

Physical Environment

The physical environment can contribute to children's wellbeing, happiness, creativity and developing independence. It can contribute to and express the quality of children's learning and experiences. The choices made in an education and care service about resources, materials, spaces, layout, air and light quality and access to a range of experiences in the indoor and outdoor, have a direct impact on the quality of learning opportunities available to children. The

Centre 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.

Choosing appropriate resources and equipment

- Our Centre is committed to providing an environment that promotes safety and enhances children's learning and development by:
- Providing appropriately sized furniture and equipment in both the indoor and outdoor environment for the age ranges signified in the centre.
- The Approved Provider will be responsible for any large purchases of equipment. The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for the daily running purchases of the centre.
- Educators will compile a list for the Nominated Supervisor of equipment that needs maintenance on a prioritised basis, **twice annually**.
- The Centre will actively seek the input of parents/guardians regarding toys and equipment at the centre.
- Resources and equipment will be chosen to reflect the cultural diversity of the Centre's community and the cultural diversity of contemporary Australia, including the incorporation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
- Providing children with challenges in relation to indoor and outdoor fundamentals in the environment to inspire appropriate challenges and risk taking in accordance with children's individual developmental level.
- Ensuring the environment is organised to ensure safety and minimal disruption for children.
- Integrating precise requirements of children with additional needs to ensure an inclusive environment.
- Ensuring climbing equipment is set up in a safe way. For example, incorporating soft fall materials wherever climbing equipment is set up.
- Conducting consistent risk assessments of the indoor and outdoor environment in order to minimise risk and hazards.
- Providing an environment that allows children in several dispositions to occur in the same space (e.g. quiet play areas and loud play areas)
- Providing a natural environment for children to explore and experience which may include (e.g. plants, trees, gardens, rock, mud or water)
- Encouraging Educators to participate in on-going professional development in order to enhance children's learning and ensuring a safe and educational environment.
- Working in collaboration with our Sun Safety policies and procedures, providing adequate shading for children that work in accordance with the recommendations of relevant authorities.
- Providing an environment that ensures children are appropriately supervised at all times.
- Ensuring all required fencing is in working condition and is compliant with current regulations.
- Providing a variety of indoor and outdoor experiences, catering for children's interests and abilities.
- Supporting the children to access appropriate furniture, resources, materials, toys and equipment. These resources will be adequate in number for the amount of children attending our Centre and be developmentally appropriate.
- Providing an environment where children can explore, solve problems, create, construct and engage in critical thinking that is developmentally appropriate



- Providing an environment that permits children to participate in activities independently or in small groups and access resources autonomously.
- Providing an environment that incorporates commercial, natural, recycled, homemade and real resources that can be used in a variety of ways to encourage children's learning.
- Providing sufficient and accessible hand-washing, toileting, eating and sleeping facilities
- Toileting and hand-washing facilities are accessible from both the indoor and outdoor environments.
- Providing adequate and appropriate hygienic facilities for nappy changing, which are properly constructed ensuring children's safety.
- Incorporating natural and artificial lighting, appropriate ventilation, heating and cooling and fresh air.
- Providing appropriate areas for food preparation.
- Providing a separate indoor space for children who are under two years of age.
- Providing an area for managerial purposes, consultation with children's parents and for private conversations to occur.
- Ensuring 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.
- Discussing with children the safety characteristics of using toys and equipment.
- Where appropriate involving the children in setting classroom guidelines.
- Providing families with the latest safety information
- Implementing a maintenance log and register of toys and equipment
- Ensuring all equipment, including resources, equipment, car seats, booster seats etc. meets relevant Australian Standards and educators are trained in correct maintenance and assembly.

Rearranging, Adding or Removing Furniture

- Plans will be kept regarding the arrangement of the rooms and outdoor spaces. These plans will show how the centre aims to create inviting learning spaces.
- The Centre will keep a record of any changes that is made to the physical environment of the centre, such as rearranging of rooms etc. to show continuous improvement.
- The Centre will document the links between the arrangements and choice of resources and equipment and the children's learning in the program.

The Sleeping/Rest Environment

- Cots and beds should be positioned to encourage a calm and relaxing environment. They should also be separated by a minimum of 300mm to reduce the possibility of cross infection.
- Cots and beds should be regularly checked that all bolts and fittings are secure and safe
- Beds should be located in an area that is easy to access for all educators and other staff
- Beds should be stored in a dry area.
- Educators must ensure to use correct manual handling techniques when moving the beds in a safe manner
- Beds should not be placed on high shelves or in unstable or difficult to reach stacks.

Facilities

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Provide adequate, sufficient and accessible facilities for hand-washing, toileting, eating and sleeping. Toileting and hand-washing facilities will be accessible from our indoor and outdoor environments
- Provide adequate, sufficient and hygienic facilities for nappy changing which are inaccessible to children if they are not directly supervised, and providing at least 1 properly constructed nappy changing bench for children under 3 years of age
- Provide access to clean drinking water in our indoor and outdoor environments
- Providing secure and hygienic laundry facilities



- Ensure that the premises and grounds comply with building regulations (Local, State and Federal Government) and the Building Code of Australia in relation to fire, ventilation, lighting and safety glass
- Provide appropriate and hygienic areas for food preparation
- Complete a WHS Inspection Checklist of the premises and grounds every 6 months and ensure any work necessary meets Australian standards
- Implement management plans to ensure the safety of educators, children, families and visitors if the centre undertakes major renovations

Environment

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Include natural elements like plants, trees, gardens, rock, mud and water
- Provide adequate shading
- Adequately fence the environment.
- Incorporate natural and artificial lighting, appropriate ventilation, heating, cooling and fresh air
- Include elements that challenge children and encourage appropriate risk taking for the child's developmental level
- Incorporate specific requirements for special needs children as seamlessly as possible
- Incorporate sustainable practices which develop environmental responsibility
- Ensure elements in the environment encourage children to explore, solve problems, create, construct and engage in critical thinking

Layout

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Organise the environment so children, educators and visitors can move around without disrupting children's activities
- Create spaces which encourage collaborative learning through group interactions and one-on-one interactions
- Create areas where children can engage in quiet, restful or independent activities Establish the environment so children can be adequately supervised at all times
- Provide space for administrative functions, consultation with children's parents and private conversations
- Keep plans about the arrangement of the rooms and outdoor spaces to show how our centre creates inviting learning spaces, and document how the arrangement, resources and equipment contribute to children's learning.
- Keep a record of any changes made to the physical environment eg rearrangement of rooms, additions/changes to outdoor environment

Activities

The Nominated Supervisor and educators will:

- Undertake regular risk assessments to ensure risk is minimised or eliminated at all times
- Provide adequate and ongoing training in risk management practices for new and existing educators, staff and volunteers
- Engage children in a wide variety of indoor and outdoor experiences
- Discuss safety issues with children (eg using toys or equipment) and involving children in rule setting to minimise or eliminate safety risks.
- Cover unused power points with safety caps, securing all electrical cords and ensuring all double adaptors and power-boards are inaccessible to children
- Provide families with the latest child-related safety information

Kitchens

The Nominated Supervisor will ensure:

- Children cannot gain access to any harmful substance, equipment or facility
- A door prevents unsupervised entry by children into the kitchen



- The preparation of children’s bottles is both safe and hygienic at all times and separate from nappy change area.

Laundry

- The laundry area includes a washing machine, dryer and trough with hot & cold water supply for the laundering of soiled clothes, linen and face washers/bibs.
- Items returned to a child’s home for laundering will be placed into the double plastic bag and then into another plastic bag WITHOUT RINSING to give back to parents. Soiled clothing are stored securely and not placed in the child’s bag in contact with personal items. Rinsing increases the risk of splashing, and cross contamination of hands, sinks and bathroom surfaces. Rinsing increases the risk that educator and the children would be exposed to germs that cause infection.

Children’s Bathroom

- Supervision in the bathroom is important when in use.
- Educators and other staff should also encourage children to follow hygiene practices.
- Bathrooms should be cleaned at least twice a day.
- Bathroom floors should always be mopped.
- 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

Centre Closure

- Three Educators must close the Centre each night
- All 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.
- All educators must sign the sign in and out sheets confirming all children are signed out.
- Educators are to follow Centre-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 centre, the educators must take every step to get in contact with the parent to ensure the child has safely left the Centre.
- 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 Centre.
- Individuals visiting our Centre must also sign in when they arrive at the Centre, and sign out when they leave.
- Details of absences during the day must also be recorded

Source: Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, Early Years Learning Framework, National Quality Standard, Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004 Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014). Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2015, Guide to the National Quality Standard. Swimming Pools Act 1992, Work Health and Safety Act 2011, Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard Cancer Council

Date Implemented: 16/04/2012

Review Completed: 21/02/2017

Schedule for Review: 21/02/2018

National Quality Standard – NQS

Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety

2.3.2	Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect Children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury
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Quality Area 3: Physical Environment



3.1.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, furniture, equipment, facilities and resources are suitable for their purpose
3.1.2	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained
3.1.3	Facilities are designed or adapted to ensure access and participation by every child in the service and to allow flexible use, and interaction between indoor and outdoor space.
3.2.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces are designed and organised to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
3.2.2	Resources, materials and equipment are sufficient in number, organised in ways that ensure appropriate and effective implementation of the program and allow for multiple uses

Quality Area 6: Partnership with families and Community

6.1.1	There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families
6.1.2	Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
6.1.3	Current information about the service is available to families
6.2.1	The expertise of families is recognised and they share in decision making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
6.2.2	Current information is available to families about community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.
6.3.1	Links with relevant community and support agencies are established and maintained.
6.3.2	Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing relevant information and clarifying responsibilities
6.3.3	Access to inclusion and support assistance is facilitated
6.3.4	The service builds relationships and engages with their local community.

Education and Care Service National Regulations

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
80	Weekly menu
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 (Centre-based services)
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(2)(k)	Policies and procedures are required in relation to enrolment and orientation
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
182	Tobacco, drug and alcohol free environment

Early Years Learning Framework

Learning Outcome 2 - Children are Connected with and Contribute to their World



2.1	Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation
2.2	Children respond to diversity with respect
2.4	Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment
Learning Outcome 4 – Children are Confident and Involved Learners	
4.1	Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, Commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity
4.2	Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, enquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating
4.3	Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another
4.4	Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials

