



P.O. Box 1050, Woden, ACT, 2606  
 Ph: 6281 3121  
 Email: wodenecc@tpg.com.au

## SAFE SLEEP AND REST TIMES POLICY

### QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

#### 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
2.2	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 Area3: 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

#### Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law Act 2010	
Section 165	Offense to inadequately supervise children
Section 167	Offense relating to protection of children from harm and hazard
81	Sleep and Rest
82	Tobacco, drug and alcohol-free environment
87	Incident, injury, trauma and illness record
103	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
105	Furniture, materials and equipment
107	Space requirements-indoor space
110	Ventilation and natural light
115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be available
172	Notification of change to policies
176	Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority

## Scope

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, volunteers and visitors of the Centre.

## Goals

'Children have different sleep, rest and relaxation needs. Children of the same age can have different sleep patterns that Nominated Supervisors and educators need to consider within the Service. As per Standard 2.1 (Element 2.1.1) of the National Quality Standard, each child's comfort must be provided for and there must be appropriate opportunities to meet each child's sleep, rest and relaxation needs.' (ACECQA).

WECC will ensure that all children have appropriate opportunities to sleep, rest and relax in accordance with their individual needs. WECC will provide beds and cots that comply with Australian Standards. The risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) will be minimised by following practices and guidelines set out by health authorities.

If a family's beliefs and requests are in conflict with current recommended evidence-based guidelines, WECC will need to determine if there are exceptional circumstances that allow for alternative practices. WECC will only approve an alternative practice if the service is provided with written advice from and the contact details of a registered medical practitioner accompanied by a risk assessment and risk minimisation plan for individual children. We have a duty of care to ensure children are provided with a high level of safety when sleeping and resting and every reasonable precaution is taken to protect them from harm and hazard. In meeting the Centre's duty of care, it is a requirement that all educators implement and adhere to this policy to ensure we respect and cater for each child's specific needs.

## Strategies

The Nominated Supervisor or Director and Educational Leader will:

- "take reasonable steps to ensure that the needs for sleep and rest of children being educated and cared for by (WECC) are met, having regard to the ages, development stages and individual needs of the children" (Regulation 81)
- ensure there is an adequate number of cots available to children that meet Australian Standard AS/NZS 2172 (all cots sold in Australia must meet the current mandatory Australian Standard for cots (AS/NZS 2172), and should carry a label to indicate this)
- ensure there is an adequate supply of bedding available
- ensure sleep and rest environments are safe and free from hazards
- ensure that areas for sleep and rest are well ventilated and have natural lighting
- ensure that supervision windows are kept clear to ensure safe supervision of sleeping children
- maintain up to date knowledge regarding safe sleeping practices and communicate this information to educators and families
- ensure that sleeping infants are closely monitored and that all sleeping children are within hearing range and observed. This involves checking/inspecting sleeping children at regular intervals, and ensuring they are always within sight and hearing distance so that a child's breathing and the colour of their skin can be assessed
- negotiate sleep and rest routines and practices with families to reach agreement on how these occur for each child at the Centre
- ensure they receive information and training to fulfil their role effectively, including being made aware of the sleep and rest policies, their responsibilities in implementing these, and any changes that are made over time

- ensure the child's safety is always the first priority
- ensure children who are sleeping or resting have their face uncovered at all times
- ensure the sleep and rest environment is free from cigarette or tobacco smoke

Educators will:

- be sensitive to each child's needs so that sleep and rest times are a positive experience
- consult with families about children's sleep and rest needs
- respect family preferences regarding sleep and rest and consider these daily; while ensuring children feel safe and secure in the environment. Conversations with families may be necessary to remind families that children will neither be forced to sleep nor prevented from sleeping
- record sleep and rest patterns daily for families
- communicate with families about their child's sleeping or rest times and WECC's policy regarding sleep and rest times
- ensure that bedding/mattresses are clean and in good repair
  - beds and mattresses will be wiped over with warm water and neutral detergent between each change in use or if soiled
  - bed linen is for use by an individual child and will be washed at least weekly and/or as needed
- arrange children's beds and cots to allow easy access for children and educators
- creating a relaxing atmosphere for resting children by playing relaxation music, reading stories, cultural reflection, turning off the lights and ensuring children are comfortably clothed
  - encourage children to dress appropriately for the room temperature when resting or sleeping. Lighter clothing is preferable, with children encouraged to remove shoes, jumpers, jackets and bulky clothing. The room temperature will be considered to ensure maximum comfort for the children
  - if sleeping outdoors, consideration should be given to the temperature and weather. Educators will ensure all children are dressed appropriately for the weather, lighter clothing is preferable, with children encouraged to remove shoes, jumpers, jackets and bulky clothing; that they are protected from the elements, and that their bedding is reflective of the weather so as to ensure a positive sleep/rest environment
- sit near resting children and support them by encouraging them to relax and listen to the music or stories. Children may not need help to relax their bodies; by providing a quiet, tranquil environment, children will choose to sleep if their body needs it
- encourage children to rest their bodies and minds for 30-40 minutes. If children are awake after this time, they will be provided with quiet activities for the duration of rest time
- maintain adequate supervision and maintain educator ratios throughout the rest period
- assess each child's circumstances and current health to determine whether higher supervision level and checks may be required
- ensure children's cots and beds are positioned to encourage a calm and relaxing environment, and be separated by a minimum of 30cm and positioned head to toe to reduce the possibility of cross infection
- monitor the room temperature to ensure maximum comfort for the children
- ensure that each child's comfort is provided for
- ensure there are appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation
- ensure that children who do not wish to sleep are provided with alternative activities and experiences, while those children who do wish to sleep are allowed to do so without being disrupted. If a child requests a rest, or if they are showing clear signs of tiredness, regardless of the times of day, there should be a comfortable, safe area available for them to rest (if required). It is important that opportunities for rest and relaxation, as well as sleep, are provided
- respond to children's individual cues for sleep (yawning, rubbing eyes, disengagement from activities, crying, etc.)
- acknowledge children's emotions, feeling and fears
- develop positive relationships with children to assist in settling children confidently when sleeping and resting

- beds will be located in a dry area that is easy for all educators and other staff to access. Beds should not be placed on high shelves or in unstable or difficult to reach stacks
- educators should use correct handling techniques when moving beds, to ensure this is done in a safe manner

### *Children in cots*

Educators will:

- give bottle-fed children their bottles before putting them to bed. Children will not be put in cots or in beds with bottles as per the Centre's *Dental Health* policy
- observe children at 15-minute intervals while they sleep in the cot rooms. Educators must go into the cot room and physically see each child breathing; the educator will then officially record this on the Centre app, OWNA
- cot rooms will be maintained at an appropriate temperature
- make up cots to comply with SIDS safe sleeping guidelines<sup>1</sup>
- encourage the use of sleeping bags for babies. If they have a fitted neck and armholes there is no risk of the child's face being covered
- securely lock cot sides into place to ensure children's safety
- be aware of manual handling practices when lifting babies in and out of cots
- participate in staff development about safe sleeping practices. WECC will access the SIDS and Kids resource kit and provide information to families on safe sleeping practices
- understand that bassinets, hammocks and prams/strollers do not carry safety codes for sleep. Babies should not be left in a bassinet, hammock or pram/stroller to sleep, as these are not safe substitutes for a cot
- ensure mattresses are kept in good condition; they should be clean, firm and flat, and fit with the cot base with not more than a 20mm gap between the mattress sides and ends. A firm sleep surface that is compliant with the new AS/NZS Voluntary Standard (AS/NZS 8811.1: 2013 Methods of testing infant products – Sleep surfaces – test for firmness) should be used
- not elevate or tilt mattress
- remove any plastic packaging from mattresses
- ensure waterproof mattress protectors are strong, not torn and a tight fit
- use firm, clean and well-fitting mattresses in portable cots
- remove pillows, doonas, loose bedding or fabric, lamb's wool, bumpers and soft toys from cots
- cots should be regularly checked to ensure all bolts and fittings are secure and safe

### *Babies and Toddlers*

- babies should be placed on their back to sleep when first being settled. Once a baby has been observed to repeatedly roll from back to front and back again on their own, they can be left to find their own preferred sleep or rest position (this is usually around 5-6 months of age). Babies aged younger than 5-6 months, and who have not been observed to repeatedly roll from back to front to back again on their own, should be re-positioned onto their back when they roll onto their front or side
- if a medical condition exists that prevents a baby from being placed on their back, the alternative practice should be confirmed in writing with the service, by the child's medical practitioner
- babies over four months of age can generally turn over in a cot. When a baby is placed to sleep, educators should check that any bedding is tucked in securely and is not loose. Babies of this age may be placed in a safe baby sleeping bag (i.e. with fitted neck and arm holes, but no hood). At no time should a baby's face or head be covered (i.e. with linen). To prevent a baby from wriggling down under bed linen, they should be positioned with their feet at the bottom of the cot

---

<sup>1</sup> The guidelines can be viewed at <http://www.sidsandkids.org/safe-sleeping/>

- if a baby is wrapped when sleeping, consider the baby's stage of development. Leave their arms free once the startle reflex disappears at around three months of age, and discontinue the use of a wrap when the baby can roll from back to tummy to back again (usually four to six months of age). Use only lightweight wraps such as cotton or muslin
- if being used, a dummy should be offered for all sleep periods. Dummy use should be phased out by the end of the first year of a baby's life, but in conjunction with the families' wishes. If a dummy falls out of a baby's mouth during sleep, it should not be re-inserted
- babies or young children should not be moved out of a cot into a bed too early; they should not be kept in a cot for too long. When a young child is observed attempting to climb out of a cot, and looking like they might succeed, it is time to move them out of a cot. This usually occurs when a toddler is between 2 and 3 ½ years of age, but could be as early as 18 months

## Guidelines for Children's Sleep

### Birth to three months

- Newborns generally wake frequently, every one to three hours, needing a feed and attention.
- Sleeps needs change quickly as they grow. Many babies sleep 14-20 hours a day in the first weeks
- By six weeks, 25 per cent of babies are sleeping a straight five-hour stretch, not necessarily at night.
- By three months, most babies have longer times awake during the day and longer sleep times at night. At three months, babies enter a deep sleep more quickly than when they were younger

### Three to six months

- Some babies have two or three longish sleeps during the day, while other just have short naps
- Some may sleep 12 hours without interruption; few manage eight hours. However, remember that five hours is considered a night's sleep
- Many wake fairly regularly, usually for food

### Six months to three years

- Some babies and toddlers sleep through the night
- Many still wake, often more than once, at night
- At two-three years, 41 per cent of young children are still waking once or twice a night, with a few waking more often

### Three to six years

- A wide range of sleep patterns is normal. If your preschool child is still waking at night, you are not alone!
- Most children need about 10-12 hours of sleep at night
- Bedtimes vary a lot. Some children go to bed at 6:30pm; others stay up until 9:30pm or later. Often those who go to bed later wake up later
- Young children may still need a daytime sleep as well, but by preschool age only a few are still having this

## Evaluation

Communication with families is maintained to ensure children's sleep and rest needs can be best met. Safe sleeping practices are followed to minimise the risk of harm to children.

## Related policies /documents

- *Cleaning and maintaining the environment*
- *Clothing and footwear*

- *Dental health*
- *Enrolment and orientation*
- *Family participation and communication*
- *Interactions with children*

## Statutory legislation and considerations

- Guidelines for SIDS and Kids Safe Sleeping in Childcare Facilities
- Australian Consumer Law 2011 – Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
- The Work Health and Safety Act 2011 & The Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011

## Sources and references

- ECA Code of Ethics
- Early Childhood Australia  
[www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/parent-recources/sleeping/](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/parent-recources/sleeping/)
- Guide to the National Quality Standards
- Guidelines for SIDS and Kids Safe Sleeping in Childcare Facilities
- SIDS & Kids Safe Sleeping Kit – [www.sidsandkids.org](http://www.sidsandkids.org)
- Standards Australia – [www.standards.org.au](http://www.standards.org.au)
- The Children's Hospital at Westmead – Safety factsheet – Cots and Cot Mattresses – <http://kidshealth.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/sites/http://kidshealth.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/files/safetyfactsheets/cots-and-cot-mattresses.pdf>
- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) – [www.accc.gov.au](http://www.accc.gov.au) – Cot Safety PDF
- Australian Consumer Law 2011 – Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
- The NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011 & the NSW Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011
- Safe sleep and rest practices from October 2017 (ACECQA)
- Revised National Quality Standards
- Red Nose – <http://rednose.com.au/section/safe-practices>

<b>Policy Reviewed</b>	<b>September 2022</b>	<b>Ratified Date</b>	<b>Next Review Date</b>
<b>Modifications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addition to Education and care services national regulations</li> <li>• Addition of ACECQA statement to 'Goals'</li> <li>• Reviewed and updated sources and references</li> <li>• Format change</li> <li>• Addition of Modifications table</li> <li>• Minor wording edits</li> </ul>	Sept 22	Sept 25
<b>Policy Reviewed</b>	<b>August 2016</b>	<b>Ratified Date</b>	<b>Next Review Date</b>
<b>Modifications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing policy</li> </ul>	Aug 2016	Aug 2018
<b>Policy Reviewed</b>	<b>August 2013</b>	<b>Ratified Date</b>	<b>Next Review Date</b>
<b>Modifications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing policy</li> </ul>	Aug 2013	Aug 2015

## Authorisation

Paul Halloran  
President  
2021-22 WECC Management Committee

