



Bottle Warming Safety

Policy Number: FO-25-03

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Effective Date: August 1, 2025

Applicability: Field Operations: All Licensed and Funded Programs

BACKGROUND

Bottles of formula or breast milk may be given to children at room temperature or cold. At times, however, a family may ask for their child's bottle to be warmed. The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) recognizes the challenge programs may face when trying to warm bottles for multiple children at the same time. EEC is therefore updating its policy on bottle warming safety to allow flexibility for programs while continuing to minimize the risk of burn injuries to children.

AUTHORITY

- 606 CMR 3.08(5)(l) Buildings and Grounds: The licensee shall assure that all areas accessible to infants, toddlers, and young children shall be child-proofed appropriately.
- 606 CMR 5.10(5)(a) Physical Requirements for Adoptive Homes: The home must be clean, safe, free of obvious fire and other hazards....
- 606 CMR 7.11(5)(a) Injury Prevention: Liquids, foods, and appliances that are or become hot enough to burn a child must be kept out of the reach of children.

POLICY STATEMENT

EEC allows the following methods to warm bottles:

Warm Water

- Bottles may be heated or thawed under running water that is not warmer than 120 degrees Fahrenheit [See 606 CMR 7.07(10)(l)].
- Bottles may be heated or thawed in a container of tap water. The container of water must:
 - not be warmer than 120 degrees Fahrenheit [See 606 CMR 7.07(10)(l)];
 - not be filled with water from a water dispenser;
 - not be heated on the stove, in a microwave, or by any other heating source;
 - be kept out of reach of children; and
 - be placed where it cannot tip or fall into the children's area

Bottle Warmers

- Only bottle warmers that use warm air to heat or those electric bottle warmers that do not use water or steam are allowed.
- The bottle warmer must:
 - not allow bottles to reach a temperature warmer than 120 degrees Fahrenheit;
 - be kept out of reach of children at all times [See 606 CMR 7.07(13)(g)]
 - be placed where it cannot tip or fall into the children's area;
 - be used and stored in a way that ensures the electrical cord is kept out of children's reach [See 606 CMR 7.07(13)(h)];
 - be used and cleaned according to the manufacturers' instructions; and
 - not be subject to recall by [the Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) [See 606 CMR 7.07(13)(a)].

Bottles may not be warmed using bottle warmers that use water and/or steam, microwave ovens, or crock-pot/slow cookers.

After warming, bottles must be mixed gently¹ and the temperature of the milk tested before offering it to a child. This may be done by putting a few drops of the formula or

¹ Excessive shaking of breastmilk can reduce its nutritional value.

breast milk on the back of the hand. Regardless of the testing method used, the liquid should feel neutral (not warm or cold). If it feels warm, it is likely too hot and must cool before use. All warmed bottles, whether warmed at the program or warmed at home by the family and sent in with the child, should be tested to ensure they are not too hot before offering to a child.

Children must not be held while removing a bottle from the warm water or bottle warmer or while testing the bottle's temperature.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- For more information specific to early education programs, please see:
 - [Best Practices for Bottle Feeding in Early Education and Care Settings](#)
 - [Storage, Handling, and Preparation of Breast Milk in Early Care and Education Programs](#).
- For more information on infant nutrition, please visit: [USDA Nutrition by Life Stage: Infants](#).
- For more information on preventing burn injuries in children, please see: [Preventing Burn Injuries](#).
- To sign up for email alerts from the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) regarding recalled products, please see: [CPSC.gov: Subscribe](#).

OBSOLETE

This policy replaces EEC's previous Bottle Warming Safety Policy that was released on January 23, 2012.