

# Physical Environment (Workplace Safety, Learning and Administration) Policy



<b>Document Title</b>	NQS3.20 Physical Environment (Workplace Safety, Learning and Administration) Policy	<b>Version</b>	2a
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<b>Warning - Ensure you are using the latest version of this policy.</b>			
DCC Network/All Organisation Information/DCC Policies/Quality Area 3 – Physical Environment			

## 1. Policy Statement

To provide a physical environment that is safe, appealing, constructive, well-maintained and welcoming to all individuals who use it.

## 2. Rationale

River Region Early Education must ensure that the physical environment for children, educators, staff and visitors meets regulations, relevant policies and best practice. This helps ensure a healthy physical environment for all.

## 3. Definitions

Nil

## 4. Guidelines

### a) Resources and equipment

The Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor will:

- provide appropriately sized furniture and equipment in the indoor and outdoor settings for the age ranges at the service
- provide sufficient furniture, resources, materials, toys and equipment for the number of children and ensure they are developmentally appropriate
- check that all equipment, including resources, car seats, booster seats etc meets Australian Standards and educators are trained in correct maintenance and assembly
- ensure non-fixed play equipment in the grounds is less than one metre high and that educators can adequately supervise children at all times
- place any outdoor climbing equipment, swings or slides on impact absorbing surfaces (soft fall materials)
- maintain an up to date inventory/registry of equipment
- select resources and equipment that reflect the cultural diversity of our families, local community and nation, including the culture and diversity of Australia's Indigenous community
- actively seek the views of parents and families about our resources and equipment

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- advise educators and families about the purchase of new equipment and ensure a risk assessment is carried out
- prepare an ongoing prioritised maintenance plan for the service at the beginning of each year, and implement the plan throughout the year and organise maintenance systems (eg checklists, logs, building and equipment records).

Educators will:

- provide a list of equipment or resources which need maintenance to the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor every 6 months. The list will prioritise maintenance requirements
- introduce children to new resources and equipment, and teach them how to use and care for them appropriately
- store equipment that should only be used under supervision in a secure place
- allow children to use a trampoline only when they are directly supervised
- regularly check equipment and resources to ensure it is clean and safe
- ensure they comply with cleaning schedules for resources and equipment

### **b) Facilities**

The Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor will:

- provide adequate, sufficient and accessible facilities for hand-washing, toileting, eating and sleeping. Toileting and hand-washing facilities will be accessible from our indoor and outdoor environments
- provide adequate, sufficient and hygienic facilities for nappy changing which are inaccessible to children if they are not directly supervised, and providing at least 1 properly constructed nappy changing bench for children under 3 years of age
- provide access to clean drinking water in our indoor and outdoor environments
- providing secure and hygienic laundry facilities
- provide a separate indoor space for children under 2 years of age
- ensure that the premises and grounds comply with building regulations (Local, State and Federal Government) and the Building Code of Australia in relation to fire, ventilation, lighting and safety glass
- provide appropriate and hygienic areas for food preparation
- complete a Building Safety Checklist of the premises and grounds every 6 months and ensure any work necessary meets Australian Standards
- implement management plans to ensure the safety of educators, children, families and visitors if the service undertakes major renovations
- ensure there are at least 3.25 square metres of unencumbered indoor space for each child at the service (does not include passageways, bathrooms, food preparation areas, staff or administrative rooms, storage areas, kitchens unless primarily used by children as part of the program and any space not suitable for children)
- ensure there are at least 7 square metres of unencumbered outdoor space for each child at the service (does not include areas like thoroughfares, car parks and storage sheds)

Indoor and outdoor space requirements do not apply to children being educated and cared for in:

- an emergency for no more than two consecutive days the service operates, or
- exceptional circumstances where all the children are siblings in the same family, or the child is in need of protection under a child protection order.

### c) Environment

The Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor will:

- include natural elements like plants, trees, gardens, rock, mud and water
- provide adequate shading
- adequately fence the environment
- incorporate natural and artificial lighting, appropriate ventilation, heating, cooling and fresh air
- include elements that challenge children and encourage appropriate risk taking for the child's developmental level
- incorporate specific requirements for special needs children as seamlessly as possible
- incorporate sustainable practices which develop environmental responsibility
- ensure elements in the environment encourage children to explore, solve problems, create, construct and engage in critical thinking.

### d) Layout

The Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor will:

- organise the environment so children, educators and visitors can move around without disrupting children's activities
- create spaces which encourage collaborative learning through group interactions and one-on-one interactions
- create areas where children can engage in quiet, restful or independent activities
- establish the environment so children can be adequately supervised at all times
- provide space for administrative functions, consultation with children's parents and private conversations
- keep plans about the arrangement of the rooms and outdoor spaces to show how our service creates inviting learning spaces, and document how the arrangement, resources and equipment contribute to children's learning
- keep a record (through the QIP) of any changes made to the physical environment e.g. rearrangement of rooms, additions/changes to outdoor environment.

### e) Activities

The Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor and educators will:

- undertake regular risk assessments to ensure risk is minimised or eliminated at all times,
- provide adequate and ongoing training in risk management practices for new and existing educators, staff and volunteers,
- engage children in a wide variety of indoor and outdoor experiences,
- discuss safety issues with children (e.g. using toys or equipment) and involving children in rule setting to minimise or eliminate safety risks,
- cover unused power points with safety caps, securing all electrical cords and ensuring all double adaptors and power-boards are inaccessible to children,
- provide families with the latest child-related safety information.

### f) Children's groupings

It is important that children have opportunities to interact with other children and educators in group situations. This contributes to their learning and development and helps children to develop respectful and positive relationships. When forming groups, the **Nominated Supervisor**

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and educators will consider whether the size and composition of the group is appropriate by considering whether children:

- are settled
- develop secure relationships with educators and positive relationships with peers.

The Nominated Supervisor and Educators will:

- base children's rooms and groupings on their age and/or development
- encourage open play time in the morning so all children can interact with children and educators from other rooms.

### **g) Safety Checks**

To ensure the safety of all children and educators, the **Nominated Supervisor** will ensure the following environmental safety checks are carried out:

- Indoor and outdoor environment safety checklists.

The checklists are completed daily, with tasks shared among staff. The checklists are then stored in the service Work Health and Safety folder.

Educators will wear gloves and use tongs to pick up any sharp objects (e.g. syringes) and place them in the 'sharp object box'. This box will be disposed of in line with local council recommendations. Any maintenance required will be immediately reported to the **Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor** who will make the appropriate arrangements to have repairs carried out using the following form : *NQS 2.19A1 WHS Maintenance identification form*

- Every six months the trees in the service grounds will be checked for overhanging, dead or dangerous looking branches as well as for any infestations or nests.
- Every six months a pest inspection will be completed by an accredited pest control company. Any recommendations made by the company will be implemented if they will not compromise the health and safety of children and adults.

**Administration** will keep records of pest inspections and findings, and records to verify completion of safety checks.

### **h) Cleaning of Buildings, Premises, Furniture and Equipment**

For detailed procedures regarding cleaning of Buildings, Furniture, Premises, Furniture and Equipment, refer to the *Hygiene and Infection Control Policy*.

### **i) Hazardous Substances**

When **purchasing** dangerous chemicals, substances, medicines or equipment, the **Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor** will:

- select and use the least hazardous substance or equipment
- only select substances which have child resistant lids or caps
- ensure dangerous substances/chemicals are supplied with a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) formerly called a Material Data Safety Sheet
- ensure educators adhere to the manufacturer's instructions for use, storage, and first aid recorded on the SDS
- keep a register (summary sheet) of all hazardous chemicals, substances and equipment used at the Service. Information recorded will include where they are stored, their use,

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any risks, and first aid instructions and the current SDS. The register will be readily accessible.

When **using** dangerous chemicals, substances, medicines or equipment, educators will:

- ensure the child resistant lids or caps are properly closed after use
- adhere at all times to manufacturer's advice and instructions (e.g., follow advice for products which need to be stored in a refrigerated environment)
- wear appropriate personal protective clothing recommended on the manufacturer's instructions.

When **storing** dangerous chemicals, substances, medicines or equipment, educators will:

- store all dangerous substances in their original containers
- keep all labels and/or use by dates intact at all times
- dispose of (without using) any dangerous substance not stored in the original container, or with destroyed labels and/or unknown use by dates. Disposal will be safe and in line with local council guidelines. Containers will not be reused under any circumstances
- lock all dangerous substances and equipment, including cleaning materials, detergents, toiletries poisons, dangerous tools and equipment with sharp and razor edges, in a place or facility which is labelled, secure and inaccessible to children
- ensure dangerous and hazardous materials such as pesticides, herbicides, petroleum, kerosene, solvents and equipment which are operated by an engine or hazardous to children will not be kept on site
- wear appropriate personal protective clothing recommended on the manufacturer's instructions.

### **First Aid**

The Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor will:

- seek medical advice immediately if poisoning or potentially hazardous ingestion, inhalation, skin or eye exposure has occurred by calling the Poisons Information Line on 131126 or Ambulance service on 000
- immediately ring the emergency services on 000 if there is any major emergency involving a hazardous chemical or equipment, a gas, fire or explosion hazard
- implement the first aid procedures in the NQS 2.11 Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy, and if required the emergency procedures in the NQS 2.8 Emergency Management and Evacuation Policy, if a child or any other person is injured by a chemical, substance or equipment .

### **Other requirements**

The Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor will:

- notify the appropriate Workplace Health and Safety Authority if there is any major emergency involving a hazardous chemical or equipment, a gas, fire or explosion hazard or a child or any other person is seriously injured by a chemical, substance or equipment (refer Work Health and Safety Policy).
- regularly implement the Poison Safety Checklist attached to this policy to ensure we protect the health and safety of all children and adults at the service.

### **Kitchens**

The Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor will ensure:

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- children cannot gain access to any harmful substance, equipment or facility
- a door, half-gate or other barrier prevents unsupervised entry by children into the kitchen
- the preparation of children's bottles is both safe and hygienic at all times and separate from nappy change areas.

### **Laundry**

- Soiled laundry is hygienically stored in a sealed container until it is removed from the premises. Items returned to a child's home for laundering will be stored securely and will not be placed in a child's bag in contact with personal items.
- Educators will advise families when there are soiled clothes as per the Nappy change and toileting policy

### **Garbage**

The Nominated Supervisor must ensure that the premises are kept clean of garbage, rubbish and rubble. The large wheelie bins are stored behind a gate which is inaccessible to children and is emptied weekly.

### **Hot Water**

The thermostatic mixing valve on the hot water services is tested quarterly to ensure hot water temperature does not exceed 43.5°C

### **j) Sun Protection**

Too much of the sun's UV radiation can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage and skin cancer. Infants and toddlers up to four years of age are particularly vulnerable to UV damage due to lower levels of melanin and a thinner stratum corneum (the outermost layer of skin). UV damage accumulated during childhood and adolescence is strongly associated with an increased risk of skin cancer later in life.

By teaching sensible sun protection habits from an early age and implementing best-practice sun protection measures, early childhood services can play a significant role toward reducing the life time risk of skin cancer.

- To assist with the implementation of this policy, educators and children will access their local sun protection times via the SunSmart sign at the entrance (sign in desk), the SunSmart app, or Bureau of Meteorology.
- The sun protection measures listed are used for all outdoor activities during the daily local sun protection times, when the UV Index is 3 or above. The sun protection times are a forecast from the Bureau of Meteorology for the time of day UV levels are forecast to reach 3 or higher. At these levels, sun protection is recommended for all skin types.

### **Special note regarding infants**

SunSmart practices consider the special needs of infants. All babies under 12 months are kept out of direct sun when UV levels are 3 or higher. Physical protection such as shade, clothing and broad-brimmed hats are the best sun protection measures. If babies are kept out of the sun or well protected from UV radiation by clothing, hats and shade, then sunscreen need only be used occasionally on very small areas of a baby's skin. The widespread use of sunscreen on babies under 6 months old is not recommended.

Additional sun protection measures must be adhered to in accordance with the following recommendations:

## **NSW**

Sun protection measures are used whenever UV levels reach 3 and above. In NSW, UV levels are high enough (UV 3 or above) to damage unprotected skin most months of the year. UV levels are particularly high during the summer months, and highest in the middle of the day. UV levels and daily sun protection times are used to plan activities and ensure a correct understanding of local sun protection requirements.

### **1. Seek shade**

- We will ensure there is a sufficient number of shelters and trees providing shade in the outdoor area particularly in high-use areas.
- The availability of shade is considered when planning all outdoor activities.
- Children are encouraged to choose and use available areas of shade when outside.
- Play activities will be set up in the shade and moved throughout the day to take advantage of shade patterns.
- Children who do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing are asked to choose a shady play space or a suitable area protected from the sun.
- In consultation with the service's committee, shade provision is considered in future plans and upgrades.
- A shade assessment is conducted regularly to determine the current availability and quality of shade. Refer to: <https://www.sunsmart.com.au/shade-audit/>

### **2. Slip on sun-protective clothing**

- Children are required to wear loose-fitting clothing that covers as much skin as possible. Clothing made from cool, densely woven fabric is recommended. Families are asked to choose tops with sleeves, higher necklines (or collars) and knee-length or longer style shorts and skirts for their child. If a child is wearing a singlet top or shoestring dress, they will be asked to choose a t-shirt/shirt to wear over this before going outdoors.

### **3. Slap on a hat**

- All children are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears (legionnaire, broad-brimmed or bucket style). Peak caps and visors are not considered a suitable alternative.

### **4. Slop on sunscreen**

- SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen is supplied by the service and/or families.
- Sunscreen is applied in accordance with the manufacturer's directions (which state to apply at least 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapply every two hours, or more frequently if sweating or swimming).
- To help develop independent skills ready for school, children from three years of age are given opportunities to apply their own sunscreen under supervision of staff and are encouraged to do so.
- Sunscreen is stored in a cool place, out of the sun and the expiry date is monitored.
- Families may choose to provide their own sunscreen- which will be authorised on the NQS 6.40 Enrolment form

### **5. Slide on sunglasses [if practical]**

- Where practical, children are encouraged to wear close-fitting, wrap-around sunglasses that meet the Australian Standard 1067 (Sunglasses: Category 2, 3 or 4) and cover as much of the eye area as possible.



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### **Learning and skills**

- Sun protection is incorporated into the learning and development program.
- This policy is reinforced by educators and through children's activities and displays.
- Educators are encouraged to complete Cancer Council's free Generation SunSmart online learning modules.

### **Engaging children, educators, staff and families**

- Educators, staff and families are provided with information about sun protection through family newsletters, service handbook, noticeboards and the service's website.
- When enrolling their child, families are:
  - informed of the service's Physical Environment (Workplace safety, learning and administration) policy;
  - asked to provide a suitable sun protective hat, covering clothing and sunscreen for their child;
  - required to give permission for educators to apply sunscreen to their child; and
  - encouraged to use SunSmart measures themselves when at the service.
- As part of WH&S UV risk controls and role-modelling, educators, staff and visitors:
  - wear a suitable sun-protective hat, covering clothing and, if practical, sunglasses;
  - apply sunscreen; and seek shade whenever possible

The Nominated Supervisor will apply to join Cancer Council's National SunSmart Early Childhood Program and will participate in a SunSmart policy and program review every three years to maintain the SunSmart standards. See [www.sunsmartnsw.com.au](http://www.sunsmartnsw.com.au)

### **k) Extreme Heat**

Heat is a hazard in Australian workplaces. Heat poses a potential health risk to children and adults. Please refer to the *Extreme Heat Policy* which describes how this risk is minimised in our services.

### **l) Water Safety**

The **Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and Educators** understand the risks that water based activities pose and will undertake measures to protect the health and safety of all children involved in water based activities.

Educators will:

- complete a risk assessment before allowing children to engage in water based activities at the service or on excursion and ensure all risks are minimised or eliminated where possible
- ensure no child swims in any water without:
  - written permission from parents
  - appropriate educator/child ratios in place and adequate supervision
- closely supervise children at all times and never leave any child unattended near water.
- ensure children with upset stomachs (diarrhoea), open sores or nasal infections do not swim or play in water
- ensure all children wear appropriate swimmers in a pool, go to the toilet before entering the pool, and follow correct toileting hygiene practices while in the pool
- remove all children immediately if a child passes a bowel motion in the pool, advise pool managers if at a public pool, disinfect and if practical empty a home pool or trough.



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Services in New South Wales are not permitted to have pools unless they existed on the premises before 6 November 1996. To prevent accidents and illnesses related to water based activities at the service educators will:

- fill wading pools with less than 300 mm of water.
- remove any items or objects that could be used to climb into the fenced area of a pool, trough, or water storage unit e.g. chairs, bins, bikes, any overhanging trees.
- display a Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation guide prominently near any water.
- cover all water containers like ponds, spas, nappy buckets, bathtubs or ensure they are inaccessible to children.
- immediately empty all wading pools/water troughs etc. after every use and store in a way that prevents water collecting in them (e.g. upright/inverted).
- ensure children's play areas are safely fenced off from water hazards like rivers, dams, creeks, lakes, irrigation channels, wells.
- check grounds after rain or watering and empty water that has collected in holes or containers.
- ensure all pools and troughs in which children play are hygienically cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the instructions on the container.

Educators will:

- remove leaves and debris daily
- hose away surface dirt
- scrub inside with disinfectant and rinse it away before refilling

### **m) Severe Storms and Lightning**

The effects of severe storms and lightning can be catastrophic. Severe thunderstorms, for example, can produce large hail, damaging wind, lightning and heavy rainfall, which can cause death, injury and damage to property. Sometimes lightning may occur when there isn't a thunderstorm. Lightning may be seen, for example, during an intense bushfire or heavy snowstorm. It's important to remember that blue skies and lack of rain do not reduce lightning risk. People do not need to be hit directly by lightning to suffer injury. Electrical current can move along the ground or jump sideways from other objects.

The Nominated Supervisor will include severe storms and lightning activity in their risk assessment of potential emergencies, and all employees will take the steps identified to minimise the risks children and adults are exposed to during these events.

The Nominated Supervisor and Educators will monitor storm activity using the radar on the Bureau of Meteorology website [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au) or app or if this is not available listen to the local radio station for storm warnings and updates.

When a severe storm threatens the service the Nominated Supervisor and Educators will:

- ensure all children stay inside the service until the storm passes, sheltering in the strongest part of the premises if necessary
- secure or store any loose objects in the outdoor environment that could blow around in strong winds
- shelter and secure any animals
- secure all external doors and windows eg tape/board up windows and glass entrances
- use sandbags if required

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- where necessary disconnect all electrical items, aerials and computer modems - cover and/or move away from windows

While sheltering inside during a severe storm, the Nominated Supervisor and educators will ensure they and all children stay well clear of windows, doors and any skylights, close curtains/blinds and avoid using a fixed telephone unless absolutely necessary due to lightning danger. The Nominated Supervisor will continue to monitor storm activity and call emergency services if required.

If educators are caught outdoors with children as a severe storm approaches, they will immediately seek shelter in the strongest most enclosed structure available if they are unable to return to the service before the storm reaches them.

After a severe storm passes, the Nominated Supervisor and educators will inspect the outdoor environment for fallen power lines, broken furniture and equipment etc to ensure it is safe before letting children outside to play.

### **n) Lightning**

Lightning can strike more than 10 kms from the edge of a thunderstorm which is the minimum safe distance from a storm. If there is lightning activity, the Nominated Supervisor and educators will use what's known as the Flash to Bang rule. This involves counting the seconds between the flash of lightning and the bang of thunder as the storm approaches. Sound travels around 1 km every 3 seconds, so a count of 30 seconds means the storm is around 10 kms away. If the count nears 30, the Nominated Supervisor will ensure educators cancel all outdoor activities and move children inside or to a safe shelter if this is not possible. If the count is less than 30, educators will take immediate and urgent action to move children inside/to a safe shelter.

Educators will also use the Flash to Bang rule if there is an unexpected lightning storm while children are on an excursion. In this case educators will seek shelter with the children in safe areas if they do not have time to return to the service. These include substantial, enclosed buildings, and enclosed vehicles if people do not touch any metal parts. Where these shelters are not available educators and children will shelter in hollows or on low ground, including clumps of low bushes and trees the same height e.g. forest, ensuring they are not the tallest objects in the area. Educators will remove any metal objects on their or the children's heads or bodies.

Educators will avoid sheltering with children in or near insubstantial structures like picnic sheds and shade shelters, metal structures like fences, gates, poles, high/open ground, water and isolated or tall trees. They will not use umbrellas as this is unsafe when there is lightning. Educators will immediately move to a new location with children if their hair stands on end or they hear 'buzzing' from nearby rocks, fences etc.

The Nominated Supervisor and educators will keep children inside or in a safe shelter for at least 30 minutes after the last thunder clap or lightning strike to ensure the storm is a safe distance away. They will continue to monitor the Bureau of Meteorology radar and observe outside conditions before letting children outside

### **o) Visitors**

To ensure we can meet Work Health and Safety requirements and ensure the safety of our children, individuals visiting our service must sign in when they arrive at the service and sign out when they leave.

#### **p) Inspection and testing of electrical equipment**

Services must ensure that electrical equipment is regularly inspected and tested by a competent 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 the testing, which may be a tag attached to the equipment tested, must be 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.

#### **q) Fire Equipment**

All fire equipment at our service will comply with relevant laws and regulations, council requirements and the Building Code, and be maintained in line with the Australian Standard AS 1851-2012 (see Attachment D). The fire equipment is checked twice yearly, and records kept.

#### **r) Back Care and Manual Handling**

Manual handling means any activity requiring the use of force exerted by the person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any person or object.

Manual handling injuries can be the result of incorrect manual handling techniques, overuse, or from accidents. Injuries include back strains, and sprains in other parts of the body such as the neck, arm, shoulder and knee, bruising and lacerations.

Employers and managers have a legal duty to provide safe workplaces and implement safe workplace practices.

#### **Principles of Preventing Manual Handling Injuries**

1. Eliminate or reduce the amount of manual handling.
2. Reduce the amount of bending, forward reaching, and twisting, in all tasks.
3. Reduce worker fatigue.
4. Keep all equipment in good working order.
5. Keep the workplace environment safe.

The Approved Provider and/or Nominated Supervisor will:

- provide annual training in manual handling and back care
- display written, current information regarding manual handling in the staff room
- ensure equipment and facilities are designed and maintained to reduce manual handling injuries
- ensure work practices are consistent with safe manual handling guidelines
- ensure educators and staff follow our safe manual handling procedures
- identify, assess and control all risks associated with manual handling
- clearly mark any equipment which requires more than one person to lift or move it.

To help prevent manual handling injuries educators and staff will:

- do warm-up exercises for three to five minutes before starting work, particularly during cold periods. Simple exercises to warm and stretch all the major muscle groups help prevent injury. Regular exercise such as walking, tennis, or aerobics will help condition

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muscles, but anyone with neck, back or muscular problems should see a doctor before exercising

- kneel rather than bend down eg to help a child put their shoes on
- sit rather than bend eg to comfort a child, educators will sit on the floor and encourage the child to sit on their lap
- sit in an appropriate sized chair (or on the floor) so their upper legs are horizontal to hips and feet flat on the floor
- sit in an appropriate sized chair and table to complete writing tasks (eg programming)
- carry children with one arm under the child's buttocks and the other arm supporting the child's back, with the child facing them as close as possible to their body
- not carry a child on their hip because this can strain the back, and only carry children when necessary
- lift safely and avoid twisting, especially with awkward loads
- lift a child out of a cot by leaning against the cot and raising the child as close as possible to their body. Educators and staff will not stretch over and lift
- help larger children to climb up steps/ladder provided to change table
- use a step ladder to reach above shoulder level
- avoid extended reaching forward e.g. leaning into low equipment boxes
- share the load if the equipment is heavy, long or awkward
- ask for help and organise a team lift when sliding, pulling or pushing equipment that is not easy to move e.g. trestles or gym mats
- rearrange surroundings to meet the needs of both children and adults where possible
- use equipment and furniture that can be moved around as safely and easily as possible
- store seldom-used objects up high between the shoulder-to-raised arm height
- avoid storing objects between a person's knuckles and the floor
- use mechanical aids like ladders and trolleys where possible to avoid lifting and stretching
- Reduce accidents by implementing good housekeeping practices including ensuring:
  - the floors and other walking surfaces are uncluttered, even and non-slippery
  - the environment is tidy
  - there is adequate space to work
  - equipment is maintained regularly
  - lighting is adequate.

### **How to Lift Safely**

1. Place your feet in astride position.
2. Keep your breastbone as elevated as possible.
3. Bend your knees.
4. Brace your stomach muscles.
5. Hold the object close to your centre of gravity i.e. around your navel.
6. Move your feet, not your spine.
7. Prepare to move in a forward-facing direction.
8. Ask for help when it is not possible to lift on your own.

### **Avoid Twisting when Lifting**

To avoid injuries resulting from twisting educators and staff will:

- move equipment when children are not around
- rearrange storage so that it is easier and safer to replace and remove items

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- lift only within the limits of their strength
- use beds and equipment that are easy to move
- ensure they can see where they are going when carrying equipment or children
- be especially careful when lifting a child with special needs.

### **Organising a Team Lift**

Educators and staff will:

1. Ask a colleague who is willing and able to help, and ideally is fairly well matched with them in size and strength.
2. Agree on a plan of action to achieve a coordinated lift.
3. Appoint one person as team leader to 'call' the lift.

### **How to Assess the Correct Storage and Shelving Height**

Correct storage and shelving height is important to prevent slips, falls and strains. When standing with feet together and hands by sides:

- ensure the best height range for handling loads is around waist level and
- the acceptable height for lifting is any point between a person's knuckle and shoulder.

## **5. Resources and References**

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Early Years Learning Framework
- Dangerous Substances (National Code of Practice for the Labelling of Workplace Substances) Code of Practice Approval 2006
- National Quality Standard
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011
- Staying Healthy – Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services 2012
- Work Safe Victoria: Children's services – occupational health and safety compliance kit
- Swimming Pools Act 1992
- Building Code of Australia
- Australian Standards 1851-2005 "Maintenance of Fire Protection Systems and Equipment"
- Cancer Council NSW Sample Sun Protection Policy
- Royal Life Saving Society Home Pool Safety Checklist
- Royal Life Saving Society Wading Pools Checklist
- Australian Standard 1926.1 Swimming Pool Safety
- Kidsafe NSW: Playground surfacing
- Heat health plan for Victoria
- Vic Govt Better Health: How to cope and stay safe in extreme heat
- Cancer Council NSW and the National SunSmart Early Childhood Program

## **6. Relevant Legislation, Regulations and Standards**

Legislation	

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<b>Education and Care Services National Regulation</b>	
82	Tobacco, drug and alcohol free environment
99	Children leaving the education and care service premises
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
156	Relationships in groups
249	Declared approved services (other than declared approved family day care services)
251	Declared out of scope services
274	Swimming pools
285	Space requirements
<b>National Quality Standards</b>	
2.2.1	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
3.1.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.
3.1.2	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.
3.2.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
3.2.2	Resources, materials and equipment allow for multiple uses, are sufficient in number, and enable every child to engage in play-based learning.
<b>Child Safe Standards</b>	

## Physical Environment (Workplace Safety, Learning and Administration) Policy

8	Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse or other kinds of harm to occur
<b>Early Years Learning Framework Learning Outcomes</b>	
<b>Early Years Learning Framework Principles</b>	
<b>Early Years Learning Framework Practices</b>	
	Learning environments

## 7. Related Documents

Doc #	Attachments
NQS3.20 A1	Building and Equipment Inspection Checklist
NQS3.20 A2	Sunsmart Shade Audit

Doc #	Intersections with other key documents
NQS 2.10	Hygiene and Infection Control
NQS 2.8	Emergency Management and Evacuation Policy
NQS 2.11	Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
NQS 2.13	Nappy Change and Toileting Policy
NQS 2.19	Work, Health and Safety Policy
NQS 7.65	Extreme Heat Policy
NQS2.19 A1	WHS Maintenance Identification Form

## 8. Document Control

Doc #	Doc Title	Version	Approved	Next Review
NQS3.20	Physical Environment (Workplace Safety, Learning and Administration) Policy	1	March 2019	March 2021
NQS3.20	Physical Environment (Workplace Safety, Learning and Administration) Policy	2	August 2020	August 2023
NQS3.20	Physical Environment (Workplace Safety, Learning and Administration) Policy (minor changes due name change and new policy document format)	2a	January 2024	August 2023