



RELAXATION AND SLEEP POLICY

Best Practice – Quality Area 2

PURPOSE

This policy will provide clear guidelines for the implementation of safe relaxation and sleep practices that meet the individual needs of children attending Black Hill Kindergarten.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Black Hill Kindergarten 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 (refer to *Definitions*) to all children at Black Hill Kindergarten and ensuring that adequate supervision (refer to *Definitions*) is maintained while children are sleeping, resting or relaxing
- complying with all legislative requirements, standards and current best practice, including recommendations by SIDS and Kids and Kidsafe (refer to *Sources*).

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Black Hill Kindergarten.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

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, safe and comfortable when resting or sleeping and to maintain adequate supervision.

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. Development 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
- consider the longer instructional session of 7.5 hours
- 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 to standards in relation to equipment, such as blankets and mattresses (refer to *Sources*).

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Act 2012*
- *Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Regulations 2012*
- Australian/New Zealand Standard – Safety Requirements (AS/NZS 2172:2010)
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*: Section 167
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulation 81
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
 - Standard 2.1: Each child's health needs are supported
 - Element 2.1.2: Each child's comfort is provided for and there are appropriate opportunities to meet each child's needs for sleep, rest and relaxation
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*

DEFINITIONS

Policy Statement

Some original approved, revised, nominated supervisor, regulatory authority, etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Adequate supervision: (In relation to this policy) **supervision** entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child

ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used.

Adequate supervision refers to **constant, active and diligent supervision** of every child at the service. Adequate supervision requires that educators **are always in a position to observe** each child, respond to individual needs, and immediately intervene if necessary. Variables affecting supervision levels include:

- number, age and abilities of children
- number and positioning of educators
- current activity of each child
- areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility)
- developmental profile of each child and of the group of children
- experience, knowledge and skill of each educator
- need for educators to **move between areas** (effective communication strategies).

Duty of care: A common law concept that refers to the responsibilities of organisations to provide people with an adequate level of protection against harm and all reasonable foreseeable risk of injury.

Relaxation/rest: A period of inactivity, solitude, calmness or tranquillity.

SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome): The unexpected and unexplained death of an infant, usually occurring during sleep.

SIDS and Kids: The National SIDS Council of Australia, dedicated to eliminating SIDS and providing support for bereaved families. SIDS and Kids is considered to be the national authority on safe sleeping practices for infants and children. A branch of SIDS and Kids is located in each state and territory, and can provide resources and assistance (refer to *Sources*).

Sources and related policies

Sources

www.saiglobal.com

Childcare and Children's Health, vol 14, no 2, June 2011, Sleep and Oral Health.

Publication of the Centre for Community Child Health:

www.rch.org.au/emplibrary/ccch/CCH_Vol_14_No_2_Sleep_and_Oral_Health.pdf

- *Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* (EYLF): www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Policy_Agenda/Quality/Pages/EarlyYearsLearningFramework.aspx#key_documents
- Kidsafe Fact Sheets at www.kidsafevic.com.au/resources:
 - *Safe Sleeping for toddlers*
 - *Ages and Stages* fact sheet series ('Sleeping' section)
- SIDS and Kids, Safe Sleeping Program: www.sidsandkidsvic.org/safe-sleeping-education
- Product safety: a guide for businesses and legal practitioners: www.consumer.vic.gov.au/businesses/fair-trading/product-safety

- WorkSafe Victoria, *Children’s services – occupational health and safety compliance kit*: www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/forms-and-publications/forms-and-publications/childrens-services-occupational-health-and-safety-compliance-kit
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)*: www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/learning/veylframework.pdf

Service policies

- *Child Safe Environment Policy*
- *Hygiene Policy*
- *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*
- *Interactions with Children Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- *Supervision of Children Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider 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 (Regulation 81(1))
- ensuring parents/guardians are consulted about appropriate relaxation and sleep practices for their child
- protecting children from hazards and harm (Section 167)
- consulting with staff in relation to OHS issues when purchasing new equipment for the service
- ensuring compliance with WorkSafe Victoria’s *Children’s services – occupational health and safety compliance kit* (refer to *Sources*)
- ensuring compliance with the recommendations of SIDS and Kids and Kidsafe in relation to safe sleeping practices for children (refer to *Sources*)
- ensuring adequate **supervision of children at the service at all times, including during relaxation and sleep**
- ensuring that rooms used for sleep and relaxation are well ventilated
- ensuring that there is adequate space to store bedding in a hygienic manner (refer to *Hygiene Policy*).

The Nominated Supervisor 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 (Regulation 81(2))
- 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 (Section 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 – occupational health and safety compliance kit* (refer to *Sources*)
- ensuring all staff and educators comply with the recommendations of SIDS and Kids and Kidsafe in relation to safe sleeping practices for children (refer to *Sources*)
- 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 (refer to *Hygiene Policy*).

Certified Supervisors, educators and other staff are responsible for:

- providing each child with appropriate opportunities for relaxation and sleep according to their needs
- complying with the recommendations of SIDS and Kids and Kidsafe in relation to safe sleeping practices for children (refer to *Sources*)
- complying with WorkSafe Victoria's *Children's services – occupational health and safety compliance kit* (refer to *Sources*)
- 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 (refer to *Interactions with Children Policy*)
- providing a range of opportunities for relaxation throughout the day
- informing the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider, as soon as is practicable, of any hazards identified in the child's resting or sleeping environment
- ensuring that any hanging cords, mobiles, curtains and blinds are inaccessible to children who are resting or sleeping
- providing adequate supervision (refer to *Definitions*) of all children, including during sleep, rest and relaxation
- supervising children displaying symptoms of illness closely, especially when resting or sleeping (refer to *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*)
- ensuring that artificial heating, **such as heat bags and hot-water bottles, is not used** to provide warmth
- providing information to families about the service's relaxation and sleep practices
- encouraging children's independence, and assisting children with dressing as needed.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- discussing their child's relaxation and sleep requirements and practices prior to commencing at the service, and 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
- providing a written medical report if their baby/child is not to be placed on their back during sleep. Parents/guardians must communicate alternative resting practices to staff.

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

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

AUTHORISATION

Policy Statement

This policy was adopted by Black Hill Kindergarten on May 2018

REVIEW DATE: February 2020