

Water Safety

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

Policy Statement

The safety and supervision of children is paramount when in or around water. This relates to managing water safety including any activity involving water play, excursions near water, safety around hot water, and hygiene practices with water in the Service environment. Children will be actively supervised at all times during water play experiences to help keep children safe in and around water and support children's learning in a safe environment. Water safety education is embedded in the educational program to help children develop lifelong safety awareness.

Background

To ensure the safety and supervision of children in and around water. This includes water play, excursions near water, hot water, drinking water and hygiene practices with water in the Service environment.

Important: Parents will be notified as soon as practicable but within 24 hours if their child is involved in an incident/accident at the Service or while under Service care. Details of the incident/accident will be recorded on a Safety Incident Form.

Regulation 176: If the incident/accident situation or event present imminent or severe risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of the child or if an ambulance was called in response to the emergency (not as a precaution) the regulatory authority will be notified within 24 hours. Educators will follow emergency procedures and contact emergency services if a child appears to be missing or unaccounted for or is involved in a serious incident or accident.

Strategies

Implementation

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, an Approved Provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for managing water safety, including during any water-based activities and take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed.

According to Kidsafe, drowning is one of the leading causes of unintentional death for Australian children. Every year a number of children are killed and hundreds more rescued from near drowning situations. Non-fatal drowning incidents are also of great concern as they can have potential long-term effects, including brain damage and permanent disability.

The most common factor in childhood drowning is lack of supervision. A child can drown in as little as a few centimetres of water. Items such as nappy buckets, sinks, pet drinking bowls, ponds, pools, water features, water tanks are all potential drowning hazards. [source: Kidsafe]

Water Hazards

The National Regulations make reference to '*water hazards*' however the term is not expressly defined. In this policy, a water hazard is defined as anything that can hold 5cm of water and fit a child's nose and mouth and a 'water hazard' may include:

- large bodies of water such as dams, creeks, river or pooling water, swimming pool, portable pools and spas, jetted bathtubs (or Jacuzzis)
- fishponds
- smaller bodies of water such as baths, mop buckets
- sinks, basins
- water features, such as a wishing well
- containers for feeding animals
- water troughs, containers for paddling- clam shells
- beach

The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor/ Responsible Person will :

- adhere to all obligations under the Education and Care National Law and Regulations
- complete detailed risk assessments that identify and assess risks associated with any water hazards and water-based activities
- ensure adequate supervision is provided when participating in water activities including: - direct and constant monitoring of children - careful and intentional positioning of educators - scanning and moving around the environment - observing play and anticipating behaviour - ensuring higher adult to child ratios - ensuring no child is left unattended when in proximity to water
 - Ensure educators, staff, students and volunteers have knowledge of and adhere to this policy and associated procedure and are advised on how and where the policy can be accessed

- Ensure all educators, staff and volunteers participate in a comprehensive induction that includes an understanding of child safety, CPR and our water safety policy
- provide direction and education to educators, staff and families on the importance of children's safety and supervision in and around water
- ensure health and safety practices incorporate approaches to safe storage of water and water play
- ensure premises adjacent to or providing access to any water hazards that are not able to be adequately supervised at all times (e.g. dams, swimming pool) are to be isolated from children by a child resistant barrier or fence
- ensure there are no items near fencing that children could climb up onto to gain access to a water hazard (pot plants, boxes, chairs)
- conduct a risk assessment in accordance with Regulation 101 prior to taking children on an excursion-consider any water hazards and any risks associated with water-based activities before an excursion/incursion is approved
- ensure at least one educator who holds a current approved first aid qualification is in attendance at the service at all times including emergency life support and cardio pulmonary resuscitation
- display a Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) guide near any swimming pool, wading pool, or body of water
- ensure hot water is inaccessible to children, including hot drinks accessed by educators, staff or families
- ensure the regulatory authority is notified within 24 hours of becoming aware of a serious incident.

Educators will:

- provide active supervision when children are participating in water activities including:
 - o supervise children near water at all times
 - o never leave children alone near any water
 - o direct and constant monitoring of children
 - o scanning and moving around the environment
 - o observing play and anticipating behaviour

- ensure children in a bath (if required) are
 - o directly supervised at all times; and
 - o remain within an arm's reach of an educator
- ensure fish / frog ponds and water features that are not able to be adequately supervised at all times and/or pose an unacceptable risk to children are guarded or effective barriers are in place
- complete a daily Safety Inspection of premises to ensure that all hazards are known and minimised
- when a hazard or potential hazard is detected, educators will complete a risk assessment to address any concerns and children will be excluded from the area until the hazard has been rectified.
- utilise water activities in appropriate weather as part of the planned program
- allow the children the opportunity to experiment with water, sand, and mixing materials.
- incorporate water safety awareness into the educational program
- monitor all taps on the premises that children have access to and ensure they are turned off securely when not in use
- safely cover or make inaccessible to children all water containers, e.g. mop buckets.
- empty wading pools immediately after every use and store to prevent the collection of water, e.g., upright
- check for and empty any water that has collected in holes or containers after rainfall or watering gardens
- ensure water troughs are not used without a stand to keep it off the ground
- ensure children remain standing on the ground whilst using the water trough
- ensure buckets of water for soaking toys or clothing are inaccessible to children
 - Ensure that any body of water with a depth greater than 3cm is inaccessible to children at all times and is guarded with an effective barrier at all times (child-proof fence/grate over the water)
- ensure water troughs or containers for water play are filled to a safe level and emptied into the garden areas after **each** use

- discourage children from drinking from these water activities (as above)
- ensure laundry, storerooms and educator areas are to have **Staff only** signs on doors to remind adults to close doors behind them
- teach children about staying safe in and around water

Operational Safety

- Hot water accessible to children will be maintained at the temperature of 45.C° which will be tested annually. (Australian standard AS 3498)
- Hot drinks are not to be consumed near children by educators, students or visitors
- Water for pets at the Service must be changed daily and only be accessible to children when educators are present.

IMPORTANT: Parents will be notified as soon as practicable but within 24 hours if their child is involved in an incident/accident at the Service or while under Service care. Details of the incident/accident will be recorded on an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record.

Regulation 176: If the incident/accident situation, or event presents imminent or severe risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of the child or if an ambulance was called in response to the emergency (not as a precaution) the regulatory authority will be notified within 24 hours. Educators will follow emergency procedures and contact emergency services if a child appears to be missing or unaccounted for or is involved in a serious incident or accident.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

2.1.2	Health Practices and Procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented
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, practised and implemented

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS/EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS

Sec. 165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
Sec. 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards Kids
25(1)(c)	Additional information about proposed education and care services premises
12	Meaning of a serious incident
101	Conduct of risk assessment for excursion
115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
122	Educators must be working directly with children to be included in ratios
126	Centre based services – general educator qualifications
136	First aid qualification
168(2)(a)(iii)	Education and care service must have policies and procedures in relation to – water safety, including safety during any water-based activities
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
176	Time to notify the certain information to the Regulatory Authority

Relevant references:

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

ACECQA. (2021). Policy and procedure guidelines- *Water Safety Guidelines*

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2018).

Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2011)

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2017).

KidSafe (2021). Water Safety. <https://kidsafe.com.au/water-safety/>

National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC): www.nhmrc.gov.au

NSW Department of Health: www.health.nsw.gov.au

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

Policy reviewed by: Suzi Scott

Policy review date: July 2026

Next review date: July 2027

Modifications: July 2026 - additional information for approved provider and nominated supervisor, information about notifying of incidents