



**Department of  
Early Education and Care**  
THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

**Family Child Care Licensing**

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: Protecting Children from Reptiles**

[See 606 CMR 7.11(16)(d)]

---

Children require protection from reptiles because reptiles are a significant source of *Salmonella* bacteria, which causes *salmonellosis*, or salmonella infection. Symptoms of salmonella infection include diarrhea, vomiting, fever and cramping, and in severe cases it can lead to hospitalization.

Family child care homes where reptiles are maintained should follow these guidelines:

- Reptiles must not be allowed to roam freely.
- Reptiles must be kept out of kitchens and other food preparation areas to prevent contamination.
- Kitchen sinks must not be used to bathe reptiles or to wash their dishes, cages or aquariums. If bathtubs are used for these purposes, they should be cleaned thoroughly and disinfected with bleach.
- Hand washing procedures must be strictly followed! People handling reptiles must always wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling reptiles or reptile cages.
- Children must not handle reptile equipment or be in physical contact with others who have handled reptiles or cages until after those others have washed their hands.
- Children must avoid floors and other surfaces where reptiles have walked until after those areas have been cleaned and disinfected.
- Children must thoroughly wash their hands and any other body parts that accidentally come into contact with a reptile.