



Department of Early Education and Care

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

EEC Licensing

POLICY STATEMENT: **Bottle Warming Safety** - Injury Prevention

EEC licensing regulations for all types of programs require that physical facilities must be safe, clean, comfortable and free from hazards. [See 102 CMR 7.11(5)(a), 3.08(5)(1), 5.10(4)(a)]. They require that programs caring for infants prevent injury by keeping liquids, foods and appliances that are or become hot enough to burn a child out of the reach of children. Although scalding injuries in licensed programs are rare, they do occur and when they do they are generally severe. The most common cause of unintentional scald burns are hot liquid spills from a countertop or stove. In the early education and care industry, most of these spills tend to be closely connected to the heating of formula or breast milk. ¹

To fulfill these requirements, programs caring for infants must **not** use a crock pot, (slow cooker), bottle-warming appliance or microwave oven to warm infant bottles.

The safest solution is to serve bottles either cold or at room temperature.² However, if parents ask to have an infant's bottle warmed before feeding, the bottle may be held under warm, running water or placed in a container of warm tap water. The container of water must not be heated on the stove or in a microwave. The temperature of the water shall not exceed 120 degrees. The container shall not be accessible to children or placed where it could tip or fall into the children's area. The educator should not hold an infant while removing the bottle from the warm water. Bottles shall not be left to warm for more than 5 minutes.

After warming, bottles shall be mixed gently and the temperature of the milk tested before feeding. The milk or formula should feel warm, but not hot. (Excessive shaking of human milk may affect the nutritional value as may excessive heating.)

See technical assistance paper, "Best Practices for Bottle feeding in an Early Education and Care Setting", for additional information about best practices for feeding breast milk or formula to babies.

¹ Children's National Medical Center – Department of Trauma and Burn Services

² National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education – Caring for Our Children 3rd edition