

Policy Statement

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in the attitudes, behaviour and practices of the staff working with in our service through building and maintaining a child safe and child friendly environment which is inclusive, transparent and where all children are valued and feel safe.

Our service has a responsibility to ensure that the rights and best interests of the child are paramount and that we will provide training, resources, information and guidance to support this in order to:

- Ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the service is protected at all times
- Ensure that people educating and caring for children at the service act in the best interests of the child
- Protect and advocate the rights of all children to feel safe, and be safe at all times
- Maintain a culture in which children's rights are respected
- Encourage active participation from families at the service, supporting a partnership approach and shared responsibility for children's health, safety, wellbeing and development

Explanation

Country Children's Early Learning is committed to complying with the Education and Care Services National Regulations to ensure:

- Adult /child ratios are maintained
- Children are supervised at all times, as supervision is a key aspect to ensuring that children's safety is protected in the service environment
- Consideration is given to the design and arrangement of children's environments to support active supervision
- Supervision is used to reduce or prevent injury to children and adults
- Educators acknowledge and understand the need for increased supervision when children are involved in high risk activities e.g. an excursion near a significant water hazard
- Children are protected from possible or potential hazards and dangers posed by products, plants, objects, animals and people in the immediate and wider environment
- Plans are in place to manage incidents and emergencies, assist services to protect adults and children and to maintain children's wellbeing and a safe environment

Policy Created
February 2016

Policy Last Updated
September 2023

Policy Review Date
March 2025

Goals

All children have the right to experience quality education and care in an environment that promotes opportunities to thrive with adults who safeguard and advocate for their health, safety, security and wellbeing including the right to:

- Be asked to express their views and wishes about matters affecting their lives and to have those views appropriately considered by adults
- Feel and be safe in their interactions with adults and other children and young people
- Understand as early as possible what is meant by “feeling safe”

Strategies

The Physical Environment

- Ensure all equipment and materials used at the service meet relevant Australian Safety Standards
- Risk Assessments including for Regulation 97.2 will be conducted and updated regularly to ensure potential risks at the service are managed and minimised appropriately to ensure the health and safety of children
- Conduct daily safety checks of the equipment and environment
- Remove, replace or repair worn and damaged equipment, structures and resources in a timely manner
- Organise indoor and outdoor spaces to ensure risks to health and safety are minimised
- Analyse and evaluate the risks associated with identified hazards
- Determine appropriate ways to eliminate or control identified hazards
- Review Risk Assessments after any serious incident report is made to the Regulatory Authority
- Ensure smoking is banned within the grounds of, and within the legislated distance if any entrance of an enclosed public space or residence
- Ensure secure storage of hazardous products including chemicals and medications
- Ensure secure equipment and food are stored securely and safely so as not to attract pests and vermin
- Work closely with the school to manage and maintain the school site, and ensure the environment is free from potential hazards and harm

Outdoor Climbing Equipment in Family Day Care Homes/Venues

- Make responsible decisions about where the safest place is to put climbing equipment
- Place outdoor play equipment away from concrete paths, gravel and solid garden edges
- Ensure that climbing equipment is placed away from other toys and equipment
- All climbing and play equipment should be placed in an area that is suitable such as a well maintained grass area, Softfall, soft sand or tanbark
- Climbing and play equipment that is higher than 50cms can be used in the home/venue as long as the use of this equipment is managed properly such as ensuring:
 - The equipment is still the appropriate height for the age of the children
 - The placement of the equipment is on a soft well maintained grassy area, Softfall, soft sand or tanbark
 - There is adequate space around the climbing equipment for the children to move and climb safely
 - There is adequate space between the climbing equipment and hard surfaces
 - The play area is not overcrowded with equipment
 - The children are appropriately supervised and the number of children on the equipment at any given time is kept to a safe number

Staffing and Supervision

- Ensure that sufficient numbers of Educators are employed to ensure adequate supervision of children at all times
- Manage rosters to not only ensure that adequate numbers of Educators are on duty to meet ratio and qualification requirements, but that duty of care implications are considered to ensure adequate supervision at all times
- Consideration is given to the design and arrangement of children's environments to support active supervision
- Ensure Supervision Plans are in place for the indoor and outdoor areas to provide optimum supervision of those spaces
- Ensure screening and suitability of staff and volunteers as per the legislation and services policies at the time of employment and as a part of an ongoing process
- Provide regular and ongoing training for staff that embeds the Child Safe Standards
- Respond proactively to emerging staff performance concerns

Child Protection

- Raise concerns with the Approved Provider if any circumstances arise that may pose a risk to a child's health, safety and wellbeing are identified, including cultural, environmental and operational risks
- Ensure that all staff including Educators, students and volunteers have current Working with Children Checks
- Ensure that all staff, volunteers and students are given information and training about Child Protection Law and any obligations they have under that law
- Staff will undertake training in order to effectively:
 - Make appropriate responses to disclosures of abuse and any allegations of abuse against staff members of the service
 - Understand the responsibilities and processes as a mandated reporter
 - Be able to recognise the factors that increase a child's vulnerability to mistreatment
 - Be aware of the vulnerabilities which may indicate a need to assess, monitor or curtail the behaviour of individuals in relation to children and young people
 - Manage the safe use of online environments
 - Implement procedures for releasing children only into the care of authorised persons
 - Ensure children are provided with ways to provide feedback or concerns
 - Ensure children's views are listened to, respected, they are involved in decision making, especially decisions that directly affect them

Preventing other Harms and Hazards

The service will ensure that:

- Risk Assessments are conducted regularly for excursions, regular outings and transportation provided or arrange by the service
- Risk minimisation practices are in place for the management of medical conditions in conjunction the services policy
- Emergency evacuation plans specific to the service are implemented in conjunction with the services policy, and in line with the schools' procedures
- If a staff member works alone, careful consideration has been given to the ability of that individual to meet regulatory and child protection requirements

Roles and Responsibilities

Approved Provider

- Ensure all staff have access to relevant professional development
- Ensure that the Nominated Supervisor and Educators at the service who work with children are advised of current child protection legislation, its application and any obligations they may have under that law

Nominated Supervisor/Coordinator

- Ensure screening and suitability processes are maintained to meet policy and legislative requirements
- Identify and providing appropriate resources and training to assist staff, visitors, volunteers and students to implement this policy
- Provide a comprehensive induction process for staff that includes training and guidance on the Child Safe Standards and Child Protection
- Keep up to date and comply with any relevant changes in legislation and practices
- Cooperate with other services and professional in the best interests of children and their families
- Ensure families are made aware of support services available to them
- Ensure that all staff who work with children are supported to implement this policy in the service
- Protect the rights of the children and families, and encourage their participation in decision making at the service

Educators

- Act in accordance with the obligations outlined in this policy
- Raise concerns when barriers or threats to the protection of children and young people's safety and wellbeing are identified
- Keep up to date and comply with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy
- Undertake appropriate training and education on child protection
- Identify any potential for risk and harm to children at the service, developing and implementing effective prevention strategies in consultation with the service coordinator
- Ensure no child is left alone (or is out of sight) with a visitor, volunteer or student at the service

- Notify your Coordinator immediately if you become aware of any concerns, complaints or allegations regarding the health, safety and welfare of a child at the service
- Offer support to the child and their family and to other Educators in response to concerns or reports relating to the health, safety and wellbeing of a child at the service
- Maintain confidentiality at all times

Family Day Care Educators

- Educators must supervise children at all times, including while they are asleep, having regard to their ages and physical and intellectual development and to the activities in which they are engaged
- Be alert to, and aware of risks and hazards and the potential for accidents and injury throughout the service, not just within their immediate area
- Educators must not perform other duties or work whilst Family Day care Children are in their care
- Raise concerns with the Approved Provider if any circumstances arise that may affect whether residents of the FDC home are fit and proper to be in the company of children
- Educators must not pass the responsibility of the supervision of the child to any person other than a parent of the child or a person authorised by a parent to have the care of the child
- Educators must notify Country Children's Early Learning Pty Ltd prior to making any physical changes to their residence that may affect supervision
- Develop emergency and evacuation procedures for their residence or venue
- Annually complete the Kidsafe Hazard Reduction Checklist found in the Kidsafe "Family Day Care Safety Guidelines" and every 6 months review the Resident/Venue Risk Assessment, or as changes occur
- Ensure dangerous chemicals, substances and equipment at their residence or venue are inaccessible to children
- If guns are kept on the premises, Educators are required to provide Country Children's Early Learning with a Certificate of Compliance after each routine Police Inspection
- Educators with swimming pools are required to provide Country Children's Early Learning with a Certificate of Inspection by an Authorised Body annually
- Daily check for hazards in and around the residence or venue, as listed in the Educators Daily Diary

LINKS TO

- **Education & Care Services National Law**
Section 162A, 165, 166, 167
- **Education & Care Services National Regulations**
82, 83, 84, 99, 103, 115, 122, 123, 149, 158, 159, 165, 168(2)(h), 175, 176
- National Quality Standards/Elements 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 7.1, 7.2
- Child Safe Standards
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

- Supervision management strategies need to be outlined for all excursions on the Excursion Safety and hazard Checklist and approved by Country Children's Early Learning Pty Ltd

Families

- Report any concerns including in relation to potential for child abuse to the Nominated Supervisor or Service Coordinator

Continual Monitoring and Improvement

Continual improvement and monitoring will occur in the following ways:

- Incidental and planned consultation with families
- Approved Provider and Coordinators accessing current relevant information
- Approved Provider, Coordinators and Educators accessing current and relevant training
- Internal evaluation of incidences and the improvement of systems

SOURCES

Education and Care Services National Regulations, October 2020
 Education and care Services National Law, February 2018
 Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations, October 2017
 Guide to the National Quality Standard, January 2020
 Implementing the Child Safe Standards: A Guide for Early Education and Outside School Hours Care Services, NSW Department of Education, 2021
 A Guide to the Child Safe Standards, NSW Office of the Children's Guardian, 2020
 Be You
 Childsafety Australia
 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
 Australian Human Rights Commission
 Australian Childhood Foundation

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

- Acceptance & Refusal of Authorisations
- Child Protection
- Dangerous Products
- Dealing with Medical Conditions
- Delivery & Collection of Children
- Emergency & Evacuation
- Regular Outings & Excursions
- Safe Transportation of Children
- Sole Educator
- Supervision
- Tobacco, Drug & Alcohol Free Environment
- Water Safety