



DRINKING WATER IN CHILD CARE CENTERS & SCHOOLS

FLORIDA

State Policy Profile

Access to safe and appealing drinking water in child care and schools is a key strategy to build healthy habits that children will use for life to maintain a healthy body weight and to support overall health.

RESEARCH METHODS: This issue brief summarizes state-level policies that govern drinking water access and quality in licensed child care centers and public school buildings. Findings reflect laws and regulations in effect as of June 2017. The following state-level policies were reviewed for relevant provisions:

- Child care licensing regulations
- School building standards
- School nutrition standards
- School sanitation standards
- School facilities inventory requirements
- School joint purchasing provisions
- Food safety codes
- Plumbing codes
- Childhood lead poisoning prevention program regulations

CHILD CARE CENTERS

Access to Drinking Water

Is there a general state policy requiring that children be provided drinking water?

Yes. In child care centers “[s]afe drinking water shall be available to all children.”¹

How water is to be provided is not specified, but if a child care center uses disposable cups they “must be discarded after each use.”²

How many drinking fountains are required?

One drinking fountain per 100 occupants. The Florida Plumbing Code 5th Ed. (2014) requires 1 drinking fountain per 100 occupants for day care centers.³ Water coolers or bottled water dispensers can substitute for up to 50 percent of required fountains.⁴ Child care centers located in public school buildings must provide at least one drinking fountain, and fountains “shall be within close proximity of the child-care facility.”⁵

Water Quality

Is routine water quality testing of taps and fountains used to supply drinking water required?

No

How is the child care center water supply addressed?

In order to maintain a child care license, “[c]hild care facilities that have a well [water] system must maintain current written records indicating the well system meets the requirements of the Department of Health on an annual basis.”⁶

How does the state lead poisoning prevention program address potential exposure to lead in drinking water?

The Florida Department of Health’s Lead Poisoning Prevention Program conducts surveillance of elevated blood lead levels in vulnerable children under 6 years of age and provides basic public education about sources of lead poisoning including from drinking water.⁷ Drinking water is not specifically addressed in the law that established the program.⁸

SCHOOLS

Access to Drinking Water

Is there a state school nutrition policy that addresses access to drinking water at no cost to students?

No

Are cups for drinking water required in food service areas?

No

Can school food service purchase drinking water supplies like cups through a purchasing collaborative?

Yes. The Florida Interlocal Cooperation Act of 1969 permits Florida school districts to conduct joint purchasing with other districts or governmental entities.⁹

What are the requirements for drinking fountains in schools?

School facilities constructed and/or maintained by a school board must comply with the Florida Building Code.¹⁰ The Florida Plumbing Code 5th Ed. (2014) requires one drinking fountain per 100 occupants for K-12 educational facilities.¹¹ Water coolers or bottled water dispensers can substitute for up to 50 percent of required fountains.¹²

Are there requirements for drinking fountain maintenance and cleanliness?

Yes. Schools are subject to annual sanitation inspections and must maintain drinking fountains “in an operational condition at all times.”¹³ School boards are required to schedule and prescribe methods for daily cleaning and disinfection of drinking fountains.¹⁴

Water Quality

Is routine water quality testing of school taps and fountains that convey drinking water required?

No

Is plumbing system maintenance in general regulated?

Yes. Sanitary standards for school buildings require that plumbing systems “shall not leak or drip, and shall be clean and sanitary.”¹⁵ The Florida Food Code requires that plumbing systems in food service areas must “prevent

contamination of the water supply...and shall not constitute a source of contamination of food, equipment or utensils or create an unsanitary condition or nuisance.”¹⁶

How is the school water supply addressed?

Florida public schools are subject to the state food safety code that requires school food service areas to use a water supply from an “approved source” that complies with Florida water quality and laws and regulations for public and private water suppliers.¹⁷

Is water quality from a private water supply, e.g. a well, monitored?

Yes. On-site potable water systems “shall be in proper working order and comply with the Florida Safe Drinking Water Act.”¹⁸ On-site systems like wells are subject to monthly sampling of treated and raw water “for the purpose of bacteriological examination” and records of water testing must be kept.¹⁹

How does the Lead Poisoning Prevention Program address potential exposure to lead in drinking water at schools?

The Florida Department of Health’s Lead Poisoning Prevention Program conducts surveillance of elevated blood lead levels in vulnerable children under 6 years of age and provides basic public education about sources of lead poisoning including from drinking water.²⁰ Drinking water is not specifically addressed in the law that established the program.²¹

Information Gathering Systems

Does Florida conduct a school facilities inventory?

Yes. School boards in Florida are required to conduct an educational plant survey every five years.²² The Florida Department of Education's Office of Educational Facilities oversees the facilities inventories.²³ Detailed reports for each Florida school district are available online.²⁴

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For additional information please visit www.phaionline.org for the summary report: **Developing State Policy Recommendations for Safe Drinking Water Procurement in Child Care Centers and Schools**

¹ Fla. Admin. Code Ann. r. 65C-22.002(10)(a)(3) (2017).

² Id.

³ Fla. Stat. Ann. § 553.73 (2017); 2012 Int'l Plumbing Code, Table 403.1

⁴ Fla. Stat. Ann. § 553.73 (2017); 2012 Int'l Plumbing Code, § 410.3.

⁵ Office of Educational Facilities, Fla. Dept. of Educ., STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES 71 (2014).

⁶ Fla. Admin. Code Ann. r. 65C-22.001 (1)(c) (2017).

⁷ Fla. Dept. of Health, About the Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, <http://www.floridahealth.gov/Environmental-Health/lead-poisoning/index.html> (last accessed July 19, 2017).

⁸ Fla. Stat. Ann. § 381.982 (2017).

⁹ Fla. Stat. Ann. § **163.01(2017)**.

¹⁰ Office of Educational Facilities, Fla. Dept. of Educ., STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES (2014).

¹¹ Fla. Stat. Ann. § 553.73 (2017); 2012 Int'l Plumbing Code, Table 403.1.

¹² Fla. Stat. Ann. § 553.73 (2017); 2012 Int'l Plumbing Code, § 410.3.

¹³ Office of Educational Facilities, Fla. Dept. of Educ., STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES 55, 83 (2014).

¹⁴ Id. at 87.

¹⁵ Id. at 80.

¹⁶ Fla. Admin. Code Ann. r. 64E-11.007(3) (2017).

¹⁷ Office of Educational Facilities, Fla. Dept. of Educ., STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES 73 (2014); Fla. Admin. Code Ann. r. 64E-11.007 (2017).

¹⁸ Office of Educational Facilities, Florida Department of Education, STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES (2014) 62.

¹⁹ Id.

²⁰ Fla. Dept. of Health, About the Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, <http://www.floridahealth.gov/Environmental-Health/lead-poisoning/index.html> (last accessed July 19, 2017).

²¹ Fla. Stat. Ann. § 381.982 (2017).

²² Fla. Stat. Ann. § 1013.31 (2017).

²³ Fla. Dept. of Educ., Florida Inventory of School Houses (FISH), <http://www.fldoe.org/finance/edual-facilities/fl-inventory-of-school-houses-fish.shtml> (last accessed July 19, 2017).

²⁴ Fla. Dept. of Educ., 2016-2017 Five-Year Educational Work Plan Historical Data, <http://www.fldoe.org/finance/edual-facilities/wkplans/2016-2017.shtml> (last accessed July 19, 2017).