



Keep Your Child Care Center Free From Pests

Roaches, flies, mice and rats can be harmful to children's health. They can contaminate food and trigger allergies and asthma.

Stay pest-free by following these steps:

Shut pests out.

- Seal cracks, gaps and holes in ceilings, walls, floors and around pipes. Talk to your landlord about making repairs.
- Attach a door sweep to the bottom of outside doors if there is a gap of more than one-eighth of an inch.
- Put screens on windows, and mesh screens on bathroom and kitchen vents.

Take away inside and outside nesting places.

Inside the child care center

- Get rid of clutter, such as piles of papers, boxes or bags.
- Keep toys, dress-up clothes and books tidy.
- Store art supplies, puzzles and other materials in clear plastic bins with tight fitting lids.
- Keep storage areas neat and store bins at least six inches off the floor and away from the wall.

Outside the child care center

- Remove any bushes or plants that are within six inches of the edge of the building.
- Keep the yard free of trash and weeds.
- Regularly trim back shrubs and cut the grass.

Get rid of food sources.

Store food and clean daily

- Store food in tightly sealed containers. Do not leave food out overnight.
- Inspect fresh and packaged foods for pests and pests' droppings before using, and discard contaminated food right away.
- Keep the kitchen and other areas where staff and kids store, prepare and eat food clean and dry.
- Clean around and behind equipment.
- Wash table tops with soap and water regularly and sweep under tables after snack times and lunch.
- Vacuum rugs daily with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) vacuum.
- Clean toys regularly. Wash stuffed or soft toys and run them through a hot dryer.
- Neaten cubbies every day and remove any food.
- Use eco-friendly or "green" cleaning products when possible. Store cleaning materials out of reach of children.

Get rid of food sources. *(cont'd)*

Manage garbage

- Store garbage and recyclables in metal or hard plastic containers with tight fitting lids.
- Remove garbage every day and store it outside, away from green spaces or outdoor play areas.
- Be sure the garbage area is well lit, well ventilated and dry.
- Clean trash cans routinely.

Get rid of water sources.

- Wipe up any water from counters, table tops and floors. Drain water tables daily.
- Repair leaking equipment, pipes and faucets. Talk to your landlord about repairs.

Train all employees to be active in keeping your center pest-free.

- Identify a staff member to follow up on pest problems and complaints, and conduct daily inspections where pests may hide.
- Encourage staff to report rodent, cockroach, fly and other insect sightings.

Choose a high-quality pest control professional.

- Only a licensed professional may apply pesticides.
- Only use companies that are registered with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Call 718-482-4994 or visit www.dec.ny.gov/nyspad/ to find registered companies.
- A good pest-control company will:
 - Give you references. (When you interview the company, ask for these.)
 - Have experience conducting pest management in child care settings.
 - Inspect your child care center and point out where pests enter, hide and feed, and recommend strategies to prevent them.
 - Provide a written action plan with regular inspection reports.
 - Give you a price quote based on findings, rather than a flat fee.
 - Provide educational materials and regular trainings for staff.
- Ask the company for a copy of the pesticide labels to keep on site when pesticides are applied.
- Notify parents at least 48 hours before pesticides are applied (unless there is an immediate health threat). It's the law.
- Keep records of all pesticides used.

Pesticides can be harmful to children. Never allow pesticides to be applied just before children arrive or while they are present. Keep children out of the treated area for the maximum time required by law or as written on the label. It is illegal for any employee of a child care center to apply pesticides. Certain pesticides are illegal for use in a child care setting. Make sure to discuss these restrictions with your pest-control professional and ask about all products before any pesticides are applied.

**For more information and resources on pest control,
visit nyc.gov/health or call 311.**