

Background

Children are active little people who are constantly learning, playing, watching and interacting with others. It is crucial for their sense of well-being, healthy growth and development to have time away from busy surroundings to rest, to reflect, and to imagine. Effective sleep and rest strategies are important factors in ensuring a child is safe and feels secure while at a Service.

Policy statement

This policy sets out how the Service provides regular sleep and rest periods which follow the safe sleeping recommendations of *Red Nose* <https://rednose.org.au/>, the recognised national authority on safe sleeping practices for infants and children, and take into consideration the ages, development and needs of individual children and their families.

Strategies and practices

- The *Sleep and Rest Policy* will be kept in the Services policy and procedures folder, accessible to families, educators, students, and volunteers.
- The Service has a prime duty of care to ensure children are provided with a high level of safety when sleeping and resting, and every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and hazard. The Services approach to supporting and promoting children's health and physical activity, including safe sleep, is informed by current recognised guidelines and up to date information.
- Educators consult with parents about their child's particular needs e.g. sleep patterns and habits, need for a comforter, and family values and parenting beliefs, cultural or otherwise, associated with sleep/rest, and consider these when determining each child's sleep/rest needs.
- Supervision practices are extended to meet the needs of children who have been identified as requiring additional supervision while sleeping, possibly due to a medical or physical condition.
- Nominated Supervisors and educators receive information and training on safe sleep and rest practices, as outlined in the Services *Sleep and Rest Policy*, and are made purposefully aware of their responsibilities in implementing those practices. This information is received upon induction and is reviewed annually.
- Nominated Supervisors and educators have a shared duty of care to ensure children are provided with a high level of safety when sleeping and resting, and every reasonable precaution is taken to protect them from harm and hazard.
- Infants sleep on demand. Toddlers and older children have a scheduled sleep/rest period shortly after lunch. In addition, educators are alert to any indication that a child might need sleep/rest outside of routine. Quiet areas for children to rest or be alone are always available.

Sleep and Rest

- The Services sleep/rest strategies and practices are outlined in the Parent Handbook and in enrolment forms and newsletters. Information from Red Nose on safe sleeping practices is displayed on noticeboards and within the Nursery, together with other useful information on sleeping, at the Service or at home.
- All children under the age of 12 months are placed on their back when being settled for a rest. Children over the age of 6 months who turn onto their side or stomach during sleep are left undisturbed.
- All children rest with faces uncovered. Hooded tops, bibs, shoes and amber necklaces/bracelets are removed before children are put to rest.
- Children remain within sight and hearing distance of educators when sleeping and resting. Educators constantly monitor the children e.g. breathing patterns, and the sleep/rest environment e.g. room temperature.
- Students or volunteers involved are supervised at all times.
- Sleep/rest areas are kept well-ventilated, uncluttered and appropriately lit and, as with all other areas of the Service, are smoke-free.
- 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 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.
- Comforters from home will be provided 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 due to the Services adherence to the *Red Nose Guidelines*.
- To assist children to relax for sleep/rest, educators dim the lights, 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 help educators in setting up the sleep/rest area and the quiet activities for children who do not sleep.
- No child is made to sleep against their wishes or needs, although it is expected that all children will otherwise speak and play quietly at this time in a suitably lit area.
- Children are left to wake of their own accord, and educators attend to and soothe them when they do wake. In instances where families request that their child remain awake, that child will not be encouraged to sleep e.g. patted. However, if the child should subsequently fall asleep, educators will not wake the child. This is explained to families upon making the request.
- On those occasions when parents do not supply a bed set, the Service will provide a sheet from its stock of Service linen. These sheets are laundered after each child's use.

Sleep and Rest

- The Service supplies bed sets for cots. Each cot set consists of a fitted bottom sheet and a loose top sheet. Bed linen is washed daily.
- The children's beds are cleaned daily with the Services approved cleaning product, following the three step process, before being stored. The covers of any cushions used for rest and relaxation are washed after each use.
- Each cot mattress is cleaned following the three step process, before being aired at the end of each day by lifting and leaving it tilted in the cot.
- Beds are positioned so that educators may walk between them to gain easy access to every bed from all four sides and children are positioned in a head to toe sequence.
- Every child's sleep pattern for the day is recorded on the daily feedback sheet for older children and displayed in the child's room or in the child's individual daily communication book for infants.
- Educators receive regular first aid training in resuscitation, and in the *Red Nose Guidelines*.

Additional safe resting practices for babies

SUDI (Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy) is the sudden, unexpected death of a baby during sleep. Babies under twelve months are considered to be at greater risk of SUDI than children over twelve months. The Service closely follows the recommendations for safe sleeping practices from *Red Nose*.

- All cots meet the current mandatory Australian Standard for Cots (AS/NZS 2172) and carry a label to indicate this. Safety checks are carried out on a regular basis. Babies are never put to sleep in a bassinet, hammock or pram/stroller because they do not carry safety codes for sleep.
- All children are placed on their back when first being settled for sleep/rest. If a child younger than 6 months turns onto their side or stomach during sleep, educators return the child onto their back.
- Should a child need to sleep on their stomach or side for sound medical reasons, the Service will only endorse this alternative practice upon receiving a letter from the child's Doctor stating the need for this alternative sleeping practice.
- All children rest with faces uncovered. Hooded tops, bibs, shoes and amber necklaces/bracelets are removed before children are put to rest.
- Children are placed with their feet at the bottom of their cot or mattress, and bedclothes are tucked in securely.
- If parents ask for their infant 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. All Red Nose recommendations are followed.

Sleep and Rest

- 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.
- Snugly rugs/blankets and soft toys are not given to any child sleeping in a cot.
- Mobiles or toys with stretch elastic cords are not used within reach of cots.
- Remove amber teething necklaces on the basis they pose a strangulation and choking hazard and if used, should be removed while sleeping during the day or night.
- Bottles will not be given to children if they are on a bed. Children can draw fluid into their lungs and may choke silently. Milk can also flow into the ear cavity causing infections. If children form an association between bottles and sleep this could establish poor sleep patterns for the future.
- Cots are positioned well away from dangling electrical and curtain/blind cords, heaters, fans and other electrical appliances, and power points.
- 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.
- The viewing window to the cot room is kept clear of obstruction, and educators check sleeping infants every 10 minutes, and initial the Sleep and Rest Register.
- All cots in the Service meet the Australian Standard, are assembled according to manufacturer's instructions, and are maintained in good condition.
- 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.
- Babies or young children should not be moved out of a cot into a bed too early, they should also not be kept in a cot for too long. When a young child is observed attempting to climb out of a cot, and looking like they might succeed, it is time to move them out of a cot.
- No child is placed in a cot if the child has the ability to climb out.
- Electric blankets, hot water bottles or wheat bags are not used in the Service.
- Cots are wiped over each day with the Services approved cleaning product. Cot mattresses are cleaned with the Services approved cleaning product following the three step process at the end of each day and are stood up to air dry.
- The Service supplies a sheet set consisting of a fitted bottom sheet and a flat top sheet for each child. All bed linen is laundered at the end of each day or as required.
- The sleep/rest area, as are all other areas of the Service, is smoke-free.
- The temperature of the room is monitored to ensure children's comfort.

Sleep and Rest

- Each child is always put to bed in the same cot.
- The Service has designated evacuation cots within each cot room and the Services Evacuation and Lockdown Policy specifically addresses sleep and rest times.

Additional safe resting practices for a child who is unwell

- Consistent with the Services Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness and Supervision Policy, children who are unwell are constantly monitored until collected by their parent(s).

Responsibilities of parents

- Upon enrolment, to discuss with educators their child's particular needs e.g. sleep patterns and habits, need for a comforter, and family values and parenting beliefs, cultural or otherwise, associated with sleep/rest. Update this information in the event of change e.g. a child becoming anxious about sleep/rest at the Service.
- To supply a bed set consisting of a fitted bottom sheet and a loose top sheet for summer, and a light blanket for winter, and to bring the set to the Service in a bag labelled with the child's name.
- To take the bed set home at least once a week, launder it, and return it on the day the child next attends the Service.
- To provide any comforters necessary.
- To read the daily feedback sheet or the child's individual communication book.

Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibility
Approved Provider	• Ensure sleep and rest policies and procedures are in place • Ensure educators receive information and induction training to fulfil their roles effectively, including being made aware of the sleep and rest policies, their responsibilities in implementing these, and any changes that are made over time • Take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators, staff and volunteers follow the policy and procedures • Ensure the needs for sleep and rest of children being educated and cared for by the service are met, having regard to the ages, developmental stages and individual needs of the children • Ensure the premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and in good repair • Ensure that each child has access to sufficient furniture, materials and developmentally appropriate equipment suitable for the education and care of that child • Ensure that the indoor spaces used by children is well ventilated; has adequate natural light; and is maintained at a temperature that ensures the safety and wellbeing of children • Ensure that the premises are designed to facilitate supervision • Ensure copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, educators, staff and volunteers, and available for inspection • Notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will: - Affect the fees charged or the way they are collected - Significantly impact the service's education and care of children or - Significantly impact the family's abilities to utilise the service

Sleep and Rest

Nominated Supervisor	- Ensure the needs for sleep and rest of children being educated and cared for by the service are met, having regard to the ages, developmental stages and individual needs of the children - Ensure educators understand and follow the service's policies and procedures - Ensure procedures are tailored to the specific service environment - Ensure educators understand their legal roles in the implementation of policies and procedures
Educators	- Ensure procedures are relevant to their particular service type - Have a good understanding of the service's policy and procedures - Identify and remove potential hazards from sleep environments - Document children's sleep and rest needs and provide information to families about their child's sleep and rest patterns - Consult families to gather information about individual children's needs and preferences - Model and promote safe sleep practices and make information available to families
Families	- Regularly update the service on their child's sleeping routines and patterns - Provide information updates on the previous night's sleep to assist with sleeping during the day - Provide specified bedding if required by the service - Dress child appropriately for the weather conditions and provide additional clothing

Procedures and forms

- Sleep and Rest Register per Day
- Sunkids Sleep and Rest Register per Child
- Hygiene Guidelines
- Supervision Guidelines
- Rest Time Procedure

Links to other policies

- Child Safe Environments Policy
- Evacuation and Lock Down Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Interactions with Families Policy
- Relationships with Children Policy
- Staffing Policy
- Tobacco, Drug and Alcohol Policy

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

Regs	81	Sleep and rest
	87	Incident, injury, trauma and illness record
	97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
	103	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
	105	Furniture, materials and equipment
	106	Laundry and hygiene facilities
	107	Space requirements – indoor space
	110	Ventilation and natural light
	115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
	168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures

Sleep and Rest

	170	Policies and procedures to be followed
	171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
	172	Notification of change to policies or procedures

QA	2.1.1	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation
	2.1.2	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented
	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
	3.1.1	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
	3.2.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments
	4.1.1	The organisation of educators across the service supports children's learning and development

Sources

- ACECQA. (2023). Safe sleep and rest practices. <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/supporting-materials/infosheet/safe-sleep-and-rest-practices> accessed 25 June 2025
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2020
- UNICEF. (n.d.). *Fact sheet: A summary of the rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child*. <https://www.unicef.org/montenegro/en/reports/summary-rights-under-convention-rights-child> accessed 25 June 2025

Further reading and useful websites

- Red Nose Australia – Education: <https://rednose.org.au/section/education> accessed 25 June 2025
- Raising Children Network – Sleep: <https://raisingchildren.net.au/newborns/sleep> accessed 25 June 2025
- Better Health Channel – Safe sleeping: <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/safe-sleeping-for-babies> accessed 25 June 2025

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.	
Infant	Young child between the ages of birth to 12 months.	

Sleep and Rest

Rest	A period of inactivity, solitude, calmness or tranquillity, and can include a child being in a state of sleep.	
Relaxation	Relaxation or other activity for bringing about a feeling of calm in your body and mind.	
Sudden and Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI)	A broad term used to describe the sudden and unexpected death of a baby for which the cause is not immediately obvious.	https://rednose.org.au/article/what-does-sudden-unexpected-death-in-infancy-sudi-mean
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)	The sudden and unexpected death of an infant under one year of age with an onset of a fatal episode occurring during sleep, that remains unexplained after a thorough investigation, including performance of a complete autopsy and review of the circumstances of death and the clinical history.	https://rednose.org.au/article/what-is-sudden-infant-death-syndrome-sids

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	5 February 2018	Kaylene Harper	Policy reviewed. Sources and further readings accessed and updated.	February 2020
3	31 January 2020	Kaylene Harper	Policy reviewed. Sources and further readings accessed and updated.	January 2021
4	25 September 2020	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy. Accessed sources and further readings.	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	15 February 2021	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy.	February 2022
7	8 September 2021	Kaylene Harper	Annual policy review – additional information regarding transition from cot to bed added	September 2022
8	20 January 2022	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy. Additional practice included to ensure adequate supervision while utilising cot room	January 2023
9	4 August 2022	Kaylene Harper	Amended practices around safe sleeping positions in cots.	August 2023

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10	24 August 2023	Grace McKinstry	Policy reviewed. Sources and further readings accessed and updated.	August 2024
11	25 June 2024	Tiffany Boeske	Policy reviewed to reflect best practice.	June 2025
12	25 June 2025	Gen Mahaki	Annual policy review – sources and further reading updated	June 2026