

Background

Children have the right to experience learning in an environment that is physically, emotionally, and digitally safe. While children may not always recognise risks themselves, it is the role of early childhood education and care services to proactively safeguard them from harm—including physical and sexual abuse, neglect, and inappropriate exposure to digital environments.

In accordance with the **National Quality Framework (NQF)** and upcoming amendments effective **1 September 2025**, this policy integrates enhanced responsibilities in providing protective physical spaces and safe digital environments, along with reinforcing child protection awareness among all stakeholders.

Policy statement

This Policy outlines the roles, responsibilities, and procedures required to establish and maintain a safe physical and digital environment for children, staff, and families at the service. It emphasises proactive child protection strategies, compliance with national child safe principles, and alignment with National Quality Framework.

Strategies and practices

- The *Child Safe Environments Policy* will be kept in the Services policy and procedures folder, accessible to families, educators, students, and volunteers.
- On employment educators undergo a thorough induction process detailing their roles in maintaining a **child-safe physical, emotional, and digital environment**. This includes current laws related to **child protection, mandatory reporting, and digital safeguarding practices**.
- The Services' building, facilities, furniture and equipment meet licensing requirements and those of all relevant national and state regulatory bodies, local council, and the Building Code of Australia.
- Play equipment has been installed strictly according to manufacturers' recommendations. All fixed equipment meets the Australian/New Zealand Safety Standards and is well maintained.
- All toys meet Australian Safety Standards, and are age appropriate, well maintained and have non-toxic finishes.
- The Service employs a handyman to repair equipment when necessary. A digital maintenance app is used to record the details of repairs. Items requiring immediate attention are logged with Sunkids Management. No item is used after repair until the Nominated Supervisor has checked and approved the repair.
- Educators complete a Safety Check List – Outdoor Daily and a Safety Check List – Indoor Daily each day before the Service opens to ensure the environment is safe for children. Each Friday morning after the check is completed, the lists are taken to the main office to be scanned to archiving.
- If at any time foreign objects, vermin, sharps, possibly harmful plants or damaged equipment are found refer to the Service's Dangerous Products, Plants, Vermin and Objects Policy.

- In order to determine the safe air and surface temperatures for children to play on different outdoor equipment and surfaces, educators use an infrared thermometer, or like instrument, to measure the surface temperature of outdoor equipment at various times of the day. Following safety recommendations from Kidsafe QLD, if surface temperatures reach above 45 degrees Celsius, children will not play in the outdoor environment. The data gathered is recorded on the Outdoor Play Surface Temperature Check form in OWNA.
- Staff maintain a clean and healthy sandpit by following the Service's Sandpit Cleaning Procedure.
- Should any matter requiring immediate attention be identified during the educators' checks, educators complete a Hazard Report Form and place it in the designated place for the Nominated Supervisor's immediate attention.
- The Service is safe, clean and well maintained. Refer to the Service's *Cleaning Policy*. All hazardous products are stored securely away from children's access.
- Sunkids arrange the completion of Monthly Safety and Maintenance Audit. This audit covers all play areas, approaches to the Service, outdoor environments, kitchen, laundry and other utility areas, fences and general maintenance items. Any items requiring attention are recorded in the digital maintenance app, and the audit document is scanned to archiving. Items requiring immediate attention are logged with Sunkids Management.
- The Service engages an external expert annually, to conduct a compliance and safety audit of every aspect of the Service's building and facilities.
- Sunkids Management support the compliance of the Service through managing and maintaining educators qualifications and Working with children card which are validated as part of the employment process.
- The Nominated Supervisor and educators at the Service who work directly with children are advised of the existence and application of the current child protection law and any obligations that they may have under that law to ensure a safe environment is maintained for children. Three monthly monitoring guides are completed to maintain and record educators' knowledge, and child protection training is completed bi-annually.
- The Nominated Supervisor and educators are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.
- At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard. Supervision plans are developed for the outdoor play spaces and are reviewed and amended regularly to meet children's evolving needs.
- Where hazards are documented a risk assessment is completed to inform safe practices and minimise risks.
- Where the educational program involves simultaneous use of the indoor and outdoor environments, educators will effectively supervise children in both environments.
- Procedures to effectively manage incident and emergencies are in place and regularly rehearsed, engaging children, families, students and visitors in rehearsals.

- The Nominated Supervisor observes and determines that all educators, staff and volunteers are fit for employment and are at no time under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Child Protection and Abuse Prevention

- Staff are trained annually on identifying and reporting all forms of abuse, including **physical, emotional, sexual abuse, grooming, and neglect**.
- Child protection monitoring guides are completed every three months and reviewed by leadership.
- Any disclosures or suspicions of abuse are documented and reported in accordance with **mandatory reporting requirements**.
- The service maintains clear procedures for responding to child disclosures, including **immediate response, documentation, referral, and family communication** (as appropriate).

Supervision and Risk Management

- **Supervision plans** for indoor/outdoor environments are tailored to children's developmental needs and are reviewed regularly.
- Educators ensure that **no child is left alone with a visitor** and follow **approved supervision ratios**.
- Risk assessments are conducted for all identified hazards, excursions, and use of new materials or equipment.
- Visitors are inducted into safe practices, and their presence is recorded and monitored at all times.

Safe Use of Digital Technology

- Digital technologies (e.g. tablets, interactive boards) are used under **active supervision**.
- Educators ensure children are **not exposed to harmful online content**, images, or interactions.
- The service implements **digital safety filters** and maintains policies for safe digital usage.
- **Photos, videos, and recordings** of children are used only with **explicit parental consent**, in compliance with **privacy and data protection laws**.
- Staff are prohibited from using personal devices in children's learning spaces and are trained in **cybersafety and ethical use of digital content**.

Educator Fitness and Conduct

- All staff undergo regular verification of their **Working With Children Checks**, monitored by Sunkids Management.
- No staff, educator, or volunteer may be under the influence of alcohol, illegal substances, or impairing medication during operational hours.
- Clear codes of conduct prohibit behaviours that could compromise children's physical or emotional safety.

Additional safe practices for babies

- Equipment for babies (e.g., cots, high chairs, prams) is inspected and cleaned regularly.
- Battery-operated toys and books are checked daily to ensure batteries are securely fastened.
- Sleeping infants are supervised in a way that allows **clear visual and auditory monitoring** at all times.

Responsibilities of parents

- Parents must close all gates/doors securely and drive slowly in all car park and pedestrian zones.
- Families are encouraged to report any safety concern or hazard they notice.

Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Approved Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all regulatory obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met, including digital safety. Monitor implementation of this policy and ensure access to child protection and digital safety training. Oversee staff fitness and code of conduct. • Ensure that the Child Safe Environments policy and procedures are implemented, the appropriate risk assessments and action plans are completed, and all identified actions are taken to minimise the risks to children's health and safety • Ensure all educators and staff have undertaken current child protection legislation training, including for the Mandatory Reporting requirement and obligations in their state/territory. If not, develop a plan to ensure training is undertaken in a suitable timeframe • Provide an environment that is free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol and ensure no educators or staff are affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medication) so as to impair their capacity to supervise or provide education and care to children in the service. • Take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators, staff and volunteers follow the policy and procedures. • Ensure copies of the policy or procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, educators, staff and volunteers, and are 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/Responsible Person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead policy implementation. Conduct staff briefings on child abuse indicators, digital safety, and privacy practices. Supervise staff-child interactions and ensure continuous risk assessment • Ensure all educators and staff are aware of current child protection legislation, including the Mandatory Reporting requirements and obligations in their state/territory • Meeting staff to child ratios to ensure adequate supervision

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all educators and staff know where to access the Child Safe Environments policy and procedures • Maintain ongoing communication with educators and staff about their responsibilities and any changes to policies, procedures and legislation. • Regularly monitor child protection training schedules and ensure all educators and staff are up to date with their training • When required, work collaboratively with appropriate services and/or professionals to support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program. • Ensure the safety and wellbeing of children attending the service by keeping a visitors' record, including signatures and arrival/departure times
Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report suspected abuse or risk. Implement safe supervision and digital practices. Monitor children's physical and emotional wellbeing daily. Follow checklists and maintain updated training. • Implement the Child Safe Environments policy and procedures and ensure that any action plans for individual children are carried out • Know the individual needs and action plans for the children • Maintain current accredited Child Protection, First Aid and approved CPR, Asthma and Anaphylaxis training • Monitor and maintain staff to child ratios to ensure adequate supervision of children • Provide an environment that is free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol. • Keep a visitors' record, including signatures and arrival and departure times
Families	<p>Be families with the Child Safe Environments policy and procedures</p> <p>Report concerns. Follow safety procedures when entering/exiting the service. Provide consent for photo/video use and participate in digital safety agreements.</p>

Procedures and forms

- Incident, injury, trauma and illness form
- Injury on intake Form
- Outdoor Play Surface Temperature Check
- Safety Checklist – Indoor Daily
- Safety Checklist – Outdoor Daily
- Sandpit Cleaning Procedure
- Monthly Safety and Maintenance Audit
- Supervision Guidelines
- Child Protection Procedure
- Digital Technology Safety Procedure

Links to other policies

- Child Protection and Risk Management Policy
- Use of other electrical devices and other equipment considering child safe risks.
- Cleaning Policy
- Dangerous Products, Plants, Vermin and Objects Policy
- Delivery and Collection Policy
- Evacuation and Lockdown Policy
- Incident, injury, trauma and illness Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Nutrition, Food and Beverages Policy

- Sleep and Rest Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Sun Protection Policy

Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2011

Section/Regulation		Description
Section	165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
Section	166	Offense to use inappropriate discipline
Regulation	82	Tobacco, drug and alcohol-free environment
Regulation	83	Staff members and family day care educators not to be affected by alcohol or drugs
Regulation	84	Awareness of child protection law
Regulation	103	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
Regulation	104	Fencing
Regulation	105	Furniture, materials and equipment
Regulation	115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
Regulation	122	Educators must be working directly with children to be included in ratios
Regulation	123	Educator to child ratios – centre-based services
Regulation	166	Children not to be alone with visitors
Regulation	167	Record of service's compliance
Regulation	168	Education and care facilities must have policies and procedures
Regulation	170	Policies and procedures to be followed
Regulation	171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
Regulation	172	Notification of change to policies and procedures
Regulation	175 (d) & (e)	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority

QA	2.1.3	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child
	2.2.1	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
	3.1.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child
	3.1.2	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained
	5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions
	5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child
	5.2.2	Self-regulation

Sources

- Child Safe Organisations
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2018

Further reading and useful websites

- ACECQA- <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-03/Providing-a-childsafe-environment-policy.pdf#>: Providing a Child Safe Environment – Policy Guidelines accessed 1 December

- Kidsafe – <http://www.kidsafe.com.au/> accessed 1 December 2025
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations – <https://www.childsafety.gov.au>
- eSafety Commissioner – <https://www.esafety.gov.au> accessed 1 December 2025
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Guide to the National Quality Framework (NQF) – ACECQA, 2024

Key Terms

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
Notification Decision Tree	This Queensland specific tool can assist in deciding whether a notification is required and the timeframe in which that notification should be made.	https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/legislation-and-guidelines/health-and-safety/incident-and-emergency-management/notify-the-regulatory-authority
Reasonably Believes	Believes on grounds that are reasonable in the circumstances.	Schedule 3, Child Protection Act 1999 (Queensland)
Reasonable Grounds	Suspects that a child may be at risk of significant harm based on your observations of the child or what has been reported to you about a child.	Schedule 3, Child Protection Act 1999 (Queensland)
Reasonably Suspects	Suspects on grounds that are reasonable in the circumstances.	Schedule 3, Child Protection Act 1999 (Queensland)
Responsible Person	In relation to an education and care service, means a person referred to in section 162(1)(a) to (c) of the National Law	National Law
Rights of the Child	Human rights belonging to all children, as specified in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.	Guide to the NQF
Wellbeing	Sound wellbeing results from the satisfaction of basic needs – the need for tenderness and affection; security and clarity; social recognition; to feel competent; physical needs and for meaning in life. It includes happiness and satisfaction, effective social functioning and the dispositions of optimism, openness, curiosity and resilience.	Guide to the NQF
Working Directly with Children	A person is working directly with children at a given time if at that time the person: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is physically present with the children, and - Is directly engaged in providing education and care to the children. 	National Regulations
Working with Children Check (WWCC)	A notice, certificate or other document granted to, or with respect to, a person under a working with children law to the effect that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The person has been assessed as suitable to work with children; or - There has been no information that if the person worked with children the person would pose a risk to the children; or - The person is not prohibited from attempting to obtain, undertake or remain in child-related employment. 	National Law

Policy review

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual 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 the Service's commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

Version Control

Version	Date Reviewed	Approved By	Comments/Amendments	Next Review Date
1	8 January 2018	Kaylene Harper	Updated to changed NQF requirements 1 February 2018.	January 2019
2	6 February 2019	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy. Section included relating to batteries contained in toys, books. Reviewed and amended safety checklists attached to policy.	February 2020
3	28 January 2020	Kaylene Harper	Accessed sources and further reading/useful websites.	January 2021
4	25 September 2020	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy. Accessed sources and further reading/useful websites.	September 2021
5	21 October 2020	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy. Added key terms and roles and responsibilities in line with Queensland Government Policy and Procedure Guidelines	October 2021
6	18 February 2021	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed Policy. Added Child Protection and Risk Management Policy to 'Links to other policies'.	February 2022
7	9 September 2021	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy	September 2022
8	26 September 2022	Linda Hollard	Reviewed policy Added Child Safe Standards, ACECQA Child Safe Environments Policy Guidelines Added key Quality Areas of the National Quality Framework and Education and Care Services National Regulations	September 2023
9	23 August 2023	Grace McKinstry	Reviewed policy. Accessed sources and further reading/useful websites.	August 2024
10	1 July 2024	Tiffany Boeske	Reviewed policy Accessed sources	July 2025
11	20 June 2025	Kaylene Harper	Inclusion in the 2025 revision cycle with the annotation noting the inclusion of NQF Child Safety Update 2025 updates and explicit vaping prohibition.	June 2026
12	1 December 2025	Tiffany Boeske	Reviewed policy inline with outdoor surface temperature guidance released by Kidsafe QLD	December 2026

HAZARD REPORT FORM

Room/ Play Area: _____ Date: _____

Description of hazard (What is it?):

Where it is damaged? (e.g. if fence is cracked or damaged, describe where)

Has the item or area been isolated for the safety of children, staff and visitors?
(Circle)

Yes No If no, explain why not

Educator reporting item:

Person educator notified:

Immediate action to be taken: _____

Who is to complete action: _____

Time reported to Nominated Supervisor: _____

Time and date reported to Sunkids Management (if needed): _____

Use this chart to establish the safe temperatures of play elements in your play ground during a typical day. Use typical outdoor play times, so you know which play surfaces will be safe to use. If items reach 45 ° surface temperature or more, they are too hot to safely use. Note the air temperature and surface temperature of each item. Use this record to establish when it is safe to go outdoors each day.

[illegible]

SAFETY CHECKLIST – INDOOR DAILY

Week Starting date (Monday): _____

Items to be checked	Educator in charge to initial when daily check is complete.					Note any safety concerns each day and report them to the Nominated Supervisor
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	
Are all traffic paths and halls clear of objects that may cause trips and falls? Check for toys, spilled water, bags.						
Are all non-child access area doors closed/locked to children (e.g. laundry, kitchen, staff areas)?						
Are all cleaning chemicals (bottles) out of children's reach and in their correct locations in each room?						
Are all cleaning materials and other chemicals stored safely out of reach?						
Are all electrical sockets fitted with safety plugs if not in use?						
Are all sharp objects stored out of children's reach?						
Are all emergency signs posted in correct places for evacuation?						
Are signs indicating poison storage posted in the correct places?						
Are all medications stored correctly?						
Are store/prep room doors closed?						
Is all equipment used indoors set up in a safe and stable manner?						
Are the bins fitted with clean liners ready for the day in each room?						
Have all toys been checked for safety before placing out today?						
Have all toys, books containing batteries been checked to ensure batteries are secure?						
Are first aid kits ready accessible for staff to access in an emergency, and kept fully stocked?						
Are all cords, out of reach and secured appropriately?						
Is all safety emergency equipment free of obstruction such as fire extinguishers or alarms?						

SAFETY CHECKLIST – INDOOR DAILY

Signature of educator in charge of shift each day.						
<p>Comments: (Any hazards or areas of concern are to be passed on to the Nominated Supervisor and written in the Maintenance Book.)</p>						

SAFETY CHECKLIST – OUTDOOR DAILY

Week Starting date (Monday): _____

Items to be checked	Educator in charge to initial when daily check is complete.					Note any safety concerns each day and report them to the Nominated Supervisor
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	
Check that the front entry is clear for parents/children to pass through safely.						
Walk playground and check for rubbish, paper, glass and other foreign objects.						
Check all equipment and any structures for breaks, sharp edges, splinters, cracks, wear and tear						
Check that all safety gates work correctly and ensure that they self-close after opening for safety of children						
Check any play equipment set up is stable and well balanced.						
Check climbing equipment is safe and free from obstacles						
Check sandpit edges are clear and swept, paving also swept and obstacle free.						
Ensure sandpit covers are safely stored and out of children's reach.						
Check sandpit is raked and free of foreign objects.						
Check all fencing and gates are secure and splinter free.						
Check for spiders around pots, rims, fences, rocks, furniture, tyres and sheds.						
Ensure the playground is free of trip hazards.						
Check equipment is free of entrapment hazards.						
Ensure equipment is placed safe distances away from fences or other structures.						
Check the shed is tidy with no items packed or stacked unsafely.						
Ensure tissues, gloves and telephone is readily available to educators outdoors.						
Check garden beds are free of foreign objects.						

SAFETY CHECKLIST – OUTDOOR DAILY

Ensure gardens, trees and other plants are safe to children – no mushrooms, broken branches or sharp edges at unsafe heights to endanger children's eyes.						
Ensure the front path is free of trip hazards.						
Weekly sandpit cleaning completed - Follow procedure						
Signature of educator in charge of shift each day.						
<p>Comments: (Any hazards or areas of concern are to be passed on to the Nominated Supervisor and written in the Maintenance Book.)</p>						

Background

Sand pits form an integral part of everyday play and activity in our centre. As a result, we must ensure that our sand pits do not become a vehicle for the spread of illness or other undesirable health or hygiene outcomes.

Sandpits are to be cleaned weekly, on the same day each week, at the end of the day prior to being covered.

Follow this procedure when completing **weekly** sand pit cleaning to ensure we do not spread disease.

Steps to follow:

1. Pack away all toys and materials to the appropriate storage area
2. Use the metal rake and score across the sand, checking the whole surface for foreign objects
3. Sprinkle the sand with pool salt.
4. Once the surface has been covered with pool salt, use the rake to spread the pool salt through the sand
5. Place cover over the sand pit, ensuring the cover sits neatly and falls over the edges to protect sand from any animal access.
6. Place the rake and pool salt neatly in their allocated storage areas.
7. Sign the Safety Checklist – Outdoor daily once you have completed the sandpit clean.