

WADING POOLS IN CHILD CARE AND SCHOOL SETTINGS

Contra Costa Public Health and Environmental Health strongly discourage the use of wading pools in school and day care settings.

What is a wading pool?

A wading pool is a shallow pool of water frequently used for children's play.

Why are wading pools not recommended for child care and school settings?

Unlike swimming pools that are chemically treated and inspected to prevent disease transmission, wading pools are typically filled with tap water and may or may not be emptied and disinfected on a daily basis. Wading pools are designed for use by small children, many of whom are not fully toilet-trained. If a child has an "accident" in the pool, it may release germs into the water, and other children may swallow the contaminated water. Spread of these infections can occur under the care of the most diligent and thoughtful childcare providers, since these infections can spread even when children have mild to no symptoms.

How serious are the potential consequences associated with wading pools?

Disease-causing agents including *Norovirus*, *E.coli*, *Giardia*, *Cryptosporidium*, and *Shigella* are efficiently transmitted in wading pools. All of these agents can cause severe illness in children, with symptoms such as **diarrhea, vomiting, nausea and dehydration**.

I just bought a plastic fill-and-drain pool from the local store. Should I use it at my facility?

NO. Portable, plastic fill-and-drain pools are intended for individual family use and should not be used at facilities in which multiple children could be sharing the water.

Is there an alternative to wading pools?

Sprinklers provide water play opportunities, and carry less risk of drowning and disease transmission compared to wading pools.

Questions?

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