

Proposal Statement: Childcare Center in Proximity to Industrial Activity

Subject: Ensuring Health and Safety Standards Near Trucking Zones

As part of our proposal to establish a high-quality childcare center near an industrial area where large trucks access a nearby driveway, we recognize the importance of addressing environmental health and safety concerns. Below are key considerations, based on state regulations, existing precedents, and planned mitigation strategies.

1. Existing Successful School Models in Similar Zones

Numerous schools and childcare centers in New Jersey operate safely and effectively in similar environments:

- *Bloomfield, NJ:* Berkeley Elementary and Forest Glen Early Childhood Center are both located near the Garden State Parkway and NJ Transit rail lines. These institutions manage daily truck and train traffic without compromising children's health or safety.
- *East Orange, NJ:* Althea Gibson Early Childhood Academy and Ecole Toussaint L'Ouverture are also located near industrial corridors and transportation routes, yet meet all licensing and health standards.

These schools provide strong precedents that industrial proximity, when managed within regulatory guidelines, does not impede child development or safety.

2. Emissions and Idling Are Strictly Regulated

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) enforces anti-idling laws (N.J.A.C. 7:27-14 & 15), which limit diesel vehicle idling to:

- No more than **3 minutes**, with even stricter enforcement near schools and child care facilities.

The proposed site is used for transit and access, not long-term truck idling or operations. Consequently, the exposure risk to diesel emissions is minimal and within all safe environmental standards.

3. Licensing and Site Safety Oversight

- The **New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS)** and the **Department of Children and Families (DCF)** require comprehensive environmental assessments prior to licensing any childcare facility.

- **Improved Standards for Regulatory Programs (ISRPs)** provide oversight to ensure that any site approved for childcare use meets strict health, safety, and environmental criteria.

If there were a risk posed by emissions or environmental toxicity, the center would not be eligible for approval or licensure.

4. Built-in Safety and Design Features

Our proposed childcare center will implement the following mitigation measures:

- **Landscaped buffers and fencing** to reduce any vehicular exposure or noise.
- **High-quality HVAC and filtration systems** to ensure indoor air remains clean.
- **Designated pedestrian access routes** separate from truck driveways.

These measures mirror practices already in place in similar facilities across the state.

5. Addressing a Critical Community Need

Industrial and transit-adjacent zones are often underserved in early childhood care options, despite being central to where many parents work. This center will:

- Provide **accessible, licensed early education** for nearby working families.
 - Support the local economy by creating jobs and stability.
 - Deliver the same level of care, safety, and quality as any suburban or residentially located center.
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Conclusion

While concerns about emissions near industrial zones are valid, they are effectively addressed by strict New Jersey regulations and licensing protocols. The proposed center is not only compliant but designed with additional safeguards to ensure a healthy, safe, and enriching environment for all children. Our plan follows the successful model of other public and private schools operating in similar proximity to industrial zones.

This initiative reflects a deep commitment to expanding equitable access to childcare while upholding the highest standards of safety and quality.

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