

Yarram Early Learning Sleep and Rest Policy

Best Practice – Quality Area 2

PURPOSE

- This policy will provide clear guidelines to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending Yarram Early Learning and appropriate opportunities are provided to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.

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 rest 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 rest 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 or resting.
- 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.
- allowing children to be actively involved in decision making, to provide an environment that encourages them to reach their potential
- providing a safe environment where children feel comfortable and safe to play, talk, or rest.
- children's safety and wellbeing will be fostered through responsive relationships, engaging experiences and a safe and healthy environment.
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SCOPE

- This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, and others attending the programs and activities of Yarram Early Learning.

BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

1. BACKGROUND

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 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, 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.

Holistic approaches recognise the importance of physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing. Educators who provide a range of active and restful experiences throughout the day support children's individual requirements for health, nutrition, sleep, rest and relaxation.

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 sleeping 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*).

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 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 in 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, lamb 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 baby's face and neck completely uncovered.
- Educators will wrap/swaddle babies in accordance to the Red Nose recommendations and assess each individual baby's sleep habits and age to determine the safest practice for the baby. (in communication with family's 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*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Australian/New Zealand Standard – Cots for household use – Safety Requirements (AS/NZS 2172:2010)*
- *Australian/New Zealand Standard – Cots for day nursery, hospital and institutional use – Safety Requirements (AS/NZS 2130:1998)*

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au

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: Relaxation or other activity for bringing about a feeling of calm in your body and mind

Rest: A period of inactivity, solitude, calmness or tranquillity, and can include a child being in a state of sleep.

Hazardous Manual Handling: Manual handling is work where you have to lift, lower, push, pull, carry, move, hold or restrain something. It's hazardous manual handling if it involves:

repeated, sustained or high force
sustained awkward posture
repetitive movements
exposure to sustained vibration
handling people or animals
loads that are unstable, unbalanced or hard to hold.

Red Nose Australia (formerly SIDS and Kids): Recognised national authority on safe sleeping practices for infants and children (*refer to Sources*)

SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome): 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.

- 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.

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

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- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority, *Safe sleep and rest practices*: www.acecqa.gov.au/resources
- Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (2016), *Consumer product safety – a guide for businesses & legal practitioners*: www.accc.gov.au
- *Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF)*: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Current Australian/New Zealand Standards for cots is available on the SAI Global website at: www.saiglobal.com
- Red Nose Australia: www.rednose.org.au
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF): www.acecqa.gov.au
- WorkSafe Victoria, *Children's services – occupational health and safety compliance kit*: www.worksafe.vic.gov.au
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority, *Sleep and rest risk assessment Template - Sleep Rest Risk Assessment Template*
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority, *Risk Assessment and Management Tool* - www.acecqa.gov.au/media/32166
- Kids Safe Australia - www.kidsafe.com.au
- Compliance code: Hazardous manual handling - <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/resources/compliance-code-hazardous-manual-handling>
- Hazardous manual handling risk assessment and control tool – www.worksafe.vic.gov.au

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 Committee of Management is responsible for:

- Ensuring that policies and procedures are in place for managing sleep and rest for children (*Regulation 168*) and take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed (*Regulation 170*)
- Conducting 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 or wellbeing of children during sleep and rest (*Regulation 84C (a)(b)*)
- the suitability of staffing arrangements to adequately supervise and monitor children during sleep and rest periods
- the level of knowledge and training of staff supervising children during sleep and rest periods
- the location of sleep and rest areas, including the arrangement of cots and beds within the sleep and rest areas
- the safety and suitability of any cots, beds and bedding equipment, having regard to the ages and developmental stages of the children who will use the cots, bed and bedding equipment
- any potential hazards
- in sleep and rest areas
- on a child during sleep and rest periods
- 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).
- Ensuring all risk assessments conducted are recorded and stored (*Regulation 84C (4)*)

- Undertaking a risk assessment to mitigate hazardous manual handling (*refer to Definitions*), such as patting and rocking children to sleep for long periods of time
- Ensuring educators receive information and induction training to fulfil their roles effectively, including being made aware of the sleep and rest policies, their responsibilities in implementing these, and any changes that are made over time
- Ensuring the premise, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and in good repair (*Regulation 103 and National Law: Section 167*) including ensuring all equipment used meets any relevant Australian Standards and other product safety standards, such as Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) guidelines (*Refer to Sources*).
- Ensuring the cots, beds, bedding and bedding equipment being used for sleep and rest are safe and appropriate for the ages and developmental stages of children who will use them
- Ensuring that rooms used for sleep and relaxation are well ventilated; have adequate natural light; and are maintained at a temperature that ensures the safety and wellbeing of children (*Regulation 110*)
- Ensuring sleep and rest environments are free from cigarette, e-cigarette, or tobacco smoke (*Regulation 82*)
- Ensuring that the premises are designed to facilitate supervision
 - Ensuring adequate supervision of children sleeping and resting, being within sight and hearing distance and monitoring through visual checks of:
 - sleeping position
 - skin and lip colour
 - breathing
 - body temperature
 - head position
 - airway
 - head and face, ensuring they remain uncovered
- Ensuring supervision and monitoring procedures are documented, including method and frequency of checking the safety, health and wellbeing of children during sleep and rest periods, as per the risk assessment
- Ensuring cots (including evacuations cots) provided at the service comply with the most current Australian/New Zealand Standards (*refer to Sources and Attachment 1*)

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- Conducting 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 or wellbeing of children during sleep and rest (*Regulation 84C (a)(b)*)
- *the physical safety and suitability of sleep and rest environments (including temperature, lighting and ventilation)* (*Regulations 84C*) (*refer to Sources*)
- *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 sleep and rest
- 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
- Ensuring the premise, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and in good repair (*Regulation 103 and National Law: Section 167*) including ensuring all equipment used meets any relevant Australian Standards and other product safety standards, such as Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) guidelines (*Refer to Sources*).
- Ensuring the cots, beds, bedding and bedding equipment being used for sleep and rest are safe and appropriate for the ages and developmental stages of children who will use them
- Ensuring that the premises are designed to facilitate supervision
 - Ensuring adequate supervision of children sleeping and resting, being within sight and hearing distance and monitoring through visual checks of:
 - sleeping position
 - skin and lip colour
 - breathing
 - body temperature
 - head position
 - airway head and face, ensuring they remain uncovered
- Ensuring supervision and monitoring procedures are documented, including method and frequency of checking the safety, health and wellbeing of children during sleep and rest periods, as per the risk assessment
- Ensuring 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
- Regularly reviewing practices to ensure compliance with the recommendations of Red Nose Australia in relation to safe sleeping practices for children (*refer to Sources*)

Certified Supervisors and staff are responsible for:

- Providing each child with appropriate opportunities for sleep and rest 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 sleep and rest practices
- Ensuring cots (including evacuations cots) provided at the service comply with the most current Australian/New Zealand Standards (refer to *Sources and Attachment 1*)
- Ensuring that bassinets, hammocks, prams and strollers are not used to settle children to sleep
- Conducting regular safety checks of equipment used for sleeping/resting, such as cots and mattresses (*Regulation 103 and National Law: Section 167*)
- Ensuring that if a child is brought to the service in a pram or bassinet, the child is transferred into the service's own sleep equipment

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

Volunteers and students, while at the service, must be always supervised to ensure they follow this policy.

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

ATTACHMENT 1. COTS

There is currently (at the time of printing) one standards that apply to the use of cots:

- Australian/New Zealand Standard – AS/NZS 2172

Services can check current standards on the SAI Global website at: www.saiglobal.com

Household cots usually have a lower base and mattress, and WorkSafe Victoria have expressed concern for staff in relation to the manual handling risks posed when working with cots at a lower height.

Employers should make sure workplaces use cots which minimise the distance employees need to bend and reach.

- Cots should be of a height that will enable employees to lift and lower children into and out of the cots with minimal forward bending of the employee's back.
- If cots have two base positions, set the base to the higher position for infants unable to stand. The higher base position will reduce the need for employees to reach into cots.
- Cots should have sides that drop to reduce the need for employees to bend and reach over the cot side to lift and lower children. At its dropped level, the top of the cot's lowered side should be at least 250mm above the top of the mattress to ensure children cannot roll out of the cot.
- Ensure there is enough clearance under cots for employees to stand with their feet under the edge of the cot to minimise reaching distance.
- Prepare cots in advance so sides are down before employees lift children in or out.
- If cots have wheels, ensure the wheels have locks and keep wheels in the locked position when the cot is not being moved.
- Regularly check and maintain cot wheels, wheel locks and drop-down sides to ensure cots are safe and secure.
- Assess floor surfaces to ensure minimal friction and resistance when wheeling cots. Change floor surfaces so employees can easily move cots.
- Ensure cots meet all relevant structural safety requirements.

No alterations should be made to purchased cots under any circumstances, as this may have serious consequences in relation to liability if an incident occurs.

ELAA does not recommend that services use portable or folding cots, as they present an increased risk of injury or death to a child if erected incorrectly. Portable cots also pose an increased risk of manual handling injuries to staff. If a service requires an extra cot to be available for occasional use, it is possible to purchase a cot that meets the Australian/New Zealand Standard – Cots for household use, and folds flat for easy storage.

Further information on portable or folding cots is available as outlined below:

- Red Nose: <https://rednose.org.au/article/portable-cots>
- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission: www.productsafety.gov.au

Note: Bassinets must not be on the education and care service premises (including centre based care and family day care) at any time that children are being educated and cared for by the service.