



STATE OF NEVADA
Department of Conservation & Natural Resources

Division of Environmental Protection
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ndep.nv.gov/lead

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Nevada Division of Environmental Protection now offering licensed childcare providers free test kits and expert guidance to screen for lead in drinking water

The program is open to all licensed childcare providers in Nevada, including daycares, home-based childcare services, health and fitness facility childcare centers, and more.

The Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP), in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health, and Washoe County Health District, is offering all licensed childcare providers throughout the state the opportunity to screen for lead in their drinking water systems with expert guidance, technical assistance, and educational resources provided every step of the way.

Funded by a \$418,000 EPA grant, this voluntary program is available at no cost to all licensed childcare providers, with first priority given to those located in historically underserved and disadvantaged communities. All childcare providers will be receiving enrollment information from NDEP's contractor, TruePani, and are encouraged to review additional outreach materials online at ndep.nv.gov/lead.

Test results, with follow-up support, will be sent to each facility to be posted and shared with parents and caregivers, and will be available on NDEP's website. If elevated levels of lead are found, NDEP stands ready to work with childcare centers to provide recommendations and discuss funding opportunities that may be available to them through NDEP's current grant programs, and potentially through the federal American Recovery Plan Act or the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

"The Nevada Division of Environmental Protection is committed to helping childcare providers ensure that every child in their care has access to safe, lead-free drinking water," **said NDEP Deputy Administrator Jennifer Carr.** "For the last four years, our program has supported no-cost, voluntary lead testing at nearly 500 K-12 schools throughout the state. We look forward to expanding our lead testing program through engaging Nevada's more than 600 licensed childcare centers, where thousands of kids learn and play every year. I thank our local, state, and federal partners for supporting this critical undertaking that will benefit Nevada's children and families for generations to come."

Young children are among those particularly vulnerable to health and developmental issues from exposure to high levels of lead. The majority of childhood lead exposures happen in the home, usually

from deteriorated lead-based paint or lead contaminated soil. However, it is possible that repeated drinking of water containing lead can contribute to a child's lead exposure, especially if the building was built in Nevada before 1989. Testing drinking water from water fountains, faucets, and other fixtures is a simple way to determine where lead is present and can help inform next steps for addressing any potential concerns.

"There are no safe levels of lead exposure," **said Dr. Ihsan Azzam, the Chief Medical Officer for the State of Nevada.** "Even limited amounts of lead can have serious developmental negative health outcomes, particularly for young children and pregnant women. Studies have demonstrated clear relationships between exposure to lead in drinking water and blood lead in children, even when the concentration of lead in water was low. These effects can include learning and behavioral problems, hearing and speech problems, lower IQ and decreased ability to pay attention. Early detection of this environmental hazard in drinking water, timely interventions and proper use of various mitigation strategies can prevent exposure to lead and protect young children."

"Lead testing of drinking water is critical for the protection of our children," **said Deborah Jordan, EPA's Deputy Regional Administrator for the Pacific Southwest.** "EPA is pleased to support Nevada in both its efforts to detect and remediate lead in drinking water at childcare centers and prioritize those in historically underserved and disadvantaged communities."

The Nevada Lead Testing Program is part of a nationwide effort established by the federal 2016 [Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation \(WIIN\) Act](#). As part of the WIIN Act, the EPA provides grant funding to states to test the drinking water in schools and childcare centers for lead.

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