



Sleep and Rest Policy

School Support Services 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 to all children at School Support Services, and ensuring that Adequate Supervision is maintained while children are sleeping, Resting or relaxing
- Complying with all legislative requirements, standards and current best practice.

Purpose

School Support Services is committed to:

- Providing clear guidelines for the implementation of safe Relaxation and sleep 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 School Support Services who is responsible for the direct education and care of children.

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Primary Nominee, Certified Supervisor, Educators, Staff, Students on placement, Volunteers, Parents/guardians, Children and others attending School Support Services 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.

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 Educational Leader 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)
- 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
- 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

The Nominated Supervisor/Primary Nominee 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
- Ensuring all staff and educators comply with the recommendations of SIDS and Kids and Kid safe in relation to safe sleeping practices for children
- 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

Certified Supervisors, Nominees educators and other staff are responsible for:

- Providing each child with appropriate opportunities for Relaxation and sleep according to their needs
- Complying with WorkSafe Victoria's Children's Services
- 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
- 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, Primary Nominee, as soon as is practicable, of any hazards identified in the child's Resting or sleeping environment
- Providing Adequate Supervision of all children, including during sleep, Rest and Relaxation
- Supervising children displaying symptoms of illness closely, especially when Resting or sleeping
- 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

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
- Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.