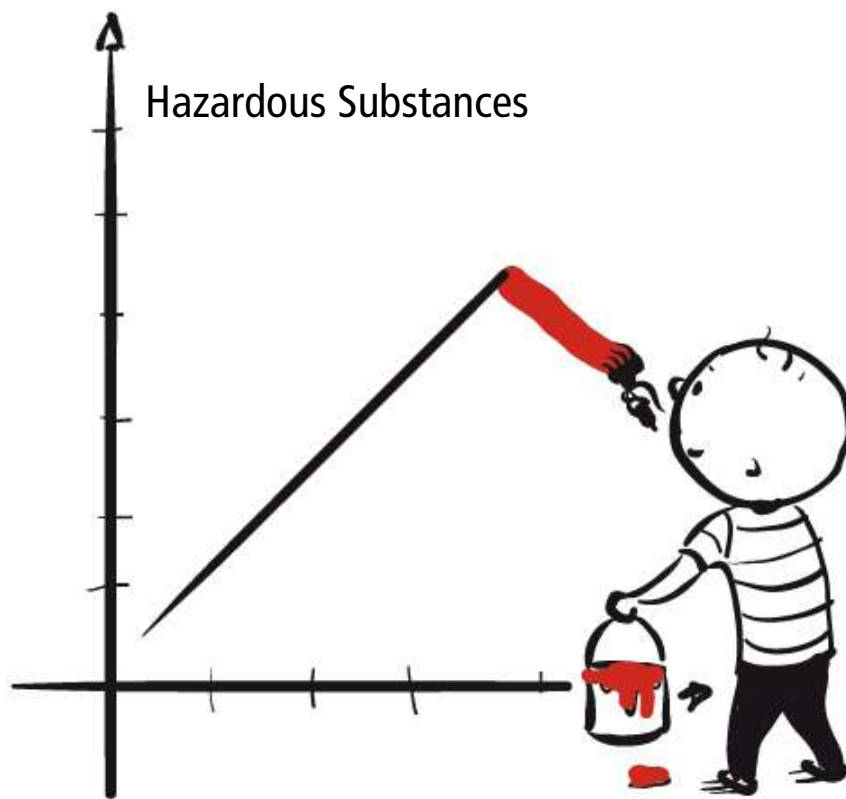


GUIDELINES FOR

# Toxin Free Preschools





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# INTRODUCTION

Our environment today contains far more chemicals than ever before. We come into contact with them wherever we go. The food we eat may have been grown using pesticides. When building or rebuilding our homes, we may use materials containing harmful substances. In addition, we surround ourselves with electronic products, toys and furniture which may contain and release harmful substances. Very little is known about the risks this exposure creates for people and the environment. Research shows that children are exposed to more or less the same substances at their preschool as in their home, and sometimes to an even greater extent. This gives cause for concern, considering how much time many children spend at preschool.

These Guidelines for Toxin Free Preschools are intended for new and existing preschools (attended by children aged 1–6 years). They aim to help preschools in Västerås to avoid harmful chemicals and to achieve the Swedish environmental objective of A Non-Toxic Environment. The Guidelines are intended to support decision-making, for instance when changes are to be carried out or purchases are to be made. Since some of the recommendations given are relevant to several areas, they are included in several sections.



# BACKGROUND

Children and young people are particularly sensitive to hazardous chemicals because they are still developing. For normal development to occur, several hormonal systems need to interact properly. Even very small amounts of hormone disruptors may interfere with this interaction. Children also risk absorbing more chemicals than adults because they eat more by body weight, their skin is thinner, they breathe faster and they are closer to the floor, where chemical residues may collect in dust. In addition, children like to explore their environment by touching and tasting objects.

Some chemicals accumulate in the human body and in the environment, remaining there for a very long time. We do not yet know enough

about their effects, but it is suspected that they are at least part of the reason for the increasing prevalence of cancer and diabetes in society. Researchers have also found links between chemicals and difficulties having children, damage to the nervous system, obesity and allergies.

This is why it is important to apply the precautionary principle and aim for a toxin-free environment. As a first step, the City of Västerås adopted a Chemicals Action Plan which stresses, among other things, the need to reduce children's exposure to chemicals. These Guidelines for Toxin Free Preschools build on that work.

These Guidelines were jointly elaborated by the Childcare and Education Department, Technical Services and Property Management Department and the Environment and Public Health Department of the Municipality of Västerås.

The Municipality of Västerås participates in an EU project called NonHazCity which aims to minimise emissions of hazardous substances from cities around the Baltic Sea. These Guidelines are part of the work to create toxin-free cities carried out as part of that project. Read more about NonHazCity at [www.nonhazcity.eu](http://www.nonhazcity.eu)

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# INDOOR ENVIRONMENT

Preschools should offer children a good and healthy learning environment. In such an environment, they should not run unnecessary health risks and their exposure to potentially unhealthy chemicals should be minimized. Choosing good raw materials and products is the best way to reduce toxins in the children's indoor environment.

This chapter consists of three sections: Eating; Playing; and Sleeping and Being.

## Eating

Food plays an important part in creating toxin-free preschools. This section offers advice on raw materials, cooking, storage and serving.

## Challenges

Ready-made food products often contain undesirable additives.

Synthetic substances may pass from plastics into food, especially when the plastics come into contact with acidic or fatty foods or when they are heated. This is why it is important to use materials and products which are resistant to heat, acids and fat and which will not release undesirable chemicals.

Non-stick frying pans often contain perfluorinated substances which may be hormone disruptive and generally degrade very slowly in the environment. Such substances may also be found in paper designed to withstand high temperatures, such as non-eco-labelled baking paper, muffin liners and popcorn bags for use in microwave ovens.

Metal tins may have a coating which contains undesirable chemicals such as Bisphenol A, a hormone disruptor. These chemicals may pass into the food stored in the tin.

Vinyl gloves often contain phthalates, which may pass into the food during cooking.

When water is stagnant, [any] heavy metals in pipes and fittings may release into it.

## ORGANIC FOOD

There are several advantages to choosing organic food. Compared with conventionally grown food, it contains no or less pesticides. It does not cause toxins to spread to the environment or to agricultural workers. In addition, organic farming increases biodiversity.

### Actions to be taken

- Prepare food from scratch to minimise artificial food additives.
- All utensils, packages and products should be intended for the purpose in question. Check labels and quality. Only use products approved for contact with food. Utensils used when cooking should be heat-resistant. Replace scratched or worn plastic products and choose wooden or stainless-steel utensils wherever possible.
- Do not store food in plastic packages. Storing it in glass is better, especially for hot, acidic or fatty foods. Do not heat food in plastic containers.
- Use phthalate-free gloves and avoid vinyl gloves.
- Let the tap water run for a while before filling jugs or glasses for the table.



OK

- Organic food and manually prepared food.
- Cardboard packaging (e.g. crushed tomatoes), frozen foods (e.g. maize and green peas) or dry goods (e.g. chickpeas and beans).
- Frying pans, saucepans, service pans, baking tins and baking plates made of cast iron, carbon steel or stainless steel.
- Utensils made of stainless steel or wood. Wooden cutting boards.
- China, stainless steel and glass for serving.
- Gloves made of nitrile rubber or polyethylene and intended for use with food.
- Plastic wrap made of polyethylene (PE, PE-LD).
- Lids, aluminium foil or towels to cover food.
- Eco-labelled baking paper.
- Heating food in containers made of stainless steel or china.
- Cotton cloths with or without an acrylic plastic coating.
- Table-covering materials intended for contact with food.

NOT OK



- Industrially processed food products.
- Food in metal tins.
- Non-stick (perfluorinated) coated frying pans, saucepans, baking tins and baking plates.
- Kitchen utensils made of plastic.
- Plastic glasses and plates for serving.
- Gloves made of PVC.
- Plastic wrap made of PVC.
- Plastic wrap should not be in direct contact with food nor used to cover hot food.
- Baking paper without eco-label.
- Heating food in plastic containers.
- Table-covering materials not intended for contact with food, e.g. oilcloth made of PVC.

## WOODEN CUTTING BOARDS AND UTENSILS

are just as hygienic as plastic ones. Check for wear and replace worn and scratched products.

## Playing

Children will play with anything they can get their hands on. In this section, a “toy” refers to an object originally intended for children to play with. To ensure that toys are safe for children, the EU Toy Safety Directive includes rules on harmful substances that are not allowed in toys. The legislation on chemicals in toys was made stricter in 2007, which is why that year is often seen as a turning point for toy safety. A further tightening of toy legislation occurred in 2013. All toys that comply with the Toy Safety Directive carry the CE mark (see the Symbols and Markings section), and today only CE-marked toys may be sold in Europe.

## Challenges

Children will also play with objects which were not originally intended to be toys. Such “non-toys” are not subject to the same legislation and may therefore contain substances that are banned from toys and may be harmful to children.

Old electronic products, such as old mobile phones, covers, circuit boards and cables, may contain harmful flame retardants, heavy metals and additives such as phthalates. Modern computers, monitors and tablets are subject to EU legislation but may still contain flame retardants, heavy metals and phthalates. Some of these substances may be released into the air when the equipment heats up.

Artificial leather is often made of PVC, which contains phthalates. Metal parts, such as buttons, may contain nickel. Metal jewellery and keys may contain lead and cadmium in addition to nickel.

Soft plastic toys (e.g. dolls, plastic animals and balls) which are sticky or have an oily, greasy surface are highly likely to contain phthalates. Plastic toys with a strong smell may contain allergenic substances.

Hard plastic toys are usually made of better materials than soft plastic toys. PVC, which should be avoided, can be found in both hard and soft toys. For example, small figurines (e.g. farm animals) often contain PVC.

Sports equipment such as balls and training mats are not regulated in the same way as toys. Such equipment may contain harmful phthalates and other substances.

It may be hard for a preschool to accept second-hand toys offered to it as gifts, because it is often difficult to check the age and CE marking of such toys.



## Actions to be taken

- Reduce the number of plastic toys at the preschool, especially soft plastic toys.
- Choose products manufactured in Europe whenever possible.
- Always wash clothes and textiles before letting the children play with them. Give newly purchased plastic and rubber products a good airing.
- Do not let children take apart old electronic products to examine them.
- Do not keep electronic equipment in the room(s) where children eat and sleep. Make sure that the equipment does not heat up and have children wash their hands after using tablets or computers.
- Give some thought to the purpose of a toy or product: which children will be using it and how will it be used? Be particularly analytical when it comes to objects that will be used by younger children, especially where they may be tempted to put them in their mouths.



OK

- CE-marked toys (note that the mark may be on the packaging).
- Toys made after 2007 or, even better, after 2013.
- Hard plastic toys made of ABS, PE and PP, which are better plastics, e.g. Plus-Plus, Duplo, Lego and Nopper.
- Non-phthalate farm animals and other figurines.
- Toys made of wood, textiles and good metals such as stainless steel, other steel or aluminium.
- Wooden toys made of solid pieces of wood are better than those made of particle board.
- Intact and operational electronic equipment, such as computers and tablets, made after 2007.
- Dressing-up materials classified as toys; organic textiles.
- Always wash clothes and textiles before letting children use them.
- Items of jewellery classified as toys.
- Nickel-free light jewellery, wooden jewellery.
- Keys classified as toys.
- Eco-labelled, non-chlorine-bleached paper.
- Cuddly toys stuffed with polyester; non-flame-resistant, CE-marked cuddly toys.
- Tubes and hoses classified as toys or intended for use with food; untreated or heat-treated wood; organic wallpaper.

NOT OK



- Toys which lack the CE mark.
- Soft plastic toys from before 2007.
- Soft plastic toys (dolls, plastic animals, balls) which are sticky or whose surface feels fatty to the touch without being dirty.
- Old figurines made of PVC or unknown materials.
- Objects and materials with a strong smell.
- New toys made of PVC.
- Electronic products and electronic toys made before 2007.
- Old electronic products such as videogame consoles, mobile phones, cameras, computers, etc.
- Any electronic products, for children likely to put things in their mouths.
- Dressing-up clothes, bags and other paraphernalia with parts made of artificial leather, plastics or metal.
- Metal jewellery.
- Common keys.
- Receipts.
- Cuddly toys stuffed with foam rubber or marked as flame resistant.
- Toys with peeling paint.
- Building materials, e.g. PVC tubes and hoses, insulating material, cables, pressure-treated wood and pieces of flooring.

## CREATIVE MATERIALS

Examples: beads, clay, laminating equipment, paint and glue

### Challenges

Many art, craft and hobby materials are not considered to be toys, meaning that they are not covered by toy legislation. Such materials may contain phthalates, heavy metals, preservatives, solvents and other types of substances.

### Actions to be taken

- When it comes to creative activities, the process is often more important than the result or the finished product. It is also better for the environment to re-use the same material several times. The child's creative process may be documented, for example through photos, and exhibitions may be held. Afterwards, necklaces, finished

pegboards or figurines may be taken apart just as Lego constructions tend to be.

- Whenever possible, choose eco-labelled products which are adapted for use by children and manufactured in Europe.
- Do not let children be present when pegboards are ironed, when lamination is carried out or when a glue pistol is used. Always give the room a good airing afterwards.
- During face painting activities, use make-up adapted for use by children – CE-marked, eco-labelled and with low allergy risk. Don't use make-up products intended for stage actors. Give some thought to the purpose of a product: which children will be using it and how will it be used? For example, will it be cut, glued or heated? Be particularly analytical when it comes to materials that will be used by the younger children and objects that they may be tempted to put in their mouths.



OK

- Beads made of wood or glass.
- Modern pegboard beads, which are made of approved plastics.
- Home-made salt dough and play dough.
- Modelling clays made of vegetable waxes or oils, or natural clay marketed as having a low lead content.
- Glues adapted for use by children.
- Water-based paint adapted for use by children.
- Water-based chinks and pens adapted for use by children, without solvents or heavy metals.
- Using old T-shirts as aprons, or using CE-marked aprons made of polyester, polyamide or PEVA.
- Eco-labelled paper.
- Recyclable cardboard, e.g. cardboard boxes, toilet-paper tubes and food packages such as pizza cartons and paper mugs.
- Organic and washed materials.

NOT OK



- Older pegboard beads.
- Having the children iron pegboards.
- Modelling clay made of PVC.
- Natural clay whose lead content has not been checked.
- Glues marked with hazard symbols.
- Oil paint and artist's paint.
- Older aprons made of vinyl oilcloth.
- Receipt paper and thermal paper.
- Children having cardboard or paper in their mouth.
- Spray-type products such as spray paint and spray glue.
- Any materials with a strong smell.



## PLAY DOUGH

5 decilitres of wheat flour  
2 decilitres of salt  
2 tablespoons of alum or citric acid  
2 tablespoons of cooking oil  
5 decilitres of boiling water  
Caramel colouring (any colour you like)

Mix the dry ingredients and the wet ones separately. Then mix them together into a paste. Keep it in the fridge, in an airtight container.

## SALT DOUGH

1 decilitre of salt  
1.5 decilitres of water  
1.5 teaspoons of oil  
3 decilitres of wheat flour

Mix the salt and water. Leave for about 30 minutes until the salt has dissolved. Then mix everything together. Figurines should be baked at 80 °C for at least an hour.

## HOME-MADE FINGER PAINT

Mix 1 decilitre of maize starch with 2 decilitres of cold water. Then add 4 decilitres of boiling-hot water little by little while stirring. A creamy paste should form.

When the mix has cooled down, colour may be added to the paste. You may use caramel colouring, turmeric, cinnamon, algae powder, crushed berries or any other colourful item you find in the larder.

You can also mix thick yoghurt with the same colourants.

## RE-USED MATERIALS

There are many advantages to re-using materials rather than throwing them away. This is better for the environment, and using materials without a set purpose will enrich the children's imagination by offering greater room for creativity.

### Challenges

Most materials that are re-used were not originally intended for children and so are not subject to the same rules as toys.

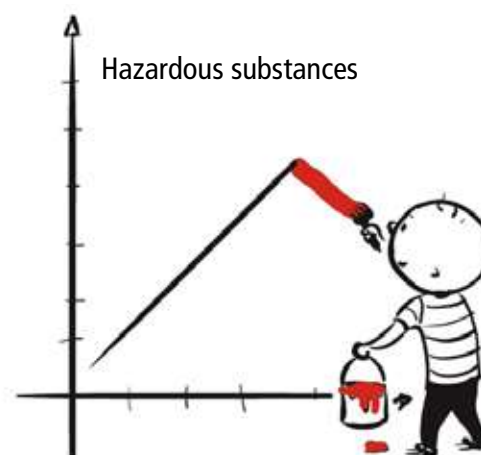
Packaging materials may absorb substances from the products kept in them. For example, it is OK for children to create using old food packages while electronics packaging is unsuitable.

### Actions to be taken

- Give some thought to the purpose of a product: which children will be using it and how will it be used? For example, will

it be cut, glued or heated? Be particularly analytical when it comes to materials that will be used by the younger children and objects that they may be tempted to put in their mouths.

- Disposable food packages may be used in creative activities, but they should not be used for food again.



OK

- Untreated wood.
- Stainless steel, other steel, aluminium.
- Food tins without a plastic coating.
- China and glazed tiles.
- Common glass.
- Washed textiles and organic textiles.
- Cardboard boxes, toilet-paper tubes and cardboard food packages such as pizza cartons and paper mugs.
- Organic wallpaper.
- Plastics intended for use by children or for use with food.

NOT OK

- Impregnated wood, e.g. pressure-treated wood.
- Food tins with a plastic coating.
- Polishing and sandpapering old glazed tiles in the presence of children.
- Crystal glass (which often contains lead).
- Artificial leather.
- Cardboard boxes previously used as packaging for electronic products.
- Children having cardboard or paper in their mouth.
- Wallpaper with a plastic coating.
- Plastics not intended for use by children or for use with food.
- Polystyrene (styrofoam).
- Foam rubber.
- Building materials, e.g. PVC tubes and hoses, insulating material, cables, pressure-treated wood and pieces of flooring.

## Sleeping and Being

This chapter deals with issues including interior fittings, furniture and hygiene.

### Challenges

Brominated flame retardants can be found in foam rubber, textiles and furniture. In particular, furniture from the 1970s and 1980s may contain flame retardants that have since been banned. The surface of both old and new textiles may have been treated with perfluorinated substances to repel dirt.

Resting mattresses and nursing-table pads often consist of a foam-rubber mattress with a PVC cover. The foam rubber may contain harmful flame retardants such as organophosphates, and the plastic cover may contain phthalates and heavy metals.

Environmentally harmful substances such as flame retardants and phthalates will collect in dust.

### Actions to be taken

- Choose organic and eco-labelled products.
- Before starting to use them, give new furniture a good airing and wash new textiles.
- Children should not lie directly on resting mattresses. The mattresses should have textile covers which are washed regularly.
- Whenever possible, have children sleep outdoors, where levels of chemicals are usually lower.
- Ensure that the preschool building is well ventilated, properly cleaned and regularly aired out. Cleaning should take place when children are not in the building.

## IF A FLUORESCENT TUBE OR LOW-ENERGY BULB BREAKS

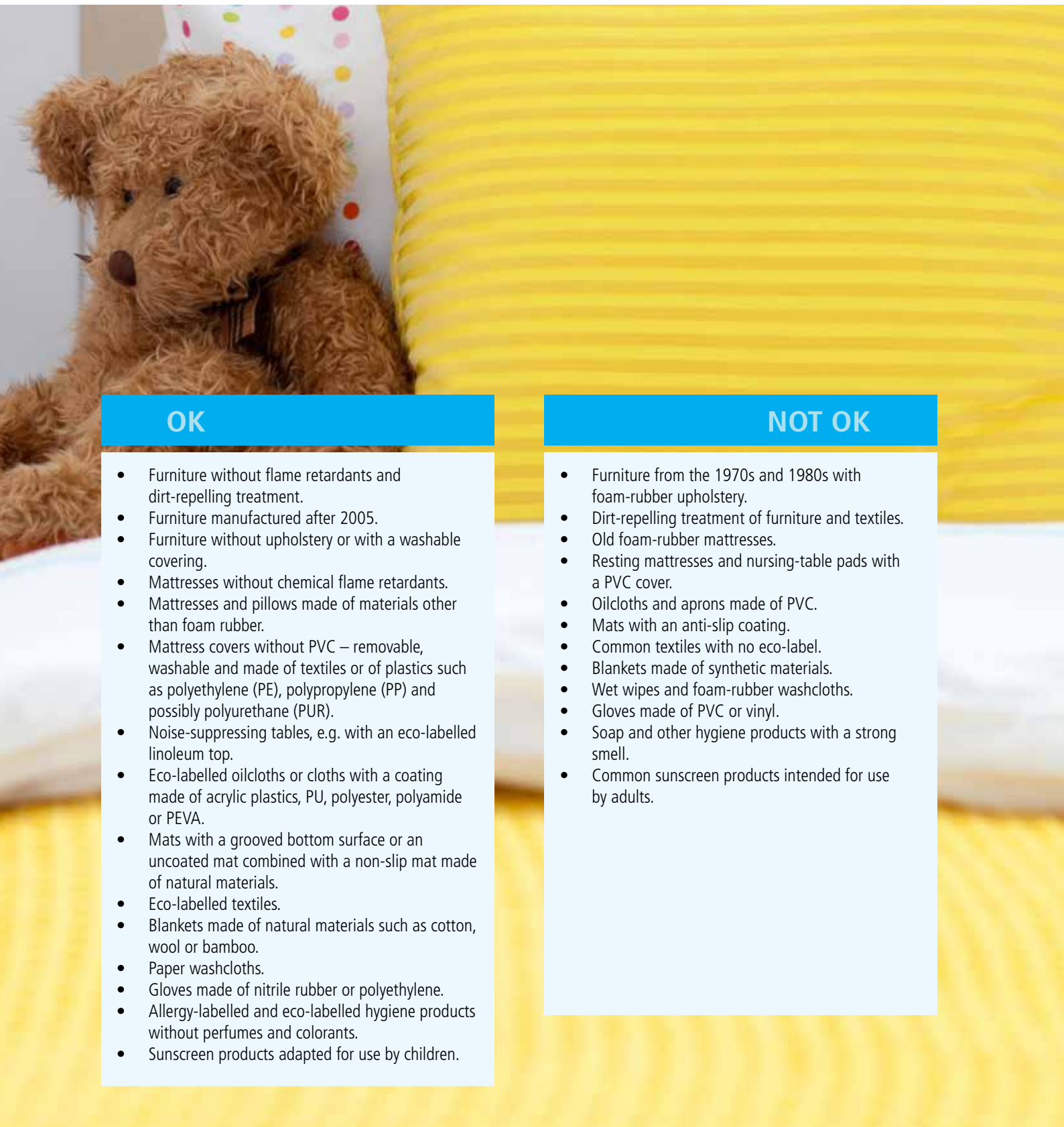
Fluorescent tubes and low-energy light bulbs both contain mercury. If the glass breaks, there is a risk that mercury will be released into the environment.

### **What to do when a fluorescent tube or low-energy light bulb breaks:**

Leave the room and air it out for 30 minutes. Then scoop up the fragments using a stiff sheet of paper. Put both the fragments and the paper in an airtight container. Wipe the floor and other surfaces with a wet cloth and then put the cloth in the same container. Use gloves and wash your hands carefully afterwards.

Mark the container to make it clear that it contains a broken tube or bulb with mercury, and send it to a recycling centre that accepts hazardous waste.

Do not use a vacuum cleaner – doing so may turn the mercury into vapour and cause it to spread further through the indoor air.



## OK

- Furniture without flame retardants and dirt-repelling treatment.
- Furniture manufactured after 2005.
- Furniture without upholstery or with a washable covering.
- Mattresses without chemical flame retardants.
- Mattresses and pillows made of materials other than foam rubber.
- Mattress covers without PVC – removable, washable and made of textiles or of plastics such as polyethylene (PE), polypropylene (PP) and possibly polyurethane (PUR).
- Noise-suppressing tables, e.g. with an eco-labelled linoleum top.
- Eco-labelled oilcloths or cloths with a coating made of acrylic plastics, PU, polyester, polyamide or PEVA.
- Mats with a grooved bottom surface or an uncoated mat combined with a non-slip mat made of natural materials.
- Eco-labelled textiles.
- Blankets made of natural materials such as cotton, wool or bamboo.
- Paper washcloths.
- Gloves made of nitrile rubber or polyethylene.
- Allergy-labelled and eco-labelled hygiene products without perfumes and colorants.
- Sunscreen products adapted for use by children.

## NOT OK

- Furniture from the 1970s and 1980s with foam-rubber upholstery.
- Dirt-repelling treatment of furniture and textiles.
- Old foam-rubber mattresses.
- Resting mattresses and nursing-table pads with a PVC cover.
- Oilcloths and aprons made of PVC.
- Mats with an anti-slip coating.
- Common textiles with no eco-label.
- Blankets made of synthetic materials.
- Wet wipes and foam-rubber washcloths.
- Gloves made of PVC or vinyl.
- Soap and other hygiene products with a strong smell.
- Common sunscreen products intended for use by adults.

# OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT

To minimise exposure to chemicals, it is always a good idea to spend large parts of the day outdoors. The indoor air at a preschool usually contains higher levels of chemicals than the outdoor air. For this reason, it is good for children to be outdoors as much as possible, and preferably also to sleep outdoors. Several studies show that children who play in natural environments can stay focused for longer

periods and have fewer attentional difficulties than children who play mainly in urban areas with many hard artificial surfaces.

This chapter consists of four sections: Yard and Playground Equipment; Loose Playing Materials; Vegetation, Artificial Turf and Fall Protection; and Care and Maintenance.



## Yard and Playground Equipment

Equipment includes benches, tables, terraces, roofs, swings, climbing frames, slides, obstacle courses, sandpits and seesaws.

### Challenges

To make them last longer, climbing frames, swing frames, sandpits and other constructions are often made of impregnated wood.

Impregnating agents may contain substances harmful to the environment and to human health, such as copper, arsenic, chromium and creosote. These may be released into the environment, so they should preferably not be used at preschools. In addition, skin contact with creosote may cause chemical burns.

Car tyres are sometimes used in the outdoor environment, for example as part of obstacle courses, as jumping toys and as flower-bed edges. While it is good from a recycling point of view to re-use materials, it should be noted that old tyres in particular contain harmful and potentially carcinogenic chemicals.

### Actions to be taken

- Choose the right type of wood when building terraces, benches, playhouses, sandpit edges and other playground equipment. Ask the product supplier about materials and surface treatments used.
- Remove car tyres from the preschool yard. Replace swings made of old car tyres with better options.



OK

- Heat-treated wood or wood treated with a silicon-based impregnating agent.
- Untreated wood, such as heartwood as well as larch and oak, which are naturally more durable than certain other types of wood.
- Untreated wood which is painted or oiled with an eco-labelled paint or surface-treatment agent. Also use eco-labelled surface treatment when maintaining the wood.
- High-pressure laminate (HPL) or laminated wood.
- Aluminium, sheet metal and steel.
- Swings and playing equipment made of materials intended for children and for play.
- Sandpit sand of a grade intended for use by children.

NOT OK



- Creosote-treated wood, e.g. railway sleepers and telegraph poles.
- Pressure-impregnated wood.
- Car tyres, for swings or other equipment on the preschool yard.



## Loose Playing Materials

This section deals with loose playing equipment used outdoors, such as spades, buckets, stilts and skipping ropes.


### Challenges

Children are sometimes allowed to play with tubes, hoses, cable reels and tarpaulins. However, these are not intended as toys for children, and may contain hazardous chemicals.


Loading pallets and cable reels may have been impregnated with agents to prevent mould growth or pest attacks. Untreated pallets and reels are deemed safe for children, but it is hard to say whether wood has been treated since you cannot tell from the way it looks.

### Actions to be taken

- Choose outdoor toys where it is clear that the material is intended for use by children. Such information must be given on the packaging, and the supplier has a duty to provide sufficient information about the product.
- Use materials and products for their intended purposes. Let the children play with safe products: products intended either for use by children or for use with food as well as products made of untreated wood.
- Make sure that the children have an ample supply of natural loose materials such as branches, twigs, tree stumps, pine cones, wood chips, seed cases, etc.

 **OK**

- Toys and materials adapted for use by children.
- Tubes and hoses classified as toys or intended for use with food.
- Products made of untreated or heat-treated wood or of sheet metal.

**NOT OK** 

- Hoses made of PVC, insulating material, cables and other material not adapted for use by children.
- Impregnated wood and wood treated to resist mould.

## Vegetation, Artificial Turf and Fall Protection

Vegetation, such as bushes, trees and lawns, is very important for children's play, learning and health. Natural lawns are sometimes replaced with artificial turf, above all on sports fields but also on schoolyards and elsewhere. Artificial turf consists of plastic grass with or without loose rubber granules embedded in it.

Climbing frames and swings require fall protection to reduce the risk of injuries from falls. Fall protection may consist of natural materials, fall-protection sand or fall-protection rubber, which is also known, among other names, as "wet pour". Fall-protection rubber consists of rubber granules which are bound together.

### Challenges

Certain plants contain allergenic or toxic substances.

It is sometimes decided to replace natural vegetation with artificial surfaces and objects. However, replacing natural environments with artificial materials is a bad choice for several reasons. Artificial surfaces rarely offer such an attractive environment for learning and play as natural environments do. The rubber granules found in artificial turf and fall-protection rubber are often made from worn-out car tyres, which may contain carcinogenic substances. To increase the durability of fall-protection materials, various substances that may be harmful to the environment and to human

health are added. As the artificial surfaces are subjected to wear, they release microplastics which travel with rainwater to rivers and lakes. Finally, the replacement of worn-out artificial turf and fall protection generates large amounts of waste.

### Actions to be taken

- Avoid highly toxic or allergenic plants when replanting, but do not remove more vegetation than necessary. Garden centres can give advice about plants suitable for preschools.
- Aim for natural environments. Keep existing vegetation as far as possible and make use of any trees, bushes and rocks found on the site. Plan for nature-like environments if they do not exist to begin with. In addition, the preschool yard must be large enough to accommodate the children's play.
- Use wood chips, bark, cork or sand as fall protection. Make sure that the fall-protection surface is well drained to increase the durability of the material.
- On preschool yards which already have artificial turf, replace the rubber granules in it with sand. Sand is a healthier option, and it will not prevent balls from bouncing properly.
- Choose natural grass or natural fall protection whenever artificial turf or artificial fall protection has become worn out and needs to be replaced.



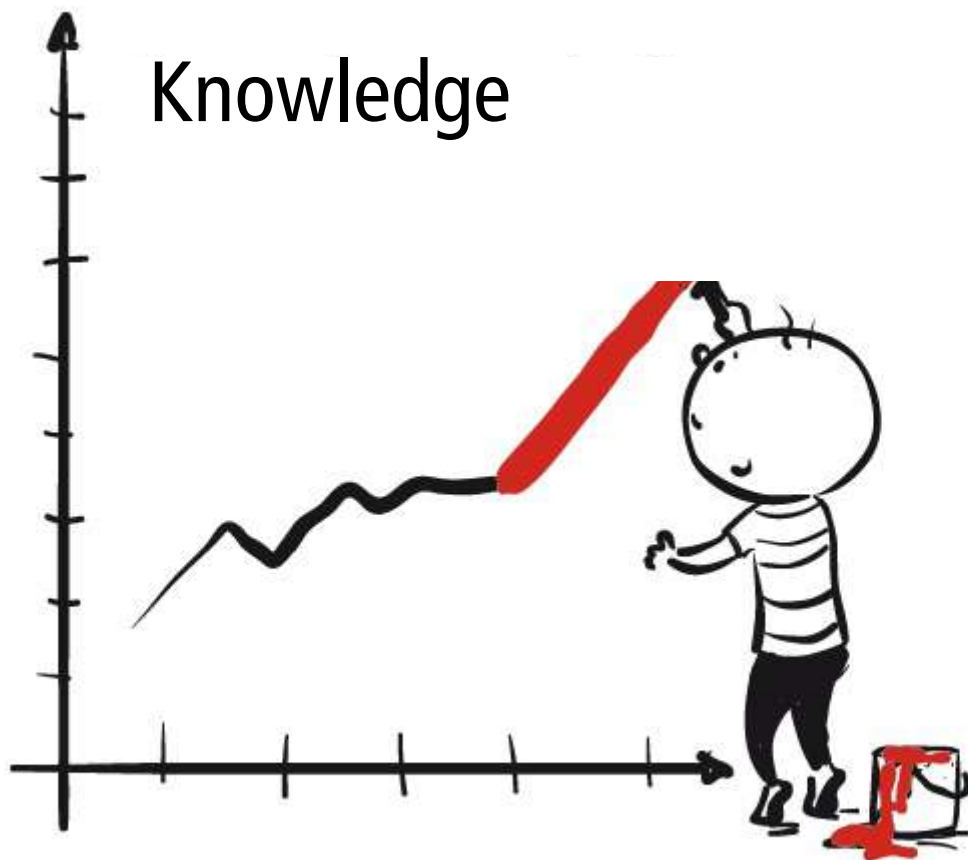
OK

- Natural materials and untreated pallet collars in planted areas.
- Natural environments with natural vegetation.
- Fall protection made of wood chips, bark, cork or sand.
- Replacing the rubber granules in artificial turf with sand.

NOT OK



- Highly toxic or allergenic plants.
- Car tyres in planted areas.
- Artificial turf.
- Fall protection made of artificial materials – “wet pour”.
- Rubber granules made from car tyres.



## Care and Maintenance

This section deals with lawn mowing, sweeping and weeding.

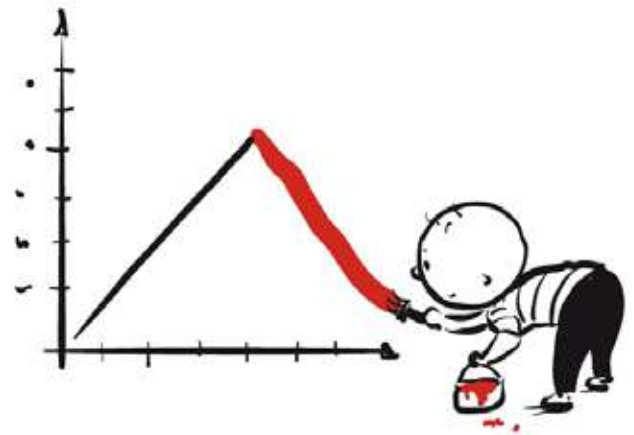
### Challenges

Lawn mowing, sweeping and leaf blowing may cause unhealthy exhaust fumes and particles to be released into the air.

Herbicides are sometimes used against weeds and pesticides against vermin on plants. Even pesticides in common use may contain potentially unhealthy chemicals. For this reason, they should not be used in areas where children spend time. The City of Västerås decided several years ago not to use chemical pesticides on hard surfaces.

### Actions to be taken

- Reduce the risk that children will be exposed to exhaust fumes and other air pollution by mowing lawns and sweeping when the children are not nearby. Make sure that particles do not enter the preschool building from the yard through fresh-air inlets when lawns are being mown or surfaces are being swept.
- Do not use chemical pesticides against weeds or vermin.



OK

- Weeding by hand or using machines and tools.
- Traps to catch vermin.

NOT OK



- Chemical herbicides against weeds.
- Chemical pesticides against vermin

## NO CHEMICAL PESTICIDES

Pest controllers commonly offer several options. Be careful to specify that no chemical pesticides may be used.

# CHECK YOUR OLD TOYS

## A QUICK GUIDE

### Soft plastics

- Is it produced before 2007 - dispose.
- Does it smell plastic or perfume – dispose.
- Is the CE-label missing – dispose.
- Does it feel sticky or greasy – dispose.

### Wood and metal toys

- Paint is peeling – dispose.

### Textiles

- Marked as flame resistant – dispose.
- Filled with polymer foam – dispose.
- Filled with polyester – keep.

### Synthetic leather

- Made of PVC – dispose.
- Made of polyurethane – keep.

### Electronic items

- Broken with visible parts and soldering – dispose.
- Made before 2006 – dispose.



# SYMBOLS AND MARKINGS



Bra Miljöval

## A few common eco-labels

Bra Miljöval (“Good Environmental Choice”) is the eco-label awarded by the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation to goods and services. The requirements, which are extensive, relate both to the manufacturing process and to the finished product and are constantly being updated.



“The Swan”, which is managed by the Nordic Council of Ministers, collaborates with the EU eco-label, “the EU flower”. These two labels often apply the same criteria for the marking of goods and services. The requirements relate to the entire life cycle and are constantly being updated.



GOTS, the Global Organic Textile Standard, is an extensive eco-labelling scheme for textiles. It imposes strict environmental requirements throughout the supply chain, from cultivation to manufacturing and distribution of textiles. It also requires social responsibility.



Oeko-tex requires that a textile product must not contain certain harmful substances. The label relates only to the final product.



“The Swallow”, managed by the National Swedish Association against Asthma and Allergy, shows that a product can be recommended from an allergy perspective.



The KRAV label for food products shows that a product is organic and meets strict requirements in terms of animal husbandry, health, social responsibility and climate impact.



The “Euro Leaf” is the EU label for organic food products. The requirements under KRAV are somewhat stricter than those under the Euro Leaf.

## Marking of plastics

Plastics can be marked in two different ways, either using a recycling triangle with a number inside or using a letter code inside > < brackets:



>PE-HD<

The number inside the triangle or the letter code indicates the type of plastic that the packaging is made of.

- 1 PET - Polyethylene terephthalate
- 2 PE-HD - High-density polyethylene
- 3 PVC - Polyvinyl chloride, **should be avoided**
- 4 PE-LD - Low-density polyethylene
- 5 PP - Polypropylene
- 6 PS - Polystyrene, **should be avoided**
- 7 Other plastics, **should be avoided unless you know that it is a good type of plastic**



## Other markings

The glass-and-fork mark shows that a product is approved for use with food.



The CE mark shows that a product meets EU requirements. Those requirements differ between product groups. CE-marked toys meet the requirements laid down in the EU Toy Safety Directive, which places particularly high demands on toys intended for small children.

## INSPIRATION

[nonhazcity.eu](http://nonhazcity.eu)

<https://www.kemi.se/en/global/broschyror/chemicals-in-childrens-everyday-lives.pdf?>

<https://www.kemi.se/en/guidance-for/consumers/articles-and-chemical-products/toys?>

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