

EARLY YEARS POLICY



Early Years Services Water Safety	Policy No:	QA 3.5
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	Approved Date:	1 April 2014
	Approved By:	Manager Aged and Family
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Responsible Officer:	Coordinator Early Years	
Authorising Officer:	Manager Community Strengthening	

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure safe practices around water which includes constant supervision of children around water by staff/educators.

The health and wellbeing of children and staff/educators involved in the Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services is of the utmost importance.

Water play and education is included in Early Years Services to:

- Educate children about safety around water
- Enable children to learn and enjoy experiences involving water

2. Scope

Evidence of link to National Quality Standards: 2.1.3, 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.3.3, 7.3.5,

Evidence of link to Education & Care Services National Regulations: 168 (2) (a) (b).

Victorian Children's Services Regulations 2009

3. Application

All Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services staff / Family Day Care Educators and children accessing the Early Years Services

4. Definitions

Not applicable

5. Policy

5.1 Early Years Services

i) Risk Assessment

General Risk Assessment is conducted to ensure every reasonable precaution is taken.

Excursion Risk Assessment

Every reasonable effort is taken to minimise risks in relation to water hazards and risks related to water based activities (where applicable) on excursions. Risk management must occur before the activity takes place. It is also important to recognise potential water hazards and to take action to eliminate or control the hazards. A visit in advance to the proposed excursion destination is required in conducting and recording the risk assessment. Information to be gathered regarding the suitability of the excursion site in relation to water hazards/water based activities is to include: age appropriateness and safety of the location, supervision requirements/possible issues and planning for this, other people attending venue, planning for any required emergency responses.

Supervision

No child is left unsupervised at any time whilst around water hazards, involved in water based activities, or water play activities.

ii) Water Play

- Water play activities may be included in education and care programs provided by Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services.

- When water play activities are planned Educators, staff and contractors will consider the developmental levels and individual needs / provisions of the children in the program, and as a result of these considerations will ensure constant supervision is in place to ensure the safety of all children.
- Water play troughs, buckets and other water containers will be emptied after every use, and stored to prevent the collection of water when not in use.
- Any ponds or areas of open water in children's play areas must be fitted with a childproof cover.

iii) Water Hazards

- Given the increased risk of injury posed by water hazards, children are visually supervised at all times by staff/educators and contractors.
- To reduce the incidents of falls from water/other fluid spills, all spills are mopped up as they occur.

iii) Safety with Hot Tap Water

All Early Years services will have an annual check of all water temperature, taps and valves as part of the Surf Coast Shire Council Work Place Health and Safety Audit and will comply with the required Standards.

Family Day Care – refer to the *Annual Home Safety Check* regarding water temperature.

5.2 Family Day Care

Family Day Care Home Safety Checklist process: All Family Day Care residences undergo a Home Safety inspection process (as per the *Family Day Care Assessment, approval and reassessment of approved Family Day Care residences and Family Day Care Venues Procedure*), which includes the assessment and resolution of any water hazards.

Contractors will:

- Comply with practices that reduce the risk of child accidents and illnesses relating to swimming and wading pools and other water hazards and will comply with the Regulations.
- Complete a risk assessment prior to any activity or excursion near water.

Direct adult supervision provided at all times near water, including excursions. Direct supervision applies even when a water hazard is fenced in accordance with the *Australian Standard AS 1926*.

Adult/child ratios apply for all excursions where water hazards are present.

- The Coordination Unit is informed of the intention to participate in an excursion 48 hours prior to the excursion date where a water hazard is present.
- When applying for a water hazard excursion the Coordination Unit requires the risk assessment for approval.
- Once approved participation is dependent upon parents signing a Regular or Non-Regular excursion form.
- **One adult for every four children** - this ratio may vary depending on the increased risks of water hazards.

Wading pools, plastic pools, water play troughs etc. are emptied after every use, and stored to prevent the collection of water. The practice is supported by evidence demonstrating that bacteria and algae that may be detrimental to children can grow quickly in un-chlorinated water and be of considerable health risk to children.

- Wading pools can only be filled to a maximum depth of 15cm, otherwise pool fencing is required.
- Children with diarrhea, upset stomach, open sores, or nasal infections cannot use a pool or wading pool.

Private swimming pools/spas – see Home Safety Check for standard, (this also applies to visits to other homes where there is a pool/spa).

- Swimming pool fencing and gates that comply with *Australian Standard AS 1926* must be provided. Check pool fencing and gates regularly to ensure they are working correctly.
- Remove all objects from around pool or other water hazard that a child could use to climb over fencing, such as logs, trees, bikes, chairs, bins.
- Pool filters, chemicals and equipment must be inaccessible to children in care.
- Keep an accessible, current and legible cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) guide near pool.

**** No child is permitted to enter into the area of, or swim, in a spa, or a private or public swimming pool whilst the Family Day Care Service is operating and children are in care.**

Private Dams – must be inaccessible to children.

Grey Water – must be inaccessible to children.

Septic Tanks – must be inaccessible to children.

Rainwater Tanks – children must be supervised during use.

Private ponds are required to be fitted with a childproof cover to prevent children from falling in.

Water Containers (nappy buckets, etc) must be safely covered or inaccessible to children. Check garden after rain or watering and empty water that has collected in holes or containers.

Bathrooms and Laundries

- Nappy buckets must have a lid and be kept off the floor.
- Never leave a child in a bath alone.
- Keep bathroom and toilet doors closed and always supervise children when using the bathroom.

*** A Contractor may not directly supervise their own children for swimming activities whilst still responsible for the supervision of children enrolled with Family Day Care.*

*** Contractors are not permitted to take Family Day Care children to swimming lessons. Contractors must arrange their own child's swimming lessons outside of Family Day Care hours.*

Bathing in Hot Water

For children less than five years of age the second most common location of drowning is the bath. The other major areas of risk surrounding the bathing process are hot water scalds and falls.

The aim of this section of the policy is to:

- Raise awareness of drowning, hot water scalds and falls and management of the risks through education and policy implementation.
- Minimise the risk of burns and hot water scalds occurring while the child is in care.
- Ensure Contractors respond appropriately by following the procedure outlined below.

Drowning

To prevent drowning in the bathroom:

- Supervision of children when bathing
- Never leave children alone.
- Bath plugs must be out of reach of all children

Safety with Hot Tap Water

- Control the temperature of your bathroom hot tap water to a maximum of 50°C as per the home safety check list.
- Always test the water's temperature before bathing a child. Use the inside of your wrist. Hold it in the water for a slow count of five. It should be comfortably warm, not hot. Note; the maximum recommended temperature for bathing a baby is 38°C.
- Refer to home safety checklist for other preventative measures.

6. Records

Records shall be retained for at least the period shown below.

Record	Retention/Disposal Responsibility	Retention Period	Location
Early Years Regular/Non-Regular Excursion Form	Records	Destroy 7 years after last attendance of child	Off-site
Early Years Risk Assessment Management Plan	Records	Destroy 7 years after last attendance of child	Off-Site

Family Day Care Home Safety Checklist Template	Records	Destroy 7 years after conclusion of engagement of FDC provider.	Off-Site
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7. Attachments

Not applicable

8. References

Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Services Policies

D15/33004 Early Years Supervision of Children Policy
D14/70705 Early Years Excursions Policy
D15/35312 Early Years Child Safe Environment Policy

Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Services Work Instructions and Forms

D14/28577 Family Day Care Supervision of Children Work Instruction
D17/51029 Family Day Care Home Safety Checklist Template
D18/29066 Family Day Care Regular Excursion Authority
D14/48378 Family Day Care Non Regular Excursion Authority
D14/87971 Early Years Risk Assessment Management Plan
D17/23578 Kindergarten Regular Outing Form
D19/24712 Kindergarten Excursion Form

Other References

Kidsafe Victoria Water Safety Fact Sheet
Victorian Pool Fencing Laws
Education and Care Services National Law 2010
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
ACECQA National; Quality Framework Resource Kit

Approval Date:	01/04/2014	Approved by:	General Manager Culture and Community
Amendment/Review 1:	01/04/2015	Approved by:	Manager Aged and Family
Amendment/Review 2:	08/06/2017	Approved by:	Manager Aged and Family
Amendment/Review 3:	06/12/2018	Approved by:	Manager Community Strengthening
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