

2.4 Child Safe Environments

Applies to: All Koorana staff working in Preschools, families attending Koorana Preschools and visitors.

Purpose

To provide and maintain a safe environment for the children, families and staff at the Preschool.

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Approved by: CEO

Policy context: This policy relates to

Standards or other external requirements

National Quality Standards – Quality Area 2 – Standard 2.3, Elements 2.3.1 & 2.3.2

<http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/NQF-Resource-03-Guide-to-NQS.pdf>

Legislation or other requirements

Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010

<http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/2010/104>

Education and Care Services National Regulations [(2)(h) & (2)(a) under Regulation 168]

<http://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-regulations>

Work Health and Safety Act 2011

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2016C00887>

Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011

<http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/674>

Contractual obligations

N/A

Resources

Managing Occupational Health and Safety in Children's Services, Community Child Care, WorkCover NSW

<https://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/>

Child Safe Workshop – Activity Book, Office of the Children's Guardian

<https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/child-safe-face-to-face>

Documents related to this policy

Related policies	<p>2.5 Infection Control</p> <p>2.8 Hand Washing</p> <p>2.9 Nappy Changing and Toileting</p> <p>2.10 Chemicals</p> <p>2.11 Sun Protection</p> <p>2.12 Management of Critical Incidents</p> <p>2.13 Excursions</p> <p>6.1 Authorised Contact Persons - Collection of Children</p>
Forms, record keeping or other organisational documents	<p>Beginning and End of Day Checklist</p> <p>Outdoor Checklist</p> <p>Quarterly WHS Checklist</p> <p>Equipment Cleaning Procedure</p> <p>Children's sign in/out sheets</p> <p>Maintenance Register</p>

Definitions

"Koorana" means Koorana Child and Family Services Incorporated.

"Parents" includes a legal guardian.

"Visitors" includes students, volunteers, visiting professionals, performers and contractors.

"Staff" is a Koorana staff member working in the Preschool, e.g. Educator, Administrator or Key Worker. This may also include other Koorana staff such as Case Managers, Early Linker, Therapists, Head Office Administrators, Home and Community Based Key Workers and Koorana Management when visiting or working in the Preschool.

POLICY STATEMENT

Preschools are busy and fast paced environments. It is essential for Educators to be aware of potentially dangerous areas, actions, materials and resources that are required to operate a Preschool. When assessing safety the Preschool Educators are to consider all aspects of the indoor and outdoor environments, supervision of children, as well as the types of materials and resources that are provided for use by the children.

PRACTICES

Interactions with children

Staff are to ensure that all their interactions with children are appropriate. In order to provide a 'child safe' environment staff are also to refer to policy 4.1 – Code of Conduct as well as policies 2.13 – Child Protection, 7.3 Compliments and Complaints Handling and 2.11 Guiding Children's Behaviour.

Arrival and Departure of Children

- Staff are to ensure that daily safety checks at the Preschool have been conducted prior to the arrival of children.
- Sign in and out sheets are to be made available on a daily basis for parents to sign their child in and out.
- Staff are to ensure that they monitor the arrival of children, and are available to receive the child from the parent.
- Staff are to check the sign in and out sheets during the morning period to ensure that all children have been signed in.
- Staff are to ensure that they monitor the departure of children and are aware which children are in their care.
- Staff are to ensure that only Authorised persons collect a child enrolled in the Preschool (Policy 6.1 Authorised Contact Person/Collection of children).

Signing Children's Attendance Records

- The attendance record (sign in and out sheet) must be signed by the person who delivers the child to the Preschool and by the person who collects the child from the Preschool.
- Where a child is in attendance but not signed in by the person delivering them to the Preschool a Preschool Educator is to sign the child into the Preschool and indicate in comments section for the parents/authorised persons to co-sign the attendance.
- Where a child has been collected by an authorised person and has not been signed out of the Preschool staff are to sign the child out of the Preschool and indicate in the comments section for the parents/authorised persons to co-sign the attendance next time the child attends.

Beginning and End of day checks

Staff are to ensure that at the beginning of each day the Preschool is checked for any hazards and at the end of the day all areas of the Preschool (indoor and outdoor areas, bathrooms and storerooms) are thoroughly checked by two Preschool Educators to ensure no child remains on the premises after the Preschool is closed.

The two Preschool Educators are to sign the attendance record to indicate that the check has been completed and that all children have been signed out and collected.

Supervision and Safety of Children

- The supervision of the children is to remain the focal point of all staff throughout each day.
- Preschool Educators are to adhere, at all times, to the ratios of staff to child ratios as set out in the Education and Care Services National Regulations (1 staff to 10 children).
- These ratios are to be applied as "in Preschool" or "in visual sight" ratios.
- Therefore Preschool Educators who are on the premises but not in visual sight of the children (e.g. on a break) are not to be included in the ratios.

- Staff are to ensure that they are supervising children at all times, including during sleep time and toileting, having regard to the physical and intellectual development and to the activities in which they engage.
- Consideration must be given to the placement and display of information, pictures or paintings on windows or doors that have been designed to provide visual supervision to other areas.
- Staff are to be aware that students, volunteers and visitors must be supervised at all times by Preschool Educators.
- Key Workers are not to be included in staff to child ratios. Staff to child ratios are to be met by Preschool teams.

Indoor environments

Kitchen areas

- Children are not permitted in the kitchen area.
- Where the Preschool wishes to partake in cooking experiences with the children this is to be conducted in a clean area of the Preschool separate to the kitchen facilities.

Children's bathrooms

- Staff are to supervise children in bathrooms.
- Educators are to encourage children to wash and dry hands immediately after entering the bathroom to reduce the spread of infection and to exit the bathroom promptly to reduce the opportunity for water spills.
- When there is evidence of water on the floor Educators are to erect a hazard sign and mop up the spill.
- Whilst a professional cleaner cleans children's bathroom facilities each evening, the Preschool bathroom, including toilets, will be cleaned during the day as required.

Emergency Evacuation Exits and equipment

- Staff are to ensure that all doors are unlocked and that designated fire exits are accessible and unobstructed.
- Fire extinguishers, fire hoses and fire blankets must remain accessible at all times.
- All fire protection equipment is inspected every six months and after use.
- Staff are not to place items in front of fire equipment.
- Fire equipment will be inspected regularly.
- Smoke detectors are located in the Preschool.
- Staff will conduct emergency evacuation and lockdown procedures every term with all children. Staff will keep a record of such drills and evaluate the effectiveness of such drills. Emergency evacuation plans and procedures are to be displayed at each fire exit.

Children's Resources

- When Preschool Educators are setting up the play environment they are to inspect resources for age suitability and condition.
- Preschool Educators are to remove any damaged or broken toys from use immediately.
- Children's equipment and furniture needs to be cleaned on a regular basis and toys that are mouthed are to be cleaned after each use.

- Preschool Educators are to store children's scissors out of reach when not in use and must supervise children who are using scissors.
- Preschool Educators are to ensure that the environment is kept neat and tidy and to undertake cleaning as required, such as craft tables.

Store rooms

- Children are not permitted in storerooms and storerooms are to be kept locked when not in use.

Laundry

- Children are not permitted in the laundry.
- Any chemicals or hazardous materials within this area are to be stored in a locked cupboard or laundry needs to be kept locked if locked cupboard is not available.

Hot Water

- Hot water from the outlets accessible to children at Preschool is regulated to keep the temperature of water from the outlet below 43.5 degrees Celsius, by using a hot water thermostatic mixing valve. This will be checked annually.

Outdoor Environments

- Educators are to conduct an outdoor safety checklist each day prior to allowing the children into the outdoor environment.
- The outdoor safety check is to include assessing the safety of the perimeter fence and child proof locks on the gates (where relevant).
- The perimeter fence is to be of a height and design that prevents children from scaling or crawling under it and must inhibit or impede intruders from entering the premises.
- Gates at the Preschool are to be designed to prevent children from gaining access to or leaving premises unsupervised.
- Educators are to check the perimeter fence and assess the structure for any damage and ensure that the children are not able to climb over or crawl under the fence or gates.
- Where damage or obstructions are found Educators are to immediately take action to rectify the problem.
- Any hazards identified are to be removed from use.
- Educators are to report any need for maintenance in the maintenance register.

Water Safety

- Direct close supervision of children is to be maintained at all times when a water experience is being offered.
- Water and water play equipment is to be clean and hygienic.
- Water containers are to be emptied immediately after use.
- Ensure that equipment is stored appropriately to prevent water being collected in the equipment when raining; check the outdoor area before children arrive to ensure safety.
- All open drains are to be covered with a grill.

- Educators will regularly talk to children about the dangers of water and water hazards and provide parents and guardians with information related to the dangers.

Safe sleeping arrangements

- Preschool Educators will ensure that each child has access to comfortable and appropriate bedding where required.
- Children may use additional bedding, such as a pillow and blanket.
- Preschool Educators will ensure that they follow parental request for sleeping arrangements, unless Preschool Educators feel that the request is putting a child at potential risk for sleeping accidents.
- Where multiple beds are required, beds will be set up in a head to toe manner to reduce cross infection and to allow children undisturbed rest time.
- Beds will be set up as to allow children and staff easy access between the beds.
- Where it is deemed safe and appropriate by Educators, Preschool Educators will respect children's preferences for sleeping arrangements, e.g. allowing a child to sleep on a sofa.

Cleaning

- All Preschool Educators are to take equal share in the cleaning responsibilities required during the day. It is the responsibility of all staff to be aware of the cleaning duties.
- Sandpits are covered overnight to prevent cats from excreting in the sand. Sand will be replaced annually and the sandpit will otherwise be cleaned as necessary.

Craft Preparation Facilities

- The Preschool has an area which includes a sink and bench top for the preparation of craft activities, which is located out of the Preschool room and away from food preparation areas.
- Paints and glues used for craft are placed in a cupboard inaccessible to children
- Plastic bags are placed out of reach of the children.

Accident Prevention

Staff will always work to prevent accidents within the Preschools through:

- Quarterly WHS audits.
- Risk Assessment.
- Following all safety procedures.

Animals

- A number of infectious diseases may be caught from pets. Attention to hand washing and other simple measures can minimise this risk. The decision to have pets must be made in consultation with staff, parents and the Service Operations Manager Inner West.
- Before bringing a pet into the Preschool, the Preschool Leader must consider allergic reactions some children may have to animal hair and who is to be responsible for the care of the pet on weekends and during the annual close down period. The following rules must be followed if a pet is to be kept at the Preschool:
 - Hands must be washed after any contact with the animals.
 - Pets must be kept away from food and kitchen areas.

- Gloves should be worn when cleaning up dog excreta.
- Pets should be immunised and wormed as recommended.
- An ill pet must receive immediate veterinarian attention.
- Ill pets should be isolated from contact with people.
- Enclosures should be kept clean at all times.

Plants and Trees

- Preschools must be checked where required for poisonous plants and/or dangerous trees by a professional.
- Poisonous plants or dangerous trees are to be immediately removed.
- Plants that can lead to injury or severe discomfort (for example, because of sharp prickles or prominent thorns) must be identified and removed from the premises.

Photographs

- Parents give or deny permission for children to be photographed by Koorana staff using Koorana devices on their child's enrolment form.
- Students and visitors are permitted to take photos of children on their own devices if parents have signed a permission form that clearly states the purpose of why photos are being taken and that photos will only be used for the purpose specified in the permission form.
- Parents are permitted to take photographs of their own children only. However, parents need to be mindful of the impact this may have on the operation of the Preschool and the impression this may give to other parents. Therefore parents may be asked at times to limit photo taking of their own children.