

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Margaret B. Dollar
Health Director

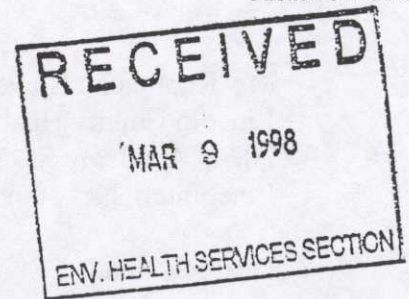
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICE

302 N. Academy Street
LINCOLNTON, N.C. 28092-8643
Phone 704/736-8426

LINCOLN COUNTY, N. C.

March 3, 1998

Ms. Sheila Nichols
Regional Environmental Health Specialist
Children's Environmental Health Branch
724 North Minton Road
Wilkesboro, NC 28697



Dear Sheila,

I am writing for information regarding the inspection of diaper bags in daycares. I am wondering about the legal aspects of searching through diaper bags to look for medications and bottles of milk that should be refrigerated. I am not sure if the diaper bags are considered personal items that would require the parent's permission for searching. I consider them part of the daycare, like cabinets or cubbies, that are accessible with the director's initial consent for inspection.

During several "mock" inspections I found toxics ranging from diaper rash creme to anti-diarrheal medication in diaper bags. Also I am concerned about bottles in the infant room being left in diaper bags and not refrigerated. I realize that to be fair to all centers, every diaper bag would have to be checked. In some larger daycares in bigger counties this may be time consuming and draw out the time spent on an inspection. However, some diaper bags are readily accessible to the children and these medications may be harmful.

I have spoken with my supervisor concerning this matter. We have discussed asking the directors to post signs to remind parents to remove medications from the diaper bags before bringing them to daycare. However, making sure they are really removing these items from the diaper bags would be difficult. Another alternative would be to ask the teachers in the infant and toddler rooms to check the diaper bags for toxics when they come in the center. During the inspections the EHS could check a percentage of the diaper bags for compliance. We would greatly appreciate any ideas or information on state-wide practices. Thank you in advance for your time.

Sincerely,

Rhonda N. Blake

Rhonda Blake R.S.I.
Environmental Health Specialist

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES SECTION



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SECTION CHIEF

June 10, 1998

Ms. Rhonda N. Blake, RSI
Lincoln County Health Department
302 N Academy St
Lincolnton, NC 28092-8643

Dear Rhonda,

In your letter dated March 3, 1998, you inquired about the legal aspects of searching through children's diaper bags to look for medications and bottles of milk or formula that should be refrigerated.

You and your supervisor have devised a good way to handle this potential problem, by asking director of the center to post signs reminding parents to remove medications from diaper bags before bringing them into the facility. Care givers in the facility should check all diaper bags for medications that should be locked up and bottles of milk or formula that should be refrigerated. During the routine sanitation evaluation some of the diaper bags could be inspected for compliance.

Thank you for this practical, common sense approach for keeping hazardous products inaccessible from children and also for keeping bottles of milk and formula stored at proper temperatures.

Sincerely,

Sheila F. Nichols
Regional Environmental Health Specialist

cc: EHSS Standard Distribution List

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