



# Safe Sleep and Rest Time

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

### Introduction

All children have individual sleep and rest requirements. Children need a comfortable relaxing environment to enable their bodies to rest. This environment must be safe and well supervised to ensure children are safe, healthy and secure in their environment.

### Reason for Requirement

As of October 2017, all education and care services must have a sleep and rest policy as a requirement.

*An inquest into the death of Indianna Rose Hicks in 2012 found Indianna, who was five months old when she died suddenly and unexpectedly while in care, died from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). A recommendation was made via the Consultation Regulation Impact Statement on proposed options for changes to the National Quality Framework (NQF), that Regulation 168 in the National Regulations, 'Education and care service must have policies and procedures' be amended to include a requirement for a policy on 'Sleep and rest for children and infants', including matters set out in Regulation 81 (Sleep and rest). ACECQA*

### Strategies

"Approved providers, nominated supervisors and educators 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".

The Nominated Supervisor will:

◁ Ensure that children's safety, health and well-being are upheld at all times.

### Safe Equipment

All equipment is to carry safety codes for sleep. Bassinets, hammocks and prams/strollers are not considered safe equipment to sleep in and cannot be considered a substitute for a cot.

### Safe Cot Mattress

◁ Mattress should always be in good condition, they should be clean, firm and flat. Cot mattresses should fit the cot with no 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.

◁ Mattresses should never be elevated or tilted.

### **Safe Bedding**

◁ Light bedding is recommended.

◁ Remove pillows, doonas, loose bedding or fabric from cots.

### **Goals / What are we going to do?**

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

### **Strategies / How will it be done?**

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 and should carry a label to indicate this.

◁ 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:**

◁ 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.

- ◁ Remember that children do not need to be “patted” to sleep. By providing a quiet, tranquil environment, children will choose to sleep if their body needs it.
- ◁ Provide a quiet learning environment to encourage children to rest their bodies and minds for 20-30 minutes.
- ◁ 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, for those babies that sleep in the cotroom.
- ◁ Ensure children will sleep and rest with their face uncovered.
- ◁ 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:**

- ◁ Follow parents wishes in regards to how to put children to bed. If parents want their child to go to bed with a bottle we require this in writing.
- ◁ Teething necklaces will be removed during sleep time.
- ◁ Ensure that cot rooms and sleep rooms must have operational baby monitors on at all times.
- ◁ Observe children at 10-15 minute intervals while they sleep in these rooms. Educators must go into the rooms and physically see babies breathing. The educator will then officially record this.
- ◁ Ensure that cot mattresses are clean, firm and the correct size for the cot frame.
- ◁ Make up cots to comply with Red Nose safe sleeping messages. 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.
- ◁ 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 room 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.

## **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every two years.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

### **RELATED GUIDELINES, STANDARDS, FRAMEWORKS**

- ◁ National Quality Standard Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety: Standards 2.1.1, 2.2, 2.2.1, 3.1
- ◁ Red Nose Safe Sleeping Guide for Parents 2019

### **SOURCES**

- ◁ Guide to the National Quality Framework 2018
- ◁ Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations
- ◁ Standards Australia – [www.standards.org.au](http://www.standards.org.au)
- ◁ ACCC Product Safety Australia - [www.productsafety.gov.au/publication/keeping-baby-safe-a-guide-to-infant-and-nursery-products](http://www.productsafety.gov.au/publication/keeping-baby-safe-a-guide-to-infant-and-nursery-products)

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