

**GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING AND COMPLETING LOST CHILD
PREVENTION AND RETRIEVAL PROCEDURES REQUIRED BY NEW YORK
CITY HEALTH CODE SECTION 47.11**

The following guidelines will assist you in developing the child supervision and lost child prevention and retrieval procedures required to be part of your child care service's Written Safety Plan.

Routine Attendance

New York City Health Code 47.23 requires constant supervision at prescribed staff-to-child ratios. Your safety plan should establish procedures for taking daily attendance of children in your care and maintaining accountability for children in your care. The plan should include but not be limited to the following:

- Procedures on how attendance will be taken:
 - Identify staff responsible for taking attendance.
 - Identify times attendance will be taken.
 - Describe how a child's attendance will be confirmed. For example:
 - Roll Call
 - Parental sign-in of the child
 - Child rosters
 - Describe procedures to document attendance.
 - Develop procedures for reporting attendance to child care service administrators:
 - Specify follow up activity upon submittal of attendance report.
 - Describe actions to be taken for absences, with specific requirements for parental contact for instances of unexpected absences within one hour of a child's scheduled arrival time, in accordance with Health Code 47.27(c)(4).
- Describe how you will coordinate and assign staff schedules so that:
 - Staff-to-child ratios are maintained from the arrival time of the first child at the start of the day to the departure time of the last child at the end of the day.
 - Assistants may be utilized for supervision in lieu of teachers prior to the beginning of classroom activities.
 - Procedures are described for the transfer of children to their respective classrooms.
- Procedures to accommodate children arriving or leaving child care service at times other than routine arrival and departure times, including:
 - Procedure for maintaining records of attendance and reporting.
 - Procedure for informing teaching staff of the late arrival of the child or early departure of a child.
 - Procedure to integrate or extricate children into or from classrooms when they arrive late or leave early.

- Alternative arrangements for the care and supervision of the child when they arrive after their routinely assigned class has left the child care service facility on offsite activities or trips.
- Procedures to maintain accountability for children throughout the day, with specific attention to changes in activity, location, periods of outdoor play and the use of bathroom facilities.
- Training procedure for staff in attendance requirements.

Special Events and Trips

The potential for a child to go missing is increased during times of special activities and field trips. Therefore, the safety plan should include supplementary procedures for these times.

- Plans should identify an event/trip coordinator, responsible for all facets of the event/trip activity.
- Describe procedures requiring that staff be familiar with the destination prior to the event/trip.
- Develop procedures for recording parental approval for their child to participate in the event/trip.
- Establish sign-out procedures for attendees, with instructions for how to notify child care service administrators.
- Establish procedures to increase supervision ratios by assigning auxiliary staff or the use of volunteers. All staff and volunteers who are assigned child supervision duties must be cleared.
- Establish lines of authority for staff and volunteers during event/trip.
- Develop and describe methods for communication among groups and between separate groups at event/trip, as well as among and between event/trip attendees and child care service administrators, including:
 - Provision of emergency contact information for attendees of event/trip.
 - Local police or precinct
 - Information on emergency medical personnel at destination
 - Local hospital
 - Means of communication to ensure communication is guaranteed. You should not depend on unpredictable methods.
 - Develop a contact/communication tree.
- Describe accountability procedures, which may include the following:
 - Take attendance prior to the start of an activity or leaving the child care service.
 - Monitor and retake attendance periodically.
 - Maintain a trip attendance log.
 - Establish a buddy system.
 - Assign small groups of children to specific staff or volunteer supervisors.

- Use child identifiers, such as:
 - Tags with child service name
 - Child care service identifying t-shirts
- Establish areas of refuge/regrouping, as required.
- Describe procedures to maintain group cohesiveness during the entire event/trip, especially during transit.
- Take attendance again prior to departure from the event and upon returning to the child care service.
- Develop and describe how staff and attending children will be trained in event/trip accountability requirements.

Lost Child Procedures

In the event a child goes missing from a child care service, the safety plan must include provisions incorporating emergency reporting, search activities and maintenance of supervision for the remaining children.

- Establish instructions to staff for the reporting of missing children, including:
 - Identify when, how and by whom reports of missing children are to be submitted to administrators of the child service and City and State agencies, including the Police Department, Administration for Children’s Services, Department of Education, New York State Central Register for Child Abuse Maltreatment and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.
 - Timeframe for reporting missing child.
 - Method for reporting missing child to child’s parents.
- Describe procedures for initiating and carrying out the search for the child:
 - Identify members of a search team.
 - Describe how search area parameters, duration and scope will be identified and determined.
 - Describe how required staff-to-child ratios for remaining children will be maintained.
 - Include procedures for searches in areas incorporating subways and busses when those modes of transportation are involved.
 - Communication requirements for search parties.
 - Guidelines for search area expansion and instructions on when it becomes necessary to include emergency services personnel in a search.
- Provide instructions for remaining groups, including:
 - Procedures for remaining in contact with search party.
 - Instructions on how groups should determine whether to remain at the activity/trip destination or return to the child care service.
- Describe measures to be taken at cessation of the search:
 - Include instructions for the assessment of retrieved children.
 - Include identity of individual responsible for conducting assessment.

Assessment shall, at a minimum, include:

- A determination of the need for treatment for any perceived injury or need for medical intervention.
- An investigation into what may have occurred to the child while unsupervised. Include directions for response to investigation results that indicate need for any additional intervention.
- Provide steps for the integration of the retrieved child back into their group, when appropriate. Include steps for alternative means of care when child cannot be returned to their group.
- Actions to be taken by the child care service in the event a lost child is not retrieved by the end of the service's business day.
- Provide a procedure for the documentation of the incident, report of actions taken and outcome.
 - Identify individual responsible for generating incident report.
 - Establish timeframes for completion of report.
- Describe action to be taken by child care service in response to a lost child incident.