Children's Comfort, Rest and Relaxation Policy

Policy Number: 1
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Rationale and Policy Considerations

The education and care service understands it has a duty of care to ensure that children are provided with a nurturing environment that provides for children's needs for comfort, rest and relaxation. Children's health and wellbeing is fundamental to their development. Children need to be supported to feel a sense of belonging and comfort within the education and care environment. Experiences that promote awareness of care and safety for themselves and others will assist children to become competent, independent, and develop valuable life skills.

The Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012 requires that the Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor take reasonable care to protect children's health and safety. The Red Nose Foundation provides guidelines for children's safety whilst sleeping, and relevant health authorities provide information on children's comfort and wellbeing.

Most relevant policies and procedures

- Educator Handbook
- Sun Protection
- Supervision

Scope

This policy is written for children, educators and visitors of Lifestreamers Early Learning.

Policy Statement

Educators will consult with families about their child's clothing needs for play and rest experiences, both indoors and outdoors, and will ensure each child's individual needs are met. Educators will always consider children's comfort and safety.

Educators will talk to children about appropriate clothing for different weather conditions, clothing for sun protection and different fashions and traditional clothing from around the world. Programs will include opportunity for dress-ups as well as allowing time for children to attempt to dress themselves and put their own shoes and socks on. Educators will be patient with new attempts and provide assistance before frustration sets in.

We believe that rest is an important part of the child's day and encourage all children to have a quiet period of 40 minutes where they can relax and rejuvenate. This part of the day allows the children to prepare themselves for the afternoon activities, and by resting, they are better able to utilise the experiences we provide.

Educators will consult with families about their child's sleeping/rest patterns and where possible, will develop procedures to ensure each child's individual needs are met. Sleep procedures and sleep equipment will consider current health and safety advice from recognised health and safety authorities. There will be a comfortable place and experiences that promote rest and relaxation always provided for children.

Policy Principles

Clothing

- Educators will discuss appropriate dress with children in relation to:
    - current weather conditions and differing seasons
    - indoor or outdoor play

    - different activities.
- Children will be required to wear clothing that will provide protection from harmful UV rays in the warmer months. Children are required to wear shirts that cover their shoulders and neck. Therefore, singlets and summer tops with the back missing will be changed for a t-shirt before going outside. (Refer to Sun Protection Policy.)
- Hats and sunscreen must be worn whenever the educators and children are engaged in outdoor activities. Legionnaire, bucket or broad brim hats that cover the ears, neck, face and nose need to be provided by families and worn. Most skin cancers appear on the head and neck and are linked to lifetime exposure to UV rays.
- Families and children will be consulted about individual clothing needs, preferences and cultural requirements, and will make every effort to address these issues within the service's requirements for children's health and safety.
- Children will be encouraged to communicate their needs for comfort and assistance and develop independence and competence in their own personal hygiene, care and safety.
- Educators will ensure that young children are appropriately dressed for their age, mobility, experiences and activities within the service.
- Sleeping babies will wear clothes to keep them comfortably warm but not hot, and educators will ensure sleeping babies' heads and faces are uncovered, to prevent the baby from overheating, in line with Red Nose recommendations.
- Educators will encourage children's independence in dressing and undressing and allow sufficient time for children to practice and master these skills within the daily routines of the service.
- The service will supply sufficient spare clothing to ensure children are always kept comfortable and dry. Spare clothing that goes home with children will need to be washed and returned for future use.
- Children should arrive at the centre in comfortable footwear that is suitable should we decide to go on an impromptu walking excursion.
- Children will be given the choice as to whether they want to wear their shoes or to take them off while they are at the centre.
- Soiled/wet clothing will not be rinsed or washed at the service as this can spread germs. Soiled clothing will be placed in a wet bag, zipped up to prevent leakage, and returned to the family when they arrive to collect their child.
- Where children have special support needs or are pre-school age, families are required to provide at least one change of clothing for their child in the child's bag. Children in nappies or toilet training should be provided with more than one change of clothing.
- Parents are asked to label each piece of their child's clothing and shoes, to avoid loss or any mix-up in clothing.
- The service will provide protective clothing to be worn during messy activities.
- Families are encouraged to not send their children to LEL in good clothes. While we make every effort to wear aprons during messy play, we will not be liable for stained clothes as accidents do occur and paint always seems to find the smallest gap!
- Educators will always role model appropriate clothing.
- Dress-up clothes will be of a suitable size and variety to meet the needs of all children involved in the experience. They will be washed at the end of the program ready for the next use.

Rest and Relaxation

- Educators will provide an opportunity for children to sleep/rest or relax within the service's daily routine.
- Educators will encourage children to sleep to meet their individual developmental needs.
- Children will not be forced to sleep at any time. Children are not forced to sleep but are expected to have a rest on their beds while the other children go to sleep. Quiet activities will be made available for children to experience once the other children are asleep.
- Sleep/rest times will be regarded as a positive, pleasant experience within the service and educators will make every effort to provide a relaxing and comfortable sleep environment for all children. Educators will ensure children are dressed appropriately and closely monitored (within hearing range and regularly observed) whilst sleeping.

- Each child's bedding will be washed at least once a week or after soiling in line with Health, Hygiene and Infection Control Policy. Those who share a bed have their sheets washed in between each child's use.
- Calm music, dim light and appropriate temperature will be provided for the sleeping environments.
- Jumpers will be taken off for rest time so that the children do not get too hot and will have something warm to put on when they wake up. Any clothing with hoods or cords will also be removed for sleep.
- Children under two, who are sleeping, will be checked every ten minutes by checking the rise and fall of the child's chest and the child's lip and skin colour from the side of the cot/bed.
- Educators will ensure their knowledge and understanding of recommendations from Red Nose is current and applicable. Where possible staff will implement recommendations from Red Nose within the service's sleep/rest routines. Other factors such as age of the child, cultural needs and requests from families will also be considered when tailoring individual sleeping patterns.
- Each room will evaluate their sleep and rest procedure every year and make any necessary changes. Babies younger than 6 months old should not be sleeping on their tummy. Babies should 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.
- Sleep and rest risk assessment is conducted at least once a year and as soon as practicable after any circumstance that may affect the safety, health or wellbeing of children during sleep and rest.
- No wrapping baby as soon as they start showing signs that they can begin to roll. 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 can roll from back to tummy to back again (usually four to six months of age). Use only lightweight wraps such as cotton or muslin.
- 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. Within the Early Learning environment, this usually happens between 12 and 18 months in preparation for transition to the next room. Children sleep on mattresses on the floor to avoid injury should they roll off.
- Comforters and/or security toys may be brought in for sleep/rest periods; however, such items must not impact on the safety of children whist sleeping. Soft toys should never be placed in the sleeping environment of an infant under 7 months of age.
- Dummies will have their cords removed before sleep time. If a dummy falls out of a baby's mouth during sleep it should not be reinserted.
- If blankets are being used instead of a sleeping bag, ensure baby is placed with his/her feet at the end of the cot, tucking the blanket securely under the mattress, so it can only ride up as far as baby's chest and cannot cover his/her head.
- No blankets are to be hung on the cot when a child is sleeping in it.
- Children will be consulted on the rules and routines that relate to the comfort of individuals and the group.

Related Legislation and Documents

- Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012.
- Federal and State Health and Safety Legislation
- Red Nose Safe Sleeping

Document History

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