## MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (DPHHS) HELPS EARLY CARE & EDUCATION PROGRAMS CHOOSE SAFE PLACES

Moving or considering a new location? Save time and money by filling out a short 5-minute questionnaire to get help with choosing a place safe from environmental hazards.

Choosing a safe location for your early care and education program protects childrens' health and saves your business from costly and time-consuming remediation down the road. Choose Safe Places is a voluntary program that helps early care and education centers choose locations that are safe from environmental hazards.

## ARE THERE HIDDEN DANGERS AT YOUR CENTER?

You might think that your early care and education program is free of environmental hazards, but... sometimes, harmful chemicals can come from nearby businesses or activities, or they could have been left behind by activities that took place in the past.

Be sure to check these 4 things before choosing a new location:

**What was the building used for in the past?**

**Are there nearby properties that may contain or use hazardous chemicals?**

**Are there naturally occurring hazards like radon?**

**Is the source of drinking water safe? Has it been tested?**

## CHILDREN ARE NOT JUST SMALL ADULTS

• Their brains are still developing.
• They drink more water and breathe more air for their size.
• They play on the ground and put their hands in their mouths.

Exposure to toxic chemicals can disrupt development, learning, and behavior. It can also contribute to diseases later in life. That's why DPHHS is working with the Montana Child Care Licensing Program and early childhood educators to give every child a safe place to learn, play, and grow.

**Choose Safe Places**
for Early Care and Education
Planning. Guidance. Protection.

## YOU CAN HELP PROTECT CHILDREN FROM HAZARDS

DPHHS's voluntary Choose Safe Places program can help you look for possible exposures to environmental hazards at your early care and education center, such as:

### Former Use of Sites

Past businesses may have left behind harmful chemicals.

*What you can do:*
- Find out how your building and nearby properties were used in the past.
- Find out if it has been inspected for lead paint.
- Contact Choose Safe Places program for help finding property history information and to learn how to get a lead inspection.

### Nearby Sites & Activities

Some activities can pollute the air, leave harmful chemicals on the ground, or pollute drinking water sources.

*What you can do:*
- Find out if nearby businesses use potentially harmful chemicals.
- Look for nearby contaminated properties.
- Contact Choose Safe Places program for help with your search.

### Naturally Occuring Contamination

Radon gas is a naturally occuring contaminant that can cause cancer.

*What you can do:*
- Test your building for radon.
- Contact Choose Safe Places to learn how.

### Safe Drinking Water

Clean drinking water is important, especially for children.

*What you can do:*
- Test your drinking water for lead and manganese.
- Check your water supplier's annual water quality report.
- Test your well if that is where your drinking water comes from.
- Choose Safe Places program can help you learn more about water quality and testing.

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## MT CHOOSE SAFE PLACES CAN HELP

Fill out a short survey online **here**. We'll look up information about your property, tell you what we find, and offer recommendations to help prevent accidental environmental exposures to your staff and children in your care.

**COMPLETE THE ONLINE SURVEY**

Recommendations made by the MT CSP Program are based on publicly available data and information at the time of request. If remediation, follow-up testing, or other work is needed as a result of DPHHS recommendations, DPHHS is not responsible for any costs associated with those activities.

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PublicHealth IN THE 406

MONTANA DPHHS
*Healthy People. Healthy Communities.*
Department of Public Health & Human Services