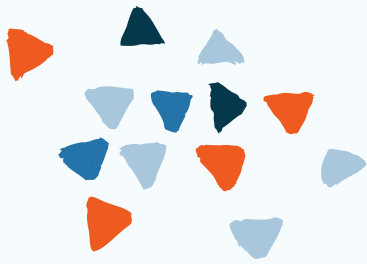




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PRESCHOOL HANDBOOK

A RESOURCE TO SUPPORT THE MANAGEMENT AND
OPERATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PRESCHOOLS



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Introduction

Preschools in government schools operated by the Department of Education provide educational programs to children one year before starting school and are an integral part of the school in which they are located.

Departmental preschools aim to ensure that “all children experience learning that is engaging and builds success for life”

(Early Years Learning Framework page 7).

In recent decades advances in brain research have highlighted the impact of early experiences in a child’s life and it is now known that the most rapid brain development occurs in the years before school. This means increased attention and effort must be placed on creating the best possible early learning environments.

It is believed that play shapes the structural design of the brain. Play creates a brain that has increased flexibility and improved potential for learning later in life (Lester and Russell, 2008). Therefore play-based learning environments offer children the opportunities and experiences needed to promote healthy brain development.

A number of longitudinal studies including Lifetime Effects: The HighScope Perry Preschool Study through Age 40 (2005) from the United States and the the Effective Provision of Preschool Education (EPPE) from the United Kingdom have clearly shown the benefits of preschool education, not only for the children themselves but also for the long term financial and social benefits to the whole community.

The EPPE research led by Iram Siraj-Blatchford, et al., (2003) found that quality preschool experiences support better cognitive and social-behaviour development for children and that disadvantaged children in particular benefit significantly from quality preschool experiences.

Department of Education preschools provide for the most disadvantaged children in the local community. They provide secure, positive and stimulating learning environments which acknowledge children as capable individuals who are respected, supported, challenged and valued as active learners as well as citizens of today and tomorrow.

Teachers in departmental preschools offer quality, play-based learning programs which respond to the abilities and interests of each child and provide a balance of child initiated and adult initiated learning experiences to promote children’s development.

Being part of a school, departmental preschools also benefit families and children by supporting the continuity of learning and facilitating a smooth and positive transition to school.

Purpose of the Handbook

This Preschool Handbook is a resource to support the management and operation of departmental preschools. It articulates the operational requirements of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* and reflects the national Early Years Learning Framework. It supports schools in meeting the requirements of the seven quality areas within the National Quality Standard.

The Handbook has been specifically written to support staff who have a role in the operation of NSW departmental preschools, including preschool staff, principals and supervisors.

Updates to the Handbook will be posted on the website.

The sections of the Handbook include:

- Introduction and purpose of the Handbook
- Access – enrolment, attendance and records management
- Wellbeing – health and safety procedures
- Staffing
- The program

Please note that throughout the Handbook, the term 'parent' is used broadly to mean a person having parental responsibility for a child, for example, carers and/or other extended family members.

Useful references

Effective Provision of Preschool Education project. I. Siraj-Blatchford, et al, 2003.

<http://www.ioe.ac.uk/research/153.html>

Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia.

<http://acecqa.gov.au/resources-and-templates/>

Early Childhood Australia Inc 2010 *Play and Learning Every Child* Vol.16 No.3.

HighScope <http://www.highscope.org/>

<http://www.highscope.org/Content.asp?ContentId=232>

Heckman, James "The Economics of Investing in Early Childhood", http://www.thesmithfamily.com.au/webdata/resources/files/Heckman_Trumbly_Snapshot_April_2006_B4F68.pdf

The national context

The National Agenda

In recognition of the importance of the first five years of a child's life, the Australian Government, in partnership with states and territories has made important changes to early childhood education and care.

In 2008 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) initiated an early childhood reform agenda to ensure that all Australian children get the best possible start in life.

Initiatives under the national agenda include a commitment that all four year olds are able to access a quality early childhood education program in the year before formal school; the introduction of a National Quality Framework; and the development of a national Early Years Learning Framework.

On 1 January 2012, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care was introduced. It is an important reform which will deliver a higher standard of care for children in the critical areas of education, health and safety and will provide comprehensive information for families.

A key aspect of the National Quality Framework is the National Quality Standard which is accompanied by an assessment and rating process. The National Quality Standard is linked to the Early Years Learning Framework. It is comprised of seven quality areas which are made up of standards and elements against which preschools will be assessed and rated.

Information on the National Quality Framework can be found on the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) website: <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/>

The Early Years Learning Framework

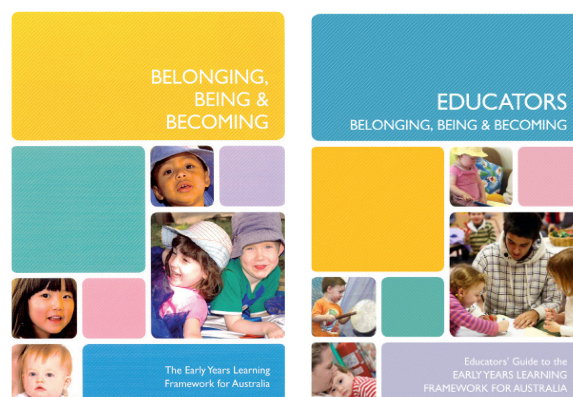
Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia was developed to ensure that children in all early childhood education settings experience quality teaching and learning and was distributed to all early childhood services in 2009.

The Framework has a strong emphasis on play-based learning and recognises that play is the best way to stimulate brain development for young children's learning. It describes the principles, practice and outcomes essential to support and enhance young children's learning from birth to five years of age, including the transition to school.

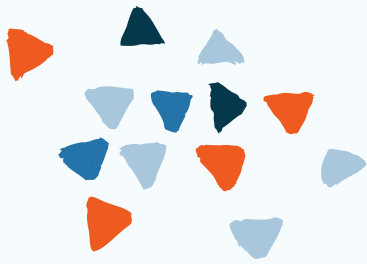
A copy of the Early Years Learning Framework is found in section 6 of the Handbook.

In 2010 the Australian Government produced *Educators Belonging, Being and Becoming* which is a guide to support the use of the Framework.

The guide is found on the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) website: <http://acecqa.gov.au/SearchResults.aspx?keywords=The+early+Years+Learning+Framework>







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Access

This section relates to Quality Area 7 of the National Quality Standard: Leadership and service management.

Preschools in government schools operated by the Department of Education provide an inclusive environment where staff ensure that all children and families are included and welcomed equally. The preschools provide programs, information and resources that respectfully reflect the context, diversity and multicultural nature of communities.

Departmental preschools give priority of access to the most disadvantaged children within the local community, particularly those who would not otherwise be able to access a children's service.

The Department's preschool provision

The Department of Education operates 100 preschools with 133 classes across NSW.

Sixty-one preschools are located in the Sydney metropolitan area and thirty-nine are located in regional and rural areas.

The department's preschools were established in four phases:

- in the early 1940s eight preschools were established in inner-city areas to support women working in wartime factories
- in the mid-to-late 1970s sixty preschools were established with Commonwealth funding
- from 1993-2004 eleven preschools were established in Aboriginal communities, designated specifically for Aboriginal children
- in 2005 twenty-one new preschools were established in areas of need bringing the total to 100. Thirteen of these were established in schools that service an Aboriginal community or in schools where there is a significantly high number of Aboriginal children enrolled.

The total provision of preschools includes distance education preschool classes in Dubbo School of Distance Education and Broken Hill School of the Air.

A list of the department's preschools is in Appendix 1.1.

The eleven preschools designated for Aboriginal children were established under the Aboriginal Preschool Education Program as part of the Department's strategy for improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal children. This was done in accordance with the goals of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy and the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

The program was designed to increase the number of Aboriginal children accessing preschool and provide equality of educational opportunity and outcomes for Aboriginal children.

Local Aboriginal children have priority of access to the designated preschools (see the following section on enrolment for more detail).

The eleven designated Aboriginal preschools are: Alma Bugdlie Preschool (Alma Public School), Djanenjam Preschool (Casino Public School), Wingarra Preschool (Doonside Public School), Enngonia Public School Preschool, Coota Gulla Preschool (Liverpool West Public School), Mungindi Public School Preschool, Moama Public School Preschool, Wayeela Cooina Preschool (Nowra East Public School), Kooloora Preschool (Toukley Public School), Birraleegal Goondi Preschool (Walgett Community College Primary School) and Barlu Kurli Preschool (Wilcannia Central School).



A list of the designated Aboriginal preschools and those established in 2005 to service Aboriginal communities is provided in Appendix 1.2.

The Department of Education also operates 47 early intervention classes across NSW. These classes are located in government schools and provide a preschool program for children with a confirmed disability from three years of age to school entry. Although they are part of the early childhood provision, these classes have their own Early Intervention Operational Guidelines.

A number of early intervention classes are located on the same site as a preschool which provides the opportunity for collaboration and support between the two services. Sections of the document may be useful for early intervention class teachers, particularly in relation to the educational program.

A list of early intervention classes is provided in Appendix 1.3.

Enrolment in a NSW government preschool

Children generally attend departmental preschool classes for one year only, in the year before starting school.

Children are eligible to enrol in preschool classes from the beginning of the school year if they turn 4 years of age on or before 31 July in that year.

The Public Health Act requires preschools to obtain documents from parents that show the child:

- is fully vaccinated for their age, or has a medical reason not to be vaccinated, or
- has a conscientious objection to vaccination due to religious beliefs, or
- is on a recognised catch-up schedule if their child has fallen behind with their vaccinations. Applications for enrolment are made by completing the Application to enrol in a NSW Government preschool and will be accepted by schools from the beginning of term two in the year before the child starts preschool.

The enrolment form is available at <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/gotoschool/enrolment/preschoolapptoenrol.pdf>

Offers of enrolment need to be made in keeping with the department's policy of targeting the most disadvantaged children in the local community.

Priority should be given to Aboriginal children and children whose families experience disadvantage, in particular families experiencing financial hardship and who are unable to access other children's services.

When the number of applications exceeds the number of places available in the preschool, children's names will be placed on a waiting list. The principal then establishes a placement panel to consider and prioritise these applications. The placement panel includes the principal, a staff member and a member of the school community. Where a significant number of Aboriginal children are seeking enrolment, the panel should include a nominee from the local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group.

In exceptional circumstances, children may attend preschool for an additional year. This can occur with the approval of the principal after discussions with the parent and consultation with the preschool teacher. If it is decided that a child would benefit from a second year in the preschool, the child would be considered as a new application and prioritised in the same way as all new applications.



Preschools designated for Aboriginal children

The eleven designated Aboriginal preschools cater specifically for Aboriginal children. If vacancies occur then every effort needs to be made to ensure the places are filled by Aboriginal children. If there are insufficient numbers of Aboriginal children, then places can be offered to non-Aboriginal children. The school may choose to maintain a buffer of two places for Aboriginal children.

Schools with designated preschools and those in communities with significant numbers of Aboriginal children are to liaise with the local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group when considering priorities for enrolment.

Distance education preschools

Eligibility criteria for enrolment in a distance education preschool differ from the rest of the departmental preschools. Preschool offered through distance education specifically caters for geographically isolated children in NSW.

Temporary visa holders

Children who are temporary visa holders may enrol in departmental preschools under the same conditions as Australian citizens.

However there are some short term visa holders who are ineligible to enrol.

Eligibility Information on the temporary visa subclasses is available on the Schedule of Visa Subclasses and Enrolment Conditions found at: <http://www.detinternational.nsw.edu.au/media-assets/trp/visa-subclasses.pdf>

Temporary visa holders enrolled in a departmental preschool are required to pay preschool fees. However, they are not required to pay the Temporary Residents fee and do not need an Authority to Enrol.

Early Intervention Classes

Enrolment in early intervention classes is through an access request application process. All applications are submitted to a regional panel that determine eligibility and make offers of placement to these classes. Enrolment forms are completed after this process.

Further information is available from local Education Services offices.

Enrolment in a departmental preschool or early intervention class does not guarantee enrolment into kindergarten in the school in which the class is located. An Application to enrol in a NSW Government school still needs to be completed and submitted to the school.

Ratios, group size and attendance patterns

The staff to child ratio for the preschool class is one to ten. This ratio should be maintained at all times (regulation 271).

Each preschool class offers a maximum of 20 full time equivalent (FTE) places. This may include multiple groups with a maximum of 20 children in each group.

Preschool classes are required to offer two attendance patterns across the week. Sessions offered can be of full or half day duration.

Decisions about enrolment patterns are best made in consultation with the school community, including other community-based early childhood providers.



Options for attendance patterns may include:

- a half-day sessional program for 5 days catering for two separate groups of children each day
- a part-time full-day program offering five days over a two week period catering for two separate groups of children per week, that is, two days or three days one week and three days or two days in the alternate week
- a part time full day program offering two days to one group and three days to another group of children each week
- a part-time program offering two and a half days to two separate groups of children each week
- in exceptional circumstances preschools may offer flexible enrolment patterns to cater for the needs of individual children for example, a child who is at risk. This could include five days per week. A five day per week program is also available where a preschool is located in a remote community; is located in an area with high socio-economic disadvantage, or in a community with a significantly high proportion of Aboriginal children.

Changes to attendance

Any change to the attendance pattern of the preschool requires the support of the school community and consultation with Early Learning and Primary Education.

Requests to change the attendance pattern should clearly identify:

- the rationale for the change
- the extent of community support
- the source of funding for any additional expenditure such as equipment for rest or sleeping
- the school's plan for providing relief during the preschool staff lunch period.

Hours of operation

It is recommended that the hours of operation of the preschool match those of the school.

On the last day of each term the principal may choose to close the preschool for a full day to allow for the cleaning of equipment and furniture, and the securing of buildings and resources for the vacation period. However, appropriate provision needs to be made for any child whose family is unable to make alternative arrangements for the closure.

Approval must be sought from the Director, Public Schools NSW if the preschool is to be closed at any other time.

Records management

This section relates to Quality Area 7 of the National Quality Standard: Leadership and service management.

In order to deliver quality programs to all children enrolled in departmental preschools, it is necessary to obtain a range of personal information.

It is the responsibility of the principal and preschool teacher to ensure that this information is accurate, confidential and used appropriately.

Parents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds should be offered interpreter assistance in obtaining this information if required.

Records about children

The preschool must keep detailed and current records for each individual child attending the preschool. Much of this information is obtained from the *Application to enrol in a NSW Government preschool* and from additional information forms used by preschools. Records which contain personal information about a child are to be considered confidential. In addition, information such as the names and addresses of people authorised to collect children, needs to be kept in the preschool.

The preschool must keep records of:

- each child's individual program including assessments
- child attendance and enrolment
- information about any cultural or religious practices that need to be observed
- illnesses, accidents or incidents and any action taken
- medication forms and health care plans.
- the daily arrival and departure of children (see sample arrival and departure register in the Wellbeing section of the Handbook)

Element 7.3.1

Records and information are stored appropriately to ensure confidentiality, are available from the service and are maintained in accordance with legislative requirements.

- excursion consents that state the number of adults and number of children attending the excursion. Further information about record keeping requirements can be found on page 186 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* (2011).

Operational records

Operational records to be kept include programs for children, visitor attendance and preschool policies.

The Program

- Records to be kept about the program include the philosophy, structure of the day and a weekly record (see The Program section of the Handbook)
- Quality Improvement Plan

Visitor attendance

- An up-to-date record of any visitors or volunteers to the preschool. The record must include name, signature and arrival and departure times

Staff timetable

- An up-to-date timetable which lets parents know of staff changes on any one day

Records in relation to preschool staff

The following are to be kept on the premises:

- staff qualifications
- child protection training
- first aid training
- Anaphylaxis training
- Asthma training

Policies and procedures

Regulation 168 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulation* states that children's services must develop policies to promote the health, safety and wellbeing of children (see Appendix 1.4).

Departmental policies for schools and preschools address most of the policy areas listed in Appendix 1.4. Where there is no specific departmental policy, such as for the arrival and departure of children, procedural information is provided in this handbook.

Preschool staff are required to be familiar with departmental policies and procedures. Policies must be kept at the preschool and be available either in paper or e-copy upon request.

Individual preschools may need to develop some procedures that are specific to their own context.

Such procedures should be stored with the Preschool Handbook.

Element 7.3.5

Service practices are based on effectively documented policies and procedures that are available at the service and reviewed regularly.

Retention of records

Records need to be stored securely on the premises for three years, then in secure storage until the child reaches 25 years of age. These include:

- records relating to personal information of each child
- any health related matters including medication forms and illness or accident records
- parent authorisations for the child to attend excursions.

Records about programs for children, daily attendance, developmental records and daily routine are to be kept for 3 years after the record is made.

Regulation 183 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulation* (2011) outlines further information about the storage of records.

All other records are kept in line with departmental policy.

Access to records

Any record which contains personal information about a child is to be considered confidential and to be kept in a locked filing cabinet. The preschool teacher has access to each child's individual record.

Parents may have access to their own child's records on request to the teacher.

What do the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* say?

Regulation 181 provides information on the confidentiality of records kept by the approved provider.

The approved provider of an education and care service must ensure that information kept in a record under these Regulations is not divulged or communicated, directly or indirectly, to another person other than:

- a) to the extent necessary for the education and care or medical treatment of the child to whom the information relates; or
- b) a parent of the child to whom the information relates, except in the case of information kept in a staff record; or
- c) the Regulatory Authority or an authorised officer; or
- d) as expressly authorised, permitted or required to be given by or under any Act or law; or
- e) with the written consent of the person who provided the information.

Certain information be kept in a place that is easily accessed by all preschool staff, for example:

- consent for the child to be collected by someone other than the parent
- individual health care plans for children who require support at school with medication or health care procedures.

Element 7.3.1

Records and information are stored appropriately to ensure confidentiality, are available from the service and are maintained in accordance with legislative requirements.

Useful reference

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
<http://acecqa.gov.au/links-and-resources/national-quality-frameworkresources/> Alma Public School *

Appendix 1.1

Department of Education Preschools

Schools have one preschool class except where indicated in brackets
(*indicates location of a designated Aboriginal preschool)

- Annandale Public School (2)
- Arncliffe West Infants School
- Ashcroft Public School
- Australia Street Infants School
- Banksmeadow Public School (2)
- Bankstown South Infants School
- Bass Hill Public School
- Batemans Bay Public School
- Bidwill Public School (3)
- Birchgrove Public School (2)
- Boggabilla Central School
- Bonnyrigg Public School
- Briar Road Public School
- Broken Hill Public School
- Busby West Public School (2)
- Cambridge Park Public School (2)
- Camdenville Public School (2)
- Canley Heights Public School
- Canley Vale Public School (2)
- Cardiff South Public School
- Casino Public School *
- Casino West Public School
- Claymore Public School
- Coonamble Public School
- Darlington Public School
- Dawson Public School (2)
- Doonside Public School *
- Distance Education
 - Dubbo School of Distance Education (3)
 - Broken Hill School of the Air (1)
- Dubbo West Public School
- Eastern Creek Public School
- Edgeworth Public School
- Elmore Vale Public School
- Enngonia Public School (0.6)*
- Fairy Meadow Public School
- Five Dock Public School
- Granville Public School
- Harrington Street Public School (2)
- Hume Public School
- Irrawang Public School
- John Brothie Memorial N Nursery School (2)
- John Warby Public School (2)
- Kegworth Public School
- Kemblawarra Public School (2)
- Kingswood Park Public School
- Kingswood South Public School
- Koonawarra Public School
- Lalor Park Public School
- Lansvale Public School (2)
- Lethbridge Park Public School
- Lismore South Public School
- Liverpool West Public School *
- Lurnea Public School

Appendix 1.1

- Madang Avenue Public School (2)
- Manning Gardens Public School
- Marayong Public School (2)
- Mascot Public School (2)
- Matraville Soldiers Settlement Public School
- Mayfield West Public School
- Moama Public School (0.6) *
- Mount Druitt Public School (2)
- Mount Warrigal Public School (2)
- Mungindi Central School *
- Narrabri West Public School
- Nowra East Public School *
- Oak Flats Public School
- Old Guildford Public School
- Orange Grove Public School
- Oxley Park Public School
- Pendle Hill Public School
- Plunkett Street Public School
- Punchbowl Public School (2)
- Riverstone Public School (2)
- Riverwood Public School
- Rosehill Public School (2)
- Rozelle Public School
- Rydalmere East Public School
- Rydalmere Public School
- Sadleir Public School
- Sarah Redfern Public School (2)
- Sefton Infants School
- Seven Hills West Public School
- Smithfield Public School (2)
- St Johns Park Public School
- St Marys Public School
- Stockton Public School
- Telarah Public School (2)
- The Entrance Public School
- Tolland Public School
- Toukley Public School *
- Tweed Heads South Public School
- Villawood East Public School
- Walgett Community College - Primary School*
- Waratah Public School (2)
- Wellington Public School
- Whalan Public School (2)
- Wilcannia Central School *
- Windale Public School
- Woy Woy Public School
- Yates Avenue Public School

Appendix 1.2

Preschools in Aboriginal communities

11 designated preschools specifically for Aboriginal children

- Alma Bugdlie Preschool, Alma Public School, Broken Hill
- Djanenjam Preschool, Casino Public School
- Wingarra Preschool, Doonside Public School
- Enngonia Public School Preschool
- Coota Gulla Preschool, Liverpool West Public School
- Mungindi Central School Preschool
- Moama Public School Preschool
- Wayeela Cooina Preschool, Nowra East Public School
- Kooloora Preschool, Toukley Public School
- Birraleegal Goondi Preschool, Walgett Community College Primary School
- Barlu Kurli Preschool, Wilcannia Central School

13 preschools established in 2005 located in schools that service an Aboriginal community or with significantly high numbers of Aboriginal children

- Bimbi Preschool, Tolland Public School, Wagga Wagga
- Batemans Bay Public School Preschool
- Boggabilla Central School Preschool
- Briar Road Public School Preschool
- Little Jarjums Preschool, Casino West Public School
- Coonamble Public School Preschool
- Dubbo West Public School Preschool
- Garawa Preschool, The Entrance Public School
- Irrawang Public School Preschool, Raymond Terrace
- Lethbridge Park Public School Preschool
- Baaya Yurrung Preschool, Manning Gardens Public School, Taree
- Wellington Public School Preschool
- Windale Public School Preschool

Appendix 1.3

Department of Education Early Intervention Classes

Schools have one early intervention class except where indicated in brackets

- Annandale Public School (2)
- Bankstown South Infants School
- Bomaderry Public School
- Broken Hill North Public School
- Claymore Public School (2)
- Dee Why Public School
- Drummond Memorial Public School
- Glenroi Heights Public School
- Griffith North Public School
- Hume Public School
- Inverell Public School (0.6)
- John Palmer Public School
- Kelso Public School
- Kingswood South Public School
- Kotara South Public School
- Lake Munmorah Public School
- Lismore Public School
- Loftus Public School
- Manning Gardens Public School
- Moree Public School
- Moss Vale Public School
- Mount Druitt Public School
- Mount Warrigal Public School
- Narara Public School
- Narranga Public School
- Normanhurst West Public School
- Orana Heights Public School
- Pendle Hill Public School
- Punchbowl Public School (2)
- Smithfield Public School (2)
- South Grafton Public School
- Tamworth South Public School
- Telarah Public School
- The Entrance Public School
- Tolland Public School
- Toronto Public School
- Towradgi Public School
- Waratah Public School
- Whalan Public School
- Windsor South Public School
- Wollondilly Public School
- Woy Woy Public School
- Yates Avenue Public School

Appendix 1.4

Policies to be made available

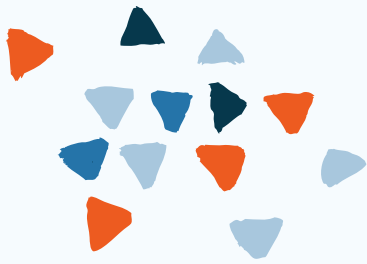
The *Education and Care Services National Regulations* (regulation 168) states that policies and procedures are required in relation to the following:

- a) health and safety, including matters relating to:
 - i) nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements; and
 - ii) sun protection; and
 - iii) water safety, including safety during any water-based activities; and
 - (iv) the administration of first aid;
- b) incident, injury, trauma and illness procedures complying with regulation 85;
- c) dealing with infectious diseases, including procedures complying with regulation 88;
- d) dealing with medical conditions in children, including the matters set out in regulation 90;
- e) emergency and evacuation, including the matters set out in regulation 97;
- f) delivery of children to, and collection of children from, education and care service premises, including procedures complying with regulation 99;
- g) excursions, including procedures complying with regulations 100 to 102;
- h) providing a child safe environment;
 - (i) staffing, including:
 - (i) a code of conduct for staff members; and
 - (ii) determining the responsible person present at the service; and
 - i) the participation of volunteers and students on practicum placements;
 - j) interactions with children, including the matters set out in regulations 155 and 156;
 - k) enrolment and orientation;
 - l) governance and management of the service, including confidentiality of records;
 - m) the acceptance and refusal of authorisations;
 - n) payment of fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the education and care service;
 - o) dealing with complaints.

For further information go to:

<https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/policiesintra/category.do?level=schools>





Wellbeing

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Wellbeing

This section relates to Quality Area 2 of the National Quality Standard: Children's health and safety.

Wellbeing describes a child's happiness, confidence, physical condition and general outlook on life. It goes hand in hand with healthy living which not only includes a balanced diet and regular exercise but also social, spiritual, emotional, cultural and economic aspects.

Preschool teachers contribute to the wellbeing of young children by giving them a secure and supportive environment that meets their health and safety needs. This includes a culturally-inclusive environment where:

- the dignity and rights of children and families are respected
- the culture, language and religion of individual children are catered for
- children are nurtured as they learn
- children's independence, self-esteem and self-confidence are developed
- the supervision level is appropriate to the children's age and stage of development
- staff are aware of and responsive to the additional needs of children with allergies, medical conditions, special dietary requirements and/or special learning needs.

For many young children a sense of wellbeing is connected to their increasing physical confidence and competence. Therefore it is important for preschool staff to support the physical development of the children in their care. Promoting and facilitating active and healthy lifestyles in preschool increases the likelihood that children will continue these habits throughout their lives and contribute to their ongoing wellbeing.

Wellbeing is a key component of the *Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*.

"To support children's learning it is essential that educators attend to children's wellbeing by providing warm, trusting relationships, predictable and safe environments, affirmation and respect for all aspects of their physical, emotional, social, cognitive, linguistic, creative and spiritual being." (Outcome 3, Early Years Learning Framework p30)

Health

This section relates to Quality Area 2 of the National Quality Standard: Children's health and safety.

Standard 2.1

Each child's health is promoted.

Physical health impacts on children's learning and development. All professionals working with young children, including preschool staff, have a responsibility to:

- support the development of safe and healthy habits
- encourage physical activity
- promote eating nutritional and interesting food
- instil healthy eating habits
- promote daily living habits, attitudes and skills that encourage children to take responsibility for the wellbeing of themselves and others.

Preschool staff are responsible for helping children who have health support needs while attending preschool. This may include giving them prescribed medications, first aid (including emergency care), temporary care when they are sick, performing health care procedures and developing individual health care plans if required.

Student Health in NSW Public Schools: A Summary and Consolidation of Policy 2005 sets out the health requirements for schools and is relevant to young children attending Department of Education preschools. To help implement the policy, detailed information on a wide range of child health issues and their management can be found on the Department's website at www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studenthealth/index.php.

Infection control

When children attend preschool their exposure to infectious conditions may increase simply because they have age-characteristic behaviours that help spread infection. They may also be exposed to other children who are contagious without recognisable symptoms. Therefore, children need guidance and support to develop good hygiene habits such as handwashing.

The use of detergent or soap and water when doing basic cleaning such as wiping table surfaces and/or toys, and wearing gloves when required can reduce the risk of spreading infection amongst children, staff and visitors.

What do the Education and Care Services National Regulations say?

The Regulations highlight the need to minimise health risks for young children by using appropriate health and hygiene practices.

Regulation 77 (2) *The nominated supervisor of an education and care service must implement, and ensure that all staff members of, and volunteers at, the service implement –*

- (a) *adequate health and hygiene practices; and*
- (b) *safe practices for handling and storing food – to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the service.*

The National Health and Medical Research Council and the Department's Standard Precautions for Infection Control recommend ways to reduce health risks:

- use colour-coded cleaning cloths for different areas and cleaning uses (such as blue in the kitchen and red in the bathroom) and ensure all staff are aware of the code
- ensure tissues, face cloths or cloth towels are not used for more than one child
- use tissues when wiping a child's nose
- after wiping a child's nose, wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water, or use an alcohol-based hand rub



Handwashing

Handwashing, including drying hands, is one of the most effective ways of preventing the spread of infection.

Handwashing should occur:

- dispose of gloves, paper towels and tissues immediately after use into a container with a disposable lining
 - ensure children do not share sheets and pillowcases, cloth towels or other personal items
 - ensure handbasins are not used for food and drink preparation or rinsing soiled clothing
 - be careful with all bodily fluids, secretions and excreta
 - use disposable gloves at all times when dealing with bodily fluids, secretions or excreta
 - display hygiene procedures in bathrooms, staffroom and toilet areas.
- on arrival at the centre
 - after going to the toilet
 - before and after helping children with toileting (which may include nappy changing)
 - before and after giving first aid
 - before and after giving medication
 - after wiping a child's nose
 - before and after eating or handling food
 - after patting or touching animals
 - before and after preparing or cooking food
 - before and after using playdough
 - after coming into contact with any bodily fluids, for example when toileting accidents occur or a child is sick
 - before and after applying sunscreen.

TIP: Check local NSW Health child and family health centres for early childhood posters to display in the bathroom or classroom.

Make your own signs using relevant software programs, for example Boardmaker.

Element 2.1.4

Steps are taken to control the spread of infectious diseases and to manage injuries and illness, in accordance with recognised guidelines.

TIP: Place posters or visual aids of correct handwashing procedures above handbasins. Check with your local NSW Health office or make your own using photographs of children from the preschool class or downloaded templates from software programs such as Boardmaker.

Element 2.1.3

Effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.

When teaching children to wash their hands the following points are a good guide:

- use soap and running water
- wash hands thoroughly while counting slowly from one to 15
- wash all parts of the hands including sides and between the fingers
- rinse hands well to remove soap
- dry hands with a new paper towel or an individual cloth towel.

TIP: Washing and rinsing hands should take about as long as singing Happy Birthday.

Avoid the risk of cross infection by ensuring cloth hand towels hang without overlapping.

Alcohol-based hand rubs can also be an effective way of cleaning hands if they aren't very dirty. This method still requires cleaning between fingers, around thumbs and under nails.

Guidance for schools on managing infection control is in the Department's *Infection Control Policy PD/2005/0257 VO1* and the *Infection Control Policy Guidelines* at:

<https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/directoriesaz/workhealthsafety/swl/proc/infectioncontrolprocedures.pdf>

Standard precautions for infection control are found in Appendix 2.1

Useful references

Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services, 5th edition National Health and Medical Research Council, 2013

Supporting health care needs

While parents have primary responsibility for managing their children's health, staff need to work with parents to support their children's health care needs while they are at preschool. This may involve giving medication, performing health care procedures or developing an individual health care plan.

An individual health care plan is needed for any child who is diagnosed with severe asthma, type 1 diabetes, epilepsy or anaphylaxis, is at risk of an emergency reaction or requires health care procedures.

Staff in local education services offices are available to support the development of individual health care plans especially when a child has an emergency care need such as anaphylaxis or another complex health care need.

Information about developing individual health care plans is available at: www.schools.nsw.edu.au/student-support/student-health/individual-student-health-care-plan/index.php.

If a child enrolled at the preschool has a specific health care need, allergy or other medical condition parents must be provided with a copy of the Department's student health policy.

When a preschool child with an individual health care plan transitions to Kindergarten, staff need to give parents a copy of the current plan and encourage them to discuss it with the school at enrolment. This will help teachers plan for the child's health care needs in the new setting.

TIP: Department of Education Legal Issues Bulletins are published on a regular basis and provide legal advice on issues such as accidents, duty of care and administration of prescribed medication.

Giving medication

All school staff must follow the Department's Student Health in NSW Public Schools policy for administering medication to children. The policy states that the school (including the preschool) must assist with administering prescribed medication during school hours, if parents or other carers cannot reasonably do so.

Preschool staff who volunteer and are trained can give prescribed medication to children in non-emergency situations.

In general, schools and preschools, do not give medication which has not been specifically requested by a medical practitioner for an individual child for a specific condition.

In some cases the medical practitioner may prescribe an over-the-counter medication. If so, staff should follow the same procedures as for 'prescribed medications'. Parents must complete and sign a Request for Administering Prescribed Medication form, available at www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studenthealth/individualstud/formletters/index.php.

The following procedures apply to giving medication:

- On arrival, parents give the child's medication to a staff member for safe storage
 - All non-emergency medication is to be stored in a locked cupboard or locked container in the refrigerator, out of reach of children
 - Medication must be in its original packaging with a pharmacy label which states the child's name, dosage instructions and current use-by date. Medication without this labelling must not be given
- When a staff member administers medication to a child, the staff member records this and another member of staff verifies that the medication was administered as prescribed. The record must include the name of the medication, the date, time and dosage given and the names and signatures of staff members who gave and checked the medication. This is to be made available to parents for verification
 - Permission forms to give medication for a prolonged period must be reviewed and updated when there is a change to the medication dosage or frequency. Administration of prescribed medication can form part of an individual health care plan
 - Parents are encouraged to advise if a child is on medication, even when it is not given at the preschool
 - All medication forms are to be kept in the school until the child reaches the age of 25 years

There may be times when emergency medication needs to be given to children in the preschool. This must be documented in the individual health care plan (particularly for conditions such as anaphylaxis)

If an emergency occurs, that has not been documented in the emergency response section of the individual health care plan, preschool staff will provide a general emergency response which may involve calling an ambulance.

TIP: Have a photo of the child in an obvious appropriate space (for example, staffroom and/or kitchen) and include medical details and emergency procedures

What do the Education and Care Services National Regulations say?

The Regulations set out procedures for giving medication. It states that medication is not to be given without the consent of parents. For further information see regulations 92 – 96.

Anaphylaxis

All preschool staff should be aware of children with allergies and consider ways to reduce their exposure to known allergens.

Anaphylaxis is a severe life-threatening allergic reaction and needs to be regarded as a medical emergency.

In most cases, anaphylactic reactions can be prevented with precautions to avoid the known allergen, however, when anaphylaxis occurs an emergency response is required.

Parents need to advise the school if their child is diagnosed with an allergy and is at risk of anaphylaxis.

The implementation of *Anaphylaxis Procedures for Schools 2012* is mandatory for NSW government schools and preschools. These include information on the management of severe reactions at preschool as well as the development of individual health care and emergency response plans.

The Department of Education requires all staff to undertake Anaphylaxis training. Both the online and face-to-face courses are approved by ACECQA.

Children and their parents will not always be aware that they have a severe allergy. To reduce the risk of exposure to a high-risk allergen, preschools may decide in consultation with their community, to ask families not to bring nut or nut products to the preschool site or to preschool activities. Preschools should also review their program to make sure that they do not support the use of these products.

Regulation 136 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations state that at least one person who has undertaken approved anaphylaxis training and one who has undertaken approved emergency asthma training must be in attendance and immediately available at all times.

As with the First Aid requirement this person may be located in the school as long as they are available in an emergency.

Each school needs to consider how they will meet this requirement.

Element 2.1.1

Each child's health needs are supported.

More information is on the Department's student health website at www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studenthealth/conditions/anaphylaxis/guidelines/index.php

TIP: Translated information and forms can be found at www.det.nsw.edu.au/languagesupport/documents/index_a.htm.

Useful Reference:

Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) www.allergy.org.au Action Plans for Anaphylaxis can be found at <http://www.allergy.org.au/content/view/10/3/>

Sick children

What do the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* say?

Regulations 85 – 87 outline the procedures for children who become ill, have an accident or need medication at preschool.

If a child becomes ill while at preschool, parents should be contacted and asked to collect them or arrange for their nominated emergency contact to pick them up.

The child should be made comfortable and kept under adult supervision until they recover or are collected by their parent.

Element 2.1.1

Each child's health needs are supported.

More information on procedures for supporting sick children is on the student health section of the Department's website at www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studenthealth/schpracprog/unwellstudents/index.php

Infectious diseases

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations* (regulation 88) requires that an infectious diseases policy is in place that outlines the practices to be followed.

Children suffering from certain infectious diseases should be excluded from attending preschool. Staff should always refer to the current NSW Health guidelines on exclusion and follow standard infection control procedures.

If a child is suspected of having an infectious disease, for example chicken pox, they should be isolated from other children, made comfortable and supervised by a staff member until collected.

If a child contracts a vaccine-preventable disease, preschool staff should tell the principal who will contact parents and the nearest public health unit if necessary.

All parents must be told of any outbreak of an infectious disease at the preschool and asked to keep children with infectious diseases at home for the appropriate timeframe. This information can be found in the NSW Health fact sheet, *Infectious Diseases of Children* at <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/factsheets/infectious/childhoodillness.html>. The child must also get a medical clearance from a doctor before they return to preschool.

Element 2.1.4

Steps are taken to control the spread of infectious diseases and to manage injuries and illness, in accordance with recognised guidelines.

Parents should be encouraged to tell the class teacher if a family member has an infectious disease, as this can help reduce the risk of the infection spreading to others.

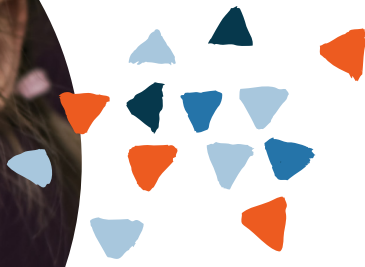
Preschool staff should ensure that parents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are given information in their first language if necessary.

TIP: Use the Telephone Interpreter Service if required when contacting parents – Phone 131 450 (quote client code CO18294).

More information can be found online in:

Infection Control Guidelines on the Department's WHS website at https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/adminandmanage/ohands/safeworklearn/injury_manage/infection/index.htm

Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services, 5th edition National Health and Medical Research Council, 2013 at <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/ch43syn.htm>



Otitis media

Ear infections are very common in young children and can cause a lot of pain and distress. Most infections are easily cleared but in some cases children can develop chronic otitis media which is long-term inflammation of the middle ear.

Preschool staff need to be aware that otitis media can result in hearing loss. This can fluctuate over time and impact on learning and development especially in the area of speech and language.

Otitis media is a significant ear health issue. The Department of Education is committed to working with NSW Health to reduce the incidence and impact of otitis media and conductive hearing loss.

Suggested strategies to help reduce the impact of recurrent ear infections include:

- using infection control procedures, particularly handwashing, to prevent the spread of respiratory infections
- ensuring noses are regularly wiped
- referring children to their local community health centre for screening and follow-up.

Element 2.1.1

Each child's health needs are supported.

TIPS: Make it practice for children to blow their noses after running around outside.

Teach children the Breathe, Blow, Cough program for preventing ear infections (see Appendix 2.2).

For more information contact your regional hearing team or student support coordinator.

Useful Resource:

Healthy Little Ears – produced by Mid Western Area Health Service.

Recording illness, accidents and incidents

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations* (regulations 85 – 87) highlight the need for records to be kept on illness or injury whilst children are at the preschool.

Teachers in preschools, as for all teachers in the school, need to ensure that all illnesses, accidents and incidents are documented. This may be kept in a register which states the child's name, date, time and details of the illness, accident or incident and any resulting injury or harm. The record must also note the action taken and by whom, be signed by the teacher, witnessed by another adult and verified by the parents.

An accident or incident report should be prepared for anything that occurs on the premises that is not minor. A commonsense approach should be taken to decide whether the accident needs to be reported.

Advice can be found in *Reporting School Accidents* which is the support document for the Reporting School Accidents Policy – PD/2002/0064/ VO3. The policy is online at www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_admin/general/accidrpt/Accident_Policy_Update_2006.pdf.

All completed accident and incident reports should be given to the principal. The principal is responsible for any appropriate notifications.

Serious incidents, as specified in regulation 12 are to be reported to Early Learning who will then notify the regulatory authority.

The reports must be kept until the child reaches the age of 25 years, as with all children attending the school.

This section also relates to Quality Area 7.

Element 7.3.1

Records and information are stored appropriately to ensure confidentiality, are available from the service and are maintained in accordance with legislative requirements.

Food and Nutrition

The Education and Care Services National Regulations (regulation 78) require that all preschool children are exposed to healthy eating practices.

Children need a nutritious, balanced daily diet for their continued physical and intellectual development. The preschool program should promote good nutrition and help children and parents to develop good food habits.

As part of the educational program staff and children should discuss the relationship between nutrition, physical fitness and good health. (See links below from recognised health authorities).

Preschool staff need to provide a positive and healthy eating environment. They should act as role models, maintain good personal nutrition, eat with children and encourage independence and social skills at meal times.

Preschools can promote healthy eating habits by:

- incorporating nutrition information in the educational program
- providing nutritional information to parents
- ensuring that food is not used as a punishment or reward
- ensuring the availability of water at all times. Water or milk may be offered for morning/afternoon tea.

Teachers can provide parents with information about the nutritional needs of young children through posters, displays, library information, newsletters and correspondence. This can help encourage parents to send food to preschool that is nutritionally balanced.

Information on healthy eating can be found at www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au

TIP: Request that parents keep lunches cool by placing them in an insulated lunchbox or cooler bag with a frozen drink bottle or ice brick. This will avoid the risk of food spoiling.

Preschools should be aware of children with allergies and have strategies in place to avoid exposure to known allergens.

Staff also need to consider the special dietary requirements of children from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds.

Special dietary needs (including allergens) should be displayed in food preparation areas.

Standard 2.2

Healthy eating and physical activity are embedded in the program for children.

Useful references

Get Up and Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood. Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing 2009 <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/phd-early-childhood-nutrition-resources>

Munch & Move Resource Manual. NSW Department of Health 2008 <http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/campaigns-programs/about-munch-move-resources/resource-manuals.aspx>

Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia, National Health and Medical Research Council brochure.

Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services, 5th edition National Health and Medical Research Council, 2013

Caring for Children: Food, Nutrition and Fun Activities, C. Bunney & L. Williams, 4th edition, 2005.



Food preparation and handling

Food preparation and handling can be a part of the daily routines for staff in preschool and the educational program often includes cooking activities for children. Any area where food is prepared or stored should be kept clean and good hygiene and safety practices reinforced throughout all cooking activities.

To reduce the risk of exposure to food allergens staff in the preschools should follow the advice in *Anaphylaxis Procedures for Schools 2012*.

The following procedures are a good guide for staff when preparing and handling food:

- wash and dry hands before and afterwards
- do not handle food when ill
- cover and seal any cuts or sores
- wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly
- replace cutting boards and washing-up cloths on a regular basis
- use tongs or spoons when serving food
- keep food covered until served
- ensure children are not in the kitchen during meal preparation.

A list of children and their reactive foods should be updated regularly and displayed so that it can be seen by all adults involved in the program. This is especially important when children with anaphylaxis are attending the preschool.

Useful reference

NSW Food Authority www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au

Physical activity

Children need to move freely and be active every day!

There is increasing evidence of a relationship between the lack of physical activity and lifestyle diseases such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease.

Physical activity should occur throughout the day both indoors and outdoors and be an integral part of the daily preschool program.

Development of good habits in preschool can form the foundation for later years and impact on immediate and longer term health outcomes.

Preschools are ideal places to develop good physical activity habits for children. Preschools can also support parents by providing information on the importance of physical activity.

Element 2.2.2

Physical activity is promoted through planned and spontaneous experiences and is appropriate for each child.

Preschoolers should be physically active every day for at least three hours, spread across the entire day. *Get Up and Grow 2009*.

Useful references

Get Up and Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood. Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing 2009 <http://www.health.gov.au>

Munch & Move Resource Manual. NSW Department of Health 2008 <http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/campaigns-programs/about-munch-move-resources/resource-manuals.aspx>

Rest and sleeping

Rest or sleep time during the day is important because there can be a wide range of 'normal' sleep patterns for young children.

Children aged 3–5 years may still need a daytime sleep or rest. Therefore preschools offering a full-day program should give children the opportunity to sleep or rest according to their particular needs. Quiet activities can be offered to children who are awake whilst others are sleeping.

By kindergarten age many children no longer need a daytime rest, so teachers may decide to limit or stop with rest time towards the end of the preschool year.

What do the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* say?

Regulation 81 states that services...“must take reasonable steps to ensure that the needs for sleep and rest of children being educated and cared for by the service are met, having regard to the ages, development stages and individual needs of the children.”

Each child should have their own linen which is appropriate to the climate and season.

To prevent cross infection:

- linen or other types of bedding should be washed before use by another child
- used linen should be stored in a way that prevents it touching clean linen.

Element 2.1.2

Each child's comfort is provided for and there are appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.

Toileting

Although it is the parent's role to toilet-train their child at home, young children's toilet skills are still developing, so it is appropriate for preschool staff to support parents in encouraging and reinforcing good toileting habits.

All staff have a duty of care for the safety and wellbeing of children. This might involve helping when there are difficulties with the toileting procedure, undressing for the toilet or in responding to soiling or wetting.

When helping children with toileting, staff can take the opportunity to extend children's skills by actively encouraging them to be responsible for their own toileting and handwashing. Staff should model and teach children to adopt hygienic practices such as flushing and effective handwashing.

Hygienic procedures for toileting are critical to reduce the risks and spread of diseases transmitted by bodily fluids.

Element 2.1.2

Nappy changing and other toileting procedures

Some children attending preschool may still be wearing nappies due to a medical condition or disability. If a child who wears nappies enrolls in the preschool, a nappy changing area should be organised which has a sink nearby. This must be separate from craft and food preparation areas.

Children with medical conditions that require specific support for toileting, for example catheterisation, will need an individual health care plan. For information about plans see www.schools.nsw.edu.au/student-support/student-health/individual-student-devimpindh-plan/index.php.

Learning and Engagement officers in local Educational Services teams can be contacted for support.

Procedures for nappy changing can be found in Appendix 2.3 and recommended procedures for cleaning children who wet or soil themselves can be found at Appendix 2.4.

Element 2.1.3

Effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.

Cleaning

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations* (regulation 103) require that children's services premises, including equipment and furnishings are safe, clean and in good repair.

Each departmental school has a cleaning contractor who aims to keep the whole school safe, clean and hygienic. The contractor makes sure that the school is cleaned to the cleaning performance standards by 8am each day (or at a time agreed to by the principal).

Preschool staff need to ensure that furnishings and play equipment are checked regularly and kept in a safe, clean and hygienic condition. There will need to be regular cleaning (as appropriate) of:

- tables and chairs
- indoor equipment
- soft toys
- puzzles
- books
- sand equipment
- outdoor construction toys

It is recommended that a cleaning schedule be kept in the preschool folder.

The principal may decide to close the preschool on the last day of each term. This allows for staff to disinfect equipment, furniture and beds, and secure buildings, resources and equipment ready for the new term.

Element 2.1.3

Effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.

Cleaning products

Staff should also consider the type of products used for cleaning desks, toys and equipment in the preschool. Many chemical cleaning products (including disinfectants) may be a potential risk to health, possibly triggering conditions such as asthma, allergies and poisoning.

Detergent and water are suitable for all general environmental cleaning. The use of disinfectant is only necessary if a surface is contaminated with potentially infectious material. However, the surface needs to be cleaned with detergent and water before using disinfectant or bleach.

The use of microfibre cloths is recommended as they remove dirt and moisture effectively.

Useful references

Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services, 5th edition National Health and Medical Research Council, 2013



Sandpits

Sandpits are fun and are often an integral part of the preschool program. To avoid the spread of infection particular attention needs to be paid to their cleanliness.

There are a number of ways to do this:

- securely cover when not in use to prevent contamination, such as animal excreta, broken glass and other objects
- check daily and remove contaminated sand or rubbish
- clean periodically. This can be done by:
 - watering with either mild detergent, diluted household disinfectant or a 1:10 solution of bleach
 - raking through with salt
 - digging the sand over monthly to reduce moisture and stop the sand from turning sour
 - keep sand topped up to the maximum level. Sand should be within 100 mm of the top edge of the sandpit edging
 - renew the sand annually or as necessary.

Kidsafe NSW Inc has information and advice on sandpit safety and design. The website address is www.kidsafensw.org

TIP: Have children turn the sand over as they are playing!

Useful references

Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services, 5th edition National Health and Medical Research Council, 2013

Safety

This section relates to Quality Area 2 of the National Quality Standard: Children's health and safety.

Work health and safety

The Department of Education is committed to ensuring a safe and healthy working and learning environment for staff, children and visitors to schools and preschools.

Accidents are often directly related to a child's growth and stage of development.

Parents of preschool-aged children need to be assured that their children are cared for in a safe environment where staff take the necessary precautions to reduce the risk of accidents.

The Department's Work Health and Safety Directorate offers a range of information and support tools for managing specific hazards and risks in schools, that is also relevant to preschools. It is available at

<http://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/workhealthandsafety>

Element 2.3.2

Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.

Supervision

Supervision in preschools should be a part of the whole school supervision plan in line with the Department's Memorandum to Principals: *Care and Supervision of Children 97/165 S.156*. The plan should acknowledge that preschool children need closer supervision than school-aged children due to their age and the nature of their activities. Therefore preschool staff must be more aware of potential hazards to ensure the risk of illness, accidents and harm is reduced wherever possible. When staff supervise children they should not perform other duties which would affect the quality of their supervision and their interactions with children.

Staff need to take a commonsense approach to ensure children are adequately supervised if the preschool's toilets are not visible or easily accessible from the preschool room.

Element 2.3.1

Children are adequately supervised at all times.

This section also relates to Element 4.1.1.

Educator-to-child ratios and qualification requirements are maintained at all times.

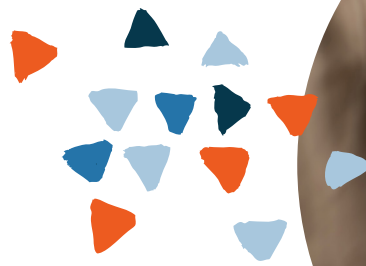
What do the Education and Care Services National Regulations say?

Regulation 271 requires a staff-to-child ratio of 1:10. Staff to child ratios alone do not determine what is considered adequate supervision. For more information see the Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and The *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*.

Arrival and departure

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations* (regulations 99 & 158) require that staff pay attention to the arrival and departure of children in the preschool to ensure their safety. The following procedures are a good guide:

- Children are to be brought to and collected from the preschool by a parent or other person who is authorised in writing by the parent to collect the child
- Children are not to be left in the preschool grounds without adult supervision
- Preschool staff are to receive children directly from parents, or other authorised person, and are not to release them into the care of any unauthorised person
- At the end of each day, two staff members must check all areas to ensure that no child remains on the premises. An arrival and departure register needs to be kept and should be signed by parents or person with authorisation, when delivering or collecting a child (a sample arrival and departure register can be found at Appendix 2.5).



Element 2.3.2

Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.

This section also relates to Element 6.3.2.

Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing relevant information and clarifying responsibilities.

- The register needs to be stored on site for three years and kept until the child reaches 25 years of age. Each preschool may need to develop arrival and departure procedures that are specific to their own context. An example is provided at Appendix 2.6

TIP: Have a sign-on sheet for the children. Use children's photos to show who has arrived at the preschool. Children match their name with their photo to show they've arrived.

Excursions

Preschool excursions are conducted in line with the Department's *Excursion Policy Implementation Procedures*. Preschool teachers must be familiar with the policy and procedures and take a risk management approach when conducting excursions to ensure the safety of all children.

To ensure adequate supervision and in recognition of the age of the children, the Department's excursion procedures reflect the Education and Care Services National Regulations especially regulations 100, 101, 102.

As for the rest of the school children need parental permission to take part in any excursion. However, for regular outings only one parent authorisation and one risk assessment is required in a 12 month period unless there is a change.

When preparing information about the excursion for parents, the total number of adults accompanying the children must be recorded. It is recommended to also include the names of staff members.

The school mobile phone may also be taken on the excursion so parents can make contact in an emergency.

It should be noted that visits to the school are not regarded as excursions unless the school is on a completely separate site and the children need to cross a major road to access the school.

For specific requirements on excursion risk assessments and authorisations see at Appendix 2.7.

Bus Travel

Element 2.3.2

This section also relates to Element 6.3.2

In some locations preschool aged children need to travel by school bus. This situation needs to be discussed with the family, preferably at the time of enrolment to determine whether an alternate arrangement can be organised, for example a sharing arrangement between families.

Where there is no alternative a plan is developed in consultation with families. The plan needs to be in writing and agreed to by all parties.

Duty of care in this situation is paramount, and issues to consider include:

- who will be responsible for signing the child in and out of the preschool
- appropriate permissions
- the time the bus arrives at the school as this may have supervision implications.

An older sibling may sign the child in and out on behalf of the parent, or the teacher could sign on behalf of the parent.

Ultimately the decision is made in consultation with the family by looking at the local situation – ensuring the safety of the children.

This section also relates to Element 6.3.2

Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing relevant information and clarifying responsibilities.

Child protection

All Department staff must complete child protection training to ensure they understand their responsibilities under the child protection legislation.

Teachers must follow the Department's child protection procedures if there are concerns about risk of harm to a child. They should also support children to develop self-care skills that enable them to protect themselves and others from harm.

The Department's *Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People: Revised Procedures* details the responsibilities of preschool staff if they have concerns about suspected risk of harm to a child.

Accidents and emergency treatment

Preschool staff need to assure parents that all necessary actions will be taken if their child is involved in an accident or emergency.

On enrolment, parents are to be asked to give written authorisation for staff to seek urgent medical and hospital treatment and/or to call an ambulance for their child if needed.

Preschool staff have a duty of care to comfort and care for sick and distressed children as well as providing immediate help if required.

A staff member with a current approved first aid qualification and anaphylaxis and emergency asthma management training must be present and immediately available at all times (regulation 136).

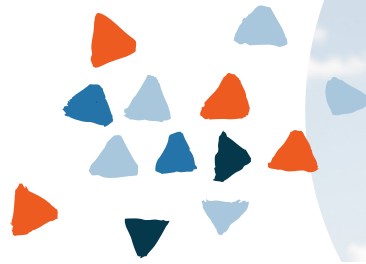
In departmental preschools the person with these qualifications may be located in the school but must always be immediately available in an emergency (regulation 136 (2)). Schools should carefully consider how they will meet this requirement.

The preschool must have a fully stocked first aid kit that is accessible to all staff but not to children. A cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) chart for adults and children should be kept with the first aid kit and also displayed in prominent positions in the preschool, both inside and outside.

The NSW Department of Education First Aid Guidelines provides for two first aid allowances to be paid to schools on the basis of need. The principal can apply for the additional allowances through Employee Services in Bathurst.

Useful Reference

Legal Issues Bulletin No. 46 NSW Department of Education



Emergency contacts

Staff will need to act promptly in an emergency. Preschools must have the following information, with contact telephone numbers, clearly displayed next to each telephone at all times:

- emergency number – 000
- Poisons Information Centre
- local hospital casualty department
- local police
- street address and telephone number of the preschool
- nearest crossroad to the preschool premises.

Element 2.3.3

Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.

Emergency management

Each school has an emergency management plan to follow in case of fire, flood, bomb threat or any other emergency situation that requires evacuation of the building. This plan must include procedures for the preschool.

All preschool staff, including relief staff, must be made aware of the emergency evacuation procedures. Copies of the procedures are to be displayed in a prominent position in each playroom and at each main preschool exit.

Regulation 97 (3) states that **all staff and children** in the preschool need to practice emergency evacuation procedures **once a term**. Details of each practice, including an evaluation of the procedures followed, are to be recorded in the Department's In Case of Emergency (ICE) system and kept for two years afterwards.

Element 2.3.3

Sun protection

Children generally attend preschool at a time of day when the UV rating is at its highest; The *Education and Care Services National Regulations* require preschools to have a sun protection policy.

What do the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* say?

Regulation 114 states that outdoor spaces must include adequate shaded areas to protect children from overexposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun.

The NSW Cancer Council advises that reducing outdoor play during peak UV periods is one of the key ways to protect children and staff from the effects of UV radiation:

- In the months from October to March, sun protection (hats, protective clothing, sunscreen and shade) is needed and consideration should be given to the amount of time children spend outdoors between 11 am and 3 pm. Where possible outdoor activities should be scheduled outside of these hours
- In the months from April to September, sun protection is needed when children are outside between 10 am and 2 pm. Outdoor activities can be scheduled to take place at any time
- In June and July, it is not necessary for hats and sunscreen to be worn unless the preschool is in the far west of the state.

Sun protection should be included in the preschool's learning programs. When parents enrol their children they are informed about the preschool's sun protection procedures. At this time any special requirements their children may have with sun protection (including allergies) should be discussed with staff.

The preschool's sun protection policy and procedures are developed in line with the Department's *Sun Safety for Students Guidelines*. Further guidance can be found in *The Cancer Council NSW SunSmart childcare: A guide for service providers*, Sydney, 2008. Recommended procedures can be found at Appendix 2.6.

TIP: To become a SunSmart preschool contact the NSW Cancer Council. Information is available from www.cancercouncil.com.au/sunsmart.

Element 2.3.2

Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.

Buildings and equipment

All buildings and equipment should be safe and in good repair. It is important that departmental provisions for maintenance programs in schools include the preschool. Urgent minor repairs for the preschool should be carried out as for all other areas in the school.

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations* (regulations 104, 105) require each child to have access to sufficient furniture, materials and developmentally appropriate equipment.

The design and height of the preschool fences and gates should prevent children from climbing over, going through or crawling under them.

Consideration also needs to be given to the following:

- Gates leading to and from outdoor play areas need to be of the same height and equipped with a childproof self-locking mechanism. Gates require special attention and need regular maintenance to ensure they remain self-locking
- Outdoor play areas have a childproof fence of at least 1200mm on all sides. 1500 mm is the recommended height
- The surfacing used underneath or around play equipment on the premises should comply with the playground surfacing requirements of the Australian and New Zealand standard AS/NZS 4422:1996

- The recommended depth of soft fall under fixed equipment is 300 mm
- Mobile play equipment over 500 mm also needs to be set up on softfall to a depth of 300 mm
- Playground equipment must be safe and in good repair. It should not pose any fall, pinch, crush or trap hazard to the children.

This is consistent with requirements for play equipment in the school.

Kidsafe NSW Inc can provide information and advice on playground safety and design. The website address is: www.kidsafensw.org

Element 2.3.2

Electrical and fire safety

All electrical equipment should be well maintained. Electrical cords must be secured safely away from children's reach and power points fitted with protectors, to ensure children's safety.

When not in use equipment should be stored in a safe place that is inaccessible to children.

Fire extinguishers must be placed appropriately throughout the building, as in the rest of the school, and a fire blanket kept adjacent to any cooking facilities.

Fire extinguishers need to be checked yearly.

Element 2.3.2

Useful Reference

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
<http://acecqa.gov.au/links-and-resources/national-quality-framework-resources/>

Chemical safety

The Work, Health and Safety (WHS) Regulations and clause 70 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* require staff to ensure that all dangerous cleaning materials, disinfectants, poisonous and other dangerous substances and medications are kept in a child-resistant container. They must be labelled with a description of contents and directions for their use.

The following items should be kept in secure storage facilities that are inaccessible to children:

- all cleaning materials, including detergents and disinfectants
- poisonous and other dangerous substances
- dangerous tools and equipment
- toiletries
- medications (kept in a childproof container and refrigerated, if necessary)
- first aid equipment.

For more information refer to Chemical Safety in Schools at <https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/assetmanagement/chemicals/foreword.htm> or contact the local WHS manager.

Element 2.3.2

TIP: Dangerous substances such as cleaning solutions, items or equipment are not to be kept in places such as toilets, where children might be able to access them.

Animals in the preschool

Animals used in the preschool educational program can provide valuable learning experiences for children. Animals can help children care for other living things and teach a sense of responsibility, caring and tolerance. Staff must supervise children at all times when in contact with animals and good hygiene practices are to be followed, as animals can pass on both minor and serious diseases to humans.

The following procedures are a good guide:

- All children and adults wash their hands thoroughly after handling animals, especially before touching food
- Animals' food and water containers must be kept separate from any areas used for food preparation for children
- Animals must be kept off tables where food is prepared and served
- Animals should be well cared for and kept healthy
- Animal enclosures and cages must be kept clean
- If an animal is unwell, the advice of a vet must be sought
- Children should not handle animals that are unwell.

Element 2.3.2

Useful resource

The Department has a set of guidelines for keeping animals at school. These can be found at <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/animalsinschools/resources/guidelines/index.htm>



Plants in the preschool

Any plants or vegetation that pose any risk of injury or severe discomfort or poisoning need to be identified and maintained or removed to ensure that they are no longer a hazard to children in the preschool.

For more information refer to the Department's Landscape Management in NSW Public Schools at https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/assetmanagement/assets/media/landscape_management.pdf

Element 2.3.2

Water safety

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations* (regulation 168) state that a health and safety policy which includes water safety is required by all services and a risk management process undertaken (regulation 101).

To provide connectedness with nature and opportunities for exploration, preschools may choose to have mud and/or water features as a part of the outdoor environment.

Staff need to assess the risk to children around water.

Ensuring:

- adequate supervision at all times
- water containers or water features that could be drowning hazards are appropriately covered or inaccessible to children.

If there is a swimming pool already located on the premises it must be fenced in accordance with the *Swimming Pool Act 1992*. It is recommended that one adult is present for each child using the swimming pool (regulation 274).

Element 2.3.2

Appendix 2.1

Standard Precautions for Infection Control

Standard Precautions for Infection Control should be used by all staff, students, visitors, volunteers and contractors to reduce the risk of transmission of infectious diseases during care procedures.

What are standard precautions?

Standard Precautions in the workplace involve the use of safe work practices and protective barriers for the control of the spread of infection from both recognised and unrecognised sources of infection.

It is not possible to reliably identify sources of infections or communicable diseases, therefore it is necessary to presume that the blood (including dried blood) and body substances of **all persons** be considered as potential sources of infection independent of diagnosis or perceived risk.

When do I use standard precautions?

Standard Precautions must be used before and after care procedures, when providing first aid, when handling and disposing of sharps and contaminated material and when handling animals and potentially infectious agricultural substances.

There is a potential risk of infection when exposed to:

- blood, including dried blood
- all other body fluids, secretions and excretions, including saliva and mucous but excluding sweat
- broken skin
- mucous membranes eg mouth and nose.

What do I need to do?

1. Use good hygiene practices

Wash your hands after any contamination, following any care procedure and after any activity which involves contaminated substances whether or not gloves are worn.

2. Take care of your skin

Take care of your skin as it is the first barrier to disease and protect damaged skin by covering with a waterproof dressing or by gloves.

3. Use good handling and disposal procedures

Minimise contact with potentially infectious substances by using personal protective equipment such as gloves, aprons, masks or goggles.

Ensure that reusable equipment such as that used in first aid provision is cleaned after use and single use items are discarded after use.

Follow the Department's procedures when handling and disposing of sharps and use a suitable sharps container.

Dispose of other contaminated or infectious waste, such as from first aid or care procedures, in a plastic bag which is tied securely and placed inside a second plastic bag and tied securely then placed in the workplace garbage hopper.

Contain all blood and body fluids ie confining spills, splashes and contamination of the environment. Clean up spills promptly.

4. Take prompt action if contact is made with blood or body fluids

Wash skin with mild soap and water, rinse eyes with water, rinse your mouth and spit out.

Appendix 2.2

Breathing, Blowing, Coughing Program (BBC Program)

The BBC program was developed by Ruth Barker, a physiotherapist from Alice Springs. It is a strategy used in schools throughout Australia. This program is effective as it actually reduces the causes of Otitis Media such as a cold, flu and asthma by improving the health of the respiratory tract.

Using the Valsva Method (holding nose and blowing air in mouth with the lips shut until the ears pop) assists in exercising the eustachian tube. This method will improve the Eustachian tubes ability to drain any fluid in the middle-ear space.

Our '*Healthy Kids*'- Blowing, Breathing, Coughing (BBC) Program

- First I blow my nose. One side, then the other side
- Then I check if it's empty
- Then I hold my nose and blow my nose to pop my ears
- Then I take 5 deep breaths and have 2 big coughs
- I do 10 star jumps
- Then I take 5 deep breaths and 2 big strong coughs again
- I run around the big tree in the playground
- Then, last of all, I empty my nose, I pop my nose and have a big cough. That's all.

Useful reference

Otitis Media and Aboriginal Children. A Handbook for teachers and Communities. Board of Studies 1994
http://ab-ed.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/files/otitis_media_aboriginal_children.pdf

Appendix 2.3

Nappy changing and other toileting procedures

A nappy changing area with handwashing facilities nearby needs to be provided if a child enrolled at the preschool wears a nappy. It should be separate from craft and food preparation areas.

Equipment for nappy changing should include:

- washable vinyl-covered change pads
- dispenser with disposable gloves
- storage space for clean nappies and other necessary supplies
- disposable wipes
- paper towels
- plastic bags for soiled clothes
- foot-operated, plastic-lined bin for disposal of paper wipes, paper towel and disposable gloves
- separate bin for disposal of nappies (available from contractors supplying sanitary napkin disposal units. The choice of contractor is a school-based decision)
- appropriate access procedures for children to reach the change mat.

When changing nappies the following procedures are to be used:

- children who are able should be encouraged to independently climb up onto the change table
- use paper on change table
- disposable gloves should be worn
- children should be wiped with disposable wipes
- paper wipes and gloves should be disposed of in a plastic-lined bin
- nappies should be disposed of into an appropriate bin
- change pads should be washed with soap and water and then wiped with disinfectant after each nappy change
- children's hands should be washed after each nappy change
- children should not be left unattended.
- adult's hands should be washed before putting on and after taking off gloves

Change table surfaces should be kept clean, and free from tears and crevices.

TIP: If children are still wearing nappies parents should provide nappies, disposable wipes and any creams that the child needs. Disposable nappies should be used to aid in infection control.

Useful reference

Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services, 5th edition. National Health and Medical Research Council, 2013

Appendix 2.4

A good practice guide for spilt urine or faeces and cleaning children after wetting or soiling themselves

When cleaning spilt urine or faeces:

- wear gloves
- place paper towel over the spill and carefully remove paper towel and contents
- place the paper towel and gloves in a plastic bag, seal the bag and put in the rubbish bin
- put on new gloves and clean the surface with warm water and detergent and allow to dry
- use disinfectant after cleaning if the spill came from a child suspected of having an infectious disease
- remove and discard gloves
- wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.

If a child needs cleaning after wetting or soiling themselves the following procedures apply:

- wear gloves and use pre-moistened disposable wipes
- wet paper towels may be used as an alternative. Ensure running water is used to wet the towels (not a bowl or sink full of water) and that towels are only used once
- dispose of paper towels
- place soiled clothes in a sealed plastic bag for parents to take home
- remove gloves, discard them and wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.

Reference

Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services, 5th edition National Health and Medical Research Council, 2013

Appendix 2.5

Preschool Arrival and Departure register

Child's name	Arrival time	Parent Signature	Departure time	Parent Signature	Comments

Appendix 2.6

Arrival and departure procedures

Arrival and departure times are an important part of the daily routine in the preschool. The way children and families are welcomed on a daily basis should be carefully considered.

Specific procedures for these times provide rich opportunities to build relationships with children and families. These procedures not only ensure children's safety but can set the tone for the whole day.

It is important for families to be familiar with the procedures. Therefore consideration needs to be given as to how they will be communicated, for example inclusion in an information booklet.

Arrival and departure procedures will vary from school to school depending on the physical layout and structure of the preschool day.

Below are suggestions that can be adapted for each school's context.

Arrival

- The arrival and departure register is to be completed and should include the date and time of the child's arrival and must be signed by the person accompanying the child.
- On arrival each child is greeted by a staff member. Children must not be left in the building or the playground without staff being made aware of their arrival.
- Parents who arrive early should stay with their children until the specified preschool starting time or until a staff member provides access to the classroom.
- On arrival parents may assist their children to put their belongings in the appropriate place and accompany them to the classroom.
- Parents are asked to inform staff of any changes regarding the collection of their child that day. These changes should be noted on the arrival and departure register for that day.

Departure

- The arrival and departure register is to be completed with the time of the child's departure from the preschool and must be signed by the adult collecting the child
- Parents are requested to inform a staff member of the child's departure
- If a parent is late in collecting their child, they must notify the preschool by telephone. The staff will explain the situation to the child to alleviate anxiety
- Parents who have not arrived by (insert a certain time) will be contacted by the school. If they are not available the emergency contact will be telephoned
- If an emergency arises regarding a change to departure, parents are requested to ring the preschool to notify of the changes
- Where a parent or other authorised person is unable to collect the child, a parent may verbally authorise another person to collect the child. Parents are required to provide relevant details regarding that person's identity and ensure that the staff can easily identify the person, for example on presentation of a driver's licence.
- Staff will not allow a person to collect a child who has not been authorised by the parent. If a parent is unable to be contacted, then the child will remain in the school's care.
- If a person unknown to staff arrives to collect the child and authorisation has not been received, staff should not allow the child to leave until authorisation has been obtained
- When collecting their own child parents are asked to ensure the safety of other children by making sure the front door or gate is closed.

Additional considerations may include:

- An invitation for parents to stay for a short while on arrival and prior to departure, to share some of their child's learning experiences
- The need for specific arrival and departure routines for individual children
- The provision of a space for families to gather after they have delivered their child to the preschool class.

Appendix 2.7

Risk assessment and authorisation for excursions

Regulation 100 states that the nominated supervisor must ensure that a risk assessment is carried out in accordance with regulation 101.

Regulation 101 – Conduct of risk assessment for excursion

1. A risk assessment for an excursion must:
 - b) identify and assess risks that the excursion may pose to the safety, health or wellbeing of any child being taken on the excursion; and
 - c) specify how the identified risks will be managed and minimised.
2. a risk assessment must consider:
 - a) the proposed route and destination for the excursion
 - b) any water hazards
 - c) any risks associated with water-based activities
 - d) the transport to and from the proposed destination for the excursion
 - e) the number of adults and children involved in the excursion
 - f) given the risks posed by the excursion, the number of educators or other responsible adults that is appropriate to provide supervision and whether any adults with specialised skills are required (e.g specialised skills could include life-saving skills.)
 - g) the proposed activities; and
 - h) the proposed duration of the excursion; and
 - i) the items that should be taken on the excursion. (e.g A mobile phone and a list of emergency contact numbers for children on the excursion).

Regulation 102 – Authorisation for excursions

Regulation 102 states that the nominated supervisor must ensure that a child being educated and cared for by the service is not taken outside the service premises on an excursion unless written authorisation has been provided.

Subregulation 4 – The authorisation must be given by a parent or other person named in the child's enrolment record as having authority to authorise the taking of the child outside the education and care service premises by an educator and must state:

- a) the child's name
- b) the reason the child is to be taken outside the premises
- c) the date the child is to be taken on the excursion (unless the authorisation is for a regular outing)
- d) a description of the proposed destination for the excursion
- e) the method of transport to be used for the excursion
- f) the proposed activities to be undertaken by the child during the excursion; and
- g) the period the child will be away from the premises
- h) the anticipated number of children likely to be attending the excursion
- i) the anticipated ratio of educators attending the excursion to the anticipated number of children attending the excursion
- j) the anticipated number of staff members and any other adults who will accompany and supervise the children on the excursion
- k) that a risk assessment has been prepared and is available at the service.

Appendix 2.8

Sun protection procedures

The following procedures can help children avoid harmful exposure to UV radiation:

- All sun protection measures (including recommended outdoor times, shade, hat, clothing and sunscreen) should be considered when planning excursions and playground activities.
- Outdoor activities should be planned to occur in shaded areas as much as possible. Shade options can include a combination of portable, natural or built shade.
- Parents who do not want their child to use sunscreen need to put it in writing with their wishes clearly stated. A list of children who are not to use sunscreen should be displayed near the building exit and where the cream is stored.
- Parents should be asked to apply sunscreen to their child before or on arrival at the preschool. All staff and children should apply SPF30+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapply every two hours. Staff should encourage and show children how to apply sunscreen.
- Staff should act as role models and show sunsafe behaviour by wearing a sunsafe hat and clothing, applying sunscreen and using and promoting the use of shaded areas for play.

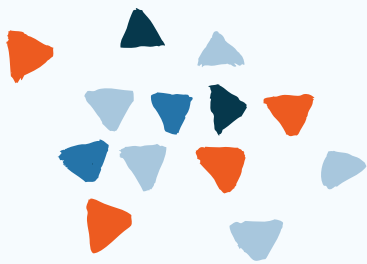
Families and visitors are also encouraged to model positive sunsafe behaviour.

A good practice guide:

- Staff and children wear sunsafe hats that protect their face, neck and ears.
 - A sunsafe hat is a:
 - legionnaire hat
 - bucket hat with a deep crown and brim size of at least 5 cm (adults 6 cm)
 - broad-brimmed hat with a brim size of at least 6 cm (adults 7.5 cm)
- When outdoors, staff and children wear sunsafe clothing (e.g. dresses with sleeves and collars) that covers as much of the skin as possible (especially the shoulders, back and stomach)
- Please note: Midriff, crop or singlet tops do not provide enough sun protection and therefore are not recommended
- Sun protection information should be promoted to staff, families and visitors. Information is available from the Cancer Council NSW website www.cancercouncil.com.au/sunsmart.



STAFFING



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Staffing

Preschools in government schools operated by the Department of Education are an integral part of the schools in which they are located. However staffing and adult to child ratios are different to that of other classes in the school.

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations* state that the educator to child ratio in New South Wales for children between 3 and 6 years of age is one adult to 10 children. (regulation 271)

The staff to child ratio for preschool aged children is one to ten. These ratios should be maintained at all times. Each school will need to consider the staff to child ratio to maintain adequate supervision when on preschool excursions.

Departmental preschool classes provide for a maximum of twenty children each day. Each class is staffed by an early childhood trained teacher and a school learning support officer or an Aboriginal education officer.

Supervision arrangements for teachers and support staff in preschools are consistent with those in the rest of the school. However, under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* the supervisors of the preschool are known as nominated supervisors. Each departmental preschool has one nominated supervisor which is the principal of the school. If the principal is absent the executive replacing the principal becomes the nominated supervisor.

In addition, each preschool receives weekly administration support (0.2) and each preschool teacher is entitled to release from face to face (0.084).

All Department staff must complete annual child protection training to ensure they understand their responsibilities under the child protection legislation.

For information on promotion, transfers and other staffing procedures see <http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-us/careers-centre/school-careers/teaching/your-teaching-career/approved-teachers/maximise-your-opportunities/promotion-and-transfer>

Element 4.1.1

Educator-to-child ratios and qualification requirements are maintained at all times.

Staffing of the preschool

This relates to Quality Area 4 of the National Quality Standard: Staffing arrangements

Teacher

All permanent preschool teachers appointed to the school by the Department's Staffing Services are required to have an early childhood qualification. Once teachers are appointed to a school by the Staffing Services area, local decisions regarding the way classes are arranged are made by the principal in consultation with the executive at the school. For teachers working in a preschool, this can mean that the teacher can also work across P-2 or P-6 depending on their qualifications and the needs of the school.

The relevant employment legislation for teachers is the Teaching Service Act 1980 and the Teaching Service Regulation 2007. Information on the professional and legal responsibilities for teachers is also found in other legislation and departmental policies and procedures such as the Department's Code of Conduct.

The preschool teacher is responsible for planning and implementing a quality play-based program that is relevant to the children in their local context and guided by the Early Years Learning Framework.

Each teacher is responsible for their own professional development. In consultation with their supervisors teachers should ensure they access appropriate professional learning.

The preschool teacher translates school policies and programs into suitable learning experiences for the children in the preschool and is accountable to the school supervisor and principal.

The teacher and support staff operate as a team within the preschool with the teacher providing direction and guidance in the provision of the preschool program.

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations* (clause 151) requires a record to be kept of preschool teachers and staff on duty each day. It is recommended that an up to date staff timetable for the preschool be on view to inform parents and visitors of the staff on duty and any changes to staff for that day.

While the focus is on the preschool program, preschool teachers and support staff have an important role in the corporate life of the whole school and contribute to whole school plans and activities.

Preschool support staff

Support staff in the preschool consist of either a school learning support officer (preschool) or an Aboriginal education officer. These positions are responsible to the principal and function under the immediate supervision of the preschool teacher.

Staff in these positions are required to hold an ACECQA approved Certificate 111 qualification in Children's Services.

The collaboration between the teacher and support staff plays an important part in the day to day operation of the preschool.

School Learning Support Officer (SLSO)

A full time school learning support officer is employed for six hours and fifteen minutes per day. He or she works with the teacher to provide the educational program and a healthy, safe and welcoming environment.

The school learning support officer assists the preschool teacher to implement the preschool program. This may include interacting with children and supporting their positive behaviour, organising and setting up activities, cleaning equipment, and attending to the personal care and needs of young children.

Information on the conditions of employment of the school learning support officer is in the Non Teaching Staff in Schools handbook which is available through the Industrial Relations Directorate on telephone 9561 8780 or through the Industrial Relations Directorate website at:

<https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/lists/directoratesaz/ires/indrel/index.htm>

See Appendix 3.1 for the Statement of Duties.



Aboriginal Education Officer (AEO)

In some designated Aboriginal preschools, an Aboriginal education officer is employed as the second staff member. A full time Aboriginal education officer is also employed for six hours and 15 minutes per day. Information on the conditions of employment of the Aboriginal education officer is also available from the Industrial Relations Directorate.

School Administrative Officer (SAO)

Each school with a preschool has a staffing entitlement of a 0.2 FTE school administrative support officer position to assist with preschool administration tasks.

The allocation of 0.2 is indicated on the school enrolment and entitlement report.

This support can be used in a number of ways. The school administrative officer may undertake their role in the preschool or be situated in the school office with other administrative staff.

A school administrative officer, when appropriately trained may administer first aid or prescribed medications to the preschool children.

Release from face to face teacher (RFF)

As for all other teachers in the school, preschool teachers are entitled to release from face to face (RFF) teaching time. The entitlement is shown as a separate entry on each school's enrolment and entitlement report.

The RFF teacher may be responsible for delivering the daily program developed by the classroom teacher or be responsible for a specific part of the program developed in consultation with the teacher, for example music, outdoor play or physical activity.

Employment of casual and/or temporary teachers

Whenever teachers provide temporary relief in the preschool for a long term vacancy, for example long service leave or maternity leave, schools need to employ an early childhood trained teacher. However if the leave is less than 12 weeks a primary trained teacher may be employed to provide relief. (regulation 135)

The responsibility for employing casual and temporary teachers to cover long term and short term teacher relief lies with the school principal. Schools either contact casual relief teachers directly or request assistance from the Department's Staffing Services area to identify a suitable casual teacher.

Any new member of staff must participate in an induction process. This would include an overview of the general operational requirements and important information about the preschool.

Staffing of breaks in the preschool

Adequate supervision must be maintained at all times including breaks.

A teacher must always be present as they have the full responsibility for the supervision of children.

If the preschool operates a full day program the school needs to ensure that the preschool teacher and support staff receive the breaks to which they are entitled.

For the staffing of these breaks it is useful if the preschool is part of the duty roster for the whole school.

Element 2.3.1

Children are adequately supervised at all times.

Staffing for excursions

In recognition of the age and development of preschool children, the adult to child ratio for preschool excursions differs to that of the rest of the school.

The *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* requires that adequate supervision is maintained at all times when the children are in care (section 165).

An increased adult to child ratio for excursions is not specified in the National Regulations. A thorough risk assessment is needed to determine whether ratios are sufficient to provide adequate supervision.

Excursion permission notes are to include the number of adults who will be accompanying the children.

Element 4.1.1

Educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times.

This also relates to Element 2.1.4

First aid qualifications

Regulation 136 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* states that at least

- one person who has an approved first aid qualification, and
- one person who has undertaken approved anaphylaxis training, and
- one person who has undertaken approved emergency asthma training need to be on the premises at all times while children are present and immediately available in an emergency. It may be the same person who holds all these qualifications.

Under the regulation the person/s with these qualifications may be located in the school as long as they are immediately available in an emergency.

Each preschool needs to carefully consider how they will meet this requirement.

It is mandatory for all departmental staff, including temporary and casual staff to complete the following:

- Australian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) anaphylaxis e-training
- e-Emergency care
- CPR training

Anaphylaxis training

When a child with Anaphylaxis is enrolled in the preschool staff are also required to do the face-to-face training.

Please refer to *Anaphylaxis Procedures for Schools 2012* for more detail. <https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/newsbuzz/yr2012/nov/anaphylaxis.htm>

Both the face-to-face and online training are approved by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) which means that they meet the requirements of the National Regulations and National Quality Standard.

Supervision of the preschool

This relates to Quality Area 7 of the National Quality Standard: Leadership and service management

The Principal

In keeping with *Leading and Managing the School* (PD2004/0024) “the principal occupies the pivotal position in the school and is accountable for leadership and management consistent with State legislation and the policies and priorities of the NSW Government.”

The principal has overriding responsibility for the supervision of the preschool however he/she may delegate the supervision of the preschool education program to an executive staff member.

Supervisor of the preschool

Members of the school executive have responsibilities and duties determined by the principal, for the management of staff and the development, implementation and evaluation of school policies and programs.

To support and advise the preschool staff the supervisor of the preschool needs to understand how young children learn through play and the difference between preschool and school programs.

It is expected that the supervisor has a working knowledge of the Early Years Learning Framework which is the curriculum framework for all children’s services across Australia including departmental preschools.

The supervisor should also be aware of the National Quality Standards and relevant legislation that applies to the preschool, for example, the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*.

Standard 7.1

Effective leadership promotes a positive organisational culture and builds a professional learning community.

There are three supervisory roles that exist under the National Quality Framework.

- Nominated Supervisor
- Educational Leader
- Responsible person in charge

Nominated Supervisor

The National Law requires all children’s services to have a Nominated Supervisor.

The Nominated Supervisor requires knowledge of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* and is responsible for the overall supervision of the preschool, the program of activities, and any other specific matters relating to the preschool.

Under the regulations the Nominated Supervisor position is able to be designated as a ‘class of person’. **In Departmental preschools this designation is the principal.** When the principal is absent the person relieving becomes the Nominated Supervisor.

The Nominated Supervisor is not required to be in attendance at the preschool at all times.

Information on the Nominated Supervisor needs to be displayed in a prominent position in the preschool. (Regulation 173)

Educational Leader

Regulation 118 states that each preschool must have an Educational Leader to lead the development and implementation of the educational program.

The Educational Leader is a suitably qualified and experienced person who leads the development and implementation of the educational program.

The principal as leader of the school will be the Educational Leader.

The principal may choose another member of staff, for example the supervisor of the preschool, to support this role.

Details of the Educational Leader also need to be displayed in a prominent position in the preschool.

Responsible person in charge

This role is also assigned to the principal.

Its purpose is to ensure that there is always a responsible person on the school premises who is in charge of the preschool.

When the principal is absent the preschool staff should be notified of the name of the person replacing the principal.

Appendix 3.1

General Conditions of Employment

1.1.3.2.4 School Learning Support Officer (Preschool)

A school learning support officer (preschool) is responsible to the principal or the supervisor for:

- providing assistance in school routines;
- classroom activities and in the care and management of students; and
- functions under the immediate supervision and direction of a teacher.

The school must not require a school learning support officer (pre-school) to accept responsibility for class management and control, playground supervision or teaching students.

A school learning support officer (pre-school) is required to carry out the following range of duties:

- setting up and cleaning the playroom and playground before and after each session including the assembling of teaching materials;
- daily cleaning of such things as painting easels, brushes, containers, plastic aprons, the wiping down of tables and chairs and the mopping of toilet/wash area after each session;
- regular cleaning of toys, repairing of books and similar equipment; washing of dolls' clothes, etc; and
- preparing students' morning and afternoon tea snack including associated washing up.

1. Administration

- Operating audio-visual aids and other teaching equipment.
- Recording school broadcasts and telecasts and maintaining a catalogue of records, cassettes, video and audio tapes and other audio-visual software.
- Duplicating materials and photocopying.
- Assembling and distributing lesson materials.
- Issuing learning materials from resource rooms.
- Arranging furniture within classrooms other than in schools for specific purposes or high schools.
- Stocktaking.
- Managing lost property and clothing pools.
- Performing minor clerical duties such as those associated with assessment records.

2. Teacher and Student Support

- The implementation of learning programs, including physical education, sport and recreation activities and educational excursions.
- "Settling in" new students.
- Helping students with toilet, ablution and dressing needs.
- Carrying out programs for the behavioural management of students.
- Assembling and dismissing classes.
- Caring for sick students and, where in receipt of a first aid allowance, administering minor first aid.

3. Other Duties

Undertaking other related duties as determined by the principal or the supervisor.

