



Early Learning Division

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New rules require child care facilities to test for lead

The Early Learning Council in February approved new requirements for child care providers to prevent children in their care from being exposed to lead.

Beginning April 1, 2018, all state-regulated child care providers may begin testing for lead in their drinking water and sending test results to the Office of Child Care. If the test results come in at or higher than "15 parts per billion (ppb)," the provider must make changes to prevent lead exposure.

The Office of Child Care will work closely with providers this spring and summer to help them implement these new requirements. This includes a resource list, tip sheet, support from your licensing specialist and a call in number in our Central Office. The Office of Child Care is also working with local water bureaus and testing labs to help make the process as simple as possible for providers. Providers have until September 30, 2018 to complete testing, submit the results to the Office of Child Care, and put in place any necessary changes.

New requirements include:

Testing: Every six years, child care providers must:

1. Take a water sample from faucets or fixtures used for drinking or preparing food.
2. Submit the sample for lead testing using an accredited drinking water laboratory.
3. Send the results to the Office of Child Care.

Correcting: If the test results show a lead level that is at or higher than 15 parts per billion (ppb), the provider must:

1. Immediately prevent children from using or consuming the water by removing access to the faucet and supply bottled water for drinking, cooking, and preparing infant formula.
2. Submit a plan of action within 60 days of receiving the results to the Office of Child Care to address the lead levels in the faucets or fixtures testing at or higher than 15 parts per billion. The plan must be consistent with the "[U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 3T's for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools](#)." The Office of Child Care will provide more information soon about acceptable options for reducing lead levels.
3. Retest the water after making changes or continue to use bottled water only.

Providers must also reduce children's exposure to lead regardless of results by running faucets 30 seconds to two minutes before using water for drinking, cooking or preparing formula.



What are the 3Ts?

The 3Ts is an outreach program launched by the Environmental Protection Agency in response to public concern over health risks posed by elevated lead levels in drinking water in schools and child care facilities across the country. Simply put, the 3Ts are Training, Testing and Telling.

- **Training** – focuses on alerting child care and other early learning providers of the risks of lead poisoning and the ways to mitigate those risks.
- **Testing** – underscores the importance of monitoring lead levels in child care facility drinking water. The 3Ts tell how to collect samples and how to identify and respond to any existing problems.
- **Telling** – emphasizes the need to communicate with parents and the public regarding testing protocol, reporting results, and remediation strategies taken.

Communicating: Child care providers must notify parents and guardians of the test results within one business day of receiving the results and post them in a visible place in the facility or home. The Office of Child Care will also post the results of each facility on its website.

Who has to follow this new rule?

- Certified center child care providers
- Certified family child care providers
- Registered family child care providers
- Regulated subsidy providers (providers exempt from licensing who care for children receiving Department of Human Services subsidies)

What should I do today?

Although providers have until September 30, 2018 to complete the testing and send results to the Office of Child Care, it is recommended that providers begin testing any time and request sample kits no later than August 1st to allow approximately 4-6 weeks for the water sample results to be processed. The Office of Child Care has included more specific information about testing and corrective steps in this packet.

Child care providers can learn about lead exposure through resources listed on this webpage: <https://oregonearlylearning.com/lead-poisoning-prevention/>. There are many steps providers can take to prevent lead exposure, such as running their water at least 30 seconds before drinking and cooking and using only cold water. Boiling water does not remove lead.

Where can I get more information?

The Office of Child Care has posted information about protecting children from lead exposure on its website: <https://oregonearlylearning.com/lead-poisoning-prevention/>. We will continue to update this website as more information is available.