



1.3 Equipment and Educational Materials Policy

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Aims

1. All purchased equipment and educational materials, all indoor/outdoor spatial dimensions and surface areas at the centre will:

- meet Safety Australia standards and the Australian Education & Care Services National Regulations (see below)
- be appropriate to the developmental needs of 3-5 year olds
- acknowledge the interests and cultures of the centre's children/families and the local rural community
- acknowledge the greater diversity of broader Australian society

2. All preschool equipment, both indoors and outdoors, will provide active play and exploratory learning opportunities such that children:

- learn and then practice new skills and/or conceptual knowledge
- apply and consolidate these skills and/or knowledge over time
- are able to challenge themselves further to extend skills and/or knowledge

Aim 2 therefore remains consistent with the centre's 'Education & Practice Policy' (Procedures 6 & 13) in using a spiral model of planning and learning that ensures progress to higher levels of understanding and ability

3. The centre's equipment and educational materials will provide children with opportunities to take an active, enjoyable and exploratory role in their own, and their peers' learning

4. Support staff in maintaining equipment & educational materials by providing child free times at the start and end of the academic year.

Legislative Requirements

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
Children (Education and Care National Law Application) Act 2010

Occupational Health & Safety Act 1989 (Part 4)

Standards Australia: (www.standards.org.au) Regulations (Retrieved January 2012) including:

- AS4422-1996/Amendment 1_ 1999 (Playground surfaces)
- AS4685. 1-2004 (Playground equipment)
- AS4685. 1-2004/Amendment 2-2008 (Playground equipment)

Who Is Effected By This Policy?

Children
Families
Staff
Management

Date reviewed by staff: May 2012
Date reviewed by committee: March 2013
Next review date: April 2015

Relevant Early Childhood Professional Standards

Early Childhood Code of Ethics:	I-1, I-6, I-10, I-12, II-9, III-5, III-6, V-3 VI-2, VI-3, VII-1, VII-8
Early Years Learning Framework:	Outcomes: 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.5, 3.1, 4.1-4.4, Principles: 1-4
Education & Care Services Australian National Regulations:	103-110,113,114,
National Quality Framework:	Quality areas – 1.1.3, 1.3.1, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.3, 6.1.2, 6.2.2, 7.1.2, 7.1.3

Sources/References

Children's Services Regulations 2004

Children's Services Amendment Regulation 2010

Mitchell, R., Cavanagh, M., & Eager, D. (2006). Not all risk is bad, playgrounds as a learning environment for children. *International Journal of Injury Control and Safety Promotion*, 13 (2), 122-124.

New, R. S., Mardell, B., & Robinson, D. (2005). Early childhood education as risky business: Going beyond what's 'safe' to discovering what's possible. *Early Childhood Research and Practice*, 7 (2). <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v7n2/new.html> (Retrieved January 2012)

Queensland Government: Office for Early Childhood Education & Care. Indoor play: Managing the risk of serious injury: http://www.deta.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/pdfs/tip_sheets/tip-sheet_indoor-play.pdf (Retrieved January 2012)

S.A. Government: Children's Services Licensing & Standards: *Designing an Early Childhood Play Area* (Fact Sheet): <http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/DesigningandEarlyChildhood.pdf> (Retrieved January 2012)

Sutterby, J. & Frost, J. (2002). Making playgrounds fit for children and children fit for playgrounds. *Young Children*, 57 (3), 36-41

Wood, E. (2011). *Play, learning & the integrated curriculum*. London UK: Sage Publications

Procedures

1. In consultation with staff, and with the financial support of the Committee of Management the Director will make decisions about the purchasing of new equipment whilst working within the yearly budget. If large/expensive items of equipment are required, the Director will, with the advice of the Committee, take into account the centre's budget limitations and will develop a timeline for how that equipment may be acquired in the future
2. Any equipment disposed of must first be approved by the Director
3. In line with usual early childhood practice, the centre will have one child free day in the first week of Term 1 for staff to:
 - Clean the indoor play area

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Next review date: April 2015

- Tidy and prepare the playground
- Clean all bench surfaces, tables and chairs
- Unpack equipment stored over the summer holidays
- Set up the playroom and playground. This should involve arranging outdoor equipment, and deciding on an indoor room configuration for the first few weeks of term
- As equipment and education materials are unpacked, staff will check them to remove dust etc
- Add children's names or symbols to their lockers
- The Director will have a meeting with staff to plan for the first week or two of the program. This will include consideration of the centre's transition to preschool strategies for the children about to commence preschool, organising the year's health training for staff re emergency asthma, anaphylaxis and CPR (See the centre's 'Health & Wellness Policy', Procedures 1 and 16), plus the required child protection training (see 'Child Protection Policy' Procedure 1.6)
- The Director will need to set up individual files for children's program planning

4. In line with usual early childhood practice, the centre will have one child free day during the last week of the academic year for staff to:

- Undertake an equipment inventory for both indoor and outdoor equipment, plus all educational materials and aids
- Maintain the equipment before packing it away so it is ready for use the following year Example: oil outdoor boards, sand rough edges on wooden blocks etc
- Remove Christmas decorations, any remaining children's artwork, outdated notices, posters etc
- Tidy office and ensure the Director's Annual Review Forms for all policies have been completed, signed and dated
- Empty, clean out and tidy both the indoor storeroom and outdoor shed
- Cull out equipment that can no longer be used

5. Staff members will be diligent and ensure that all equipment and educational materials are kept in a safe, clean and hygienic condition, and are in good repair at all times as well as stored in a safe manner. As part of the centre's preventative approach regarding OH&S issues, any potential risks identified must be reported as per the centre's 'General OH&S Policy' (Procedures 1.4 -1.6)

6. Children will be taught to use equipment appropriately

7. Indoor and outdoor learning experiences will be planned for and set up to foster unstructured, semi structured and occasionally, structured play/learning, as per the Director's educational program, thus catering for diversity in cognitive style and approaches to learning

8. Natural and re-cycled materials will be regularly used alongside commercial ones, both inside and outside (see the centre's 'Environmental Awareness & Sustainability Policy')

9. The outdoor play area will be well maintained (e.g. lawns mowed regularly, paths swept, attractive gardens etc) so as to foster a sense of delight and enjoyment in being outside. (See the centre's 'Environmental Awareness & Sustainability Policy')

10. Indoor and outdoor equipment and educational materials will provide for the development and extension of:

- Large and fine motor skills including balance, coordination, speed, eye hand coordination, e.g. areas to run in, obstacle courses, skipping, hopping, threading, drawing
- Sensory development e.g. sand, water play, finger painting
- Creative development e.g. dramatic play, other kinds of imaginative play, construction play, drawing, painting, collage, creative movement, problem solving
- Cognitive development including reasoning skills, problem solving, concentration skills, inquiry and questioning etc. The development of cognition occurs through all learning experiences offered at the centre
- Language, social and emotional development, which also occur throughout all learning experiences offered at the centre

11. Play equipment will at times allow for 'safe risks' (always with adult supervision) when presenting opportunities for children to extend their skills and challenge themselves. Through exposure to carefully managed risks, children will acquire sound judgement in assessing risks themselves, which will build confidence, resilience and self-belief - qualities that are important for their eventual independence

12. All play areas will be appropriately supervised and staff interactions with children will always be of a high standard (see the centre's 'Staffing Policy' Aims 1 & 2, and 'Interactions with Children & Managing Difficult Behaviour Policy')

13. All learning centres and play equipment will be set up prior to the children's arrival so that the centre's play areas are ready to be used and attractively arranged, thereby motivating children to become engaged in focused, exploratory play

14. Toys of war are considered inappropriate to the centre's aim of providing a safe and caring environment and staff will actively discourage children (and discuss this with parents), from bringing them

15. Visual aids, picture books, dramatic play areas etc will bear relevance to the local rural community and surrounding farming industries, the cultural backgrounds of children's families and also our wider, multicultural Australian society. Hence they may well feature ethnic diversity in varying ways. (See the centre's 'Anti-Bias & Equity Policy' Procedure 2: 'Incorporating early childhood anti-bias perspectives in the teaching program')

16. All outdoor climbing equipment will have the appropriate impact absorbing materials installed underneath all equipment higher than 500mm, with adequate fall zones area for each piece of equipment

17. All staff will continually evaluate the working effectiveness of the centre's equipment and educational materials as well as the ways in which children engage with them and learn from them. The usual practice for this is to occur daily,

either as staff set up in the morning and/or as they put equipment away at the end of the day. The Director will also use this time to encourage staff and help them to further their knowledge (see 'Staffing Policy' Induction of new staff – Procedure 2.6, Ongoing support of staff – Procedures 3.1, 3.3-3.7). Thus this process is a verbal one and will occur frequently whereas having to document such discussions in writing would not be possible, practicable or sensible in this small rural preschool

The Director will ensure that this policy is maintained and implemented at all times.