



Wangaratta Children's Services Centre

Sleep, Rest and Relaxation Policy and Procedure

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Department	Children's Services
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National Regulations and Legislative Requirements

Section 165 Offence to inadequately supervise children

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Regulation 82 Tobacco, drug, and alcohol-free environment

Regulation 84A Sleep and rest Regulation 84B Sleep and rest policies and procedures

Regulation 87 Incident, injury, trauma, and illness record

Regulation 103 Premises, furniture, and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair

Regulation 110 Ventilation and natural light

Regulation 168 Education and care service must have policies and procedures

Regulation 169 Additional policies and procedures – family day care

Regulation 170 Policies and procedures to be followed

Regulation 171 Policies and procedures to be kept available

Regulation 172 Notification of change to policies or procedures

Statement and Purpose

The Education and Care Services National Regulations requires Approved Providers to ensure their services have policies and procedures in place for children’s sleep and rest.

The Rural City of Wangaratta Children’s Services Sleep, Rest and Relaxation Policy 2023 provides our educators, management, coordinators, other staff, families and the community with the information they need to support children’s needs for sleep and rest are met while attending the Service. There is now much research available to inform decisions about safe sleeping environments, including research that identifies poor sleep procedures and inadequate supervision as risk factors, which can result in, or contribute to, serious harm to young children.

All children need rest and sleep for their wellbeing and health, and this is an area of service policy and procedure that our service very carefully considers, monitors and actively reviews to ensure risks are appropriately always addressed. We value feedback from families and ensure that our policies, procedures, practices and decisions are based on the most up to date advice from recognised authorities, such as Red Nose Australia.

Policy

Most children benefit from periods of rest, relaxation and sleep which can enhance health, growth and development. Rest, relaxation, and sleep routines can look differently throughout the day in each room and Service (Family Day Care). Rest, relaxation, and sleep can be catered to for the needs of individual children.

Educators are knowledgeable in safe sleep, relaxation and rest practices and undertake regular training to be informed and educated of best practices. Educators make effective decisions alongside children and families to build a shared understanding and commitment to safe sleep, relaxation and rest practices which include the following:

1. Current research and recommendations (Red Nose are considered the recognised authority on safe sleeping practices for infants and children);
2. Safety and wellbeing in relation to a child's age and developmental needs;
3. Encouraging children to self-regulate and develop positive associations with sleep, rest and relaxation;
4. Socio-cultural background of the child and family;
5. Educators discuss with families a child's routine when orientating and communicate regularly about practices used at home for sleep, relaxation and rest that are in line with the Service Policies and National Regulations;
6. Where family's beliefs and requests conflict with current endorsed recommended practices, for example recommendations from Red Nose, the centre will require written support from a recognised medical practitioner. In the event a child has a confirmed medical condition, follow the Dealing Medical Conditions Policy and Procedure 2023 (Follow Red Nose Safe Sleep guidelines where medical evidence cannot be provided);
7. Implement the Child Safe Standards (Victoria, 2022) when applicable.

Safe Sleeping Practices that can apply for Long Day Care and Family Day Care

- Educators can always see or hear sleeping or resting children;
- A child's face is never covered when they sleep or rest;
- Regular checks of all sleeping or resting children which may include checking for skin colour, movement, breathing patterns and body temperature. Checks will be more frequent if there are increased risk factors e.g., medical conditions or sleep issues;

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- temperature of rest environment monitored to ensure it is not too hot or cold;
- adequate space between sleeping and resting children allowing children to be attended to when required;
- model and promote safe sleep practices and make information available to families;
- Sleeping bags with a fitted neck and arm holes but no hood may be used instead of bed linen. Wraps made from lightweight material like muslin or cotton;
- baby's arm's free from wraps once startle reflex disappears (around 3 months old);
- no wraps used if babies could roll from back to front to back again;
- no quilts, doonas, pillows, lamb's wool, or cot bumpers;
- no electric blankets or hot water bottles;
- babies and toddlers placed so their feet are close to the bottom end of the cot;
- no bottles given to child while in bed/cot (for safety and dental hygiene reasons);
- no bibs on child;
- dummies, soft toys/items are allowed. Dummies not replaced if they fall out while child sleeping;
- babies physically checked every 10 minutes;
- ensure sleeping spaces have adequate light to allow supervision;
- ensure children's clothing is appropriate during sleep times and does not have any items that are loose and could get tangled and restrict breathing (including but not limited to bibs and jewellery);
- report issues with day-to-day sleep practice, environment, and equipment to the nominated supervisor or provider

Cots

A cot that meets Australian mandatory standard AS/NZS 2172 is the safest option for infants and for children who are not yet attempting to climb. Mattresses should meet the Australian voluntary standard for mattress firmness.

Portable cots that meet the Australian mandatory standard may be used to enhance the ability of the educator to supervise the sleeping infant or child but must be in good condition. In alignment with Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) guidelines, porta cots should only be used for temporary, short-term arrangements.

Environment and clothing

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- The care environment, including sleep and rest areas, should be well ventilated, either with fresh air from open windows if safe to do so, or using mechanical ventilation if needed;
- Infants should be dressed in consideration to the room temperature. The infant should be warm but not hot to touch centrally (i.e., on the chest or abdomen). Bedding or clothing should be removed if the infant is hot to touch or is flushed or sweating. Any clothing or jewellery that could pose a strangulation or choking hazard must be removed before the infant or child is placed in the sleep space;
- Soft toys and comforters should not be placed in the sleep space with infants;
- Equipment such as bumpers, infant positioners, inclined sleepers, or additional padding, mattresses, pillows, and other soft items should not be used in the sleep and rest environment for children under 2 years of age;
- All children have rights and where appropriate, should have choice about sleeping and resting within the day.

Hygiene

To ensure sleeping environments are hygienic, Educators will:

- Clean linen with detergent and water after each child's use, or at least once a week;
- Clean beds and mattress cover after each use;
- Make sure each child has their own bed linen
- Implement the Cleaning Procedure Cots to clean soiled cots, beds, mattresses, and bed linen.

Risk Assessment

The Approved Provider, nominated supervisor and FDC educator must take reasonable steps to ensure that the needs for sleep, relaxation and rest of children being educated and cared for by the service are met, having regard to the ages, development stages and individual needs of the children (Education and Care Services National Regulations, regulation 84A).

Services must conduct a sleep and rest risk assessment at least once every 12 months and as soon as practicable after becoming aware of any circumstance that may affect the safety, health, and wellbeing of children during sleep and rest. As good practice should be reviewed regularly. The Approved Provider will make any necessary updates to the sleep and rest policies and procedures as soon as

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practicable after conducting the sleep and rest risk assessment and keep a record of each sleep and rest risk assessment conducted.

The sleep and rest risk assessment must be conducted for each education and care service or for each FDC residence or FDC venue of the service. Completing risk assessment and management plans is an ongoing part of good operational practice to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of children. One way to support this is by using a system of hazard identification and risk management. This can help identify, assess, and manage the risk of harm before an incident occurs.

Roles and Responsibilities

Nominated Supervisor Responsibilities

To promote children's safety and wellbeing during sleep and rest periods, the Nominated Supervisor role includes but not limited to, ensuring:

- ratios are maintained at all times whilst children are sleeping, relaxing and resting;
- implementation of the safe sleeping practices in line with policy and procedures;
- the safety of children is priority- Please refer to Victorians Child Safe Standards for guidance;
 - the cots, beds, bedding and bedding equipment being used for sleep, relaxation and rest are safe and appropriate for the ages and developmental stages of children who will use them (considering for example, if the children might roll, climb out of a cot, fall from a high sleep surface, become trapped between a sleep surface and wall, become trapped face down in bedding, are over the recommended weight limit for sleeping surfaces, or if children's breathing might become impeded from weighted sleep products);
- that the indoor spaces used by children:
 - are well ventilated;
 - have adequate natural light; and
 - are maintained at a temperature that ensures the safety and wellbeing of children;
- sleep and rest environments are free from cigarette or tobacco smoke ensure that the premises are designed to facilitate supervision;
- children are supervised during periods of sleep and rest. This should include ensuring clear procedures and processes are in place for regular physical bedside checks of children and recording check and or sleep times if necessary;

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- in the case of FDC coordinators, considering best practice guidelines for safe sleeping environments and equipment when undertaking assessments and reassessments of FDC residences and approved FDC venues;
- procedures are tailored to the specific service or home environment. For FDC services, ensure FDC coordination unit works with FDC educators to consider the unique layout and safety consideration of each family day care residence or venue; and
- Conducting Sleep Risk Assessment 12 monthly (can be included in annual Safety Check)

Centre Responsibilities

Centres have a responsibility to families to build and maintain strong partnerships.

This includes:

- raising awareness about contemporary sleep and rest practices that are being modelled in the Centre as well as sharing this policy and procedure;
- having respectful conversations with families upon enrolment, during orientation and whilst children remain in our care. These conversations build a shared understanding and commitment to safe sleep policies and practices;
- consulting with families about their child's individual requirements and being sensitive to different values and parenting beliefs and culture, associated with sleep, relaxation and rest;
- Reinforcing that educators will neither force a child to sleep nor prevent a child from sleeping;
- provide informal updates on the previous night's sleep to assist with sleeping during the day;
- provide specified bedding if required by the service (FDC)
- review the service's policies and procedures relating to sleep and rest.

Educator Responsibilities

To make sure children's safety and wellbeing during sleep and rest periods, Educators will:

- Make sure they can always see or hear sleeping or resting children;
- Within reason, accommodate each child's and family's preferences, for rest, sleep and clothing, including cultural and religious preferences;

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- Provide children who do not require sleep or rest with learning opportunities and ensure there is enough natural light, so children are able to play/learn and actively supervised;
- Encourage children to communicate their needs for sleep, relaxation and rest;
- Support children who need rest and relaxation outside the designated rest time;
- Respect the privacy needs of each child when dressing and undressing;
- Comfort children when required or they ask you to;
- Implement the safe sleeping practices with the only exception based on written authorisation from a child's doctor
- Undertake annual Safe Sleep training.
- For FDC Educators, coordinate and develop an agreed documented procedure for the supervision of sleeping children, tailored to the unique layout and safety considerations of their family day care residence or venue, as well as the ages and developmental stages of the children in their care. For examples, considerations of how they will supervise and conduct checks of sleeping children, whilst also maintaining supervision of other children in their care.

Breaches

Breaches of this policy will be administered by the Family & Early Childhood Services for consideration in accordance with the Children's Services Code of Conduct. The Coordinator may elect to elevate to the Manager Community Services and Council's People and Culture Department for further consideration under Council's Code of Conduct and any related policy at their discretion.

Definitions

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Term	Meaning	Source
ACECQA – Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority	The independent national authority that works with all regulatory authorities to administer the National Quality Framework, including the provision of guidance, resources and services to support the sector to improve outcomes for children.	acecqa.gov.au
Infant	A young child between the ages of birth and 12 months, however, definitions may vary and may include children up to two years of age	
Rest	A period of inactivity, solitude, calmness or tranquillity, and can include a child being in a state of sleep.	
Relaxation	Relaxation or other activity for bringing about a feeling of calm in your body and mind.	
Sudden and Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI)	A broad term used to describe the sudden and unexpected death of a baby for which the cause is not immediately obvious.	What Does Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI) Mean?
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)	The sudden and unexpected death of an infant under one year of age with an onset of a fatal episode occurring during sleep, that remains unexplained after a thorough investigation, including performance of a complete autopsy and review of the circumstances of death and the clinical history.	What is Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)?

• References and related policies

Education and Care Services National Regulations

- Early Years Learning Framework

Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004

Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007

- Standards Australia: AS/NZS 2172:2010, Cots for household use—Safety requirements
- Standards Australia AS/NZS 2195:2010, Folding cots—Safety requirements

Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every four years or as required due to legislative and/or operational change.

Version History		
Version Number	Date of change	Reasons for change
1.0	September 2023	Re-formatting and re-structure of Council’s Children Services policy framework

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