

Safe Transportation of Children

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

Policy Statement

Our education and care service is committed to providing transportation that is carefully planned to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of children at all times. Our service is committed to ensuring that the safety, rights and best interests are the paramount considerations in all decisions, actions and practices.

When transportation is part of our service, we remain responsible for the children during that period. This applies whether we are transporting the children ourselves or have arranged transportation between our service premises and another location. This policy outlines the provision and arrangement of transportation as part of our education and care service according to Regulation 99 (4)(b)(ca).

We will:

- Take specific steps to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children
- Identify and manage risks associated with:
 - Transport between a vehicle and the service premises or other location
 - Transport for single or regular trips
 - Transport of children other than as part of an excursion
 - Transport associated with excursions
 - Embarking and disembarking the means of transport including how each child is to be accounted for on embarking and disembarking the vehicle.

Note this policy does not relate to Excursions. Please see our Excursions Policy.

Background

Children are considered to be under the care of an education and care service at the point the service is taken to assume responsibility for their care and wellbeing. At this point the National Law and National Regulations apply in line with service policies and procedures.

If the service transports, offers or arranges transportation of children other than as part of excursions, a transportation policy including procedures complying with The Education and Care Services National Regulations, Division 7, are required.

This policy applies to all transportation that forms part of the service. As transportation is most commonly undertaken by vehicle or public transport, including cars, trains, buses and ferries, many of the procedures outlined relate specifically to vehicle transportation. Where other forms of transportation are used, including children walking to or from the service, appropriate risk assessments, safety measures and authorisations will be implemented.

Strategies

Planning

When planning for transportation staff will:

- Establish the purpose and objective of the excursion
- Conduct a risk assessment
- Book transport
- Make alternative arrangements for adverse weather conditions
- Notify families of the proposed excursion according to Regulation 102 (4) (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i)(j)(k), including the purpose and objective
- Obtain written consent from parents or guardians for all children who will participate, according to Regulation 102 (4)(a-k)
- Request additional adult participation for the transportation where required
- Arrange for a suitably equipped first aid kit (including EpiPen and Asthma puffer) and mobile phone to be readily available for the transportation
- Ensure that all children with medical conditions are included in the planning process to receive appropriate support during the excursion.
- Consider any additional factors in the planning of transportation for children with additional needs and ensure risk management strategies are implemented to maintain the safety and wellbeing of children with high needs. Where possible, our service will uphold the right for all children to access all transport.

Regular Transportation (other than as part of an excursion)

Regular transportation is transport by the service or arranged by the service (other than as part of an excursion) of a child being educated and cared for by the service, where the circumstances relevant to a risk assessment are substantially the same each time the child is transported.

An example of a change in circumstances that are substantially different might be when the means of transportation route or destination(s) have altered or the provider of the service has changed or there is a change in the nominated supervisor or responsible person.

- Our service recognises that risks apply equally during periods of regular transportation, as they do to single transportation
- A risk assessment for regular transportation will be carried out once in a 12-month period, provided the circumstances relevant to the risk assessment are substantially the same each time the child is transported. This will be assessed as circumstances change

Risk Assessment

- A transport risk assessment will always be conducted before our service transports a child/children to evaluate risks each time transportation is used (unless the transportation is 'regular transportation')
- The nominated supervisor/ approved provider/ responsible persons/ family day care educator will ensure that the risk assessment identifies and assesses the risk the transport may pose to the safety, health and wellbeing of any child whilst using the transport and will specify how the service will manage any risks identified.
- Once risks have been identified, they will be categorised as high, moderate or low and management of the risks will be detailed.
- Educators and any Responsible persons and supporting adults using the transport are aware of the service's policy and procedures that set out the instructions for what must be done in the event of an emergency (Regulation 97(1)(a)) and are aware of the risk assessment for the transport.
- Service providers, nominated supervisors, responsible persons, educators and drivers will ensure a risk assessment identifies and assesses the risk transportation may pose to the safety, health and wellbeing

of all children during their transportation on vehicles and movement to and from a vehicle and the service or other premises and will specify how the service will manage any risks identified.

- Before using the transport, risks are checked including the weather to assess any increases to the level of risk and whether the transport can proceed.
- A procedure for each route of travel will be created in line with the risk assessment and will outline specific educator responsibilities, including the use of strollers, safety restraints, or equipment to support additional needs children.

The risk assessment conducted will consider be in accordance with Reg 101 (2) (a-i) as follows:

Our service will conduct comprehensive transport specific risk assessment to minimise and manage all potential risks when transporting children before authorisation is sought to transport a child. This risk assessment applies to the transportation of children provided or arranged by our service, other than transportation undertaken as part of an excursion.

Each time our service plans to transport or arrange transport of children, a new risk assessment will be conducted, unless the transportation is for regular transportation. A risk assessment must be conducted every 12 months for 'regular transportation'; if the circumstances relevant to the risk assessment change or are altered, a new risk assessment must be conducted. All risk assessments will be regularly assessed and evaluated to facilitate continuous improvement for the service.

- the proposed route and duration of the transportation, including estimated time of travel between the different locations
- each of the proposed pick-up locations and destination
- the means of transport
- the purpose of the transport
- any requirements for seatbelts or safety restraints under a law of each jurisdiction in which the children are being transported
- any water hazards on the proposed route travelled and at each stop
- number of adults and children involved in the transportation
- given the risks posed by transportation, the number of educators or other responsible adults that is appropriate to provide supervision and whether any adults with specialised skills are required
- whether any items should be readily available during transportation (for example, a mobile phone and list of emergency contact numbers for the children being transported)
- the process for entering and exiting the education and care service premises and the pick-up location or destination (as required)
- procedures for embarking and disembarking the means of transport, including how each child is to be accounted for on embarking and disembarking
- strategies for accounting for all children using the transportation, particularly during embarking and disembarking the vehicle.

Written authorisation for transportation (other than excursions)

The Nominated Supervisor will ensure that authorisation for a child to be transported is given by a parent or other person named in the child's enrolment record as having authority to authorise transportation of a child. The authorisation will include:

- the child's name

- the reason the child is to be transported
- if the transportation is for regular transportation, a description of when the child is to be transported
- if the authorisation is not for regular transportation, the date the child is to be transported
- a description of the proposed pick-up location and destination
- the means of transport
- the period of time during which the child is to be transported
- the anticipated number of children likely to be transported
- the anticipated number of staff members and any other adults who will accompany and supervise the children during the transportation
- any requirements for seatbelts or safety restraints under the law of each jurisdiction in which the children are being transported
- that a risk assessment has been prepared and is available at the education and care service
- that written policies and procedures for transporting children are available at the education and care service.

If the transportation is regular transportation, the authorisation is only required to be obtained once in a 12-month period. When there is a change in circumstances relevant to the risk assessment for regular transportation, updated written authorisation must be obtained from families before transportation resumes. The service will notify families of the change in circumstances and provide an updated authorisation form for families to complete, which must be returned prior to the next scheduled transportation.

Staffing Arrangements

- Educators using the transportation will be no less than the number prescribed in the Education and Care Services National Regulations, and depending on the supervision requirements, may need to be higher to ensure adequate supervision.
- The number of educators will also be adequate to supervise any responsible adults who volunteer to assist with the transportation.
- Services must ensure that the number of educators or other responsible adults involved in the transportation of children, including when children are embarking or disembarking the vehicle, is adequate, effective and ensures active supervision.
- A nominated supervisor, responsible person or a staff member (other than the driver) must:
 - be present when children embark and disembark a vehicle at the service premises
 - account for each child when they embark and disembark a vehicle at the service premises
 - complete a check of the interior of the vehicle after all children have disembarked at the service premises to ensure there are no children left on the vehicle.
- Where an educator assumes responsibility for driving the bus (and holds the relevant license to drive), they are not considered to be included in the ratio to meet ratio requirements
- Consideration will be given to the number of educators who have required first aid qualifications and the number of educators required to educate and care for children who remain at the service.
- Where a group of children are taken on transportation while a number of children remain at the service, at least one educator who holds the following qualifications must be in attendance at both the

transportation and at the service where children are being educated and cared for, and must be immediately available in an emergency. At least:

- a staff member or one nominated supervisor of the service who holds a current approved first aid qualification
- a staff member or one nominated supervisor of the service who has undertaken current approved anaphylaxis management training
- a staff member or one nominated supervisor of the service who has undertaken approved emergency asthma management training (Regulation 136(1)).
- All educators attending the transportation will be made aware of the service's policy and procedures that set out the instructions for what must be done in the event of an emergency (Regulation 97(1)(a)) and are aware of the risk assessment for the transportation.

Families and Volunteers

- Families will be encouraged to participate in transportation to increase the number of responsible adults and assist in ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of children.
- Criteria according to NSW Office of the Children's Guardian will be adhered to with Working with Children Check.
- Assign roles and responsibilities with designated educators to specific roles during the excursion, including first aid officer and supervision. Ensure additional adult participants not employed by the service are verified as volunteers according to the Working with Children Check criteria from NSW Office of The Children's Guardian.
- Families and volunteers cannot be counted in order to meet ratio requirements under the Education and Care Services National Regulations.
- Family members wishing to attend will be mature, responsible people who are aware of the hazards and responsibilities of taking a group of children out of the service. If the responsible adult needs to bring their child's sibling because they cannot find suitable care, the responsibility provided to this adult will be adjusted accordingly and considered in the risk assessment.
- Family members/volunteers will not be left in sole charge of children (including their children) and must be supervised by an educator at all times.
- All responsible adults attending the transportation will be made aware of the service's policy and procedures that set out the instructions for what must be done in the event of an emergency (Regulation 97(1)(a)) and are aware of the risk assessment for the transportation.

Conducting the Transportation

- All educators, volunteers and children using the transportation will be informed of transportation timetable/ itinerary, special requirements, safety procedures, grouping of children and responsibilities.
- A list of children using the transportation will be left at the service and a copy carried by the delegated responsible person.
- Items to be readily available when transporting children include:
 - a suitable stocked first-aid kit including EpiPen; a list of adults involved in transportation and contact information for each
 - an operating mobile phone with an appropriate telephone network or other means of communicating with the service and emergency services;

- a list of children involved, including children's contact information, emergency contact numbers and the child's registered medical practitioner or medical service;
- children's medication, medical management plans and individual risk assessment and
- other items as required e.g. sunscreen, drinking cups, jackets, hats, hygiene products etc.

Record keeping and accounting for children during regular transportation includes:

- The approved provider and nominated supervisor must ensure that records are kept for regular transportation that:
 - confirm each child was accounted for when embarking and disembarking the vehicle at the service premises
 - state how each child was accounted for at the service premises
 - state that the interior of vehicle was checked after all children have disembarked at the service premises.
- The records must be made immediately and include the time, date, full name and signature of the person/s responsible for:
 - accounting for the children during embarking and disembarking of the vehicle
 - conducting the vehicle check after children have disembarked

Mandatory notifications

From 1 March 2023, it will be mandatory to notify the regulatory authority that your service provides or arranges regular transportation. The notification is to be lodged through the NQA IT System.

- the approved provider must notify the regulatory authority in a service approval application, or if the service is already approved, within seven (7) days of regular transportation being provided or arranged by the service.
- the approved provider must notify the regulatory authority within seven (7) days if the service starts or stops providing or arranging regular transportation.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Authority/Responsibility For
Approved Provider	• Assume responsibility under the National Law for the safety, health and wellbeing of all children at all times that children are in the care of the service/s. • Ensure that any child being educated and cared for by the service is not transported by the service or in transportation arranged by the service unless written authorisation has been given. • Ensure that records are kept for regular transportation.

Role	Authority/Responsibility For
	• Ensure that the regulatory authority is notified that your service offers, provides arranges or ceases regular transportation. • Ensure the service has policies and procedures for transportation (Regulation 168 (2)(g)(ga) including: ○ procedures that address requirements for risk assessments (Regulations 102AAB, 102AAC, 102B, 102C, 102E, 102F) ○ written authorisations (Regulation 102D) ○ record keeping requirements (102E and 102F)
Nominated Supervisor / Responsible Person	• Taking steps to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children when being transported by or on transport arranged by, the service. • Ensuring that any child being educated and cared for by the service is not transported by the service or in transportation arranged by the service unless written authorisation has been given. • Ensure that the number of educators or other responsible adults involved in the transportation of children, including when children are embarking or disembarking the vehicle, is adequate, effective and ensures active supervision. • A nominated supervisor or a staff member (other than the driver) must: ○ be present when children embark and disembark a vehicle at the service premises • Only allocating educators to attend transportation of children who understand and are confident with, the transport risk assessment and any associated policies and procedures. • A staff member or nominated supervisor (other than the driver) being present at the service to account for all children as they embark and disembark at the service premises and keep a record of how each child was accounted for. • A check of the interior of the vehicle to ensure there are no children left behind. • Ensuring items to be taken on transportation are well stocked and easily accessible. • Ensuring first aid items taken on transportation are fully stocked and in date, including emergency medication. • Only using/ fitting child restraints in accordance with the National Child Restraint Laws and the mandatory standard AS/NZS 1754 Child restraint systems for use in motor vehicles • Ensuring that the transportation means meets all safety requirements for the transport of children, insurances, including approved child restraints, fire extinguishers and emergency exits. • Ensuring that sufficient educators are in attendance on the transportation to meet the Education and Care Services National Laws, Regulations and supervision requirements across the service. The transport operator/ driver will not be included in this ratio. • Ensuring that service transportation is kept clean and tidy. • Ensuring that any chartered transport companies provide evidence of the operators WWCC and that this is verified before the use of the transportation.

Role	Authority/Responsibility For
	- Ensuring that any chartered transport companies provide evidence of the operator's working with children check (or equivalent), and that this is verified before the use of the transportation. - Ensure that records are kept for regular transportation.
Early Childhood Educators	- Taking steps to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children when being transported by or on transport arranged by, the service. - Following all service policies, procedures and risks assessments in relation to transportation and child protection. - Conduct and document regular head counts as detailed in the transport risk assessment. - Remaining responsible for all children being transported and provide particularly close attention to any children in their assigned group. - Complete records accounting for the children embarking and disembarking the vehicle at the services premises. - Conduct the vehicle check after children have disembarked. - Promoting a safe and secure transportation journey for children, engaging in meaningful interactions throughout. - Maintaining items that are taken on transportation in a neat and organised fashion. Notify the responsible person of any items that need replacing and ensure the items are returned to their designated space at the conclusion of transportation, ready for their next use. - Communicating with other staff before and during the transportation to keep children safe and implement any risk minimisation strategies. - Ensuring relevant medical plans, risk assessments, medication and contact details for each child attending the transportation are readily available. - Ensuring that no child is ever left unsupervised on any transportation. - Ensuring that all safety restraints are used correctly before and during transportation. - Removing children who are in strollers first, ensuring stroller brakes are on, before assisting other children. This is always to occur on the side of the vehicle away from traffic and, wherever possible, in a position where road crossing is not required. - Having their current drivers license with them at all times, if driving. - Not using their mobile phones while directly responsible for children, other than for the purposes of the transportation or in an emergency. - Implementing road safety activities and messages with children across the service program. - Role modelling road safety practices at all times.

Role	Authority/Responsibility For
Families	- Nominating on their child's enrolment record, any persons having authority to authorise transportation of their child - Notifying the service of their child's absence, or any changes to authorisation for transportation. - Role modelling road safety practices, including holding their child's hand when arriving and departing the service. - Never leaving a child unattended in a vehicle while delivering or collecting other children from the service. - Using and fitting correct child restraints.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

It is good practice for every approved provider, nominated supervisor, family day care coordinator and educator to apply the new safety requirements for regular transportation to all periods of transportation including single trips.

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 twelve months.

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.

National Quality Standard (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

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.

2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.
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EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND REGULATIONS

S. 2A	Paramount consideration – safety, rights and best interests of children
S. 3A	Paramount consideration
S.51	Conditions on service approval
S. 165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
S.167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
Sec 172	Requirements for approved providers to display certain information at their education and care service premises
Sec 101(2)	Risk assessments for excursions, beyond the general requirement to identify and assess risks.
85	Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness policies and procedures
89	First aid kits
98	Telephone or other communication equipment
99(4)	Children leaving the education and care service premises
100	Risk assessment must be conducted before excursion
101	Conduct a risk assessment for excursion
102	Authorisation for excursions
102B	Transport risk assessment must be conducted before service transports child
102C	Conduct a risk assessment for transporting children by the education and care service
102D	Authorisation for service to transport children
102E	Children embarking a means of transport – centre-based services
102F	Children disembarking a means of transport – centre-based services
102(4)	Written authorisations for children leaving premises
122	Educators must be working directly with children to be included in ratios
123	Educator to child ratios
136	First aid qualifications

151	Record of educators working directly with children
158	Children's attendance record to be kept by approved provider
161	Authorisations to be kept with enrolment record
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
172	Notification of changes to policies and procedures
175	Prescribed information to be notified to the regulatory authority
177	Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by the approved provider
183	Storage of records and other documents

Related Policies

Child Safe Environment Policy

Delivery of Children to, and collection from Education and Care Service Premises

Health and Safety Policy

Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy

Retention of Records Policy

Supervision Policy

Related Resources

Emergency Bag Audit

Emergency Management Plan (EMP)

Related References

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). Guide to the National Quality Framework.

Australian Government Department of Education. (2023). Help in an emergency

Australian Government Department of Home Affairs. Emergency Management

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

Education and Care Services National Regulations. (Amended 2023).

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

Work Health and Safety Act 2011.

Review

POLICY REVIEWED BY: Suzi Scott

POLICY REVIEWED: July 2026

NEXT REVIEW DATE: July 2027

MODIFICATIONS: July 2026- Additional information regarding the paramountcy principle, information to be included in the risk assessment, information for regular outings, including additional Regs and Law relevant to the policy