

The Ins and Outs of Door Security

Implementing strategies to secure exterior doors are important safety measures for any child care facility, however effectively regulating the ingress and egress of entryways can be a challenge. Child care standards typically require no lock or fastening devices be used that prevent free escape from the interior of a center.

Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standard states that “in centers, only panic hardware (hardware that can be opened by pressure in the direction of travel) or single-action hardware (hardware that allows a door to open either way but keeps it from swinging back past the enter point) shall be permitted on exterior doors.” This standard is designed to facilitate a speedy exit in the event of a fire or other emergency evacuation. For security during operating hours, use locks that do not allow the door to open from the outside, but permit it to open from the inside without a key.

In addition to the above recommendations, aggressively manage door security to reduce the possibility of unwanted intruders and children leaving the premises on their own accord by utilizing these strategies as well:

- Install a keypad that requires a security code to enter. Post a notice advising your clientele to avoid holding the door open for others, as a matter of security. Keypads track when someone enters your building, in case records are necessary at a later date.
- If a keypad system is not in your budget, keep the door locked from the outside and install a doorbell. Require visual confirmation of who is attempting to gain access, and never “buzz” someone in without seeing who it is first. If you are unfamiliar with the person, ask for identification and validate their reason for being there.
- Create a buffer zone that requires someone entering your center to pass by an occupied desk before gaining access.
- Keep unused exterior doors locked. Basement doors and other doors that exit into backyards and playground areas are often unmonitored, creating easy access for intruders.
- Never prop open a door.
- Install an alert system that issues an audible signal whenever the door is opened.
- Video surveillance is another great way to monitor door access and maintain records of who enters your center.
- Install laminated or tempered glass on all exterior doors and window panels adjacent to doors, making it more difficult for a burglar to break the glass, while also minimizing potential injuries from shattered glass.

If you have a safety or risk management question or a suggestion for a topic, please contact Markel's Risk Management Department at safety1st@markelcorp.com.