

SLEEP AND REST POLICY

Policy Statement

This Policy sets out how the Service provides regular sleep and rest periods which follow the safe sleeping recommendations of the recognised authority, Red Nose, and takes into consideration the number, ages, cultural preferences, suitability of staffing arrangements, development and specific health needs of individual children and their families to ensure the health and safety of children during sleep and rest periods.

Strategies and Practices

- The *Sleep and Rest Policy* is available to families upon enrolment and staff upon induction.
- Educators speak with parents about their child's particular needs in relation to sleep. Information is recorded in the enrolment record regarding children's sleep patterns and habits, and need for a comforter etc.
- The centre tries to accommodate each child's individual sleep routine as practically as possible. Educators are aware of the need to be responsive to children's signs of tiredness and acknowledge that they may need a sleep/rest outside of this routine. Infants and young children's sleep patterns will be varied and occur at different times throughout the day. Older children will have a scheduled sleep/rest period that will generally occur after lunch; however, these routines are flexible to ensure that all children's needs are met.
- Quiet areas for children to rest or be alone are always available.
- If a family's beliefs and practices are in conflict with Red Nose recommendations, or a child has a diagnosed medical condition that prevents compliance with these recommendations, then the Service will only endorse an alternative practice after written advice has been received from a registered medical practitioner stating the need for this practice.
- Information from Red Nose on safe sleeping practices is available to families and staff.
- All children are placed on their back for a rest/sleep. However, children are allowed to find their own preferred sleeping position. All children rest with faces uncovered.
- Staff ratios are maintained according to the Education and Care Services National Regulations during sleep/rest periods.
- Sleeping children are supervised at all times and the period that they sleep for is recorded on the Sleep Record in the Discoverers, Investigators and Inventors Rooms.
- The viewing window to the Explorers cot room is kept clear of obstruction, and educators check sleeping children every 10 minutes, by entering the room and checking each individual child. Educators then initial the Sleep and Rest Register as a record of the check being conducted.
- A baby monitor is used in addition to the 10-minute checks that are conducted and recorded. The monitor is taken outside if children are sleeping in the cot room and the other children are outside.
- Sleep/rest areas are kept well-ventilated, uncluttered and appropriately lit and, as with all other areas of the Service, are smoke-free.
- Prams are available to support children at rest/sleep times to settle. Once children are asleep in the pram they are then transferred into a cot. The prams are also used as a transition tool for children who are new to the care environment; always with the end goal to fully transition to a cot.
- Educators ensure children are dressed suitably for the room temperature. Some items of clothing may need to be removed for safety reasons (e.g. tops with hoods and cords, and bibs that may cause choking). Educators are respectful and sensitive to cultural differences in attitudes to dressing and encourage children to be independent in dressing at these times.

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- Any jewellery that is seen as a safety risk (including amber teething necklaces) will be removed from children prior to sleep/rest times and will be replaced upon waking.
- Any dummies used by children are only available at rest/sleep times and at other times that educators deem necessary, such as when settling or feeling unwell. The dummies are stored in the fridge in individually labelled containers. Families are encouraged to leave a dummy at the service. Dummy chains will not be used at the service and will be removed and provided to the families.
- Comforters from home will be given to children who need them to settle. However, toys with ribbons, removable parts or parts that can be looped over a child's head cannot be used because of the Service adherence to Red Nose guidelines. Once children are settled and asleep, their comforters will be removed to ensure optimal safety. These can be re-offered to children in order to resettle.
- To help children relax for sleep/rest, educators play calming music, use quiet soothing voices and, sometimes, use guided relaxation techniques.
- While all children need time to relax at the Service, some do not need to sleep during the day. Rather, they only require a quiet comfortable place to relax.
- Children's voices are respected, and no child is made to sleep against their wishes or needs.
- Children are left to wake of their own accord, and educators attend to and soothe them when they do wake. Staff will work in collaboration with families to ensure that their child is receiving an appropriate amount of sleep while in care. Families may ask educators to wake their child after a certain time frame; however, the decision to wake a child will be based on the needs of the child at the time. Staff will wake children in a respectful, quiet and unhurried manner.
- In instances where families request that their child remain awake, that child will not be encouraged to sleep. However, if the child should subsequently fall asleep, or ask for a rest, educators will support the child to do so.
- The Service supplies age appropriate individual cots, beds and linen. Bed linen is washed weekly for full-time children or after each child's last day of their attendance pattern. Cots are prepared/made in line with Red Nose safe sleeping guidelines.
- Bed linen is stored hygienically.
- The children's beds are cleaned daily, after each use, before being stored. If families wish for their child to use a cushion or pillow to support their sleep and rest on a bed, then these must be provided by the family.
- Beds are positioned so that educators may walk between them to gain easy access to every bed.
- Children are placed with their feet at the bottom of their cot or bed, and bedclothes are tucked in securely as per Red Nose safe sleeping guidelines.
- If parents ask for their child to be 'wrapped' as a means of settling for sleep, educators ensure that a lightweight wrap is used, the baby is not wrapped too tightly, and that the wrap is kept away from the face. Once children can roll over, they will no longer be able to have their hands contained in wraps, muslins or Sleeping Sacks. This is in line with Red Nose guidelines.
- Quilts, doonas, duvets, pillows, cot bumpers or lambskins are not used in cots. Other materials such as blankets and spare sheets are not draped over the sides or ends of cots to block light or children's view of each other.
- No bottles are given to children in their cots.
- Mobiles or toys with stretch elastic cords are not used within reach of cots.
- Cots are positioned well away from dangling electrical and curtain /blind cords, heaters, fans and other electrical appliances, and power points.

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- Cots are set up at least 30cm apart as well as 30cm from any other furniture.
- After a child is placed in a cot, the cot side is pulled up and securely locked, and the educator makes a final check before leaving the cot.
- All cots in the Service meet the Australian Standard, are assembled according to manufacturer's instructions, and are maintained in good condition. Purchases of sleep products from 19 January 2026 will meet mandatory standards for design and construction including sleep products must be supplied with safety information on the use of the product and warning label affixed to the product during its lifecycle at the service. Inclined products must only be used for their intended purpose and have an incline of no more than 7 degrees to reduce the risk of suffocation from chin to chest position.
- Cot mattresses meet the manufacturer's size recommendations and fit the cot base with no more than a 25mm gap between the mattress and the sides of the cot.
- No child is placed in a cot if the child has the ability to climb out. Staff will communicate this with families and support the child to transition to a stretcher bed.
- Cots and cot mattresses are wiped over and cleaned with warm soapy water according to the Service's cot plan. For example, a child who attends five days per week will have their cot cleaned once a week. Alternatively, they are cleaned daily if a different child is using the cot the next day.
- Each child is always put to bed in the same cot, wherever possible.
- The Service has designated emergency cots to be used in emergency procedures and emergency rehearsals. These are the first 3 cots in the entrance to the cot room and are labelled with the words 'Emergency Cot' on the shelf below the mattress.
- Educators are provided with information on recommended safe sleeping practices during their induction to the service and are provided with up to date knowledge as any changes in recommendations occur. All educators will be required to hold, or enrolled to complete Safe Sleep practices training
- All Educators will review a Sleep and Rest Risk Assessment at least annually, or as soon as possible when they become aware of any circumstance that may affect children's health or safety during sleep or rest periods.
- The service will make every attempt to ensure familiar educators are rostered in each play room daily who know the regular sleep and rest requirements of children.

References

- *Education and Care Services National Law*
- Red Nose www.rednose.com.au
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations*
- *Guide to the National Quality Framework*
- Australian Child Care Alliance NSW - <https://nsw.childcarealliance.org.au/members/policies-required-under-regulation-168>
- Dr Brenda Abbey (Childcare by Design)
- Early Childhood Education NSW - *Safe Sleeping Practices*, 13th August 2021

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Policy Review

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur and any issues identified as part of the Service's commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities, where necessary, as part of the review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.