Week Four is here! I hope you are enjoying the discussions and learning topics as much as I am! Our readings this week motivate us to learn strategies in which educators can conduct health and wellness checks, explain safe indoor and outdoor environments, share innovative and creative ways to share health, safety, and wellness with our children and their families.

The National Association for Educators of Young Children's Code of Ethics suggests that teachers supervise by sight and sound. This exemplary organization goes on to say that it is what teachers do and what teachers do not do that keep children from harm. This statement is so true! It is imperative for teachers to be proactive by planning and thinking ahead to anticipate problems instead of being reactive by eating with things that have already happened. Children want to feel safe and if teachers can convey this "safe" feeling to students, everything else will fall in place. Most accidents happen at home. Since school is a child's second home, we want to prevent accidents at school as much as possible. Practicing disease prevention strategies such as extra cleaning and sanitizing as needed can help our students remain healthy and disease free.

Daily health checks are an important part of keeping children safe and healthy. Teachers should stop, look and listen as they observe any indications of illness or concern. Stopping the parent for a quick conversation during early morning greeting time can offer some insight if the child looks or feels ill.  It is often difficult for a young child to verbally communicate if something is wrong so teachers need to gather all the information possible. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the following checklist for teachers and childcare personnel.

***DAILY HEALTH CHECK***

*Instructions*

***When a child comes into the setting, observe child and/or ask the parent***

***the following questions:***

*Be at the child’s level so you can interact with the child even if talking with the*

*parent.*

***1. Check:***

***Behavior:*** *typical or atypical for time of day and circumstances*

***Appearance:***

*a.* ***Skin:*** *pale, flushed, rash (feel child’s skin by touching gently)*

*b.* ***Eyes, Nose, Mouth****: is there discharge, is the child rubbing eyes*

*nose or mouth note color.*

*c.* ***Breathing****: normal or different: is there a cough*

***2. Ask parent:***

*a. How the child seemed to act at home*

*b. Did the child sleep well the night before*

*c. Did the child have anything to drink/eat today*

*d. Were their eating/drinking habits normal previous to arrival*

*e. Any problems with urination/bowel movements*

*f. Any unusual events that might influence the child’s behavior (death*

*of pet, change in family structure, etc.)*

Teachers are also part of a network of safety. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) encourages teachers to be ***advocates*** for implementing new safety practices for both indoor and outdoor school environments, going beyond the current minimum requirements for the classroom. This professional organization’s goal is to “raise the bar” for safe schools!

The following video shares some important information on quality childcare safety.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8m5BLGSQsl0&list=UUP9erMlrGuTphZTNWWelZew&index=3&feature=plcp

The following video reminds us of how important adequate supervision is to keep our children safe.

http://www.youtubecom/watch?v=loTuGEcm0bQ

Check out this engaging video lesson about a porcupine named Spike that teaches students about staying away from poisons. The children’s smiles and laughs are contagious as they are learning important information to share at home. This video uses the strategy of repetition, music and interactive participation between the students and the puppet to help the children remember the important information. With the help of technology, there are so many options on the internet and in our school libraries to share with our students. Don’t forget all the picture books that can serve as springboards for various safety topics.

                                                                                            [Spike the Porcupine and Poison Safety](http://www.aapcc.org/dnn/PoisoningPrevention/Children/PreschoolEducationProgram.aspx)

My favorite part of teaching is creating innovative strategies to help children make real life connections so that they can think critically, make good choices and help themselves. We want children to teach safe strategies so they understand and have ownership in helping to keep their learning environment and home environment safe. **I** look forward to “listening” to your thoughts on creating and practicing safe environments for young children in our discussions this week as we think critically to be teacher safety *advocates* for our children!