

# SLEEP AND REST POLICY

All children have individual sleep and rest requirements. Our objective is to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation by providing a comfortable, relaxing and safe space to enable their bodies to rest. This environment will also be well supervised ensuring all children feel secure and safe at our Service.

## 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 AREA 3: 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 LAW AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
S. 165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
S. 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazard
82	Environment to be free from tobacco, vaping devices, vaping substances, drug and alcohol
84A	Sleep and rest
84B	Sleep and rest policies and procedures
84C	Risk assessment for purposes of sleep and rest policies and procedures
84D	Prohibition of bassinets
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
106	Laundry and hygiene facilities
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 or procedures
176	Time to notify certain information to regulatory authority

**RELATED POLICIES**

Administration of First Aid Policy	Health and Safety Policy
Child Safe Environment Policy	Interactions with Children, Family and Staff Policy
Enrolment Policy	Physical Environment Policy
Death of a Child at the Service Policy	Respect for Children Policy
Dental Health Policy	Staffing Arrangements Policy
Emergency and Evacuation Policy	Tobacco, Drug and Alcohol-Free Policy
Family Communication Policy	Work Health and Safety
Furniture and Equipment Safety Policy	

**PURPOSE**

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations* requires approved providers and nominated supervisors to ensure their services have policies and procedures in place for children’s sleep and rest having regard to the ages, developmental stages and individual needs of the children. Our *Sleep and Rest Policy* will assist management, educators and other staff to ensure that all children have appropriate opportunities to sleep, rest and relax in accordance with their individual needs whilst attending the service.

Our Service will ensure that all children have appropriate opportunities to sleep, rest and relax in accordance with their individual needs. The risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) for infants will be minimised by following practices and guidelines set out by the national authority on safe sleeping practice for infants and children- Red Nose (formerly SIDS and Kids). Our policy sets out

quality practice and is informed by recognised and evidence-based principles. Safe Sleep practices are informed by Red Nose and guidance from ACEQCA.

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

Service's duty of care, it is a requirement that all educators implement and adhere to this policy and associated procedures to ensure we respect and cater for each child's specific needs and ensure all risks are appropriately addressed at all times.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, educators, staff, management, approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, volunteers and visitors of the Service.

## IMPLEMENTATION

'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).

Our Service defines 'rest' as a period of inactivity, solitude, calmness, or tranquillity, and can include a child being in a state of sleep. Considering the busy and energetic nature of children's day, we feel that it is important for children to participate in a quiet/rest period during the day in order to rest, relax, and recharge their body. Effective rest strategies are important factors in ensuring a child feels secure and safe in an early childhood environment.

Our Service will consult with families about their child's individual needs, ensuring all parties are aware of the different values, cultural, and parenting beliefs and practices, or opinions associated with sleep requirements.

## SLEEP AND REST SPECIFIC RISK ASSESSMENT

The approved provider, in conjunction with educators of the Service, will conduct a comprehensive risk assessment to ensure all potential hazards are identified and specify how any risks identified

are managed and minimised in sleep and rest areas in line with Red Nose and ACECQA guidelines (reg. 84A).

The risk assessment will be reviewed at least annually or after being aware of an incident or circumstance where the health, safety or wellbeing of children may be compromised during sleep or rest. All risk assessments will be regularly assessed and evaluated as to facilitate continuous improvement in our service. If a risk concerning a child's safety during sleep and rest is identified during the risk assessment, the approved provider must update the *Sleep and Rest Policy* and procedure as soon as possible. The risk assessment must be stored safely and securely and kept for a period of 3 years.

Our risk assessment will consider and include the following information:

- the number, age, developmental stages and individual needs of children
- the sleep and rest needs of individual children being educated and cared for (including specific health care needs, cultural preferences, sleep and rest needs of individual children and requests from families about a child's sleep and rest)
- the suitability of staffing arrangements to adequately supervise and monitor children during sleep and rest periods
- the level of knowledge and training of staff supervising children during sleep and rest periods
- the location of sleep and rest areas, including the arrangement of cots and beds within the sleep and rest areas
- the safety, cleanliness and condition of sleep equipment
- the safety and suitability of any cots, beds and bedding equipment, having regard to the ages and developmental stages of the children who will use the cots, bed and bedding equipment
- any potential hazards
  - in sleep and rest areas
  - on a child during sleep and rest periods (such as jewellery, clothing)
- the physical safety and suitability of sleep and rest environments (including temperature, lighting and ventilation)

## BASSINETS

Effective 1 October 2023, approved providers and nominated supervisors must ensure bassinets are not kept on the education and care service premises. (Regulation 84D). There are no Australian Standards for bassinets and risks include the bassinet tipping over or suffocation. All staff and

educators will be made aware of this regulation and policy as part of their induction process. Our Service will ensure no bassinets are used or stored within the service. Families will be informed children will not be accepted into care in a bassinet and under no circumstances will a bassinet be permitted to remain on the premises.

#### THE APPROVED PROVIDER/MANAGEMENT/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL ENSURE:

- that obligations under the *Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations* are met
- educators, staff, students, visitors and volunteers have knowledge of and adhere to this policy and associated procedure
- all new employees are provided with a copy of this policy as part of their induction process
- families are aware of this *Sleep and Rest Policy*
- a sleep and rest specific risk assessment is conducted at least annually to ensure all potential hazards are controlled in sleep or rest areas in line with Red Nose and ACECQA guidelines
- every reasonable precaution has been taken to protect children from harm and from hazards likely to cause injury. Hazards posing a risk of suffocation, choking, crushing or strangulation risk to children must be removed from the sleep and rest environment. (Sec. 167)
- inclined sleep products or infant sleep products that swing or rock are not used within our Service
- up to date knowledge regarding safe sleeping practices is maintained and information communicated to educators and families
- families are advised that amber teething necklaces and bracelets are not to be worn by babies and young children at our Service- as per warnings by the Australian Government (2011)
- opportunities are provided for educators to participate in Red Nose professional training
- reasonable steps are taken to ensure that each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation are provided
- consideration is given to the ages, developmental stages and individual needs of children
- a safe indoor environment for sleep and rest is provided for children that is well ventilated, has adequate natural light and can be maintained at a temperature that ensures children's safety and wellbeing and is free from all hazards including cigarette and tobacco smoke (Reg.110)
- the supervision window (or similar) is kept clear to ensure safe supervision of sleeping infants
- that sleeping infants and children are closely monitored and that all sleeping children are always within hearing distance and observed. This involves physically checking/inspecting sleeping infants and children every 10 minutes and ensuring that educators are always within sight and hearing distance of sleeping and resting children so they can easily monitor a child's breathing

and the colour of their skin. It is recommended that educators will not perform administrative duties that would take their attention away from sleeping/resting children- (Note: CCTV, audio monitors or heart monitors **do not** replace the need for physical checking/inspecting sleeping children)

- children who are sleeping or resting have their face uncovered at all times
- any soft items are removed from the cot, such blankets, pillows or toys (see: Comforters and soft toys)
- information is provided to parents and families about Safe Sleep practices (see [Red Nose](#))
- all equipment and furniture used for sleep and rest is safe, clean and in good repair (Reg. 103, 105)
- there are adequate numbers of cots and bedding (including mattresses) available to children that meet Australian Standards and are only to be used for sleep and rest purposes
- all cots used in our Service will meet the current mandatory Australian Standard for Cots (AS/NZS 2172) and will carry a label to indicate this
- sleep surfaces are checked for firmness in accordance to Australian Standard AS/NZS 8811:1:2013
- bassinets are not used or stored within the Service
- children are not accepted into care in a bassinet
- to negotiate sleep and rest routines and practices with families to reach agreement on how these occur for each child at the Service
- nominated supervisors and educators are not expected to endorse practices requested by a family if they differ from [Red Nose](#) safe (formerly SIDS and Kids) sleeping recommendations.
- if any requirements differ from Red Nose sleeping recommendations, written authorisation from a medical practitioner will be required and shared with educators
- educators follow the *Administration of First Aid Policy* if the child's face/body appears blue and the child is not breathing, initiate first aid immediately including calling an ambulance and beginning resuscitation
- an *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record* is completed in its entirety
- the parent and the regulatory authority are notified as soon as possible and within 24 hours of a serious incident.

#### EDUCATORS WILL:

- have a thorough understanding of the Service's policy and procedure and embed practices to support safe sleep into everyday practice
- ensure children's safety and wellbeing is paramount

- communicate with families about their child's sleeping or rest times and the Service's policy regarding sleep and rest times
- 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 and provide information to parents/families
- consider a vast range of strategies to meet children's individual sleep and rest needs- consider inclusion of all children and adjustments that may need to be implemented
- ensure there are appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation
- respond to children's individual cues for sleep (yawning, rubbing eyes, disengagement from activities, crying etc).
- acknowledge and support children's agency, emotions, feelings and fears in regard to sleep/rest time
- develop positive relationships with children to assist in settling children confidently when sleeping and resting
- ensure that children who **do not** wish to sleep are provided with alternative quiet activities and experiences, whilst 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 time of day, there should be a comfortable, safe area available for them to rest. It is important that opportunities for rest and relaxation, as well as sleep, are provided.
- 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]
- encourage the use of sleeping bags with fitted neck and armholes for babies as there is no risk of the infant's face being covered
- ensure there are no loose aspects of clothing or jewellery that could entangle the child during sleep/rest (including bibs)
- give bottle-fed children their bottles before going to bed
- ensure children are not put in cots or in beds with bottles as per the *Dental Health Policy*
- securely lock cots sides into place to ensure children's safety
- create a relaxing environment for sleeping children by playing quiet relaxation music, reading stories, cultural reflection, turning off lights, and ensuring children are comfortably clothed
- monitor the room temperature to ensure maximum comfort for the children

- turn off wall-mounted heaters before children use the room for sleeping. Cot rooms may be air conditioned and maintained at an appropriate temperature.
- be aware of manual handling practices when lifting babies and young children in and out of cots.

## COMFORTERS AND SOFT TOYS

- Red Nose guidelines suggest comforters (soft toys) should not be placed in the sleeping environment for children under the age of 7 months due to the facial obstruction and suffocation risk.
- Studies suggest children below the age of 7 months do not develop a strong attachment to a comforter and are more likely to self sooth with a dummy, whereas older children aged 18-24 months were more likely to use a comforter (Red Nose)
- Our service is guided by the practices outlined by Red Nose
- Our service will strongly discourage the use of comforters for all children aged under 12 months.
- Educators will inform families of our Sleep and Rest Policy and provide current information regarding comforters to families.
- Should families be firm on their desire for their child to sleep with a comforter whilst under the age of 12 months, will be required to sign the *Comforters Consent Form* expressing they are aware comforters are not recommended, and discouraged by our service.
- The child will be given their comforter, and actively supervised whilst falling asleep.
- Once the child is asleep, the comforter will be removed from their sleep environment.
- Children above the age of 12 months may have their comforter for the duration of their sleep and do not require a signed form from the parent.

## SUPERVISION

### EDUCATORS WILL:

- maintain adequate supervision and maintain educator ratios throughout the sleep period
- ensure supervision is active, effective and frequent
- not be engaged in other duties (e.g., administrative duties) that will take their attention away from actively supervising sleeping and resting children
- ensure sleeping spaces are not dark- there needs to be sufficient light to allow supervision and to physically check children's breathing, lip and skin colour
- ensure sleeping infants are closely monitored and that all sleeping children are within hearing range and observed

- ensure physical checks of sleeping children in the nursery occur at least every 10 minutes and 30 minutes for all other age groups (Note: CCTV, audio monitors or heart monitors **do not** replace the need for physical checking/inspecting sleeping children)
- physically check that the infant/child from the side of the cot (or floor mattress/toddler bed) to include:
  - breathing- rise and fall of child's chest
  - skin and lip colour
  - head position
  - body temperature
  - airway
  - head and face- ensure they remain uncovered
- ensure a record is maintained on OWNA recording the time and observation of each physical check immediately after checks are made
- consider the circumstances and any risk factors that may mean physical checks need to be more frequent for some babies or children (e.g.; children with colds, chronic lung disorders or specific health care needs that may require higher level of supervision)
- consider higher levels of supervision and conduct more frequent checks on babies or children with colds, chronic lung disorders or specific health care needs
- initiate first aid immediately including calling an ambulance and beginning resuscitation if the child's face/body appears blue and the child is not breathing
- ensure an *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record* is completed in its entirety following an incident.

## PRE-SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

### EDUCATORS WILL:

- be respectful for children's individual sleep and rest requirements
- discuss children's sleep and rest needs with families and include children in decision making (children's agency)
- provide a tranquil and calm environment for children to rest by turning off lights, playing quiet relaxing music, reading stories, cultural reflection
- ensure children are comfortably clothed
- encourage children to rest their bodies and minds for 20-30 minutes
- introduce relaxation techniques into rest routine- use of a relaxation tape
- ensure children sleep with their face uncovered

- closely monitor sleeping and resting children
- provide quiet activities for children- puzzles, books, drawing if they do not fall asleep
- record sleep and rest patterns to provide information to parents/families

### USE AND MAINTENANCE OF COTS/SLEEP PRODUCTS

- ensure beds, cots and mattresses are used for the correct purpose of sleep and rest only
- ensure safety information and warning labels remain affixed to infant sleep products and non-inclined sleep products during its lifecycle at the Service
- ensure all equipment and furniture is safe, clean and in good repair (Reg. 103, 105)
- ensure cots comply with the following:
  - spaces between bars and mattress sides are as per regulations/guidelines (not more than 25mm apart)
  - spaces do not pose any danger to children- arm and leg traps/finger traps
  - cots are not painted with any paint that contains lead
  - paint work of cots is not chipped when babies are teething
  - cots have high sides- from top of mattress to top side of cot should be at least 500mm
  - there are no toys, bumpers, pillows, doonas, loose bedding or fabric in the cot that could cause suffocation (See: Comforters and Soft toys)
  - there are no sharp edges
  - sleep surfaces are checked for firmness in accordance to Australian Standard AS/NZS 8811:1:2013
  - bolts and screws are tight and regularly checked
  - plastic packaging is removed from mattresses
  - waterproof mattress protectors are strong, not torn, and a tight fit
  - mattresses are not elevated or tilted
- banned/recalled products are removed immediately from the Service if required
- ensure there are no choking hazards- cords, strings, bunting in the sleep environment
- use firm, clean, and well-fitting mattresses on portable cots
- beds and mattresses are cleaned with the green detergent spray between each use
- children's beds and cots are arranged to allow easy access for children and staff  
cots/stretchers are stored safely
- bed linen is used by an individual child and is washed before use by another child

### BABIES AND TODDLERS

Recommendations sourced from ACECQA and Red Nose Australia

- Babies should always 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 and 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 but may not always be able to roll back again. 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.
- Ensure any bed linen is securely tucked underneath the mattress so it cannot ride up and cover the baby’s chest or cover his/her head.
- 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 begins rolling (usually four to six months of age). Use only lightweight wraps such as cotton or muslin.
- Ensure there is no soft bedding in baby’s sleep environment (pillows, doonas, loose bedding, lambswool or soft toys) (See: Comforters and Soft toys)
- 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 (in consultation with parents). 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 also 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.
- Additional supervision is required if a child is wearing a baby sleeping bag whilst sleeping outside a cot. The sleeping suit should be removed as soon as the child wakes to avoid risk of falling and injury. (Red Nose).

PARENTS AND FAMILIES WILL:

- Be informed during orientation of our Sleep and Rest Policy and Procedure
- Be requested to provide educators with regular updates on their child's sleeping routines and patterns, especially for infants
- Be provided with information about Safe Sleep practices from Red Nose
- Be requested to complete a Comforters and Soft Toys Form to complete should they be firm on their desire for their child to sleep with a comforter whilst under the age of 12 months.

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Sleep and Rest Policy* will be updated and reviewed annually, or earlier if there are changes to legislation, ACECQA guidance or any incident related to our policy. Feedback will be requested from children, families, staff, educators and management and notification of any change to policies will be made to families within 14 days.

## Key terms

Term	Meaning
ACECQA- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority	The independent national authority that works with all regulatory authorities to administer the National Quality Framework, including the provision of guidance, resources and services to support the sector to improve outcomes for children.
Adequate supervision	Adequate supervision means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that an educator can respond immediately, particularly when a child is distressed or in a hazardous situation;</li> <li>• knowing where children are at all times and monitoring their activities actively and diligently</li> </ul>
Continuous supervision	Ensure an educator is in sight and hearing of a sleeping child at all times- representing best practice (Red Nose Australia)
Infant	A young child between the ages of birth and 12 months
Rest	A period of inactivity solitude, calmness or tranquility and can include a child being in a state of sleep.
Relaxation	Relaxation or other activity for bringing about a feeling of calm in your body and mind.
<a href="#">Red Nose</a>	Red Nose is Australia's leading authority on safe sleep and safe pregnancy advice.

Sudden and Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI)	A broad term used to describe the sudden and unexpected death of a baby for which the cause is not immediately obvious- (SIDS or Fatal sleeping accident)
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)	The sudden and unexpected death of an infant under one year of age with an onset of a fatal episode occurring during sleep, that remains unexplained after a thorough investigation including performance of a complete autopsy and review of the circumstances of death and the clinical history.

**SOURCES**

ACECQA. (n.d.). [Safe sleep and rest practices](#)

ACECQA. (2024). [Sleep and Rest for Children. Policy Guidelines.](#)

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2025). [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#)

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC). (2022). Find out more: [Your First Steps to help parents keep their baby safe](#)

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

[Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010.](#) (amended 2025)

[Education and Care Services National Regulations.](#) (Amended 2025)

NSW Department of Education. (2024). [Sleep and rest for children-Policy guidelines for early childhood education and care services. \(updated\)](#)

Red Nose: <https://rednose.org.au/section/safe-practices>

Red Nose: Cot to bed safety [https://rednose.org.au/downloads/RN3356\\_Cot\\_Bed\\_DL\\_Oct2018\\_Online.pdf](https://rednose.org.au/downloads/RN3356_Cot_Bed_DL_Oct2018_Online.pdf)

**REVIEW**

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Kelsey Pearce	Management Support Officer	
POLICY REVIEWED	NOVEMBER 2025	NEXT REVIEW DATE	FEBRUARY 2026
VERSION NUMBER	V16.11.25		
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>updated policy with new mandatory safety standards on infant sleep products</li> </ul>		