

Health assessments

Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (ECE) services

Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora works with ECE services to ensure safe environments and good health practices to support the health and wellbeing of children. An important part of this is carrying out health assessments on services. These guidelines let ECE services know about the assessment process and what to expect.



What is a health assessment?

We carry out health assessments as part of licensing or relicensing of ECE services, or if a concern has been raised by the Ministry of Education.

Health assessments are based on requirements under the relevant licensing criteria and are completed in accordance with the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008. An assessment is required before the Ministry of Education will issue a license to operate.

The main aspects we will look at during a health assessment are:

- Illness policies and methods of controlling the spread of diseases
- Immunisation registers
- Nappy changing procedures and bathroom hygiene
- General cleaning schedules and upkeep of the service
- Adequacy of ventilation
- Ensuring safe noise levels.



Establishing a new ECE service

When establishing a new ECE service, contact the National Public Health Service (NPHS) in your region. They will schedule a time for your assessment visit and request any documentation required (e.g. health policies). They can also review any plans or policies if necessary to provide health advice regarding the design of the ECE service.

It is important that your ECE service is ready so we can carry out an assessment. At the time of the assessment, it is expected that the service will be as it is on the opening day.

- **All building work and renovations must be completed** e.g. a Code Compliance Certificate has been issued, and a current Building Warrant of Fitness has been issued for premises that require a compliance schedule under the Building Act.
- **All equipment must be operating** e.g. water temperatures have been tempered, fridges are operating etc.
- **Fixtures, fittings and furniture must be in place.**
- **Health and safety policies and procedures must be available for review.** Ideally these should be provided to the public health staff before the assessment visit.





Preparing for a health assessment

Before the assessment visit, we recommend you read all the information we send you so you can address health and hygiene in the design and management of your ECE service. A copy of the assessment form will be provided to you before the visit. We recommended you do a pre check before the visit to ensure everything is in place.

We aim to work with you to undertake the assessment at a date and time suitable (providing the premises are ready to be assessed). If your ECE service is not ready for the visit, please let us know so a new date can be scheduled.

To arrange a visit, reschedule a visit or for further information, please contact the NPHS in your region.



During the health assessment visit

We will carry out a health assessment of the premises. We recommend that someone with detailed knowledge of the ECE service and its operations (e.g. manager or supervisor) is available to assist us during the assessment.

At the end of the visit, we will give a verbal summary of the outcomes. A written report will be sent to you and a copy to the Ministry of Education within seven working days following the assessment.

The Ministry of Education will consider the information within the report and determine what (if any) actions must be undertaken by your ECE service before granting a license.



Health and hygiene documents

Policies and procedures

ECE services will have a range of policies dealing with health and hygiene issues. We recommended policies contain two parts. The first part being a policy statement, which is a short statement that gives a reason for the need for the policy. The second part contains the practices or procedures that will occur at the ECE service to ensure the policy is met.

We will need to review the following documents as part of the health assessment:

- Wash down policy
- Nappy changing policy
- Animal procedures
- Infectious disease exclusion policy
- Laundry policy
- Cleaning policy and cleaning schedule
- Nutrition policy (including breastfeeding policy) and food menus
- Blood and body fluid exposure policy
- Sun safe policy
- Smoke and vape free policy
- Food Safety Training certificates and Food Control Plan (if applicable).

Please supply copies of these documents prior to the health assessment.

Immunisation records

The Health (Immunisation) Regulations 1995 require ECE services to maintain registers of each child's immunisation status. Health protection officers and medical officers of health are authorised to look at these records.

Acoustic report

The licensing criteria (PF12) recommends the use of acoustic absorbing materials to reduce noise levels that may impact children negatively. If your service has used an acoustic specialist, please supply copies of any acoustic reports. If concerns are raised during the health assessment around noise levels, you may be asked to provide a report from an acoustic consultant.



Health education resources

There is a wide range of health education resources that ECE services may find useful. To view and order the current resources refer to [HealthEd](http://www.healthed.govt.nz) (www.healthed.govt.nz).

