



Relaxation and Sleep Policy

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| Authorisation | DSCC Management Committee |
| Review Date | September 2023 |
| Approved Date | 26 September 2023 |
| Next Review Date | September 2026 |
| Relevant Documents | Attachment 1 - Cots |

AUTHORISATION

This policy was reviewed and adopted by the Dawson Street Child Care Co-operative (DSCC), at a committee meeting on the Approved Date defined above.

POLICY STATEMENT

Purpose

This policy will provide clear guidelines for the implementation of safe relaxation and sleep practices that meet the individual needs of children attending Dawson Street Child Care Co-operative.

Values

Dawson Street Child Care Co-Operative 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 DSCC, 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 and guidelines, including recommendations by Red Nose (refer to *Sources*).

Scope

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in day-to-day Charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of DSCC.

BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

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
- provide a range of active and restful experiences throughout the day, and support children to make appropriate decisions regarding participation.

DSCC has a duty of care to ensure that all children in the centre are able to rest, relax and sleep safely. Children should be provided with a rest period and space that meets their and their families' individual needs. This policy is based on current research and recommended evidence-based principles and guidelines from Red Nose (previously SIDS & KIDS). The guidelines and policy are considered the national authority on safe sleeping practices for infants and children.

To support children to have time to relax and sleep, our service provides a variety of opportunities during the day within an indoor and outdoor curriculum. All children are encouraged to have a rest period throughout the day to support their wellbeing.

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 with current Australian/New Zealand standards in relation to equipment, such as cots 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 – Cots for household use – Safety Requirements (AS/NZS2172:2010)
- Australian/New Zealand Standard – Cots for day nursery, hospital and institutional use – Safety Requirements (AS/NZS 2130:1998)
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*

DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g., Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Adequate supervision: (In relation to this policy) 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.

Red Nose: (formerly 'SIDS and Kids'), the recognised national authority on safe sleeping practices for infants and children (refer to *Sources*)

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

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

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- Australian/New Zealand Standards: (at the time of printing) the current relevant standards are:
 - Australian/New Zealand Standard – Cots for household use – Safety Requirements (AS/NZS2172:2003), and
 - Australian/New Zealand Standard – Cots for day nursery, hospital and institutional use – Safety Requirements (AS/NZS 2130:1998)
- *Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* (EYLF): https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-02/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf

- The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne, *Grow and Thrive - Sleep*, Volume 2 No 1, February 2014, Centre for Community Child Health:
https://www.rch.org.au/ccch/publications-resources/grow-thrive/Grow_Thrive_-_Sleep/
- Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (2016), *Consumer product safety – a guide for businesses & legal practitioners*:
<https://www.accc.gov.au/publications/consumer-product-safety-a-guide-for-businesses-legal-practitioners>
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority, *Safe sleep and rest practices*: <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/supporting-materials/infosheet/safe-sleep-and-rest-practices>
- WorkSafe Victoria, *Children's services – occupational health and safety compliance kit*: <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/resources/childrens-services-occupational-health-and-safety-compliance-kit>
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)*:
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/veyldf.aspx>

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

Safe Sleep Practices

Our service shall follow the below safe sleep practices:

- children will be placed on their back for sleep
- sleep and rest environments and equipment should be safe and free from hazards such as overhead shelving, cords, and other hazardous objects.
- educators will ensure that the physical space is safe and conducive to sleep. This means ensuring the children are provided with an environment that is quiet, well-ventilated and comfortable sleeping spaces.
- educators will be allocated across the service to ensure active supervision at all times during rest and sleep periods.
- educators will closely monitor sleeping and resting children within the sleep and rest environments. This involves physically checking on the children at regular intervals and ensuring the children are at all times within eye and hearing distance when sleeping or resting.
- ensuring children rest with their face uncovered. At no time will a child's face be covered to assist with settling.
- the use of sleeping bags are permitted in accordance with Red Nose guidelines however ensuring there are fitted holes for the child's arms and neck. At no point, is a sleeping bag with a hood, cords or toggles permitted.

- in accordance with Red Nose (formerly SIDS) children are permitted to settle and or sleep with a Dummy (pacifier) based on strong evidence of dummies being associated with a reduced risk of sudden infant death when used consistently.
- babies will be placed on their back to sleep when first settling. 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 who have yet to be observed to roll from their back to their front and back again will be repositioned to ensure they're on their back with feet towards the end of the cot.

The Management Committee 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))
- regularly reviewing practices to ensure compliance with the recommendations of Red Nose in relation to safe sleeping practices for children (refer to *Sources*)
- providing information and training to ensure staff are kept informed of changing practices in relation to safe sleep practices for children
- protecting children from hazards and harm (Section 167)
- ensuring cots provided at the service comply with the most current Australian/New Zealand Standards (refer to *Sources* and Attachment 1 – Cots)
- 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*), including in relation to staff lifting children into and out of cots
- 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 Director/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(1))
- ensuring the educational program provides opportunities for each child to sleep, rest or engage in appropriate quiet play activities, as required
- ensuring parents/guardians are consulted about appropriate relaxation and sleep practices for their child
- educating families about evidence-based safe sleeping practices
- protecting children from hazards and harm (Section 167)
- removing any hazards identified in the child's resting or sleeping environment and informing the Approved Provider, as soon as is practicable
- ensuring that hammocks, prams and strollers are not used to settle children to sleep
- ensuring all staff and educators comply with the recommendations of Red Nose in

relation to safesleeping practices for children (refer to *Sources*)

- assessing whether there are exceptional circumstances for alternative practices where family beliefs conflict with current recommended evidence-based guidelines for safe sleeping practices, seek written support from a professional and develop a risk management plan
- ensuring all staff and educators comply with WorkSafe Victoria's *Children's services – occupational health and safety compliance kit* (refer to *Sources*) in relation to lifting children into and out of cots
- 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
- storing items such as bedding in a hygienic manner to prevent cross-contamination (refer to *Hygiene Policy*).

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 Red Nose in relation to safe sleeping practices for children (refer to *Sources*)
- 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
- educating families about evidence-based safe sleeping practices
- implementing the documented sleep regime and risk management strategies where in exceptional circumstances family beliefs conflict with current recommended evidence-based guidelines for safe sleeping practices
- 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
- complying with WorkSafe Victoria's *Children's services – occupational health and safety compliance kit* (refer to *Sources*), including in relation to lifting children into and out of cots
- providing input in relation to OHS issues when new equipment is purchased for the service
- conducting regular safety checks of equipment used for sleeping/resting, such as cots and mattresses
- removing any hazards identified in the child's resting or sleeping environment and informing the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider, as soon as is practicable
- 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
- ensuring that each child has their own bed linen, and that the *Hygiene Policy* and procedures are implemented for the cleaning and storage of cots, mattresses and linen
- documenting and communicating children's rest and sleep times to co-workers during shift changes
- providing information to families about the service's relaxation and sleep practices
- developing communication strategies to inform parents/guardians about their child's rest and sleep patterns, including times and length of sleep
- encouraging children's independence, and assisting children with dressing as needed.
- Following practices and procedures outlined in their room handbooks

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.
- Following practices and procedures outlined in each room's family handbook

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 unless a lesser period is necessary because of a risk.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Cots

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Dawson Street Child Care Co-operative:

| Date Reviewed | Details of Changes (if any) | Date of Next Review |
|----------------|--|---------------------|
| September 2023 | Inclusion of Safe Sleep Practices, other minor updates and updated hyperlinks to external webpages | September 2026 |
| May 2021 | Staff member must be supervising in sleep room at all times | May 2022 |
| August 2019 | Policy rewrite to reflect National Quality Framework and best practice relating to SIDS | August 2023 |
| April 2014 | Minor updates | April 2018 |
| June 2012 | Updates to internal and external references | March 2014 |
| April 2010 | No changes | February 2012 |
| February 2008 | Initial DSCC policy based on National Childcare Accreditation Policy. | February 2010 |

ATTACHMENT 1

Cots

There are currently (at the time of printing) two standards that apply to the use of cots:

- Australian/New Zealand Standard – Cots for household use – Safety Requirements (AS/NZS 2172:2003), and
- Australian/New Zealand Standard – Cots for day nursery, hospital and institutional use – Safety Requirements (AS/NZS 2130:1998).

Services can check current standards on the SAI Global website at: www.saiglobal.com

Household cots usually have a lower base and mattress, and WorkSafe Victoria have expressed concern for staff in relation to the manual handling risks posed when working with cots at a lower height.

The Institutional Cot Standard allows for cots with a higher base and mattress, but requires these cots to be made of metal, and to have a drop side that can be lowered to the level of the mattress. The early childhood sector has expressed concerns in relation to the safety of cots with sides that lower to the level of the mattress

Services should investigate options either for:

- cots that meet the Australian/New Zealand Standard – Cots for household use – Safety Requirements (AS/NZS 2172:2003) and have a higher base and mattress, or
- cots that meet the Australian/New Zealand Standard – Cots for day nursery, hospital and institutional use – Safety Requirements (AS/NZS 2130:1998).

No alterations should be made to purchased cots under any circumstances, as this may have serious consequences in relation to liability in the event that an incident occurs.

ELAA **does not** recommend that services use portable or folding cots, as they present an increased risk of injury or death to a child if erected incorrectly. Portable cots also pose an increased risk of manual handling injuries to staff. If a service requires an extra cot to be available for occasional use, it is possible to purchase a cot that meets the Australian/New Zealand Standard – Cots for household use, and folds flat for easy storage.

Further information on portable or folding cots is available as outlined below:

- Red Nose: <https://rednose.org.au/article/portable-cots>
- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission: www.productsafety.gov.au
- ELAA's OHS website: www.ohsinecservices.org.au