

# Yarram Early Learning Relaxation and Sleep Policy

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

## PURPOSE

This policy provides clear guidelines for the implementation of safe relaxation and sleep practices that meet the individual needs of children attending Yarram Early Learning.

## POLICY STATEMENT

### VALUES

Yarram Early Learning is committed to:

- Providing a positive and nurturing environment for all children attending the service
- Recognising that children have different requirements for relaxation and sleep, 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 relaxation and sleep 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 Yarram Early Learning, 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
- Working within the Red Nose safe sleeping recommendations to ensure a safe environment and practices for all children.
- Providing our staff relevant training and professional development to ensure up-to-date and safe practices.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Responsible Person, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Yarram Early Learning.

## BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

### 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 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. Development 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, staff 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.

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act Yarram Early Learning provides a safe and healthy working environment for all persons in the workplace, including children and volunteers. Yarram Early Learning complies with current Australian standards in relation to equipment (refer to Sources) to ensure that children are provided with a safe environment.

## **Relaxation and Sleep Practices**

Yarram Early Learning believes that it is important for children to develop an appreciation for, and an understanding of, the benefits of rest/relaxation for healthy living.

Children at any point during the day are required to spend a minimum of one-hour quiet down time. Time's will depend on the child's individual routines, pick up and drop off times and educators should be mindful and accommodating to each child's physical need for rest.

There is no expectation that children sleep, rather that they give their bodies and minds a chance to relax/un-wind and reset. Children are offered the choice of resting on a mattress or spending some quiet time, enjoying books and drawing.

Educators regularly assess the individual needs of children in relation to their rest requirements. Parents are asked to provide information regarding their child's sleep needs via the 'Tell Me About Your Child' document that is distributed to all families upon enrolment. The rest program consists of either resting on mattresses or quiet activity.

If a family's beliefs are in conflict with current recommended evidence-based guidelines, the service will need to determine if there are exceptional circumstances that allow for alternate practices. For example, with some rare medical conditions, it may be necessary for a baby to sleep on his or her stomach or side, which is contrary to Red Nose recommendations. It is expected that in this scenario the service would only endorse the practice, with the written support of the baby's medical practitioner. The service may also consider undertaking risk assessment and implementing risk minimisation plans for the baby.

When implementing safe sleeping or rest Staff ensure that:

- Children who choose to rest on a mattress are comfortably dressed and warm/cool enough.
- Understand that younger children (especially those aged 0–3 years) settle confidently when they have formed bonds with familiar carers.- ACECQA recommendation
- They comfort, pat and play soft music until each child is comfortable.
- Playrooms are not overheated during rest.
- Mattresses comply with Australian Safety Standards. (AS/NZS 8811.1.2013)
- Cots meet current mandatory Australian Standard for Cots (AS/NZS 2172)
- Children are placed on the floor to ensure easy access from at least two sides.
- The energy in the playroom decreases to enable children who choose quiet activity to relax, for example enjoying books and drawing.
- Pillows, doonas, loose bedding or fabric, lam wool, bumpers and soft toys are never used in cots
- Electric blankets, hot water bottles and wheat bags are not used in cots
- Nothing is placed around the neck of a sleeping child (e.g. amber teething necklaces) the use of teething bracelets is also not recommended while a child sleeps.
- Babies in cots will be placed on their backs and with their feet at the bottom of the cot, with any blankets/sheets firmly tucked in and the babies face and neck completely uncovered.
- Educators will wrap/swaddle babies in accordance to the Red Nose recommendations and assess each individual babies sleep habits and age to determine the safest practice for the baby. (in communication with families requests)
- Will communicate with families about safe sleep practices and routines to ensure they are within the best interest of the baby and their needs.

Rest time in each individual room will vary depending on children's routines, room routines and curriculum activities.

Contributing factors may include:

- Excursions and incursions
- Drop off and pick up times and hours the child attends the centre
- Age recommendations for sleep/rest (younger children and babies require higher hours of sleep/rest)
- Family preferences

To ensure that risks are minimised, sleeping and rest routines and equipment are evaluated annually in accordance with advice from recognised Health and Safety authorities. On a daily basis staff check that mattresses are showing no signs of wear and tear.

## **Legislation and standards**

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Act 2012*
- *Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Regulations 2012*
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulation 81*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety*

- Standard 2.1: Each child's health needs are supported
- Element 2.1.2: Each child's comfort is provided for and there are appropriate opportunities to meet each child's needs for sleep, rest and relaxation
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017

## DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the General Definitions section of this manual.

**Adequate supervision:** (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 may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used. Adequate supervision refers to constant, active and diligent supervision of every child at the service.

Adequate supervision requires that staff are always in a position to observe each child, respond to individual needs, and immediately intervene if necessary. Variables affecting supervision levels include:

- number, age and abilities of children
- number and positioning of staff
- 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 staff to move between areas (effective communication strategies).

**Duty of care:** A common law concept that refers to the responsibilities of organisations 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 tranquillity.

## SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

### Sources

- *Childcare and Children's Health*, vol 14, no 2, June 2011, Sleep and Oral Health. Publication of the Centre for Community Child Health:  
[www.rch.org.au/emplibrary/ccch/CCH\\_Vol\\_14\\_No\\_2\\_Sleep\\_and\\_Oral\\_Health.pdf](http://www.rch.org.au/emplibrary/ccch/CCH_Vol_14_No_2_Sleep_and_Oral_Health.pdf)

- Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF):  
[https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-02/belonging\\_being\\_and\\_becoming\\_the\\_early\\_years\\_learning\\_framework\\_for\\_australia.pdf](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-02/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf)
- Kidsafe Fact Sheets at <https://www.kidsafevic.com.au/>  
-Safe Sleeping for Infants  
-Ages and Stages fact sheet series ('Sleeping' section)
- Product safety: a guide for businesses and legal practitioners:  
<https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/products-and-services/business-practices/advertising-and-promotions/information-standards>
- WorkSafe Victoria, Children's services – occupational health and safety compliance kit:  
<https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/resources/childrens-services-occupational-health-and-safety-compliance-kit>
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF):  
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/edcare/veyldfframework.pdf>
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority – safe sleep and rest practices from October 2017  
<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/supporting-materials/infosheet/safe-sleep-and-rest-practices>
- Red Nose Saves Little Lives – Wrapping or swaddling babies  
<https://rednose.org.au/article/wrapping-babies>
- Red Nose – safe sleeping  
<https://rednose.org.au/section/safe-sleeping>  
<https://rednose.org.au/article/how-to-make-up-babys-cot>

## Service policies

- Child Safe Environment Policy
- Hygiene Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Interactions with Children Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Supervision of Children Policy

## PROCEDURES

### The Approved Provider 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 (Regulation 81(1))
- Ensuring parents/guardians are consulted about appropriate relaxation and sleep practices for their child
- Protecting children from hazards and harm (Section 167)
- Consulting with staff in relation to OHS issues when purchasing new equipment for the service

- Ensuring compliance with Worksafe Victoria's Children's services – occupational health and safety compliance kit (refer to Sources)
- Ensuring adequate supervision of children at the service at all times, including during relaxation and sleep
- Ensuring that rooms used for sleep and relaxation are well ventilated
- Ensuring 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 (Regulation 81(2))
- 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 (Section 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 comply with Worksafe Victoria's Children's services – occupational health and safety compliance kit (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*).
- Ensure staff are complying with the Red Nose safe sleeping recommendations
- **The Supervisors and relevant Room Leader are responsible for ensuring volunteers and students are following this policy and the outlines procedures.**

### **Responsible Person and staff are responsible for:**

- Providing each child with appropriate opportunities for relaxation and sleep according to their needs
- Complying with the Red Nose safe sleeping recommendations
- Complying with Worksafe Victoria's children's services – occupational health and safety compliance kit (refer to sources)
- 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

- 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 artificial heating, such as heat bags and hot-water bottles, is not used to provide warmth
- Providing information to families about the service's relaxation and sleep practices

### **Parents/guardians are responsible for:**

- Discussing their child's relaxation and sleep requirements and practices prior to commencing at the service, and when these requirements change

## **EVALUATION**

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- Regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- Monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- Keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- Revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- Notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

## **AUTHORISATION**

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Yarram Early Learning on April, 2020.

**Most recent review date:** 30.04.2020

**To be reviewed:** APRIL 2021