The purpose of this policy statement is to provide guidelines regarding the development and use of rooftop playgrounds as an option for outdoor activities when day care is located primarily in urban areas in multi-floored buildings with limited or no accessible outdoor playground areas. The use of rooftop playgrounds as an area for outdoor play should be considered only after the option of developing a traditional landbased playground has been determined unfeasible due to lack of available physical space.

BUILDING REQUIREMENTS: The building where the day care center is located must meet all applicable Uniform Building Code (UBC) requirements, including those for allowable height and fire area for C6.1 and C6.2 occupancies. If the building in question is permitted to have a day care center on the top floor, then the roof may be considered for a playground. In any event, however, the rooftop where the playground is located cannot exceed the height where local fire apparatus can reach and safely evacuate children. The roof must be capable of supporting the increased loads imposed by the playground equipment and activities in accordance with applicable building code, which can be determined by the local building inspector. In a mixed occupancy building, where other businesses occur, the provisions of Section 771.6 of the UBC are applicable. All exposed pipes and other mechanical equipment (air conditioning units, etc.) must be properly barricaded to prevent access to children playing on the playground.

FIRE EVACUATION AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS: Fire and emergency evacuation procedures are particularly critical when discussing rooftop playgrounds. There needs to be two
separate means of egress from the roof for evacuation purposes pursuant to Section 765.1(m) of the UBC. The fire escape must not be considered as a means of egress. The building’s fire alarm and sprinkler systems must be operational.

**PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS:** The ratio of providers to children while supervising children on the rooftop playground should be sufficient to allow for the ability to evacuate all children from the roof safely and at one time. The program should be prepared to demonstrate how safe emergency evacuation will occur from the rooftop play area in the event the need arises for evacuation. Staffing requirements relating to supervision on the playground should meet the criteria for the youngest children using the playground when there are mixed age groups of children using the playground at one time.

**PLAYGROUND RECOMMENDATIONS:** The playground should be constructed with sufficient space to allow for large motor play and safe use of all playground equipment of all children on the playground at one time. A rooftop used as a day care center playground must be enclosed with a fence 10 feet high with a fencing extension angled over the playground from the fence with 45˚ inner angulation. The fence must be constructed to prevent children from climbing on it. The height and angulation requirements in this policy statement are consistent with the current fencing requirements of the Department of Health which regulates the provision of child care in the five boroughs of New York City. The area comprising the rooftop playground does not need to equal the entire rooftop area as long as the recommendation for adequate space and fencing is observed. The outdoor play area should be arranged so that all areas are visible to staff at all times. A shaded area should be available to allow children respite from excessive sun exposure while on the rooftop playground. The playground should have a thermometer placed in a position in the sun to record the surface temperature of the playground site. The surface of the playground area should be comprised of a material designed to mediate impact with the ground such as loose sand, wood mulch or chips, or pea gravel of an acceptable level or rubber mats manufactured for such use.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY:** Bathroom facilities and running water should be accessible to children and staff for health and safety needs while using the playground in a manner similar to those bathroom facilities available to children and staff who use land based playgrounds away from their day care facility. (Public parks or playgrounds, etc.) Staff must bring a first aid kit to the playground whenever children are being supervised in the event emergency treatment is necessary.

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**APPROVED BY:**

[X] Suzanne Zafonte Sennett  Date: August 4, 2000