

Physical Environment Policy

The physical environment can contribute to children's wellbeing, happiness, creativity as well as promoting the development of independence. It can contribute to and make visible the quality of children's learning and involvement in experiences. The choices made in an education and care service about resources, materials, spaces, layout, air and light in combination with access to a range of experiences in the indoor and outdoor areas, have a direct impact on the quality of learning opportunities available to children.

National Quality Standard (NQS)

| Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety | | |
|--|--|---|
| 2.1 | Health | Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted |
| 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 |
| 2.1.2 | Health practices and procedures | Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented. |
| 2.1.3 | Healthy Lifestyles | Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child |
| 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 |
| 2.2.2 | Incident and emergency management | Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented. |

| Quality Area 3: Physical Environment | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|--|
| 3.1.1 | Fit for Purpose | Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fitting are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child. |
| 3.1.2 | Upkeep | Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained. |



Education and Care Services National Regulations

| Children (Education and Care Services) National Law NSW | |
|---|---|
| 73 | Educational programs |
| 74 | Documenting of child assessments or evaluations for delivery of educational program |
| 75 | Information about the educational program to be kept available |
| 76 | Information about educational program to be given to parents |
| 82 | Tobacco, drug and alcohol -free environment |
| 86 | Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness |
| 99 | Children leaving the education and care service premises |
| 102 | Authorisation for excursions |
| 103 | Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair |
| 104 | Fencing and security |
| 105 | Furniture, materials and equipment |
| 106 | Laundry and hygiene facilities |
| 107 | Space requirements—indoor |
| 108 | Space requirements—outdoor space |
| 109 | Toilet and hygiene facilities |
| 110 | Ventilation and natural light |
| 111 | Administrative space |
| 112 | Nappy change facilities |
| 113 | Outdoor space—natural environment |
| 114 | Outdoor space—shade |
| 115 | Premises designed to facilitate supervision |
| 116 | Assessments of family day care residences and approved family day care venues |
| 117 | Glass (additional requirement for family day care) |
| 156 | Relationships in groups |
| 168 | Education and care service must have policies and procedures |
| 171 | Policies and procedures to be kept available |

Related Policies

Educational Program Policy

Work Health and Safety Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Sleep and Rest Policy

Sun Safety Policy

Water Safety Policy



PURPOSE

Our Service will ensure the environment is safe, clean and well maintained for children, families, educators and visitors. Children's awareness of the environment and sustainable practice will be supported through daily practices, resources and interactions. The physical environment will support children's learning, safety, levels of engagement and access to positive experiences and inclusive relationships.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff and management of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our Service is committed to providing an environment that promotes safety and enhances children's learning and development by:

Choosing appropriate resources and equipment

Appropriately sized furniture and equipment will be provided in both the indoor and outdoor environment for the age ranges represented in the service.

- The Approved Provider will be responsible for any large purchases of equipment. The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for the daily running purchases of the service.
- Educators will provide ideas for equipment and materials purchase based on the needs and interests of their classroom.
- Educators will complete a log for the Nominated Supervisor of equipment that needs maintenance on a prioritised basis.
- The Service will actively seek the input of parents/guardians regarding current interests of their children so as to purchase appropriate toys and equipment.
- Resources and equipment will be chosen to reflect the cultural diversity of the Service's community and the cultural diversity of contemporary Australia, including the incorporation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
- Children will be provided with resources and equipment that encourages appropriate challenges and risk taking in accordance with children's individual developmental level.
- The environment will be organised to ensure safety and minimal disruption for children whilst playing.
- Specific equipment requirements of children with additional needs will be catered for to ensure an inclusive environment.
- Climbing equipment will be set up in a safe way and compliant with Australian Safety Standards. For example, incorporating soft fall materials wherever climbing equipment is set up.
- Frequent risk assessments of the indoor and outdoor environment will be conducted in order to minimize risk and hazards.



- An environment will be provided that allows different types of play to occur both in the indoor and outdoor areas (e.g. quiet play areas and loud play areas).
- A natural environment for children to explore and experience will be provided which may include plants, trees, gardens, rock, mud and/or water.
- Educators will participate in on-going professional development in order to enhance children's learning and ensuring a safe and educational environment.
- Our Service will work within our Sun Safety policies and procedures, providing adequate shade for children in accordance with the recommendations of relevant authorities.
- An environment that ensures children are appropriately supervised at all times will be provided.
- All required fencing will be maintained in good condition and is compliant with current regulations.
- A variety of indoor and outdoor experiences will be provided, catering for children's interests and abilities.
- Children will be supported to access appropriate furniture, resources, materials, toys and equipment. These resources will be adequate in number for the amount of children attending our Service and be developmentally appropriate.
- A developmentally appropriate environment will be provided where children can explore, solve problems, create, construct and engage in critical thinking.
- An environment will be provided that permits children to participate in activities independently or in small groups, and access resources autonomously.
- The environment will incorporate commercial, natural, recycled, homemade and real resources that can be used in a variety of ways to encourage children's learning and creativity.
- Sufficient and accessible hand-washing, toileting, eating and sleeping facilities will be available.
- Toileting and hand-washing facilities are accessible from both the indoor and outdoor environments.
- Adequate and appropriate hygienic facilities for nappy changing are provided, which are soundly constructed ensuring children's safety.
- Natural and artificial lighting, appropriate ventilation, heating and cooling and fresh air will be incorporated into the building.
- Appropriate areas for food preparation are provided.
- A separate indoor space for children who are under two years of age is available.
- An area for managerial purposes, consultation with children's parents and for private conversations to occur is available.
- Power points not in use have safety caps, all double adaptors and power-boards are out of reach of children and all electrical cords are secured and not dangling.
- Educators discuss the safety characteristics of using toys and equipment with children.
- Where appropriate children are involved in setting classroom guidelines.
- Families are provided with the latest safety information on items such as cots, highchairs, car seats, etc.
- A maintenance log and register of toys and equipment is maintained.
- All equipment, including resources, and equipment meets relevant Australian Standards and educators are trained in correct maintenance and assembly.



Laundering of Soiled Items

- Soiled clothing will be returned to a child's home for laundering. Educators will remove soiled content and placed into a plastic bag. Items will be stored near child's bag.

Rearranging, Adding or Removing Furniture

- The Room Leader will keep a record in their diary of any changes that is made to the physical environment, such as rearranging of rooms etc. to show continuous improvement.
- The Room Leader will document the links between the arrangements and choice of resources and equipment and the children's learning in the program.

The Sleep/Rest Environment

- All cots must meet the mandatory Australian Standard for Cots – (AS/NZS 2172)
- Mattresses should be in good condition – clean, firm and flat and fit the cot base with no more than 20mm gap between the mattress sides and ends.
- Cots and beds will be positioned to encourage a calm and relaxing environment. There will be a minimum of 300mm between each cot to reduce the possibility of cross infection.
- Cots and beds will be checked regularly to ensure all bolts and fittings are secure and safe.
- Beds will be located in an area that is easy to access for all educators and other staff
- Beds will be stored in a dry area.
- Educators will ensure to use correct manual handling techniques when moving the beds.
- Beds should not be placed on high shelves or in unstable or difficult to reach stacks.
- Light bedding will be used for cots and beds.
- Checks will be made to identify any hazards to ensure a safe environment
- Hanging cords, strings from blinds, curtains or electrical devices will be away from cots and mattresses.

Ongoing Maintenance

- The Service will continuously reflect on its environment and put in place a plan to ensure that the environment continuously reflects our ideology of providing an environment that is safe, stimulating and engaging for all who interact within it.
- The Nominated Supervisor will document required maintenance in a maintenance plan/log for the Service as required. Repairs and maintenance will be conducted throughout the year according to priority including, hazard removal, safety precautions and any relevant policies.
- The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor will also ensure that the Service and its grounds comply with Local Government and BCA regulations in regards to fire-fighting requirements, ventilation, natural and artificial lighting and safety glass.



Grouping of Children

- Our Service groups the children in accordance to their age and/or developmental stage. Within that space, there are a variety of different learning areas and opportunities for play experiences.
- Each age group has different legally required adult to child ratios, which are adhered to at all times in both the indoor and outdoor environment.
- Our indoor and outdoor environment provides opportunities for developmentally appropriate planned experiences, intentional teaching, and spontaneous play throughout the day.

Safety Checks

A daily inspection of the premises will be undertaken before children begin to arrive. This inspection will include the:

- Service perimeters
- Fences/Fence Line
- Gates
- Paths
- Buildings
- All rooms accessible by children
- Fixed equipment
- Sand Pit
- Mud Pit

This must be done in order to identify any dangerous objects in the grounds ranging from sharps to poisonous or dangerous plants and animals.

In the event of a sharp object being found (for example a syringe) educators will notify the Nominated Supervisor who will contact the local police station for advice on disposal.

Similarly, trees in the grounds must be checked regularly for overhanging, dead or dangerous looking branches as well as check for any infestations.

Non-fixed play equipment in the Service grounds can be no more than one metre high and must be supervised at all times by an Educator.

The Service will have regular pest inspections carried out by an accredited pest control company. Documentation of these inspections will be kept and any further recommended treatments as a result of the findings from the pest control check will be carried out in a timely manner.

The Indoor and Outdoor Daily Safety Checklists will be used as the procedure to conduct these safety checks. A record of these will be kept by the service. The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor will make the appropriate arrangements to have repairs carried out as soon as possible.



Cleaning of Buildings, Premises, Furniture and Equipment

General Cleaning

- The Service will use structured cleaning schedules to ensure that all cleaning is carried out regularly and thoroughly.
- Educators will clean the service at the end of each day and throughout the day as needed.
- Accidents and spills will be cleaned up as quickly as possible to ensure that the service always maintains a high level of cleanliness and hygiene.

When purchasing, storing and/or using any dangerous chemicals, substances, medicines or equipment, our service will:

- Adhere at all times to manufacturer's advice and instructions when using products to clean furniture and equipment at the service.
- Store all dangerous chemicals, substances and medicines in their original containers provided by the manufacturer. All labels and/or use by dates should be kept intact at all times.
- Containers should be disposed of correctly following local council guidelines, and not reused under any circumstances.
- All dangerous chemicals, substances and equipment must be stored in a locked place or facility that is labelled, secure and inaccessible to children. These materials may include, but are not limited to, all cleaning materials, detergents, poisonous or dangerous substances, dangerous tools and equipment including those with sharp and razor edges and toiletries.
- Educators should follow the instructions of manufacturers, particularly of any product, which may need to be stored in a refrigerated environment pursuant to the aforementioned directives.
- Any substances that need to be refrigerated must be stored in a labelled, child resistant container, preferably in a separate compartment or in a part of the refrigerator inaccessible to children.
- All hazardous chemicals must be supplied with a **Safety Data Sheet** (SDS) formerly called a Material Data Safety Sheet. Our Service will adhere to the manufacturer's instructions for use, storage, and first aid instructions recorded on the SDS.
- Seek medical advice immediately if poisoning or potentially hazardous ingestion, inhaled, skin or eye exposure has occurred, or call the Poisons Information Line on **13 11 26**, or call an Ambulance on **000**.
- In the case of any child or educator becoming injured by a chemical, substance or equipment, the Service will initiate our emergency, medical and first aid procedures, notify the appropriate authority that administers workplace health and safety immediately and any other person or authority as required by regulations or guidelines.



- In any major emergency involving a hazardous chemical or equipment, a hazardous gas or a fire or explosion hazard, call the emergency services, dial 000 and notify the appropriate authority that administers workplace health and safety and any other person or authority as required by regulations or guidelines.
- The Poison Safety Checklist will be used in order to ensure we are consistently meeting requirements.

Children's bathroom

- Supervision in the bathroom is important when in use.
- Educators and other staff will encourage children to follow hygiene practices.
- Bathrooms will be cleaned at least twice a day and at other times as required
- Bathroom floors will be mopped at least daily.
- Signage is to be used after mopping to ensure that the child/children, educators and other staff and families are warned that the floor is wet.
- Educators are to ensure they follow the bathroom and toilet cleaning procedure.

Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment

- Our Service ensures that electrical equipment is regularly inspected and tested by an accredited person if the electrical equipment is supplied with electricity through an electrical socket and used in conditions where it could be damaged, including exposure to moisture, heat, vibration, mechanical damage, corrosive chemicals or dust.
- A record of all electrical testing and tagging, must be attached and kept until the equipment is next tested or disposed of and must specify:
 - a) The name of the tester
 - b) The date and outcome of the testing.
 - c) The date on which the next testing must be carried out.

Maintenance of Fire Equipment

- All fire equipment at our Service will be maintained as per the legal standards.
- External agencies will be employed to assist the service with this maintenance if no currently employed staff or educators are qualified to complete the maintenance checks.



Sun Protection

Our Service implements the NSW Sun Smart Program to ensure children's health and safety is maintained at all times whilst at the service. We will use the Sun Smart UV Index tool to ensure we are protecting children and staff from UV radiation. Educators will document the UV rating each day to ensure the safety of children, staff and Educators. The UV Index will be used when:

- Planning or participating in outdoor activities
- Undertaking recreational activities – for example munch and move

Water Safety

- At all times children near water are closely supervised. A child will never be left unattended near any water.
- All wading pools/water troughs etc. will be immediately emptied after every use: storage will prevent the collection of water e.g. upright/inverted. The grounds will also be checked after rain or watering and water that has collected in holes or containers will be emptied/removed.
- Wading/water troughs are hygienically cleaned, disinfected and chlorinated appropriately:
 - On a daily basis remove leaves and debris, hose away surface dirt and scrub inside with disinfectant.
 - Wash away disinfectant before filling trough.

Service Closure

- Two Educators must close the Service each night
- Both Educators are to check the entire premises to ensure that all children and families have departed by checking sign in and out sheets for all rooms AND physically checking all rooms and areas.
- Educators are to follow Service-closing procedures each night.
- In the case where a parent has omitted to sign their child out, and the educators did not witness the child leave the service, the educators must take every step to get in contact with the parent to ensure the child has safely left the Service.
- If unable to contact the family, the educators are to contact other educators present on that day for confirmation that the child has been collected. The Nominated Supervisor is to then be notified before leaving the Service.
- Individuals visiting our Service must also sign in when they arrive at the Service, and sign out when they leave.
- Details of absences during the day must also be recorded

Source

- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014)
- Cancer Council NSW: <https://www.cancercouncil.com.au>
- Cancer Council Australia: <https://www.cancer.org.au>
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).
- Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2020).
- National Health and Medical Research Council. (2013). Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services.
- Red nose Safe environment <https://rednose.org.au/section/safe-environment>
- Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Review

| Policy Reviewed | Modifications | Next Review Date |
|-----------------|---|------------------|
| February 2017 | Minor adjustments made with the addition to more information about the UV Rating, the importance of checking the rating prior to going outdoors to ensure protection and the use of sunscreen on babies. | February 2018 |
| October 2017 | Updated references to comply with the revised National Quality Standard | February 2018 |
| February 2018 | Minor adjustment to the wording of the opening paragraph Added 'related policy' section Minor amendments to terminology throughout the document to improve interpretation and compliance | February 2019 |
| February 2019 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changed all wording stating 'should' to 'will' or similar language to imply these items are being done. - Introductory statement and purpose modified. - Grammar, punctuations and spelling edited. - Additional information added to points. - Duplicated information deleted. | February 2020 |



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|---------------|--|---------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sources/references checked for currency, updated, and alphabetised. | |
| February 2020 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Minor changes to grammar, content changed- Sources checked for currency | February 2021 |

Signature of Director: _____

Busy Kids Child Care