



Australian Children's
Education & Care
Quality Authority

These guidelines are part of a series intended to assist in the development of your service's policies and procedures required under regulations 168 and 169. They set out the main components to be included in your policies and procedures, and considerations for each component.

They should guide how you develop your policies and procedures, and are not an exact format to be followed.

SLEEP AND REST FOR CHILDREN

POLICY GUIDELINES

Under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, an approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for managing sleep and rest for children (regulation 168) and take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed (regulation 170).

The approved provider, nominated supervisor and family day care educator must take reasonable steps to ensure children's needs for sleep and rest are met, having regard to each child's age, developmental stages and needs.

Basing your service's sleep and rest for children policy on recognised and evidence-based principles is an important way of demonstrating that you are taking reasonable steps.

Red Nose (formerly SIDS and Kids) is the recognised national authority on safe sleeping practices for infants and children. Approved providers, nominated supervisors and service leaders can rely on Red Nose resources to be regularly reviewed and contain the most up-to-date sleep and rest policies and procedures.

You will also need to consider safety requirements for relevant equipment, such as cots, mattresses, bedding and evacuation cots. How these work in practice will be in your procedures.

Your policies and procedures should address these requirements, as well as quality practices relating to sleep and rest for children that align with the National Quality Standard.

Every service is different so it is not sufficient to apply generic policies and procedures to multiple services. You will need to contextualise your policies and procedures to your service's operations and its unique context.

1. Title

Sleep and rest for children policy

2. Policy statement

The policy statement will reflect your service's philosophy about sleep and rest for children.

For example:

The purpose of the ***Sleep and rest for children policy*** is to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending our service and appropriate opportunities are provided to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.

3. Background

Your policy needs to include a statement of why this policy is in place.

For example:

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations* requires approved providers to ensure their services have policies and procedures in place for children's sleep and rest.

Our ***Sleep and rest for children policy*** means our educators, management, co-ordinators, other staff, families and the community can be confident that children's needs for sleep and rest are met while attending the service.

Fortunately, cases of children dying in education and care service settings are very rare. However, some deaths have occurred when a child has been sleeping at a service. Relevant coroners' reports have found that poor sleeping environments and poor supervision are risk factors. While all children need rest and sleep to be happy and healthy, this is an area of service policy and procedure that needs to be very carefully considered, monitored and actively reviewed to ensure risks are appropriately addressed at all times.

4. Legislative requirements

Your policy must be consistent with, and refer to, legislative requirements for sleep and rest for children.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

Section/regulation	Description
Section 165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
Section 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
Regulation 81	Sleep and rest
Regulation 82	Tobacco, drug and alcohol-free environment
Regulation 87	Incident, injury, trauma and illness record
Regulation 103	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
Regulation 105	Furniture, materials and equipment
Regulation 106	Laundry and hygiene facilities
Regulation 107	Space requirements – indoor space
Regulation 110	Ventilation and natural light
Regulation 115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
Regulation 116 (FDC only)	Assessments of family day care residences and approved family day care venues
Regulation 168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
Regulation 169	Additional policies and procedures – family day care
Regulation 170	Policies and procedures to be followed
Regulation 171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
Regulation 172	Notification of change to policies or procedures

When writing your policy you will need to break down what is required under each regulation and how your service will meet these requirements. How these work in practice will be in your procedures.

As you reflect on the ***Sleep and rest for children policy***, it might highlight the need to split its various areas into different policies that can be readily accessed by all staff members to follow. For example, you may wish to have separate policies for *Safe sleeping practices* and *Physical environments*.

5. Principles to inform your policy

All decision-making about your procedures should be carried out in accordance with the principles of your service's ***Sleep and rest for children policy***. Examples of principles could include, but are not limited to:

- Our approach to supporting and promoting children's health and physical activity, including safe sleep and nutrition, is informed by current recognised guidelines and up-to-date information.
- Our service's safe sleep and rest procedures and practice follow Red Nose guidelines, the recognised national authority in this area.
- Effective sleep and rest strategies are important factors in ensuring a child feels secure and is safe at our service.
- Educators, staff and management have a shared duty of care to ensure children are provided with a high level of safety when sleeping and resting, including adequate lighting to enable effective supervision by staff and ventilation for children, and every reasonable precaution is taken to protect them from harm and hazard.
- Children sleeping and resting will always be within sight and hearing distance so that educators can monitor children's safety and wellbeing. Educators will be able to visually check the child's breathing and the colour of the child's lips and skin tone.
- Child safety is our first priority. Educators can confidently refer to the service's ***Sleep and rest for children policy*** and ***procedures*** if families make requests that are contrary to the safety of the child.
- Opportunities will be provided to meet each child's sleep, rest and relaxation needs and ensure children feel secure and safe.
- We will consult with families about their child's routine for sleep and rest at home and carry this out at the service where possible and safe to do so.

General considerations

- The circumstance and needs of each child should be considered to determine any risk factors that may impact on the adequate supervision of sleeping children. For example, babies or children with colds, chronic lung disorders or specific health care needs might require a higher level of supervision while sleeping.

Considerations for overnight or extended care

- Services providing overnight or extended care may need to develop sleep and rest policies and procedures specific to this type of care (or incorporate overnight care into overarching policies and procedures), as overnight practices will differ to those used during the day.
- Policies and procedures should consider: the physical safety of the child's sleeping environment; plans for the supervision of the child while they are sleeping, including how they will be monitored during the night; access of the child to other parts of the house during the night; access of other people to the child's sleeping environment; and night time emergency evacuation procedures/lockdown (or just emergency) (e.g. in the case of a fire, intruder etc).

Considerations for family day care

- A family day care service should have an agreed and documented practice for the supervision of sleeping children, tailored to the unique layout and safety considerations of each family day care residence or venue, as well as the ages and developmental stages of the children in care. For example, the service should ensure that children are not placed in the educator's bedroom if they would have access to medication or other dangerous items.

Considerations for the physical environment

- Include information about the bedding equipment and how it will meet the relevant Australian Standards that govern the use and maintenance of equipment.
- All children have rights and have the expectations of choice within the day. How will you ensure the physical environment caters for non-resting children? (Consider separate resting spaces or quiet activities after a short rest.) How will quality practice be reflected in your policy?
- How do you reflect inclusion and cultural practices within this policy? Will this influence the physical environment? Is there a possible conflict with your safe sleeping guidelines and, if so, how is this addressed?

6. Key terms

To make it easier for your audience, provide definitions of key terms that may not be used every day. For example:

Term	Meaning	Source
ACECQA – Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority	The independent national authority that works with all regulatory authorities to administer the National Quality Framework, including the provision of guidance, resources and services to support the sector to improve outcomes for children.	acecqa.gov.au
Infant	A young child between the ages of birth and 12 months.	
Rest	A period of inactivity, solitude, calmness or tranquillity, and can include a child being in a state of sleep.	
Relaxation	Relaxation or other activity for bringing about a feeling of calm in your body and mind.	
Sudden and Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI)	A broad term used to describe the sudden and unexpected death of a baby for which the cause is not immediately obvious.	rednose.org.au/article/what-does-sudden-unexpected-death-in-infancy-sudi-mean
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)	The sudden and unexpected death of an infant under one year of age with an onset of a fatal episode occurring during sleep, that remains unexplained after a thorough investigation, including performance of a complete autopsy and review of the circumstances of death and the clinical history.	rednose.org.au/article/what-is-sudden-infant-death-syndrome-sids

7. Links to other policies

Refer to related policies and procedures, for example:

- The administration of first aid
- Enrolment and orientation
- Interactions with children
- Providing a child safe environment
- Staffing
- Emergency and evacuation

8. Induction and ongoing training

State information about induction training and frequency of ongoing training and information sharing to assist managers, co-ordinators, educators and other staff to fulfil their roles effectively.

9. Policy created/reviewed

Include the date the policy was created, reviewed or changes were made.

10. Monitoring, evaluation and review

State when the policy will be reviewed and who will be responsible for this.

11. Checklist

- Have you referenced the relevant regulations and are these reflected in the policy?
- Does the title provide a clear and concise statement identifying the intent of the policy?
- Have you checked the policy requirements and referenced related legislation that applies to your service type?
- Does your policy statement provide a framework for decision-making and ensure consistent practice?
- Does your policy statement reflect your service philosophy?
- Is it clear why this policy exists?
- Are best practice principles for sleep and rest for children reflected in your policy?
- Are the most up-to date sleep and rest policies and procedures from Red Nose (the recognised national authority) reflected throughout your policy and procedures?

PROCEDURES GUIDELINES

Under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, an approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for sleep and rest for children. These guidelines are part of a series intended to assist in the development of your policies and procedures required under regulations 168 and 169. They are to guide how you develop your policies and procedures, and are not an exact format to be followed.

Your procedures should be written in clear and concise language, making them easy to read and understand.

You will need to be specific within your induction training and procedure so that the educators who are casually employed, new to a service or moving between rooms, can refer to this document when they are unsure about their role and responsibilities at the service.

The steps and guidelines you document will not only guide your practice, but also inform regulatory authorities of roles and responsibilities.

When thinking about your procedures for sleep and rest for children, they need to be practical and achievable. For example, if your procedures outline recorded sleep checks are undertaken every 10 minutes, then this will need to be observed and evidence of documentation needs to be available.

1. Title

Sleep and rest for children procedures

2. Reference to policy and philosophy

Here you refer to your ***Sleep and rest for children policy*** as seen in your policy documents. You can reference where you will find the policy to help those looking for it.

Your procedures will also reflect your service's overall philosophy and supervision and action plans for specific children.

3. Procedures

This is where you detail the way you will implement the ***Sleep and rest for children policy***.

It is the 'How to' in your service and includes specific step-by-step procedures for each age group.

Some areas that will be outlined here will include:

- where the procedures will be kept
- when they were last reviewed
- how you are using the procedures as part of your educator and staff inductions
- templates or documents that might be required and/or used as a part of the procedures (e.g. Sleep and Rest Time Check chart or digital device/app)
- resources required for the implementation of procedures, where necessary
- systems to monitor the implementation of procedures.

Age is particularly important with sleep and rest, due to the risk associated with the younger age group.

Your procedures need to reflect the safe sleep recommendations and guidelines set out by Red Nose, the recognised national authority on safe sleeping.

As you reflect on the ***Sleep and rest for children policy***, it might highlight the need to split its various areas into different procedures, which will be displayed or accessed by educators and staff to follow in relation to their required actions. For example, your service's bed and linen cleaning procedures may need to be displayed in the storeroom where the beds are kept.

4. Roles and responsibilities

This is where you will designate specific roles and responsibilities for the people who hold different positions within your service. This needs to align with the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* (see pp. 7–8 below).

It is important to note that it is the legal responsibility of approved providers to ensure systems are in place to minimise risk and ensure health and safety procedures are implemented by the responsible people in services including family day care (FDC) environments (if applicable). Ultimate responsibility lies with the approved provider to ensure their service/s are meeting the requirements under the *Education and Care Services National Law*.

When developing this section consider:

- What are the roles and responsibilities of the approved provider, responsible person, nominated supervisor, co-ordinators, educators or other staff in your service in relation to managing children’s sleep and rest?
- How will you clearly define these roles and expectations and where will it be documented?
- Why are clear and robust procedures for children’s sleep and rest important for children’s health, safety and wellbeing?
- How will you learn from the administration of these procedures to improve your practices?
- How will you ensure that the necessary tools are available so educators and staff can follow the procedures in relation to children’s sleep and rest? How will educators and staff be made aware of the procedures?
- Do the roles and responsibilities reflect your service type?

An example of roles and responsibilities could include, but is not limited to:

Roles	Responsibilities
Approved provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that obligations under the <i>Education and Care Services National Law</i> and <i>National Regulations</i> are met • ensure educators receive information and induction training to fulfil their roles effectively, including being made aware of the sleep and rest policies, their responsibilities in implementing these, and any changes that are made over time • take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators, staff and volunteers follow the policy and procedures • ensure the needs for sleep and rest of children being educated and cared for by the service are met, having regard to the ages, developmental stages and individual needs of the children • ensure the premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and in good repair • ensure that each child has access to sufficient furniture, materials and developmentally appropriate equipment suitable for the education and care of that child • ensure that the indoor spaces used by children are well ventilated; have adequate natural light; and are maintained at a temperature that ensures the safety and wellbeing of children • ensure sleep and rest environments are free from cigarette or tobacco smoke • ensure that the premises are designed to facilitate supervision • ensure copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, educators, staff and volunteers, and available for inspection • notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • affect the fees charged or the way they are collected or • significantly impact the service’s education and care of children or • significantly impact the family’s ability to utilise the service.
Nominated supervisor/ FDC co-ordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure the needs for sleep and rest of children being educated and cared for by the service are met, having regard to the ages, developmental stages and individual needs of the children • ensure educators understand and follow the service’s policies and procedures • ensure procedures are tailored to the specific service or home environment • ensure educators understand their legal roles in the implementation of the policies and procedures.

Roles	Responsibilities
Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure procedures are relevant to their particular service type have a good understanding of the service's policy and procedures, and embed practices that support safe sleep into everyday practice identify and suggest any potential improvements to service procedures and practice identify and remove potential hazards from sleep environments document children's sleep and rest needs and provide information to families about their child's sleep and rest patterns consult families to gather information about individual children's needs and preferences model and promote safe sleep practices and make information available to families.
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> regularly update the service on their child's sleeping routines and patterns provide informal updates on the previous night's sleep to assist with sleeping during the day provide specified bedding if required by the service dress child appropriately for the weather conditions and provide additional clothing.

The following table will assist you in developing procedures specific to your service's needs and context. Referring to the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* when you are writing your procedures will assist you to ensure you are meeting your obligations.

Areas to include in your procedures	Things to consider and outline in each area (this will be specific to the context of your service)	Strategies for monitoring and implementing procedures	Related policy and/or procedures
Beds and linen Act: 167 Regs: 103, 105,106 QA2: 2.1.1, 2.1.2 QA3: 3.1.1 QA7: 7.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where bedding is stored. When and how the cots and beds are made. The cleaning process for cots, beds and linen. Compliance with Australian standards for cots (AS/NZS 2172 and AS/NZS 2195) and other bedding equipment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly defined roles and responsibility statements. Consider creating shift descriptions or checklists that include these responsibilities. Periodic workplace health and safety checks of the physical environment, furniture and resources. Manufacturer standards checked upon purchasing new furniture, linen and resources. 	Providing a child safe environment
Sleeping environment/s are fit for purpose Act: 165, 167 Regs: 103, 105, 106, 107, 110, 115, (116 FDC only) QA3: 3.1.1, 3.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How your overall sleep / rest environment and sleep equipment is fit for purpose. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how these spaces are ventilated, lighting and any other considerations, specific to your service environment consider how the beds and cots will be placed to minimise infection an appropriate sleep and rest environment, including sufficient spaces in sleep and rest areas that are flexible for the age group other considerations, specific to your service environment, e.g. number of cot rooms. That all hazards (for e.g. blinds, cords, necklaces/jewellery, doonas or other loose bedding, soft toys) are removed or controlled. How you intend to meet regulations 106, 107, 110, 115. How you reflect diversity within these areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly defined roles and responsibility statements, checklists or shift descriptions. Responsibility included in shift descriptions. Periodic WHS checks of the physical environment, furniture and resources. 	Providing a child safe environment

Areas to include in your procedures	Things to consider and outline in each area (this will be specific to the context of your service)	Strategies for monitoring and implementing procedures	Related policy and/or procedures
<p>Health, safety and supervision</p> <p>Act: 165, 167</p> <p>Regs: 81, 82 87, 170, 171</p> <p>QA2: 2.1.1, 2.1.2,</p> <p>QA3: 3.1.2</p> <p>QA6: 6.1.2</p> <p>QA7: 7.1.3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How you will keep your children safe during their sleep and rest times including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying the different practices for the varying ages and sleep needs and preferences for children. Refer to Red Nose for best practice. How do you develop your partnerships with families with regard to sleep and rest routines including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how you will explain to families that you cannot comply with requests that are contrary to safe sleep guidance without the written authorisation of the child's medical practitioner. How will your service reflect inclusion and children's agency, e.g. children's need or want to sleep or rest. Outline effective supervision for sleeping and resting children including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how you will closely monitor and record your sleeping children and ensure safe sleep practices are being implemented. (section 165; Guide to the NQF) sleep practices and sleep check routines to ensure monitoring is happening. Think about the differences between the rooms and/or age groups in your service. Do you need specific information for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Family day care:</i> Monitoring and recording sleep checks, safe sleep environment, supervision of sleeping children, mixed age groups, sleep routines, diverse family and cultural preferences. <i>Infants:</i> Monitoring and recording sleep checks and sleep routines, diverse family and cultural preferences. Consideration should be given to infants' room routines based on individual children's needs. <i>Toddlers:</i> Monitoring and recording sleep checks, options for rest, supervision for children who choose not to rest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure your policy and procedures are available for all to access. Clearly defined roles and responsibility statements or shift descriptions. Periodic WHS checks of the physical environment, furniture and resources. Collecting information from families through questions in enrolment documents. Opportunities for family input and involvement embedded in practice. Consider creating checklists to ensure health and safety measures are being met. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision plans. Daily ratio checks. Sleep check charts. Staff sign in/out sheets. Clearly marked First Aid Access and Management Plans. Safe sleep practices information included in educator and staff induction pack and training. Regular meeting agenda items to discuss safe sleep practices and any changes to service procedures. 	<p>Providing a child safe environment</p> <p>Staffing</p> <p>Interactions with children</p> <p>Enrolment and orientation</p> <p>Dealing with medical conditions in children</p>

5. Procedures created/reviewed

Include the date the procedures were created or reviewed.

6. Monitoring, evaluation and review

Your service, in consultation with educators and other key staff, families and other stakeholders, should review the effectiveness of these procedures within a set timeframe or earlier if there is a change in relevant legislation.

State when the procedure will be reviewed and who will be responsible for this.

7. Checklist

- Do the ***Sleep and rest for children procedures*** align with your ***Sleep and rest for children policy***?
- Have your procedures been written in plain English and can they be easily implemented by an educator new to your service?
- Is it clear who is responsible for the implementation of the procedure?
- Are all educators and other staff aware of the procedures and can implement them if required?
- Do you need to develop any resources to monitor and record the procedure?

USEFUL RESOURCES

Include links to useful resources that have helped inform the development of your policy. Be mindful of any state or territory specific content.

Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- ACECQA – Guide to the National Quality Framework acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide
- ACECQA – Opening a new service acecqa.gov.au/resources/opening-a-new-service
- ACECQA – Safe sleep and rest practices acecqa.gov.au/resources/supporting-materials/infosheet/safe-sleep-and-rest-practices
- Kidsafe – Kidsafe Family Day Care Safety Guidelines (7th ed.) kidsafe.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/FINAL-FDC-Safety-Guidelines_7thEd_NOV.pdf
- New South Wales Government – NSW Health Safe sleep for babies health.nsw.gov.au/kidsfamilies/MCFhealth/maternity/Pages/safe-sleep.aspx
- Northern Territory Government – Safe sleeping nt.gov.au/community/parents-and-families/sleep-and-your-child-zero-to-six-years/safe-sleeping
- Queensland Government – Meeting children’s sleep, rest and relaxation needs eprints.qut.edu.au/114096/3/114096c.pdf
- Queensland Government – Sleep health and sleep development earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/aboutUs/Documents/factsheet-sleep-health.pdf
- Queensland Government – Sleep learning for early education professionals earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/about-us/publications-and-research/sleep-learning-for-early-education-professionals

- **Red Nose** is considered the recognised national authority on safe sleeping practices for infants and children. Approved providers and service leaders are encouraged to use Red Nose resources to regularly develop, review and maintain the most up-to-date sleep and rest policies and procedures rednose.org.au
- South Australian Government – South Australian Safe Infant Sleeping Standards sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/a965e20048a319a3bafcf7675638bd8/4858+Safe+Sleeping+Standards.V9.2.PROOF.PDF?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=-ROOTWORKSPACE-a965e20048a319a3bafcf7675638bd8-niQOKYQ
- Tasmanian Government – Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services SIDS and Safe Sleeping health.tas.gov.au/service_information/information/safe_sleeping
- Victorian Government – Victorian Department of Education and Training Safe sleeping for babies education.vic.gov.au/parents/sleep/Pages/babies-safe-sleeping.aspx
- Western Australian Government – Western Australia Department of Local Government and Communities Safe Infant Sleeping Policy dlgc.communities.wa.gov.au/Publications/Pages/Safe-Infant-Sleeping-Policy.aspx