



**STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

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**BILL HASLAM**  
GOVERNOR

**RAQUEL HATTER, MSW, Ed.D.**  
COMMISSIONER

**TO:** All Licensed Child Care Providers

**FROM:** Lois Barrett Luke, Director of Child and Adult Care Licensing

**DATE:** April 7, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Critical Violations: Children Leaving Licensed Care Without Supervision

We have become aware of a very dangerous trend happening across our state. Since December, there have been nine separate instances in which one or more children were found --- unaccompanied and unsupervised --- outside of the child care programs entrusted with their care. These incidents have occurred across the state, in every grand division and among programs of various star levels. It is my hope that by sharing this information with you, we can help you avoid a similar situation, which could result in grave harm to a child in your care.

In an effort to raise awareness and to monitor your program for compliance, your Licensing Program Evaluator will be making an extra unannounced visit to your program in the coming weeks. During the visit, your PE will look for ways in which your agency has worked to prevent children from exiting your building or playground unaccompanied, and will review with you the child care licensing rules that are intended to prevent such incidents.

I ask that you take a moment now to consider all that you might do to safeguard children in this way and that you implement these things immediately. While forethought and the right room set-up and equipment are important factors, there is no substitute for adequate staffing and close supervision in the building and on the playground. In a child care environment, nothing is more important than each caregiver knowing exactly which children are in your care and the whereabouts and status of each child. I urge you to ensure that everyone who works at your agency and all the parents of the children in your care are made aware of your policies and procedures that address entering, exiting and sign-in/sign-out requirements.

Please contact your Licensing Program Evaluator with questions, comments or concerns. If you prefer, you may also contact my office at 615-313-4778.

Thank you for the important work you do each day in keeping our children safe and healthy.

Cc: Child Care Partners