



Minnesota Department of Human Services

June 30, 1999

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child care provider has decided to use a wading pool at childcare. Because of concerns about the spread of disease and the risk of drowning in wading pools, the Minnesota Legislature has directed the Minnesota Department of Health and the Minnesota Department of Human Services to provide written materials to you about these concerns.

Please read the fact sheet on the back of this form and decide whether or not to permit your child(ren) to use the wading pool at child care. Then sign the form to indicate your decision, and return it to your child care provider.

If you have any questions about these changes for wading pools, please contact your local public health department or the Minnesota Department of Health at (612) 676-5414. If you have other questions about child care licensing, please contact the Minnesota Department of Human Services at (651) 296-3971.

Sincerely,

*Jerry Kerber*

Jerry Kerber, Director  
Division of Licensing  
Minnesota Department of Human Services

*Aggie Leitheiser*

Aggie Leitheiser, Director  
Disease Prevention Control Division  
Minnesota Department of Health

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PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO YOUR CHILD CARE PROVIDER

By signing this form, you are acknowledging that you have read the attached information about the spread of disease and the risk of drowning in wading pools. You have been given the opportunity to talk with your provider and you believe you understand the concerns about the use of wading pools at your childcare.

- I do give my child(ren) permission to use the wading pool.
- I do not give my child(ren) permission to use the wading pool

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Child/ren)

Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Parent or Guardian)

Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Child Care Provider)

MDH/DHS 6-99

## FACT SHEET

### RISKS OF WADING POOLS IN CHILD CARE HOMES

**The use of wading pools in home child care settings could facilitate the transmission of infections among children and cause serious disease.**

- ⇒ Guidelines for out-of-home child care programs have been jointly developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Public Health Association and published by the National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health. These guidelines state that, "small, portable wading pools shall not be permitted" because they "do not permit adequate control of sanitation and safety and provide a superior means of transmission of infectious diseases."
- ⇒ In Minnesota, we are particularly concerned about the potential for the enhanced transmission of *E. coli* O157:H7. This bacteria is passed in stool and is readily transmitted among children when contaminated hands or toys are placed in the mouth or contaminated food or water are consumed. Wading pools can easily become contaminated with stool.
- ⇒ Infection with *E. coli* O157:H7 is the primary cause of hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), the most common cause of kidney failure in children in this country. This syndrome usually involves prolonged hospital stays and is fatal in up to 5% of cases.
- ⇒ Minnesota has the most reported *E. coli* O157:H7 infections in this country. In 1998, there were 209 cases statewide, most of which occurred in children during the summer months. Each year several *E. coli* O157:H7 outbreaks are identified in Minnesota in both child care homes and centers. These outbreaks often cause a disruption of parents' schedules and income for the child care provider because infected children need to be excluded from child care until they are no longer carrying the bacteria, which can take as long as 1-2 months. Several other disease-causing agents, including *Giardia*, *Cryptosporidium*, and *Shigella* are also efficiently transmitted in wading pools. All of these agents can cause severe illness in children and are common in Minnesota.
- ⇒ The transmission of these infections can occur even under the care of the most diligent and thoughtful child care providers as the infections can be spread even with mild symptoms.

#### **Wading Pools Present the Risk of Drowning or Other Submersion Incidents.**

- ⇒ The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission warns that young children can drown in small amounts of water, as little as two inches deep. Submersion incidents involving children usually happen in familiar surroundings and can happen quickly, even in the time it takes to answer a phone. In a comprehensive study of drowning and submersion incidents involving children under 5 years old, 77% of the victims had been missing from sight for 5 minutes or less. The Commission notes that toddlers in particular often do something unexpected because their capabilities change daily, and that child drowning is a silent death; there is no splashing to alert anyone that the child is in trouble.