

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT POLICY

The physical environment can contribute to children's wellbeing, happiness, and creativity as well as promoting the development of independence. It can contribute to and make visible the quality of children's learning and involvement in experiences. The choices made in a Family Day Care service about resources, materials, spaces, layout, air, and light in combination with access to a range of experiences in the indoor and outdoor areas, have a direct impact on the quality of learning opportunities available to children.

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.
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.1.3	Healthy Lifestyles	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.
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.

QUALITY AREA 3: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
3.1.1	Fit for Purpose	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.
3.1.2	Upkeep	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
73	Educational programs
74	Documenting of child assessments or evaluations for delivery of educational program
75	Information about the educational program to be kept available
76	Information about educational program to be given to parents
80	Weekly menu
82	Tobacco, drug and alcohol -free environment
86	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
99	Children leaving the education and care service premises
102	Authorisation for excursions
103	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
104	Fencing and security
105	Furniture, materials and equipment
106	Laundry and hygiene facilities
107	Space requirements—indoor
108	Space requirements—outdoor space
109	Toilet and hygiene facilities
110	Ventilation and natural light
111	Administrative space
112	Nappy change facilities
113	Outdoor space—natural environment
114	Outdoor space—shade
115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
116	Assessments of family day care residences and approved family day care venues
117	Glass (additional requirement for family day care)
156	Relationships in groups
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
73	Educational programs

PURPOSE

Kidzone Family Day Care Service will ensure the environment is safe, clean, and well maintained for children, families, educators, and visitors. Children's awareness of the environment and sustainable practice will be supported through daily practices, resources and interactions. The physical environment will support children's participation and engagement, development, learning, and safety, and will provide supervised access to positive experiences and inclusive relationships.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Coordinator, Educators, Educator Assistants, children, families, and visitors of the Family Day Care Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Family Day Care Service is committed to providing an environment that promotes safety and enhances children's learning and development by:

Choosing appropriate resources and equipment:

- Appropriately sized furniture and equipment will be provided in both the indoor and outdoor environment for the age ranges represented in the Family Day Care service.
- The Educator will be responsible for all purchases, including equipment and consumables for the daily running of the service.
- Educator assistants may provide ideas for equipment and materials purchase based on the observed needs and interests of the children.
- Educators will complete a log of equipment that needs maintenance on a prioritised basis and ensure this is repaired as soon as possible.
- The FDC Service will actively seek the input of parents/guardians regarding current interests of their children so as to purchase appropriate toys and equipment.
- Resources and equipment will be chosen to reflect the cultural diversity of the FDC Service's community and the cultural diversity of contemporary Australia, including the incorporation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
- Children will be provided with resources and equipment that encourages appropriate challenges and risk taking in accordance with their individual developmental level.
- The environment will be organised to ensure safety and minimal disruption for children whilst playing.

- Specific equipment requirements of children with additional needs will be catered for to ensure an inclusive environment.
- Climbing equipment will be set up in a safe way and compliant with Australian Safety Standards. For example, incorporating soft fall materials wherever climbing equipment is set up.
- Frequent risk assessments of the indoor and outdoor environment will be conducted in order to minimise risk and hazards.
- An environment will be provided that allows different types of play to occur both in the indoor and outdoor areas (e.g. quiet play areas and loud play areas)
- A natural environment for children to explore and experience will be provided which may include plants, trees, gardens, rock, mud and/or water.
- Educators and educator assistants will participate in on-going professional development in order to enhance children's learning and ensuring a safe and educational environment.
- An environment that ensures children are appropriately supervised at all times will be provided.
- All required fencing will be maintained in good condition and is compliant with current regulations.
- A variety of indoor and outdoor experiences will be provided, catering for children's interests and abilities.
- Children will be supported to access appropriate furniture, resources, materials, toys and equipment. These resources will be adequate in number for the number of children attending our Service and be developmentally appropriate.
- A developmentally appropriate environment will be provided where children can explore, solve problems, create, construct and engage in critical thinking.
- An environment will be provided that permits children to participate in activities independently or in small groups, and access resources autonomously.
- The environment will incorporate commercial, natural, recycled, homemade, and real resources that can be used in a variety of ways to encourage children's learning and creativity.
- Sufficient and accessible handwashing, toileting, eating, and sleeping facilities will be available.
- Adequate and appropriate hygienic facilities for nappy changing are provided, which are soundly constructed ensuring children's safety.
- Natural and artificial lighting, appropriate ventilation, heating, cooling and fresh air will be incorporated into the building.
- Appropriate areas for food preparation are provided.
- A separate indoor space for children who are under two years of age is available.

KIDZONE FAMILY DAY CARE

- An area for managerial purposes, consultation with children's parents and for private conversations to occur is available.
- Power points not in use have safety caps, all double adaptors and power-boards are out of reach of children, and all electrical cords are secured and not dangling.
- Educators discuss the safety characteristics of using toys and equipment with children.
- Where appropriate children are involved in setting classroom guidelines.
- Families are provided with the latest safety information on items such as cots, highchairs, car seats, etc.
- All equipment, including resources, equipment, car seats, booster seats, etc. meet relevant Australian Standards and educators are trained in correct maintenance and assembly.

Laundering of soiled items:

- Soiled clothing will be returned to a child's home for laundering. Educators will remove soiled content and place into a plastic bag. Items will be stored securely in a sealed container or double-bagged before being placed in the child's bag.

Ongoing Maintenance:

- The Family Day Care Service will continuously reflect on its environment and put in place a plan to ensure that the environment continuously reflects our ideology of providing an environment that is safe, stimulating and engaging for all who interact with it.
- The Approved Provider will ensure that the Service and its grounds comply with National Regulations.

Safety Checks:

A daily inspection of the premises will be undertaken before children begin to arrive.

This inspection will include:

- Residence perimeters
- Fences/Fence Line
- Gates
- Paths
- Buildings
- All rooms accessible by children

- Fixed equipment
- Sand Pit (if applicable)

This must be done in order to identify any dangerous objects in the grounds ranging from sharps to poisonous or dangerous plants and animals.

In the event of a sharp object being found (for example a syringe) educators will wear gloves and use tongs to pick up the object and place it in the 'sharp object box'. This box will be disposed of as per the recommendations of our local council.

Similarly, trees in the grounds must be checked regularly for overhanging, dead, or dangerous looking branches as well as checked for any infestations.

Non-fixed play equipment in the FDC Service grounds can be no more than one metre high and must be supervised at all times by an Educator.

The FDC Service will have regular pest inspections carried out by an accredited pest control company. Documentation of these inspections will be kept and any further recommended treatments as a result of the findings from the pest control check will be carried out in a timely manner.

The Indoor and Outdoor Daily Safety Checklists will be used as the procedure to conduct these safety checks. A record of these will be kept by the service. The Educator will make the appropriate arrangements to have repairs carried out as soon as possible.

The following is a guideline:

Checklist: Outdoor:

- ☐ **Bikes and wheeled toys** –correctly fitted helmets are worn every time children use 'bikes' and wheeled toys. Further information is available from the Early Childhood Road Safety Education Program on (02) 9850 9882.
- ☐ **Building maintenance** – regularly maintain and check for hazards, check building is in a safe, clean and hygienic condition. Records of any damage and subsequent repairs are kept.
- ☐ **Doors** – have finger jam protectors.
- ☐ **Dust mites, pet allergens** – regular dusting and vacuuming.
- ☐ **Educator's personal items** –Educator 's personal items such as bags, sharp instruments, toiletries and medicines are kept secure and are inaccessible to children.

- ☐ **Ensure children are visible and supervised at all times.** High-risk areas and climbing and other outdoor play equipment is supervised at all times. Hazardous equipment, machinery, chemicals, and any other materials is inaccessible to children.
- ☐ **FDC home driveway** – we ensure family members are aware of pedestrian safety rules such as holding their child’s hand and alighting children from the safety door. Families must always supervise their children in the car park to prevent accidents and injuries, which could occur as a result of reversing vehicles.
- ☐ **Fences** – securely and effectively provide a suitable barrier to all sides of outdoor play areas from roads, water hazards, and driveways. Fences have correct height for the purpose. Childproof self-locking devices are installed on gates.
- ☐ **Finger entrapment** – all holes or openings in playground equipment are between 8-25 mm to avoid finger entrapment.
- ☐ **First aid kit** is approved, maintained, and accessible throughout outdoor play.
- ☐ **Garbage** – safe and prompt disposal. Lidded secure bins are used that prevent child access and are maintained in a clean and safe condition. Our Service participates in a recycling program.
- ☐ **Garden** and renovation debris removed. Branches and bushes are regularly trimmed.
- ☐ **Garages and sheds** – are kept locked.
- ☐ **Hazardous Plants** – are identified and removed or made inaccessible to children.
- ☐ **Heating, cooling, ventilation, lighting** – is comfortable, safe, maintained, guarded and kept out of reach of children.
- ☐ **Machinery, tools and equipment** –all engine operated or other hazardous equipment, tools or machinery are stored securely and are inaccessible to children.
- ☐ **Non-slip** floors, stairs, and steps are used and nonporous indoor floors for easy cleaning.
- ☐ **Renovation** - dangers e.g. lead, asbestos, holes and excavations –risks are minimised according to the situation.
- ☐ **Pesticide residue** - dangerous chemicals are not be used to remove vermin.
- ☐ **Pet and animal droppings** are cleared or inaccessible to children in outdoor areas, dogs are excluded from children’s play areas, pet interactions with children are supervised.
- ☐ **Play equipment** that is higher than 50cm has soft fall installed underneath at least 25cm in depth and extends 1.9m from the perimeter of the equipment. Outdoor play equipment is placed away from paths and solid garden edging.
- ☐ **Pool safety, fencing and gate compliance**, paddling pools are emptied immediately after use, turned upside down, and disinfected if soiled.
- ☐ **Safe play rules and adequate safe play areas** – we talk with children about how to play safely. We maintain safe layouts for outdoor play areas to avoid collisions between children.

- ☐ **Safety glass** is installed according to the Australian Standards on all glass doors and windows accessible to children, and safety decals on both sliding doors and plate glass doors at child and adult eye level or guarded by barriers that prevent a child from striking or falling against the glass.
- ☐ **Sandpits** – are covered when not in use, regularly cleaned, raked, and sand soiled by faeces or blood is removed. Sandpits are hosed and disinfected after removing contaminated sand and material.
- ☐ **Security** - unauthorised access is minimized with appropriate fencing and locks.
- ☐ **Soft fall** - appropriate ground cover under outdoor climbing and play equipment, meets standards
- ☐ **Spills** – are cleaned up as they occur
- ☐ **Sun protection** - clothing, hats, and sunscreen, for un-shaded areas – we minimise play at peak sun exposure times. A sunshade or natural shade covers sandpits and play areas.
- ☐ **Surfacing used underneath and around equipment** complies with Australian and New Zealand Standards AS/NZS 4422, 1996, and is maintained regularly; materials may need to be raked, redistributed and checked weekly for spiders, sharp objects or animal litter
- ☐ **Under Service access** (including buildings on stilts and footings) – access is blocked or locked.
- ☐ **Window fly screens** are securely fitted, maintained, and permanent.
- ☐ **Water hazards** – are covered and made inaccessible to children, e.g. ponds, dams, spas, creeks, nappy buckets.
- ☐ **Water troughs** are used under adult supervision only and will not be used without a stand, keeping it off the ground. Children remain standing on the ground whilst using the water trough.

Checklist: Indoors

- ☐ **Barriers** - age appropriate, child proof, self-locking barriers are in place for balconies, stairways, kitchen, bathroom, laundry, garage, other levels in the Service, front and back garden.
- ☐ **Children at risk** – we maintain extra security and supervision for children at special risk.
- ☐ **Choking hazards** – the environment is monitored for small toy parts, beads, nuts, blind and curtain cords, plastic bags, sandwich bags and balloons.
- ☐ **Decorations and children's artwork** – are not placed near ceiling fans, air conditioners or heaters. The use of tacks, pins, and staples is avoided.

- ☐ **Educator's personal items** –Educator 's personal items such as bags, sharp instruments, toiletries and medicines are kept secure and are inaccessible to children.
- ☐ **Emergency evacuations** –an evacuation plan and emergency contact numbers are displayed, families are informed, and evacuation procedures are regularly practiced.
- ☐ **Fire** – fire blanket, extinguisher, fire exits, smoke detectors, electrical safety switch are checked regularly and serviced as required.
- ☐ **First aid kit** with approved contents is maintained and accessible. First Aid certificates are current for relevant educators.
- ☐ **Furniture and nursery equipment** - stable, maintained and meets safety standards.
- ☐ **Guard and make inaccessible to Children:** heaters, coolers, fireplaces, stoves, microwaves, power points, and office equipment. Heaters are away from children's cots.
- ☐ **Hazardous indoor plants** are identified or removed.
- ☐ **Heaters** –children cannot come in contact with hot surfaces. It is preferable to use heating where combustion products are ducted outside. If gas heating is used ensure there is adequate ventilation while the heater is operating.
- ☐ **Hot water** - the hot water supply is regulated so as to keep it below the temperature at which a child can be scalded (the current KidSafe NSW Inc. recommendation is below 43.5°C).
- ☐ **Machinery, tools and equipment** – all office and classroom machinery, tools, and equipment is stored securely and inaccessible to children.
- ☐ **Nappy Changing-** ensure nappy changing arrangements are safe and suitable for ages of children attending service.
- ☐ **Noise** – we reduce excessive exposure.
- ☐ **Non-slip, non-porous** floors and stairs are in the building.
- ☐ **Pets and animals** –families are informed of pets being kept on the premises and plans to obtain new pets. Pets are vaccinated, wormed, don't have fleas, are clean, and healthy. Pet accessories such as pet food, litter boxes, and pet toys are kept away from children. Dogs are excluded from children's play areas. Children-pet interactions are minimal and supervised at all times.
- ☐ **Record details** - Parents are notified of any child accident.
- ☐ **Safe play rules and adequate play spaces:** we discourage running indoors and provide safe furniture layout to avoid collisions.
- ☐ **Safety glass used and installed** according to Australian Standards, and Australian Building Codes on all glass doors and windows accessible to children, **safety decals** on sliding doors and plate glass doors at child and adult eye level.
- ☐ **Security** all entry doors are locked at all times and doorbells are on doors.
- ☐ **Smoke free environment** in all areas.

- ☐ **Stairways**, ramps, corridors, hallway, external balcony are enclosed to prevent a child falling.
- ☐ **Store in locked cabinet** any unsafe items, e.g. chemicals, medicines, razors, knives and electrical equipment.
- ☐ **Supervision and visibility of children** –children are visible and supervised at all times. High-risk areas requiring extra supervision include adventurous play experiences, playground equipment, ball sports. At least two educators are on the premises at all times within sight of each other and the children.
- ☐ **Toys** – meet safety standards, age appropriate, maintained, and non-toxic.

CLEANING OF BUILDINGS, PREMISES, FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT

General Cleaning

- The Service will use structured **cleaning schedules** to ensure that all cleaning is carried out regularly and thoroughly.
- Educators will clean the service at the end of each day and throughout the day as needed.
- Accidents and spills will be cleaned up as quickly as possible to ensure that the service always maintains a high level of cleanliness and hygiene.

When purchasing, storing and/or using any dangerous chemicals, substances, medicines or equipment, the Family Day Care Service will:

- Adhere at all times to manufacturer's advice and instructions when using products to clean furniture and equipment at the service.
- Store all dangerous chemicals, substances and medicines in their original containers provided by the manufacturer. All labels and/or use by dates should be kept intact at all times.
- Any substance found to be stored in a different container than originally provided, or with destroyed labels and/or unknown use by dates where applicable will not be used under any circumstances.
- Containers will be disposed of correctly following local council guidelines, and not reused under any circumstances.
- All dangerous chemicals, substances and equipment must be stored in a locked place or
 - facility that is labelled, secure and inaccessible to children. These materials may include, but are not limited to, all cleaning materials, detergents, poisonous or dangerous substances, dangerous tools and equipment including those with sharp and razor edges and toiletries.
- Educators will follow the instructions of manufacturers, particularly of any product that may need to be stored in a refrigerated environment as per instructions.
- Any substances that need to be refrigerated must be stored in a labelled, child resistant container, preferably in a separate compartment or in a part of the refrigerator inaccessible to children.

- Appropriate personal protective clothing should be worn in accordance to the manufacturer's instructions when using and disposing of hazardous substances or equipment.
- Seek medical advice immediately if poisoning or potentially hazardous ingestion, inhaled, skin or eye exposure has occurred, or call the Poisons Information Line on **13 11 26**, who may advise you to call an Ambulance on **000**.
- In the case of any child or educator becoming injured by a chemical, substance, or equipment, the Service will initiate our emergency, medical and first aid procedures, immediately notify the appropriate authority that administers workplace health and safety and any other person or authority as required by regulations or guidelines.
- In any major emergency involving a hazardous chemical or equipment, a hazardous gas or a fire or explosion hazard, call the emergency services, dial 000 and notify the appropriate authority that administers workplace health and safety and any other person or authority as required by regulations or guidelines.
- The **Poison Safety Checklist** will be used in order to ensure we are consistently meeting requirements.

Bathroom

The Family Day Care Service will:

- Supervise the bathroom, when in use.
- Encourage children to follow hygiene practices- for example: hand washing
- Maintain clean bathroom facilities, including using appropriate signage when the bathroom floor is wet.

Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment

- The Family Day Care Service ensures that electrical equipment is regularly inspected and tested by an accredited person if the electrical equipment is supplied with electricity through an electrical socket and used in conditions where it could be damaged, including exposure to moisture, heat, vibration, mechanical damage, corrosive chemicals or dust.
- A record of all electrical testing and tagging must be attached and kept until the equipment is next tested or disposed of and must specify:
 - The name of the tester.
 - The date and outcome of the testing.
 - The date on which the next testing must be carried out.

Maintenance of Fire Equipment

- All fire equipment at the Family Day Care Service will be maintained as per the legal standards. .

Service Closure

- FDC Educators are to check the entire premises to ensure that all children and families have departed by checking sign in and out sheets for all rooms AND physically checking all rooms and areas.
- FDC Educators are to follow the Service-closing procedures each night.
- In the case where a parent has omitted to sign their child out, and the Family Day Care Educators did not witness the child leave the Service, the Educators must take every step to get in contact with the parent to ensure the child has safely left the Service.
- If unable to contact the family, the FDC Educator is to contact other Educator Assistants or Coordinator present on that day for confirmation that the child has been collected.
- Individuals visiting our Family Day Care Service must also sign in when they arrive at the Service and sign out when they leave.
- Details of absences during the day must also be recorded.

SOURCE:

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

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

Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2020)

National Health and Medical Research Council. (2013). *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*.

NSW Sample Sun Protection Policy: <https://www.cancercouncil.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Final-Activated-PDF-Workplace-sun-protection-policy-general-November-2013.pdf>

Red nose Safe environment <https://rednose.org.au/section/safe-environment>

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

Swimming Pools Act 1992

Work Health and Safety Act 2011

REVIEW

Policy added	6/11/2020	Next review	6/11/2021
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