

	Sleep & Rest for Children Policy & Procedures
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Authorisation	General Manager
Expiry Date	Policy to be reviewed Annually
Responsible Officer	Manager Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten
Policy Owner	Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten

Policy

Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten is committed to:

- Providing a positive and nurturing environment for all children attending the service
- Recognising that children have different requirements for Sleep and Rest/Relaxation, and being responsive to those needs to ensure that children feel safe and secure at the service
- Consulting with parents/guardians about their child's individual Sleep and Rest/Relaxing requirements/practices, and ensuring practices at the service are responsive to the values and cultural beliefs of each family
- Its Duty of Care (refer to *Definitions*) to all children at Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten, and ensuring that Adequate Supervision (refer to *Definitions*) is maintained while children are sleeping, Resting or relaxing
- Complying with all legislative requirements, standards and current best practice, including recommendations by Red Nose and Kid safe (refer to *Sources*).

Purpose

Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten is committed to:

- Providing clear guidelines for the implementation of safe Sleep and Rest practices that meet the individual needs of children attending services
- This policy has been adapted from *PolicyWorks* Manual-National Quality Framework released by the Early Learning Association Australia.

Scope

This policy applies to Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten who is responsible for the direct education and care of children including offsite excursions and activities.

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Educators, Staff, Students on placement, Volunteers, Parents/guardians, Children and others attending Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten's programs and activities.

National Quality Standards (NQS)

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

2.1.1 Wellbeing and comfort – Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's needs for sleep, rest and relaxation.

2.2 Safety - Each child is protected

2.2.1 Supervision - At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard

Quality Area 3: Physical Environment

3.1 Design – The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service

3.1.2 Upkeep – Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained

Background

- Sleep and Rest are vital to children's healthy development. "Children who get enough sleep are more engaged and less prone to behavioural problems and moodiness. Sleep also promotes alertness, memory and performance.
- Effective Rest and sleep strategies are important to ensure that children feel secure and safe, and ECEC [Early Childhood Education and Care] settings have a Duty of Care to ensure that all children are provided with a high level of safety and comfort when Resting or sleeping and to maintain Adequate Supervision" (Childcare and Children's Health, vol 14, no 2, June 2011 – refer to *Sources*).
- The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) include a focus on social, emotional, spiritual and physical wellbeing and health.
- Developmental Outcome 3 in both framework documents refers to a child's ability to take increasing responsibility for their own wellbeing. One of the indicators for this capacity is that children "recognise and communicate their bodily needs (for example thirst, hunger, Rest, comfort, physical activity)".

The EYLF suggests that to promote this, educators should:

- Consider the pace of the day within the context of the community
- Provide a range of active and Restful experiences throughout the day, and support children to make appropriate decisions regarding participation.
- Employers have a responsibility under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* to provide a safe and healthy working environment. This duty extends to others present in the workplace, including children and volunteers.
- Providing a safe environment for children at the service includes complying with current Australian/New Zealand standards in relation to equipment, such as cots and mattresses (refer to *Sources*).

Education and Care National Regulations

- Sleep and Rest (National Regulations 81)
- Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair (National Regulations 103)
- Furniture, materials and equipment (National Regulations 105)
- Ventilation and natural light (National Regulations 110)
- Premises designed to facilitate supervision (National Regulations 115)
- Education and care service must have policies and procedures (National Regulations 168)

Responsibility/Accountability

The Approved Provider, according to Regulations is responsible for the implementation of this policy. This will be achieved through the Centre Manager and the staff:

- Taking reasonable steps to ensure the sleep/rest needs of children at the service are met, with regard to the age of children, developmental stages and individual needs (National Regulations 81)
- Parents/guardians are consulted about appropriate relaxation and sleep practices for their child
- Protecting children from hazards and harm (National Regulations 167)
- Cots provided at the service comply with the most current Australian/New Zealand Standards
- That prams and strollers are not used to settle children to sleep
- Consulting with staff in relation to Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) issues when purchasing new equipment for the service
- Compliance with WorkSafe Victoria's Children's Services – Occupational Health and Safety Compliance Kit (refer to *Sources*), including in relation to staff lifting children into and out of cots
- Compliance with the recommendations of Red Nose and Kid safe in relation to safe sleeping practices for children (refer to *Sources*)
- Adequate Supervision of children at the service at all times, including during Relaxation and sleep
- That rooms used for sleep and Relaxation are well ventilated
- That there is adequate space to store bedding in a hygienic manner (refer to *Hygiene Policy*).

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- Taking reasonable steps to ensure the sleep/Rest needs of children at the service are met with regard to the age of children, developmental stages and individual needs (National Regulations 81).
- Ensuring the educational program provides opportunities for each child to sleep, Rest or engage in appropriate quiet play activities, as required
- Protecting children from hazards and harm (National Regulations 167)

- Informing the Approved Provider, as soon as is practicable, of any hazards identified in the child's Resting or sleeping environment
- Ensuring all staff and educators comply with WorkSafe Victoria's Children's Services – Occupational Health and Safety Compliance Kit (refer to *Sources*) in relation to lifting children into and out of cots
- Ensuring all staff and educators comply with the recommendations of Red Nose and Kid safe in relation to safe sleeping practices for children (refer to *Sources*)
- Ensuring Adequate Supervision of children at the service at all times, including during Relaxation and sleep
- Storing items such as bedding in a hygienic manner to prevent cross-contamination (refer to *Hygiene Policy*).

Educators and other staff are responsible for:

- Providing each child with appropriate opportunities for Relaxation and sleep according to their needs
- Complying with the recommendations of Red Nose and Kid safe in relation to safe sleeping practices for children (refer to *Sources*)
- Complying with WorkSafe Victoria's Children's Services – Occupational Health and Safety Compliance Kit (refer to *Sources*), including in relation to lifting children into and out of cots
- Providing input in relation to OHS issues when new equipment is purchased for the service

Developing Relaxation and sleep practices that are responsive to:

- The individual needs of children at the service
- Parenting beliefs, values, practices and requirements
- The length of time each child spends at the service
- Circumstance or events occurring at a child's home
- Consistency of practice between home and the service
- A child's general health and wellbeing
- The physical environment, including room temperature, lighting, airflow and noise levels
- Minimising distress or discomfort for the children in their care
- Ensuring that Resting and sleeping practices are not used as a behaviour guidance strategy (refer to *Interactions with Children Policy*)
- Providing a range of opportunities for Relaxation throughout the day
- Conducting regular safety checks of equipment used for sleeping/Resting, such as cots and mattresses
- Informing the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider, as soon as is practicable, of any hazards identified in the child's Resting or sleeping environment
- Ensuring that any hanging cords, mobiles, curtains and blinds are inaccessible to children who are Resting or sleeping
- Providing Adequate Supervision (refer to *Definitions*) of all children, including during sleep, Rest and Relaxation
- Supervising children displaying symptoms of illness closely, especially when Resting or sleeping (refer to *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*)
- Ensuring that each child has their own bed linen, and that the *Hygiene Policy* and procedures are implemented for the cleaning and storage of cots, mattresses and linen

- Providing information to families about the service’s Relaxation and sleep practices
- Developing communication strategies to inform parents/guardians about their child’s Rest and sleep patterns, including times and length of sleep
- Encouraging children’s independence, and assisting children with dressing as needed.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Discussing their child’s Relaxation and sleep requirements and practices prior to commencing at the service, and informing staff/educators when these requirements change
- Providing information on the child’s enrolment form if the child requires special items while Resting or sleeping e.g. a comforter or soft toy
- Providing a written medical report if their baby/child is not to be placed on their back during sleep. Parents/guardians must communicate alternative Resting practices to staff.
- Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

Definitions

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy and related procedures. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *Glossary of Terms*.

Word/Term	Definition
Adequate Supervision	<p>(In relation to this policy) supervision entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times including during toileting, sleep, Rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used.</p> <p>Adequate Supervision refers to constant, active and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate Supervision requires that educators are always in a position to observe and/or hear each child, respond to individual needs, and immediately intervene if necessary.</p> <p>Variables affecting supervision levels include: number, age and abilities of children number and positioning of educators current activity of each child areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility) developmental profile of each child and of the group of children experience, knowledge and skill of each educator need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies).</p>

Duty of Care	A common law concept that refers to the responsibilities of organizations to provide people with an adequate level of protection against harm and all reasonable foreseeable risk of injury.
Relaxation/ Rest	A period of inactivity, solitude, calmness or tranquility.
SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome)	The unexpected and unexplained death of an infant, usually occurring during sleep.
SIDS and Kids	The National SIDS Council of Australia, dedicated to eliminating SIDS and providing support for bereaved families. SIDS and Kids is considered to be the national authority on safe sleeping practices for infants and children. A branch of SIDS and Kids is located in each state and territory, and can provide resources and assistance (refer to <i>Sources</i>).

SLEEP AND REST FOR CHILDREN PROCEDURE

Purpose

This procedure will provide a process for the implementation of safe Relaxation and sleep practices that meet the individual needs of children attending Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten.

Procedure

In terms of sleep positions:

- Educators should put baby on their back to sleep, unless, advised in writing to do otherwise by the baby's doctor. If this is the case ensure educators have clear directions regarding the advised sleeping position in writing and signed by the doctor.
- Sleep baby with face uncovered, Red Nose recommend placing the baby's feet at the bottom of the cot so that the baby can't slip down under the blanket. For further information on safe sleeping practices refer to the Red Nose website (see *Sources*).

Check the following when putting the baby to sleep:

- The baby is tucked in securely or is in a safe sleeping bag.
- Cot bedding is not loose.
- There are no quilts, doonas, duvets, pillows or cot bumpers in the cot.
- Note: Red Nose recommends that the above should be implemented until the child is 12 months of age.

In terms of a smoke free environment:

- A smoke free environment must be maintained at all times.

In terms of equipment and practices that are essential to minimise the risk of serious sleeping accidents:

- A permanent cot
- All permanent cots must meet the Australian Standard for cots (AS/NZ 2172 - 2003).

- All cots meeting the standard will have a label identifying compliance. All equipment purchased by services/educators must meet current Australian Standards.
- Safe mattress
- Make sure there is no more than 20mm (1 inch) gap between the mattress and the cot sides and ends.
- Remove the plastic packaging and ensure it is placed in a bin.
- No alterations should be made to purchased cots and mattresses under any circumstance, as this may have serious consequences in relation to liability in the event that an incident occurs.

In terms of safe & hygienic bedding and sleeping places:

- Sleeping/resting children must be visually checked at regular intervals (every 15 mins) and documented on a safe sleep checklist.
- Any area surrounding the cot must be free of hazards e.g. cords that a child can get tangled in or strangled by, and must be placed away from any open windows.
- Due to the possibility of suffocation, entrapment and poor posture development, capsules, prams and strollers and bouncers are not appropriate, and are **NOT** to be utilized as bedding.
- The provision of adequate bedding is necessary to ensure that children have individual access to a bed to enable an undisturbed sleep.
- There must be one bed or mattress or other age and culturally appropriate bedding for each child requiring a Rest or sleep.
- There must be individual, clean bed linen for each child. This practice is essential to minimise the risk of cross infection.
- When bedding is not in use it will be stored in the child's individual, named, sleep bag/basket.
- Ensure that the layout of cots/beds have a distance apart to ensure children cannot touch or share items with each other and do not obstruct emergency exit paths.
- At the end of each night, cots and mattresses are to be sanitised/cleaned.
- Bedding must be washed after 5 uses or before if soiled.
- The service will only use equipment that meets Australian Standards and will ensure that the equipment is used in accordance with those standards and the manufacturer's instructions.
- The service will cease to use any equipment if it becomes unsafe or damaged in any way.
- Comfort items such as dummies, teddies, blankets, etc, will be given to children for sleep/Rest times if required. For infants under 7 months of age, soft toys will not be placed in the cot according to Red Nose guidelines. Children older than 7 months can have a soft comfort toy but will be removed from the cot once asleep.
- Necklaces/Bracelets (including Amber Teething Necklaces) must be removed before sleep.
- Infants/babies will be placed on their back when being settled to sleep. Should an infant/baby need to be placed in a position other than their back, a letter from the child's doctor is needed.
- Ensure when children fall asleep or choose to rest/sleep in a space (not a cot/bed), educators should ensure that the child's safety and wellbeing are met.
Consideration should be given to:
 - Hygiene: is this space clean and hygienic? How can I eliminate the spread of germs?
 - Comfort: how can I make the child more comfortable?
 - Location: is this the right spot for this child to sleep/rest?

- Weather conditions: will the child get burnt, too hot, too cold, possible rain, lightening?
- Other children: what if other children want to learn in the space? Will this impact on the child's safety and wellbeing?
- Dignity and rights: how can we better protect the child's dignity and rights?
- Hazards: is this space safe?
- Children will be given the opportunity to wake up gradually and be supported in their toileting and dressing after sleep/rest time.
- Educators can guide parents and seek resources/information on helping to settle children to sleep if parents would like this information.
- A sleep risk minimisation plan must be completed every 12 months.

References, Sources, Links to Legislation and Other Documents

Please refer to Reference and Sources page.

Related service policies:

Hygiene Policy

Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy

Interactions with Children Policy

Occupational Health and Safety Policy Supervision of Children Policy.