

Policy Statement

This policy acts to ensure that:

- Clear guidelines, understanding and implementation help keep children safe in and around water and support children's learning in a safe environment
- Children's safety and wellbeing will be protected in and around water through supervision and education

Explanation

According to Kidsafe drowning continues to be one of the main causes of fatalities of Australian children. Every year a number of children are killed and hundreds more are rescued from near drowning situations. Non-fatal incidents are of also of great concern as they can have potential long term effects, including brain damage and permanent disability.

The most common factor in childhood drowning is lack of supervision. A child can drown in as little as a few centimetres of water. Items such as buckets, sinks, ponds, pools, water features and water tanks are potential drowning hazards.

The supervision and safety of children in and around water is of the highest priority.

Whilst water hazards at our service are kept to a minimum we acknowledge that water trolleys, sinks, buckets and toilets can be hazardous for children, and diligent supervision is required.

We acknowledge the importance of safe practices around water, as water hazard are a high risk to children's safety. When near water, supervision of the children is paramount and the adult to child ratio must be maintained to reduce risks.

Water areas are popular with the public, particularly in hot weather, making it difficult to maintain close supervision of children in the crowd, therefore strict procedures have been set to ensure the safety of the children in attending our services.

Country Children's Early Learning acknowledges the importance of safe practices around water, swimming pools, spas and other water hazards are a high risk to children's safety, health and wellbeing. Oversight including policy, procedures, risk assessments and authorisations are required to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children near water hazards.

All information and procedures around water safety for children will be in line with Australian Standards, State and Local Regulations.

Policy Created
February 2016

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April 2024

Policy Review Date
March 2026

Definitions

A body of water is recognised by the service as:

- Swimming Pools and/or Water Fun Parks
- Wading Pools
- Lakes
- Rivers
- Ponds
- The Sea/Ocean
- Creeks
- Dams
- Equipment used by the service that could contain 5cm or more of water and would allow a child to submerge both nose and mouth at the same time

Goals

- Our service has a responsibility to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of each child at all times
- Water based play is an important part of our children's healthy growth, learning, wellbeing and development, Educators will ensure that all precautions are employed to safeguard children during these experiences
- Our service creates opportunities for children to learn and develop and this includes incorporating water safety into the educational program

Strategies

Water Safety

- Children will be supervised at all times in and around any body of water, including water trolleys, buckets, sinks and toilets
- Educator to child ratios will be monitored when around water to ensure they are adequate
- No child will be left unsupervised at any stage around a body of water
- A Risk Assessment will be conducted prior to any Regular Outing or Excursion taking place, with particular attention focused on water safety when the outing is near a body of water
- The thermostat on hot water systems are set to a medium temperature to ensure children do not scald themselves when washing hands
- Educators are not permitted to consume hot drinks in any area accessible to children

Water Hygiene

- Grey water systems or water tanks will be labelled with “Do not drink” signs and the children will be supervised in this area to make sure they are not accessing this water for drinking
- Educators will discuss with children this water is for the purpose of play and not for consumption
- Water for pets at the service will be changed regularly and not accessible to children unless supervised by an adult
- Water containers of any sort will be emptied and a covered when not in use
- Drinking water containers will be emptied and cleaned daily

- Considerations for regional, remote and rural services will include additional care in managing and assessing risks with creeks, rivers, canals, dams, water troughs etc
- Before any water play takes place, Educators will check the quality of the water to ensure it is hygienic
- Children will be encouraged to only drink water from the water vessels provided such as drink bottles, water coolers and bubblers, this way Educators and children know that the water is safe for drinking

Regular Outings and Excursions

- The Service recognises the risks posed by bodies of water and will ensure that every precaution is taken so that children are able to enjoy water-based outings safely
- Comprehensive Risk Assessments will be carried out for all water-based outings, please refer to the service’s Regular Outing and Excursion Policy
- A site visit and risk assessment must be conducted by Educators before sending to CCEL for approval, and prior to seeking guardian authority for the outing. CCEL may require a Coordinator to visit the site prior to considering the risk assessment details and approval
- Risk Assessments for Regular Outings or Excursions near water hazards in addition to the requirements of other excursions must include:
 - Proximity of water hazard to the planned activity
 - How children’s access to the water hazard will be prevented
- Risk Assessments for Regular Outings or Excursions for the purpose of Swimming in a Pool, in addition to the requirements of other excursions must include:
 - Specific details of the adult to child ratio including and which adult is responsible for which child by name
- Authorisation from families will be sought prior to outings including those involving water-based activities

- Swimming activities to bodies of water other than a Registered Certified Swimming Pool will not be approved
- The National Law and Regulations do not specify a specific Educator to child ratio for activities where water is a feature, the number of Educators present is to be determined by a Risk Assessment of the proposed activity. It must also be noted that in sections 165, 167 and 169 of the National Law there are clear statements about adequate supervision
- A range of factors shall determine the adequacy of supervision, including:
 - Numbers, ages and abilities of the children
 - Number and positioning of Educators
 - Each child's current activities
 - Areas where children are playing, in particular the visibility and accessibility of these areas
 - Risks in the environment and experiences provided to children
 - Educators' knowledge of each child and each group of children
 - The experience, knowledge and skill of each Educator
- The Service will ensure that the Educators in charge of any excursion to a beach, river, lake or other place where there is a significant water hazard has a current approved first aid qualification and the knowledge and ability to implement water safety procedures

Swimming Pools and Spas at a Family Day Care Home or Venue

- All swimming pools and spas at the Family Day Care Educator's residence or venue must comply with the Australian Standards, State and Local Government regulations including the New South Wales Swimming Pools Act 1992
- Educators whose home or venue has a swimming pool or spa must maintain current knowledge of the requirements of the Australian Standards, New South Wales Swimming Pools Act 1992 and current local government requirements, this knowledge should form part of the Educators Annual and Ongoing Risk Assessments
- Educators with swimming pools and/or spas must have the pool or spa registered as required by local government authorities and hold a Certificate of Compliance
- Educators with swimming pools are required to provide Country Children's Early Learning with a Certificate of Registration and Certificate of Compliance by their local Council
- A Risk Assessment will be conducted at each Family Day Care home or venue with a pool or spa prior to the provision of Family Day Care to determine the suitability and safe management for the care and education of children
- Monthly inspections will be undertaken by the Approved Provider or Coordinator of any water features, water hazards or swimming pools on site

- Educators who have a water hazard on site, such as a pool or spa must conduct Daily Water Hazard Checklists
- Homes or venues with swimming pools will require a secondary boundary to prevent children's direct access to the approved pool fence, this boundary must not obscure the view of the pool so that it can be monitored
- Where a pool fence has a locking mechanism, the key is required to stay in the lock to ensure quick access
- Homes or venues with spas that are not secured by a pool fence require a lockable child safe structure in accordance with the (NSW Swimming Pools Act 1992)
- Educators are not to allow the use of their swimming pool or spa by household members or other visitors whilst Family Day Care children are signed into care at their home
- Educators are required to implement and maintain a Risk Assessment in regards to their swimming pool or spa in accordance with Regulation 97.2 of the Education and Care National Regulations. The Risk Assessment should detail the safety procedures for their home, and must include the NSW Pools Register Self-Assessment Checklist appropriate for their property
- The Educators daily safety check must include checking the risk control measures of the swimming pool or spa as outlined on the Risk Assessment
- At no time is a child in care to access, or to swim in a swimming pool or spa without the completion of an additional Risk Assessment for the activity that has been approved by CCEL, and authorised by the child's guardians

Dams and Other Water Hazards at a Family Day Care Home or Venue

- A Risk Assessment will be conducted at each Family Day Care home or venue with a dam or other water hazard prior to the provision of Family Day Care to determine the suitability and safe management for the care and education of children
- Homes or venues with dams will require a secondary boundary to prevent children's direct access to the perimeter /paddock fence around the dam ponds, wells and other water features will require a cover or guard that meets the Kidsafe Guidelines to prevent children's purposeful or accidental access to the water
- Educators are required to implement and maintain a Risk Assessment in regards to their dam or other water hazard in accordance with Regulation 97.2 of the Education and Care National Regulations. The Risk Assessment should detail the safety procedures for their home as agreed with CCEL during the initial, annual and other subsequent inspections
- Monthly inspections will be undertaken by the Approved Provider or Coordinator of any water features, water hazards or swimming pools on site

- Educators who have a water hazard on site, such as a dam must conduct Daily Water Hazard Checklists
- The Educators daily safety check must include checking the risk control measures of the dam or other water hazard as outlined in the Risk Assessment
- At no time is a child allowed access to the water or to swim in a dam or other water hazard
- Be aware of other water sources around the service and take action to prevent access to these areas, including buckets, pots, nappy pails, baths, wading pools, water tanks, water features, water troughs, fish ponds, pet water bowls
- Wading pools, sprinklers and soaker hoses may be used if children are constantly in the sight of the Educator at all times, and a Risk Assessment for the planned activity has been completed
- On the completion of play with wading pools, sprinklers and soaker hoses they must be immediately emptied and put away

Roles and Responsibilities

Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor/Coordinator

- Ensure children are adequately supervised and are protected from harm and hazards
- Provide supervision, guidance and advice to ensure adherence to this policy at all times
- Ensure Risk Assessments for Regular Outings and Excursions planned near water, or any water based activities identify a higher staff to child ratio to ensure adequate supervision
- Ensure First Aid & CPR qualifications and requirements are met at all times
- Provide families with community messages regarding safe water practices
- Keep up to date with information regarding water safety from relevant authorised bodies
- When approving Risk Assessments for pools, spas, dams and water hazards at Family Day Care Educator homes or venues access current information and advice from relevant authorised bodies
- When approving Risk Assessments for Regular Outings or Excursions to locations with water hazards access current information and advice from relevant authorised bodies
- When approving Risk Assessments for Regular Outings or Excursions at for children to swim in a swimming pool access current information and advice from relevant authorised bodies

- Monitor the maintenance and adherence to Risk Assessments in Family Day Care homes and venues with swimming pools, spas, dams and water hazards through monthly visits
- Conduct monthly inspections at any Family Day Care Home or Venue where any water features, water hazards or swimming pools are located on site
- Be aware of water sources around the Service and take action to prevent access to these areas, including buckets, wading pools, swimming pools, spas, ponds
- Wading pools, sprinklers and soaker hoses may be used if children are constantly in the sight of the Educator at all times

Educators

- Water use within the service will be supervised to ensure that the safety of children and Educators is a priority
- Embed water safety messages into the children's program
- The hygienic state of water will be assessed before it is used for children's play
- Children will be instructed on the safe use of equipment used during water-based activities
- The children's play areas will be checked each morning to ensure that no containers or pools of water are accessible to children
- If rain occurs during the day, outdoor play areas will be checked for safety prior to the children entering the outdoor environment
- Ensure water trolleys or containers for water play are filled to a safe level and emptied or covered securely after use
- Ensure water trolleys or containers are only filled while in attendance by an adult
- Ensure no child is left unattended at any time with a body of water
- On the completion of play with wading pools, sprinklers, water trolleys, buckets, water containers and soaker hoses, immediately empty onto the garden areas and put away
- Any buckets of water that may be used for cleaning or hand washing will not be left unsupervised near the children and will be emptied immediately after use
- Discourage children from drinking from the water vessels they have been playing in and with
- Ensure children do not drink any grey water
- Provide children with clean drinking water at all times

LINKS TO:

- **Education & Care Services National Law**
Section 165, 167
- **Education & Care Services National Regulations**
25(1)(c), 101, 102C, 115, 168(2)(a)(iii), 170, 171, 172, 274
- **National Quality Standards/Elements:**
2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 3.1, 4.1.1, 7.1.2, 7.1.3, 7.2.1
- **Child Safe Standards**
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

Families

- Reinforce water safety practices with children

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
- Education and Care Services National Law
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Guide to the National Quality Standard
- Implementing the Child Safe Standards: A Guide for Early Education and Outside School Hours Care Services, NSW Department of Education
- A Guide to the Child Safe Standards, NSW Office of the Children's Guardian
- ACECQA – FDC Approved Provider compliance responsibilities
- Be You
- My Time Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia
- The Early Years Learning Framework
- ECA Code of Ethics
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- NSW Kidsafe Water Safety Factsheet
- News South Wales Government – Water Safety
- Swim Australia – Water Safety in Australia

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES:

- Supervision
- Administration of First Aid
- Child-Safe Environment
- Emergency & Evacuation
- Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness
- Regular Outings & Excursions