

Background

The Early Years Learning Framework and the various state and Kindergarten Guidelines emphasise the importance of the physical environment in children's learning. According to these documents, children's capacity to understand and respect the social and natural environments is fostered in those environments where children can explore and make choices, including those that challenge their physical capabilities. Further, their competence, confidence and independence are supported.

Young children, however, have limited understanding of the potential dangers of certain products, plants and objects in the environment and must rely on adults to ensure the environment is safe for them.

Policy statement

This policy outlines the precautions the Service takes to ensure potentially dangerous products, plants and objects are inaccessible to children, and the plans it has in place in the unlikely event of a child having contact with one of these items.

Strategies and practices

- During their orientation, all staff are made aware of the need to strictly adhere to the contents of this policy, and the policy is discussed during team meetings, at staff appraisals and when required.
- The Service maintains an up-to-date list of all chemicals and cleaning agents used in the Service. Safety Data Sheets (SDS), together with any additional first-aid instructions required, are maintained for each item, and kept wherever potentially hazardous materials are stored in the Service. The SDS are filed in a way that staff can readily retrieve the information in an emergency. In such an emergency, staff follow the procedures detailed on the relevant SDS. In addition, staff seek advice from the Poisons Information Service (Telephone 13 11 26) whose number is posted beside the Service telephone.
- All potentially hazardous materials are kept out of reach of children, in child-proof cupboards, when not being used. In addition, only frequently used items are stored within locked cupboards in the rooms that children use.
- Clear warning signs are displayed wherever potentially hazardous materials are stored. As part of the program, educators discuss with the children various safety issues relating to hazardous materials, poisonous plants, and other dangers such as vermin.
- Hazardous products are kept in their original labelled container. When decanted, the new container/bottle is clearly labelled with the product name using the supplier's label. Staff check all labels regularly for legibility and these are replaced as required.
- When using any hazardous products, all staff follow the instructions on the labels. Staff members who cannot understand the instructions seek guidance from other staff.

- Hazardous products and chemicals are disposed of in strict accordance with the instructions on the labels.
- Staff conduct daily safety checks of the building and outdoor play areas for foreign objects, vermin, sharps, possible harmful plants, or damaged equipment. Refer to the Service's Child Safe Environments Policy.
- The Service is treated by a pest control contractor licensed by the relevant state health authority, at regular intervals and when necessary. The Service maintains a record of the chemicals used by the pest control contractor and the frequency of use.
- In the event of contract cleaners being used, the Service maintains a record of the products used by the cleaners and the frequency of use.
- Natural cleaning products are used wherever their use does not compromise hygiene. Only approved cleaning products are used for cleaning when children are present.
- The Service's Administration of Medication Policy contains guidelines for parents when bringing medications into the Service, and for the staff handling and storing these medications.
- Any item brought into the Service is checked by educators to ensure it does not pose any danger to children, and any identified risk is discussed with the family to ensure they are aware of the danger and why the item cannot be left at the Service.
- Safety plugs are fitted to all power points. Electrical appliances and cords are inaccessible to children. All electrical appliances are appropriately 'tested and tagged' annually.
- For Services where parents provide lunches, parents are encouraged to use alternatives to plastic wrap when packing children's lunches. Should any child's lunch be wrapped in plastic, staff ensure the wrapping is disposed of and inaccessible to children.
- The Service minimises the use of plastic bags, and these are stored inaccessible to children. When used for soiled clothing, the bags are kept out of reach of children.
- Poisonous and hazardous plants are identified, and action taken in accordance with advice from the Poisons Information Service (Telephone 13 11 26). Educators intentionally teach children of the danger posed by these plants. Do we need to include something in here about choosing plants that are safe and not including plants known to be dangerous?
- In the event of a sharp/dangerous object such as razor or knife blade or broken glass being found at the Service, the item is disposed of in the Sharps Disposal Container.
- In the event of a hypodermic needle being found at the Service: -
 - Educators: -
 - Do not attempt to pick up the syringe
 - Remove children from the area and keep them away until the needle has been removed
 - Notify the Nominated Supervisor immediately
 - The Nominated Supervisor will: -
 - Call the Clean Needle Helpline (Queensland 1800 633 353) to find out how and where to safely dispose of the syringe

- Act according to advice from the hotline
- Notify Sunkids Management of the situation do we have sharps containers at the centres?
- In the event of vermin being found at the Services: -
 - Educators:
 - Do not attempt to pick up or kill the vermin
 - Remove the children from the area and keep them away until the vermin have been removed
 - Notify the Nominated Supervisor immediately
 - The Nominated Supervisor will: -
 - Call the contracted pest controller on the emergency list displayed beside the telephone
 - Act according to advice from the pest controller
 - Notify Sunkids Management of pest controller contact
- In the event of a snake being found at the Service: -
 - Educators:
 - Do not attempt to pick up or kill the snake
 - Remove the children from the area and keep them away until the snake has been removed, or the Nominated Supervisor gives direction to the contrary
 - Notify the Nominated Supervisor immediately
 - The Nominated Supervisor will: -
 - Call the relevant snake catcher/wildlife authority on the emergency list displayed beside the telephone
 - Act according to the advice from that authority
 - Notify Sunkids Management of the situation

Additional safe practices for babies

- No additional practices required.

Responsibilities of parents

- To always follow the Service's Administration of Medication Policy. In particular, to ensure medication is never left in children's bags but handed directly to educators.
- To refer to educators all play items being brought into the Service.

Procedure and forms

- N/A

Links to other policies

- Administration of Medication Policy
- Child Safe Environments Policy
- Cleaning Policy
- Supervision Policy

Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2018

Regs	85	Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
	90	Medical conditions policy
	97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
	168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures

QA	2.2.1	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
	2.2.2	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented
	3.1.2	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained
	6.2.3	The service builds relationships and engages with its community

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2018
- RSPCA. (2015). *There's a snake in my backyard, what should I do?* http://kb.rspca.org.au/Theres-a-snake-in-my-backyard-what-should-I-do_443.html accessed 23 June 2025

Further reading and useful websites

- Department of Environment and Heritage Protection. (2019). *Snakes*. http://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/wildlife/livingwith/snakes/frequently_asked_questions.html accessed 23 June 2025
- Kidsafe – <https://kidsafeqld.com.au/resources/> accessed 23 June 2025
- Queensland Government. *Plants and mushrooms (fungi) poisonous to people*. <https://www.poisonsinfo.health.qld.gov.au/plants-and-mushrooms/> accessed 23 June 2025
- Queensland Poisons Information Centre <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/poisonsinformationcentre/> accessed 23 June 2025
- What snake is that? <https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/animals/living-with/snakes/near-you/south-east-qld> accessed 23 June 2025

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. Accessed sources and further reading/useful websites – additional included.	February 2020
3	29 January 2020	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy. Accessed sources and further reading/useful websites – additional included.	January 2021
4	13 October 2020	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy. Accessed sources and further reading/useful websites.	October 2021
5	28 September 2021	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy	September 2022
6	29 September 2022	Linda Hollard	Reviewed Policy Accessed sources and added additional information.	September 2023
7	23 August 2023	Grace McKinstry	Reviewed Policy Accessed sources and added additional information.	August 2024
8	1 July 2024	Tiffany Boeske	Reviewed policy Accessed sources	July 2025
9	23 June 2025	Gen Mahaki	Reviewed policy. Updated sources, further reading and useful websites.	June 2026