

CUSTOMER STORY

City of Chicago leans on 120Water for program creation & field team education, tests 232 sites and 3,775 fixtures to ensure safety in daycares



6,715
samples collected



3,775
fixtures tested



188
pitcher/filters shipped

Background

The Chicago Department of Family Support Services (DFSS) works hard to protect the citizens they serve - the young population that use daycares and childcare facilities in their city. In 2018, the state of Illinois introduced new regulations mandating testing in child care centers that were constructed prior to 2000. The legislation instituted a very strict 2.0 ppb action limit. If any test results came in higher than that limit, daycares had to develop a written mitigation plan and take action, executing both an interim and long-term mitigation strategy.

The Challenge

The top goal for the DFSS was to protect the safety of the children in the daycares - but they had no previous experience testing water. This new legislation forced them to create new systems, under threat of licenses being revoked if they didn't comply. DFSS looked to bring expert partners into the fold to help execute these new programs, including Globetrotters Engineering Firm & 120Water. The two biggest challenges of the program were setting up net new processes and educating daycare workers. The education piece was especially crucial as most daycare teams didn't have the expertise to properly test and remediate--even Globetrotters Engineering hadn't performed water testing.

The Tactics

The City of Chicago used 120Water's software and sample testing kits so that field teams could easily collect and record samples, as well as relying on their services team to guide the program and educate workers. 120Water's services team developed user-friendly training programs and communications for daycare staff and field team workers, hosting webinars, creating content, and distributing one-pagers. 120Water's Policy Center of Excellence served as a bridge between the state regulators and the city, helping them understand the testing requirements and interpreting the newly developing state rules.

"120Water's expertise and technology was invaluable to us," said Beatrice Nichols, the Assistant Director of Children Services at DFSS. "Having two great thought partners at the table as we developed our plan was essential, guiding us as we put together this program and communicated with the agencies and our local leaders," added Cerathel Burgess-Burnett, Deputy Commissioner of Children Services.

The careful communication and training paid off as the program tested 232 facilities for a baseline, shipping pitchers/filters as a short-term remediation strategy for any sites with exceedances, and re-testing sites at the 6-month and 1-year mark.

What's Next

At the 6-month mark, roughly a quarter of the facilities still had at least one exceedance. Those that didn't have an exceedance will need to clear one more round of testing, then will have their licenses renewed. Those that still had exceedances were required to remediate again and start re-testing. The DFSS will ensure that daycares continue on the testing and remediation program according to the legislative requirements until they're sure that all fixtures are safe for children in the daycares.