensure that all children are up-to-date on vaccinations, including the flu vaccine, to reduce the likelihood of illness.
3. **Monitor Symptoms:** Be vigilant about monitoring children for signs of illness, such as fever or unusual lethargy, and have clear policies for when to send a child home.

Indoor Activities

With colder temperatures limiting outdoor playtime, it's essential to have a variety of engaging indoor activities that promote physical development and cognitive skills:

1. **Movement Activities:** Create safe spaces for crawling, walking, and active movement. Incorporate music for dancing to encourage movement.

2. **Sensory Play:** Utilize materials that engage the five senses like water and sand play, scented play dough, fingerpaints, or mirror play for infants in sensory bins to stimulate exploration and fine motor skills.
3. **Art Projects:** Simple art projects using non-toxic materials can foster creativity while keeping children engaged indoors.

Maintaining Warmth and Comfort

Keeping infants and toddlers warm is critical during winter months:

1. **Layering Clothing:** Dress children in layers that can be easily added or removed based on their activity level indoors or outdoors.
2. **Safe Sleeping Practices:** Always follow safe sleep guidelines from the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#). Ensure that cribs are free from pillows, blankets and toys. Dress the infant with layers of clothing to keep the infant warm while reducing the chance of head covering or entrapment that could result from blanket use.
3. **Temperature Control:** Maintain a comfortable indoor temperature (ideally between 68°F-72°F) while ensuring proper ventilation.

Outdoor Safety Precautions

When conditions allow for outdoor play, it's important to take specific precautions:

1. **Check Weather Conditions:** Always check the temperature and wind chill before heading outside.
2. **Proper Gear:** Ensure all infants and toddlers wear appropriate winter gear, which might include hats, mittens, boots, and insulated jackets.

Car Seat Safety

It is not recommended that children wear bulky coats in car seats. Too much bulk can create extra room in the harness, causing a loose fit and putting infants and toddlers at risk for injury in the event of a crash. Choose lightweight fleece layers instead of puffy materials to ensure a snug-fitting harness. Keep Your Little Ones Warm and Safe in Their Car Seats | NHTSA. <https://www.nhtsa.gov/keep-your-little-ones-warm-and-safe-their-car-seats>

Communication with Families

Effective communication with families is vital during winter months:

1. **Inform About Policies:** Clearly communicate your policies regarding illness prevention, outdoor playtime limits, and what families should do if their infant or toddler shows symptoms of illness.
2. **Share Resources:** Provide families with resources on how they can support their infant and toddler's health at home during the winter months.

By understanding the unique challenges posed by winter weather and implementing thoughtful strategies around health considerations, indoor activities, warmth and comfort, outdoor safety precautions, and family communication, child care providers can create a nurturing environment that supports the well-being of infants and toddlers throughout the season.

References

[American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\)](#)

[National Association for the Education of Young Children \(NAEYC\)](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)

Resource Spotlight



Early Childhood Curriculum “Get to Know You” Series Library

Support for Early Childhood Curriculum in VQB5

VDOE currently has 70+ approved early childhood curricula, including 31 options for infants and 36 options for toddlers. There are also three options that are specifically designed for Family Day Home settings. You can learn more about these and other curriculum options by exploring the [Curriculum Vendor "Get To Know You" series library](#). Originally hosted in the spring and fall of 2023, these sessions feature representatives from Virginia-approved curriculum vendors.

- The [archived recordings](#) of this series allow providers to learn more about different curriculum options.
- Each session features multiple curricula to compare.
- Special sessions were recorded for Family Day Home settings and Spanish-speakers.

For more information about [Early Childhood Curriculum in VQB5](#), including expectations for reporting optional curriculum use, resources to support curriculum choice, and updates to the [vetted and approved list](#), you can view the [Fall Refresher 2024](#) (recorded webinar).

- Fall Refresher: [VQB5 Early Childhood Curriculum Fall Refresher 2024](#) (28 mins)
- Presentation Slides [English/Spanish](#)
- Please click [here](#) for more information on the Early Childhood Curriculum “Get to Know You” Series Library.

Please click [here](#) for more information on the Early Childhood Curriculum “Get to Know You” Series Library.

Upcoming Professional Development Opportunities



These exciting professional development institutes will empower early childhood educators and site leaders to explore and integrate the concept of community; fostering a sense of belonging and connection in the classroom setting for Virginia's infants and toddlers.

February 22 - Hampton

March 8 - Richmond

March 22 - Roanoke

April 26 - Virginia Beach

May 17 - Wytheville

Register Now!

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Enhancing Emergent Literacy for Infants and Toddlers

1-2-3 READ! early literacy training is an interactive, practical training designed for teachers, caregivers, and directors who work with infants and toddlers, birth to 36 months, in a group setting.

January 18th & 25th - Roanoke (2-days)

February 8 - Richmond (1-day)

Registration fee waived for VQB5 participants

Non-VQB5 participant is \$25.00

(Includes all training and materials)

The training is from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm. (2-days)
and 8:30 am to 4:30 pm (1-day)

Click [here](#) to register online now!

Did you know...?

VDOE launched their VQB5 Quality Profile Website!

VQB5 VIRGINIA QUALITY BIRTH TO FIVE

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Families can now access information about quality and safety for more than 3,100+ publicly-funded early childhood sites via the VDOE's new, easy-to-use online **VQB5 Quality Profile website**. With information on early childhood sites in every city and county in Virginia, this new tool helps families learn about the quality of the sites to help them choose the best option for their birth-to-five children.



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