

15A NCAC 18A .2832 OUTDOOR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND PREMISES

- (a) Child care center premises, including the outdoor learning environment, shall be kept clean, drained to minimize standing water, free of litter and hazards, and maintained in a manner which does not create conditions that attract or harbor pests. Debris, glass, dilapidated structures, and broken play equipment shall be removed from areas accessible to children. Wells, grease traps, cisterns, and utility equipment shall be made inaccessible to children.
- (b) Sand toys, water tables, and other unfiltered items that can collect standing water in the outdoor learning environment shall be emptied and stored to prevent the collection of standing water.
- (c) For outdoor toys and play equipment, including all structures accessible to children, the following shall apply:
- (1) Equipment and toys shall be kept clean, in good repair, and free of peeling, flaking, or chalking paint, rust, and corrosion; and
 - (2) A sandbox used in outdoor play shall be constructed to allow for drainage of water and shall be covered when not in use and kept clean.
- (d) Children's outdoor activities shall be restricted as set forth in this Paragraph based on a daily air quality forecast made by the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Air Quality for the county where a center is located and published on the Division of Air Quality's Air Quality Portal at: <https://airquality.climate.ncsu.edu/air-guide/aq-datasets/>. On days with a code orange (unhealthy for sensitive groups) forecast, children shall not be outside participating in physical activity between noon and 8:00 p.m. for more than one hour. On days with a code red (unhealthy) forecast, children shall not be outside participating in physical activity between noon and 8:00 p.m. for more than 15 minutes. On days with a code purple (very unhealthy) forecast, children shall not be outside participating in physical activity between noon and 8:00 p.m. Provisions shall be made to allow children with diagnosed asthma or with coughing or wheezing symptoms to participate in physical activity indoors on days with a code orange, red or purple air quality forecast.
- (e) When food service is provided in the outdoor learning environment, food shall be protected, stored, prepared, and served in accordance with Rules .2806, .2807 and .2808 of this Section. Employees and children shall wash their hands in accordance with Rule .2803 of this Section prior to food service in the outdoor learning environment and food service tables shall be cleaned or covered prior to use.
- (f) When diapering and toileting facilities are provided in the outdoor learning environment, they shall be maintained in accordance with Rules .2817 and .2819 of this Section and employees and children shall wash their hands in accordance with Rule .2803 of this Section.
- (g) Storage provided in the outdoor learning environment for children's toys shall be kept clean and in good repair. Storage areas that are accessible to children shall be kept free of equipment that is not intended by the manufacturer to be used by children and shall meet the requirements of Rule .2820 of this Section. Storage areas shall meet requirements for lighting in accordance with Rule .2826 of this Section. Spare batteries shall be kept on-site at the child care center for battery operated light fixtures used to light storage areas in accordance with this Paragraph.
- (h) Outdoor water play centers shall be maintained in accordance with Rule .2822 of this Section.
- (i) Central vacuums that exhaust to the outdoors and away from where children use the outdoor learning environment may be used in lieu of HEPA vacuum cleaners to meet the daily vacuuming requirements in Rule .2824(c) of this Section.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 110-91;
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