

COMFORTABLE SLEEP AND REST FOR CHILDREN POLICY

PURPOSE

To ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending our service and appropriate opportunities are provided to meet each child's need for sleep, rest, and relaxation.

BACKGROUND

The Education and Care Services National Regulations requires approved providers to ensure their services have policies and procedures in place for children's sleep and rest.

Our Sleep and rest for children policy means our educators, management, co-ordinators, other staff, families, and the community can be confident that children's needs for sleep and rest are met while attending the service.

Fortunately, cases of children dying in education and care service settings are very rare. However, some deaths have occurred when a child has been sleeping at a service. Relevant coroners' reports have found that poor sleeping environments and poor supervision are risk factors. While all children need rest and sleep to be happy and healthy, this is an area of service policy and procedure that needs to be very carefully considered, monitored and actively reviewed to ensure risks are appropriately addressed at all times.

IMPLEMENTATION

Sleep is an important and positive aspect of the child's overall health and well being. Infants enrolled at this centre sleep in their nominated cot in a room containing four cots. Cot linen is laundered by the centre and cots are made up in accordance with SIDS and Kids recommendations and infants are put down in the cot adhering to this advice also (see information below). As the centre has 10 cots available in secure, quiet cot rooms, this enables children in the infants and 2-3 years age groups to be able to sleep during the day at any given time.

Our service's safe sleep and rest procedures and practice follow Red Nose guidelines, the recognised national authority in this area.

Those toddler children who sleep only once a day after lunch, have a mattress provided. These children are required to provide their own linen brought to and from the centre in a draw string bag or pillowcase and to be taken home for laundering at least once a week.

Children between the ages of 3- 5 years are not required to participate in a rest time but there will be a period of quiet to allow other children the opportunity to rest/sleep. Children of this age may vary from day to day in their sleep requirements. This decision is made in consultation with parents and children. Children in this group are required to supply their own bed linen brought to and from the centre in a draw string bag or pillowcase and to be laundered by the family at least once a week. Mattresses are provided for children who either wish to or normally sleep.

Children who do not require a daytime rest will be allowed to participate in passive activities. Children participating in such activities will be encouraged to understand that other children in the centre need and have the right to undisturbed rest.

SAFE SLEEPING

At Elder Street Early Childhood Centre, we follow the safe sleeping guidelines set down by SIDS and Kids. To reduce the risk of SIDS we practice:

- Putting infants to sleep on their backs
- Ensuring infant's faces are uncovered during sleep
- Providing a smoke free environment
- Using a safe cot, bedding, and mattress
- Placing baby at the bottom of the cot with bedding "short sheeted" meaning tucked in from the bottom of the cot.

Safe Bedding

As recommended by SIDS and Kids, all cots for infants are free of soft and puffy bedding that may lead to airway obstruction or overheating. More specifically this includes pillows, quilts, doonas, and lambskins.

The Approved Provider will:

- "Take reasonable steps to ensure that the needs for sleep and rest of children being educated and cared for by the service are met, having regard to the ages, development stages and individual needs of the children." (Regulation 81.)
- Ensure there are adequate numbers of cots and bedding available to children that meet Australian Standards.
- Ensure that all cots meet **AS/NZS 2172**.
- Ensure that areas for sleep and rest are well ventilated and have natural lighting.
- Ensure that supervision windows will be kept clear to ensure safe supervision of sleeping children.

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- "Take reasonable steps to ensure that the needs for sleep and rest of children being educated and cared for by the service are met, having regard to the ages, development stages and individual needs of the children." (Regulation 81.)
- Maintain up to date knowledge regarding safe sleeping practice and communicate this information to educators and families.

Educators will:

- Consult with families about children's sleep and rest needs. Educators will be sensitive to each child's needs so that sleep and rest times are a positive experience.
- Ensure that beds/mattresses are clean and in good repair. Beds and mattresses will be wiped over with warm water and neutral detergent or vinegar between each use.
- Ensure that bed linen is clean and in good repair. Bed linen is for use by an individual child and will be washed before use by another child.

- Arrange children's beds and cots to allow easy access for children and staff.
- Create a relaxing atmosphere for resting children by playing relaxation music, reading stories, cultural reflection, turning off lights and ensuring children are comfortably clothed. The environment should be tranquil and calm for both educators and children. Educators will sit near resting children and support them by encouraging them to relax and listen to music or stories.
- Encourage children to rest their bodies and minds for 20-30 minutes. If children are awake after this time, they will be provided 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 levels and checks may be required.
- Communicate with families about their child's sleeping or rest times and the service policy regarding sleep and rest times.
- 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. Sleep and rest patterns will be recorded daily for families.
- 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.

Children in Cots

Educators will:

- Give bottle-fed children their bottles **before** going to bed. Children will not be put in cots or in beds.
- Observe children at **5-minute intervals** while they sleep in these rooms. Educators must go into the rooms and physically see babies breathing every 15 minutes. The educator will then officially record this. Individual children's health will be taken into consideration and in these instances breathing will be checked at 5 – 10-minute intervals.
- Ensure that cot mattresses are clean, firm and the correct size for the cot frame.
- Make up cots to comply with *SIDS safe sleeping guidelines*. Babies will be placed on their backs to sleep, but they will be able to find their own sleeping position. No loose bedding is to be available to the child. Bed linens will be firmly tucked under the mattress to reduce the risk of a child covering their face. Put the baby's feet at the bottom of the cot so the baby cannot slip down under the covers. Tuck the baby in securely so bed linen is not loose. No doonas, duvets, pillows, or cot bumpers will be placed in cots.
- Every 3 months educators will reflect on and document children's individual needs and store this with routine forms

- Encourage the use of sleeping bags for babies. If they have fitted neck and armholes there is no risk for the child's face being covered.
- Securely lock cots sides into place to ensure children's safety.
- Cot rooms will be air conditioned and maintained at an appropriate temperature.
- Be aware of manual handling practices when lifting babies in and out of cots.
- Participate in staff development about safe sleeping practices. The education and care service will access the *SIDS & Kids resource kit* and provide information to families on safe sleeping practices.
- Communications with families are maintained to encourage a consistent approach in responding appropriately and respectfully to children's sleep and rest needs. Safe sleeping practices are followed to minimise the risk of harm to children and babies.

Child safety is our priority. Educators can confidently refer to the service's Sleep and rest for children policy and procedures if families make requests that are contrary to the safety of the child.

Opportunities will be provided to meet each child's sleep, rest and relaxation needs and ensure children feel secure and safe. We will consult with families about their child's routine for sleep and rest at home and carry this out at the service where possible and safe to do so.

Reviewed: 10 June 2005
 25 May 2006 by M Duffy-Fagan
 12 January 2009 by M Duffy-Fagan and K Pomfrett
 21 May 2012 by M Duffy-Fagan
 29 March 2013 by M Duffy-Fagan, A Brown, K Mitchell
 1 August 2014 by M Duffy-Fagan
 12 Jan 2016 by K Pomfrett and P Rosenkranc,
 15 August 2018 M Duffy-Fagan, K Pomfrett,
 P Rosenkranc, R Heywood-Hayes
 6 October 2021 K Pomfrett, P Guy, B Creighton,
 O Hancock

Source: Community Child Care Co-operative (NSW)
 Children Services Regulation 2004
 Education and Care Services National
 Regulations 2011 Reg. 81
www.sidsandkids.org
 National Quality Framework Resource Kit
 Guide to the National Quality Framework
 ACECQA – Australian Children's Education
 and Care Quality Authority

Supporting documents: Centre Handbook