Early Years Services - QA2.15 Supervision of Children

TRIM Reference:	D15/33004	Due for Review:	6 May 2027
Responsible Officer:	Coordinator Early Years		

Purpose

This policy outlines Surf Coast Shire Council's commitment that effective supervision is a key priority in the prevention of incidents, accidents and injury to children in the Early Years Services environment.
This policy aims to ensure:

- the safety, health & wellbeing of children when participating in Early Years Services activities, including excursions.
- the potential for incidents, accidents and injury to children is reduced.
- that educators and staff are aware of the variables relating to supervision.
- that children are fully supervised at all times.

Policy Principles

Evidence of link to National Quality Standards: 2.1, 2.2.1
Evidence of link to Early Childhood Services National Regulations: 84A, 84B, 84C, 101, 102 (2), 102E, 102F, 115, 122-124, 165, 166, 168, 176
Evidence of link to Early Childhood Services National Law: 165, 167, 174
Victorian Children's Services Regulations 2020
Child Safe Standards Victoria - standards 2,4,6,8,9,10,11

Scope

This policy applies to all Surf Coast Shire Council's Early Years' Service staff members, volunteers, students and the children that attend our services.

Policy

All children attending our service are provided with a safe environment, both physically and online, at all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.

All staff, volunteers, students, families at Surf Coast Shire Early Years Services must ensure that the safety, health, wellbeing, rights and best interests of children are the paramount consideration in all interactions and activities involving children.

Considerations for supervision
Children of different ages and abilities will require different levels of supervision, privacy, and autonomy. Generally, the younger the children are, the greater the need for an adult to be close by to support and assist them.
For young children, adequate supervision may involve children remaining near the adult who is supervising them. Supervision of infants and toddlers who are sleeping is ensured when educators can see and hear them. For older children, it is important to balance the need for close supervision with respect for their age and developing independence.

Note: ~~that~~ supervision is facilitated by the physical design and maintenance of the premises (regulation 115), the supervision practices of educators (section 165), and educator ratios (regulations 122-124).

- Educators must monitor and maintain educators~~staff~~ to child ratios within each Early Years Service at all times.

- On arrival at the Early Years' Service the nominated person bringing the child/ren into the education and care setting must ensure child/ren is signed in on record of attendance sheet either online or paper. Once signed-in the Educator assumes responsibility for the child. The family resumes responsibility for the child once the child has been signed-out of the Early Years' Service by a nominated person.
- Staff will review and reflect on their arrival and departure routines regularly to ensure they are safe and manageable for all children and plan for high levels of supervision during these times.
- At no time should a door be propped open during arrival and departure routines and an educator must be situated at the door during this period to ensure that NO child leaves the service unattended.
- Always keep gates/doors securely closed when not actively supervising children entering or exiting. **Gates/Doors should NOT be held open at any times**.
- Children are to be supervised in all areas of the service, by being in sight and/or hearing of staff/educators at all times, including during eating and drinking, toileting, sleep, rest and transition processes.
- Children are not to have access to unsupervised or unsafe areas of the service. This includes store rooms and sheds.
- The Early Years' Service must plan for the supervision of children in indoor and outdoor areas.
- Staff/educators must use active-supervision methods; they must position and reposition themselves as the children move through the learning spaces, scanning all areas regularly, listening for changes in noise or activity, conduct regular head counts, avoid duties or distractions that reduce supervision and respond immediately if supervision cannot be maintained.
- Close supervision in higher risk of injury situations (e.g. nappy change table or high-chair) must take place.
- Staff/educators must exchange information between each other to ensure that there are no areas being accessed by children who are unsupervised.
- The Early Years' Service must inform new and/or relief staff/educators of the service supervision arrangements and what they are required to do in relation to supervision of children.
- Educators need to communicate and collaborate with one another to ensure children are supervised effectively. This is necessary to ensure educators know where their colleagues are in the service and how this may affect the supervision of children. Additionally, it enables roles and responsibilities to be clearly understood. For example, educators should let their colleagues know if they are leaving an area for any reason, such as to get a resource from another room, or to go to the bathroom.
- Educators at the Early Years' Service must inform other staff if they have a child in their care that requires additional supervision.
- Supervision arrangements are to be flexible enough to allow supervision of individual and small groups of children, such as children while sleeping and while both indoor and outdoor experiences are offered to children.
- The Early Years' Service must plan for excursions that includes risk assessments and considers supervision implications.
- At no time is a child to be left unsupervised in a vehicle.
- In services with low supervision areas, a **risk assessment** should be completed to ensure all staff are aware of the risks.

Indoor/Outdoor Programs

Where the program involves simultaneous use of indoor and outdoor environments, educators will effectively supervise children in both environments at all times.
A risk assessment must be created for all services that run an indoor/outdoor program

Consideration must be given to:

- Child/Staff ratios and the distribution of staff when children are playing across multiple environments. For example, having only five children indoors and seventeen children outdoors raises questions about whether this arrangement aligns with our Supervision Policy and best practice regarding child safety.
- Group dynamics and individual children who may require additional supervision.
- Experience and confidence of educators, if you usually operate an indoor/outdoor program, however you have a casual staff member for the session (do they have the confidence and skills to ensure high level of supervision at all time)
- Situation of drink/food trolleys

- Roles and responsibilities of staff **working directly with children** when operating an indoor/outdoor program (for example: if a child from outdoors goes to the toilet is that then the responsibility of the staff indoors or outdoors)
- If an educator needs to leave the space – how is the other educator going to ensure that they are providing high supervision to all children across the indoor/outdoor program?
- The yard size and educators' visibility to all areas of the yard if there is only one educator outside can they actively supervise when the yard is big and there are blind spots.
- The placement of indoor furniture to ensure optimal supervision of indoor space when running an indoor/outdoor program.

Ratios must be correct and balanced — for example, if you have 22 children and 2 staff, this should look like approximately 11 children inside and 11 children outside to maintain appropriate supervision levels. If that can't happen, then the indoor/outdoor program will need to change to reflect the distribution of children.

Supervision during excursions

A thorough risk assessment will take into account the levels of supervision and number of adults needed during an excursion and determine whether the minimum ratios are sufficient to provide adequate supervision.
Services may consider using strategies during certain times of the excursion when children may require different levels of supervision, for example when leaving and entering the service premises or excursion venue. Strategies will include head counts and attendance checks. Also allocating a group of children to a particular adult or educator.

Supervision during transportation

Children can be transported by, or be on transport arranged by, children's education and care services between the service premises and a place of excursion.
Conducting a risk assessment will determine how children are supervised while being transported and whether additional adults are required during transportation.

~~**A risk assessment must be created for all services that run an indoor/outdoor program**~~**.**

Electronic Devices

Supervising children when they use electronic devices is very important to keep them safe. Even if an adult is in the same room, they need to actively supervise the child's online activities. For more information and guidance, see the Safe use of digital technologies and online environments policy.

The use of personal mobile devices is prohibited in an area where children are being educated and cared for, if staff/volunteers/students see any other staff/volunteer/student using personal mobile devices without approval, then they are required to report this to the Team Leader or Early Years Coordinator.

Team Leader of the Service or Coordinator Early Years must be notified immediately and ~~Department of Education~~Victorian Early Children Regulatory Authority (VECRA) within 24 hours if a child:

- Appears to be missing or cannot be accounted for
- Needs emergency medical treatment as a result of injury or incident
- Appears to have been taken or removed from the service environment in a way that breaches the National Regulations, or
- Is mistakenly locked in or locked out of the Service environment (NLA174)
- Discloses or you as an educator become aware of incidents of physical or sexual abuse to the child

Definitions

Adequate and Effective Supervision

The Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services define adequate supervision 'as the process of directing, planning, listening, watching and guiding children to ensure their safety in a way as to enable them to maintain independence to build on achievable challenges that support their learning and development[1].'

What does adequate supervision look like?[2]
Although the provision of adequate supervision depends somewhat on the children's ages and abilities, every child at the service must~~should~~ always be monitored actively and diligently. It means knowing where children are at all times. Children of different ages and abilities will need different levels of supervision.

Younger children will always need to be in sight of an adult whereas older children may not. In general, the younger the children are, the more they may need an adult to be physically present and close by to support and help them. Adequate supervision is therefore likely to be different in some ways for different services.

For example: in a center-based service for young children, adequate supervision will mean that the children remain in close proximity to the adult who is supervising them. In contrast, in an outside school hour care service, in which children are older, knowing where each child is and ensuring that educators are in a position to respond may be considered adequate supervision.

Physical abuse
For the purposes of NQF notifications, child physical abuse refers to the use of physical force against a child that results in harm to the child. Depending on the age of the child and the nature of the adult's behaviour, physical force that is likely to cause physical harm to the child may also be considered abusive. For example, a situation in which a baby is shaken by an adult but not injured would still be considered physical abuse.

Sexual abuse
For the purposes of NQF notifications, the definition of child sexual abuse varies depending on the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. In the context of education and care, the definition of sexual abuse is any sexual behaviour, including grooming behaviour, by an adult to a child. Adults working in an education and care service are in a position of power or authority over children and any sexual behaviour by an adult towards a child is sexual abuse.

Working directly with children
A person is working directly with children at a given time if at that time the person:

- is physically present with the children, and
- is directly engaged in providing education and care to the children.

Related Procedure

Nil.

References

Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Services Policies

MPP018	Workplace Health and Safety Policy
D15/15724	Early Years Employment of Qualified Staff/Ratios Policy
D15/35312	Early Years Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy
D14/94973	Early Years Delivery of children to, and collection from, education and care service Policy
D14/70705	Early Years Excursions Policy
D14/70690	Early Years Sleep, Rest and Relaxation Policy
D15/35300	Early Years Sun Protection Policy
D15/38683	Early Years Water Safety Policy
D14/105413	Early Years Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
D15/32929	Early Years Nappy Changing and Toileting Policy
D15/42585	Early Years Staff Code of Conduct Policy
D22/176330	MPP-052 Child Safe Organisation Policy

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

D14/87971	WHS2.2 Early Years Risk Assessment Management Plan

[1] *Ensure the Health & Safety of Children, Aussie Childcare Network website - retrieved 1/4/2014*
[2] *National Quality Framework Supervision Fact Sheet | Updated September 2018*

D24/136792	Work Instruction – Campfire – All Surf Coast Shire operated Kindergartens and Pre-schools
D25/140977	Personal Phone request form
D25/141004	Electronic device agreement
D17/54211	Child Safe Standards Reporting Form
D23/104577	Early Years Child Safe Code of Conduct – Child Safe Standards
D24/112060	Early Years Staff – Incident Report Form
D25/137590	Work Instruction – Early Years Research projects
D25/178628	Risk Assessment - Supervision - Indoor / Outdoor Program – template
D26/63091	Visitor registration in Early Years Services via SISO
D26/113027	KIS Additional Assistant – Work Instructions

Other References

Kidsafe: the Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
Guide to Education and Care Services National Law 2010
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
Guide to Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
~~ACECQA National; Quality Framework Resource Kit~~
Victorian Children Services Regulations 2020
Childcare Service Handbook (Department of Education)
Victorian Early Learning & Development Framework
Social Services Register https://www.vic.gov.au/social-services-regulator

ACECQA Resources and References
- National; Quality Framework Resource Kit
• Children's Health and Safety, Occasional paper 2
• Guidance for adequate supervision during transportation
• Safe arrival of children
• Policy and procedure guidelines-Safe arrival of children
• Risk Assessment Management Tool
• Sleep and rest legislative requirements
• NQF Online Safety Guide
• NQF Child Safe Culture Guide.

Document History

Version	Document History	Approved by – Date
1	*Approval*	General Manager Culture and Community – 01/04/2014
2	Amendment/Review	Manager Aged and Family – 01/06/2015
3	Amendment/Review	Manager Aged and Family – 03/01/2018
4	Amendment/Review	Manager Aged and Family – 09/08/2019
5	Amendment/Review	Manager Aged and Family – 09/11/2020
6	Amendment/Review	Manager Community Strengthening – 02/06/2022
7	Amendment/Review	Manager Community Strengthening – 31/07/2023
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