

Relaxation and Sleep

1. Authorisation

This policy was adopted by the Committee of Armadale Early Learning Centre Inc. at its Committee meeting on [10th of September, 2013](#).

2. Review Date

This policy was reviewed on [September 2013](#). This policy is to be reviewed every [4 years](#) or when deemed necessary. This policy is due to be reviewed [September 2017](#).

3. Scope

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of AELC.

4. Background and Legislations

4.1 Background

Sleep and rest are vital to children’s healthy development. “Children who get enough sleep are more engaged and less prone to behavioural problems and moodiness. Sleep also promotes alertness, memory and performance... Effective rest and sleep strategies are important to ensure that children feel secure and safe, and ECEC settings have a duty of care to ensure that all children are provided with a high level of safety and comfort when resting or sleeping and to maintain adequate supervision” (*Childcare and Children’s Health*, vol 14, no 2, June 2011 – refer to Sources).

The *Early Years Learning Framework* (EYLF) and the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* (VEYLDF) include a focus on social, emotional, spiritual and physical wellbeing and health. Development Outcome 3 in both framework documents refers to a child’s ability to take increasing responsibility for their own wellbeing. One of the indicators for this capacity is that children “recognise and communicate their bodily needs (for example thirst, hunger, rest, comfort, physical activity)”. The EYLF suggests that to promote this, educators should:

- consider the pace of the day within the context of the community
- provide a range of active and restful experiences throughout the day, and support children to make appropriate decisions regarding participation.

Employers have a responsibility under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* to provide a safe and healthy working environment. This duty extends to others present in the workplace, including children and volunteers. Providing a safe environment for

children at the service includes complying with current Australian/New Zealand standards in relation to equipment, such as cots and mattresses (refer to *Sources*).

4.2 Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Act 2012*
- *Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Regulations 2012*
- Australian/New Zealand Standard – Cots for household use – Safety Requirements (AS/NZS 2172:2010)
- Australian/New Zealand Standard – Cots for day nursery, hospital and institutional use – Safety Requirements (AS/NZS 2130:1998)
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*: Section 167
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulation 81
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety
 - Standard 2.1: Each child’s health needs are supported
 - Element 2.1.2: Each child’s comfort is provided for and there are appropriate opportunities to meet each child’s needs for sleep, rest and relaxation
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*

5. Definitions

Adequate supervision: (In relation to this policy) **supervision** entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used.

Adequate supervision refers to constant, active and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate supervision requires that educators are always in a position to observe each child, respond to individual needs, and immediately intervene if necessary. Variables affecting supervision levels include:

- number, age and abilities of children
- number and positioning of educators
- current activity of each child
- areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility)
- developmental profile of each child and of the group of children
- experience, knowledge and skill of each educator
- need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies).

Duty of care: A common law concept that refers to the responsibilities of organisations to provide people with an adequate level of protection against harm and all reasonable foreseeable risk of injury.

Relaxation/rest: A period of inactivity, solitude, calmness or tranquillity.

SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome): The unexpected and unexplained death of an infant, usually occurring during sleep.

SIDS and Kids: The National SIDS Council of Australia, dedicated to eliminating SIDS and providing support for bereaved families. SIDS and Kids is considered to be the national authority on safe sleeping practices for infants and children. A branch of SIDS and Kids is located in each state and territory, and can provide resources and assistance (refer to *Sources*).

6. Policy

6.1 Values

AELC is committed to:

- providing a positive and nurturing environment for all children attending the service
- recognising that children have different requirements for relaxation and sleep, and being responsive to those needs to ensure that children feel safe and secure at the service
- consulting with parents/guardians about their child's individual relaxation and sleep requirements/practices, and ensuring practices at the service are responsive to the values and cultural beliefs of each family
- its duty of care to all children at AELC, and ensuring that adequate supervision is maintained while children are sleeping, resting or relaxing

6.2 Purpose

This policy will provide clear guidelines for the implementation of safe relaxation and sleep practices that meet the individual needs of children attending AELC.

7. Procedures

7.1 Rest time – Group A

As this rest time is only once a week, it takes place within the kindergarten room after the children have had their lunch. This rest time is discussed with the parents at the initial interview at the beginning of the year, and the parents are asked if they do or do not wish their child to sleep or rest.

On the Wednesday (which is the long day) – after lunch the children go outside in the playground while the sleep mats are arranged around the room, some mats close together, other mats so that children who may be tired or who need a quiet spot have this opportunity.

The children's sleep sheets are in their individual bags, which are contained within a large bag, and the mats are stacked on a mobile trolley so this can be easily moved in and out of the room.

After the mats are arranged, with the individual bags containing their sleep sheets places on top of their mats, and the children have had an opportunity to have a play

outside, the children come inside (going to the toilet if needed), and take their shoes off, putting them next to their mats.

The children arrange their own sleep sheets on their mats, encouraging independence and responsibility for their belongings. The children are able to bring a quiet toy from home to play with, and a pillow and blanket if they wish. These are to be taken home each time. The sheets stay at kindergarten and are sent home at the end of each term for laundering.

A number of books are placed on tables for the children to choose and take one at a time back to their mats to read. These books may be changed as the children wish. The children also choose a book from our library shelf in the room, or from our reference books. The children are responsible for replacing these books where they came from.

After a period of reading, the books are then collected, and the children listen to a story tape. This is followed by 5 – 10 minutes of quiet relaxation music. The whole rest time takes approximately 40 minutes, but varies depending on the children's needs.

After this, the children pack up their own sheets and mats, placing them in the appropriate places, and put their shoes on (by themselves if possible).

When the process is complete, we sit on the mat together and have a picnic afternoon tea.

As the year progresses, the children are able to read together with their friends, but still respecting that this is a quiet rest time.

The children are not expected to sleep, but are expected to respect this quiet time and other children who may wish to rest or sleep. They are also expected to look after the books.

This provides the children an opportunity to recharge after a busy day, and encourages them to learn to relax, without any pressure to sleep.

7.1 Rest time – Extended Hours

- The service consults with families about their child's individual needs and to be aware of the different values and parenting beliefs, cultural or otherwise that are associated with rest.
- Children are encouraged to go to the toilet and have a drink of water before the transition
- Mattresses are spaced out with a 10 – 15 inch gap. Heads are placed so children do not breathe on one another.
- Every child has their own individual sheet which should be washed each week
- Children may bring in personal toys for comfort
- Calm music and stories are played
- The service defines 'rest' as a period of inactivity, solitude, calmness or tranquility, and can include a child being in a state of sleep

- The educators and co-educators have a duty of care to ensure all children are provided with a high level of safety when resting or sleeping whilst at kindergarten
- Quiet experiences may be offered to children who do not fall asleep after 15 – 20 minutes
- The children’s resting mattresses are cleaned with a dry cloth

8. Key Responsibilities & Authorities

8.1 Approved Provider

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- taking reasonable steps to ensure the sleep/rest needs of children at the service are met, with regard to the age of children, developmental stages and individual needs (Regulation 81(1))
- ensuring parents/guardians are consulted about appropriate relaxation and sleep practices for their child
- protecting children from hazards and harm (Section 167)
- consulting with staff in relation to OHS issues when purchasing new equipment for the service
- ensuring adequate supervision of children at the service at all times, including during relaxation and sleep
- ensuring that rooms used for sleep and relaxation are well ventilated
- ensuring that there is adequate space to store bedding in a hygienic manner (refer to *Hygiene Policy*).

8.2 Nominated Supervisor

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- taking reasonable steps to ensure the sleep/rest needs of children at the service are met with regard to the age of children, developmental stages and individual needs (Regulation 81(2))
- ensuring the educational program provides opportunities for each child to sleep, rest or engage in appropriate quiet play activities, as required
- protecting children from hazards and harm (Section 167)
- informing the Approved Provider, as soon as is practicable, of any hazards identified in the child’s resting or sleeping environment
- ensuring adequate supervision of children at the service at all times, including during relaxation and sleep
- providing input in relation to OHS issues when new equipment is purchased for the service
- storing items such as bedding in a hygienic manner to prevent cross-contamination (refer to *Hygiene Policy*).

8.3 Certified Supervisors, educators and staff

Certified Supervisors, educators and other staff are responsible for:

- providing each child with appropriate opportunities for relaxation and sleep according to their needs
- providing input in relation to OHS issues when new equipment is purchased for the service
- developing relaxation and sleep practices that are responsive to:
 - the individual needs of children at the service
 - parenting beliefs, values, practices and requirements
 - the length of time each child spends at the service
 - circumstance or events occurring at a child's home
 - consistency of practice between home and the service
 - a child's general health and wellbeing
 - the physical environment, including room temperature, lighting, airflow and noise levels
- minimising distress or discomfort for the children in their care
- ensuring that resting and sleeping practices are not used as a behaviour guidance strategy (refer to *Interactions with Children Policy*)
- providing a range of opportunities for relaxation throughout the day
- conducting regular safety checks of equipment used for sleeping/resting, such as cots and mattresses
- informing the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider, as soon as is practicable, of any hazards identified in the child's resting or sleeping environment
- ensuring that any hanging cords, mobiles, curtains and blinds are inaccessible to children who are resting or sleeping
- providing adequate supervision of all children, including during sleep, rest and relaxation
- supervising children displaying symptoms of illness closely, especially when resting or sleeping (refer to *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*)
- ensuring that artificial heating, such as heat bags and hot-water bottles, is not used to provide warmth
- ensuring that each child has their own bed linen, and that the *Hygiene Policy* and procedures are implemented for the cleaning and storage of cots, mattresses and linen
- documenting and communicating children's rest and sleep times to co-workers during shift changes
- providing information to families about the service's relaxation and sleep practices
- developing communication strategies to inform parents/guardians about their child's rest and sleep patterns, including times and length of sleep
- encouraging children's independence, and assisting children with dressing as needed.

8.4 Parents/guardians

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- discussing their child's relaxation and sleep requirements and practices prior to commencing at the service, and when these requirements change
- providing information on the child's enrolment form if the child requires special items while resting or sleeping e.g. a comforter or soft toy

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

9. Circulation Plan

Who needs to know the policy and procedures exists?

- Parents whose children attend the AELC
- Staff and Committee members

9.1 Method

A copy of the Policy will be adopted by the Committee and will be available upon request, in the Policy Manual (located in the AELC foyer), and available on the AELC website www.armadaleelc.vic.edu.au.

10. Resources and Support

10.1 Sources

- *Childcare and Children's Health*, vol 14, no 2, June 2011, Sleep and Oral Health. Publication of the Centre for Community Child Health: www.rch.org.au/emplibrary/ccch/CCH_Vol_14_No_2_Sleep_and_Oral_Health.pdf
- *Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* (EYLF): www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Policy_Agenda/Quality/Pages/EarlyYearsLearningFramework.aspx#keydocuments
- Kidsafe Fact Sheets at www.kidsafevic.com.au/resources:
 - *Safe Sleeping for Infants*
 - *Ages and Stages* fact sheet series ('Sleeping' section)
- SIDS and Kids, Safe Sleeping Program: www.sidsandkidsvic.org/safe-sleeping-education
- Product safety: a guide for businesses and legal practitioners: www.consumer.vic.gov.au/businesses/fair-trading/product-safety
- WorkSafe Victoria, *Children's services – occupational health and safety compliance kit*: www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/forms-and-publications/forms-and-publications/childrens-services-occupational-health-and-safety-compliance-kit
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* (VEYLDF): www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/learning/veylframe-work.pdf

10.2 Service policies

- *Child Safe Environment Policy*
- *Hygiene Policy*
- *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*
- *Interactions with Children Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- *Supervision of Children Policy*

11. Evaluation

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

12. Attachments

Nil

Date Reviewed	Details of Changes (if any)	Date of Next Review