

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT POLICY

The physical environment can contribute to children's wellbeing, happiness, and creativity as well as promoting the development of independence. It may contribute to and make visible the children's learning and involvement in experiences. Resources, materials, space, layout, air and light, combined with access to a range of experiences in the indoor and outdoor areas, have a direct impact on the quality of learning opportunities available to children.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's needs for sleep, rest and relaxation.
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.1.3	Healthy Lifestyles	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.

QUALITY AREA 3: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
3.1.1	Fit for Purpose	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.
3.1.2	Upkeep	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
73	Educational programs
74	Documenting of child assessments or evaluations for delivery of educational program
75	Information about the educational program to be kept available
76	Information about educational program to be given to parents
81	Sleep and rest
82	Tobacco, drug and alcohol -free environment
86	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
99	Children leaving the education and care service premises
102	Authorisation for excursions
103	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
104	Fencing and security
105	Furniture, materials and equipment
106	Laundry and hygiene facilities
107	Space requirements—indoor
108	Space requirements—outdoor space
109	Toilet and hygiene facilities
110	Ventilation and natural light
111	Administrative space
112	Nappy change facilities
113	Outdoor space—natural environment
114	Outdoor space—shade
115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
123	Educator to child ratios- centre based services
156	Relationships in groups
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available

RELATED POLICIES

<p>Educational Program Policy Work Health and Safety Policy</p>	<p>Sleep and Rest Policy Sun Safety Policy Water Safety Policy</p>
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PURPOSE

Central Shoalhaven Mobile Preschool (CSMP) will ensure the preschool environment is safe, engaging, clean, and well maintained for children, families, educators, and visitors. Children's awareness of the environment and sustainable practice will be supported through daily practices, resources and interactions. The physical environment will support children's participation and engagement, development, learning, and safety. Our preschool is drug and alcohol free.

SCOPE

This policy applies to preschool children, families, staff, management and visitors

IMPLEMENTATION

Our preschool is committed to providing an environment that promotes safety and enhances children's learning and development.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER, NOMINATED SUPERVISOR, EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER AND EDUCATORS' RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

The physical environment will:

- maximise children's engagement and positive experiences whilst at the venue
- provide space where children can experience quality education and care in a safe and healthy environment
- meet licensing/Venue Management Plan requirements for buildings, space requirements, fencing, light, ventilation, emergency equipment and emergency evacuation exits.
- provide sufficient and accessible handwashing, toileting, eating, and rest facilities (as per Venue Management Plan)
- ensure adequate and appropriate hygienic facilities for nappy changing are provided (as per Venue Management Plan)
- provide appropriate areas for lunch box storage

- incorporate natural and artificial lighting, appropriate ventilation, heating, cooling and fresh air into the building
- facilitate adequate supervision of children at all times including toilets and nappy change facilities
- ensure safety and minimal disruption for children whilst playing
- provide opportunities for different types of play to occur both in the indoor and outdoor areas (e.g. quiet play areas and boisterous play areas)
- provide adequate shade for children in accordance with the recommendations of relevant authorities (as per Venue Management Plan)
- provide a natural environment for children to explore and experience which may include plants, trees, gardens, rock, mud and/or water (as per Venue Management Plan)
- ensure all required fencing is compliant with current regulations and is maintained to ensure it is in good condition (as per Venue Management Plan)
- provide a variety of indoor and outdoor experiences, catering for children's interests and abilities
- provide a developmentally appropriate learning environment where children can explore, solve problems, create, construct and engage in critical thinking
- provide an environment that permits children to participate in activities independently or in small groups, and access resources autonomously
- power points not in use have safety caps, all double adaptors and power-boards are out of reach of children, and all electrical cords are secured and not dangling

Resources and equipment

- purchases of equipment valued at or above \$1000 will be approved by management committee
- the Director is responsible for purchases under \$1000
- teachers and educators will provide ideas for equipment and materials purchase based on the needs and interests of children at their particular venue
- teachers and educators will inform the Nominated Supervisor/Director of equipment that needs maintenance or replacement on a prioritised basis
- children will be encouraged to make decisions about the use of equipment and resources
- the preschool will actively seek the input of families regarding current interests of their children so as to purchase appropriate resources and equipment
- teachers and educators will discuss the safety characteristics of using the preschool's toys and equipment with children
- teachers and educators staff participate in on-going professional development in order to enhance children's learning and ensuring a safe and educational environment

- teachers and educators will assist children in choosing appropriate resources and equipment for their size and ability whilst encouraging and supporting children in the development of new skills.

Resources and equipment will:

- be appropriately sized and will be provided in both the indoor and outdoor environment for the age ranges represented at the preschool
- be adequate in number for the number of children attending the preschool and be developmentally appropriate
- cater for specific requirements of attending children with additional needs to ensure an inclusive environment
- will be chosen to reflect the cultural diversity of the venue community and the cultural diversity of contemporary Australia, including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community
- installed according to manufacturers' recommendations and compliant with Australian Safety Standards.
- incorporate commercial, natural, recycled, homemade, and authentic materials that can be used in a variety of ways to encourage children's learning and creativity

Laundering of Soiled Items

- soiled clothing will be returned to a child's home for laundering
- educators will remove any soiled content and place the item of clothing into a plastic bag. Items will be stored securely in a sealed container, "wet-bag" or disposable plastic bag before being placed in the child's bag.

Rearranging, Adding or Removing Furniture

- a record of any changes that are made to the physical environment at the venue is documented, such as rearranging of furniture etc. to show critical reflection and continuous improvement
- links between the arrangements and choice of resources and equipment, and the children's learning in the program will be documented

Sleep/Rest Environment

- venue staff will adhere to the *Sleep and Rest Policy*
- mattresses and linen will be stored in a clean, dry area
- checks will be made to identify any hazards to ensure a safe environment

Daily Safety Checks

A daily inspection of the premises will be undertaken before children arrive. The *Indoor and Outdoor Daily Safety Checklists* will be used as the procedure to conduct these safety checks. A record of these will be kept by preschool. The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor will make the appropriate arrangements to have any identified repairs carried out as soon as possible.

This inspection will include:

- venue perimeters
- fences/fence line
- gates
- paths
- buildings
- all rooms accessible by children
- fixed equipment
- sand pit
- playground
- a visual check of trees for dead or dangerous looking overhanging branches or infestations

This must be completed to identify any dangerous objects in the grounds including sharps, objects related to the use of drugs or alcohol, used PPE, poisonous plants, venomous animals, dead animals and animal faeces. In the event of a sharp object being found (for example a syringe) venue staff will wear gloves and use tongs to pick up the object and place it in the 'sharp object box'. This box will be disposed of as per the recommendations of local council.

CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS, PREMISES, FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT

General Cleaning

- the preschool will use cleaning schedules to ensure that all cleaning is carried out regularly
- educators will clean the venue at the end of each day and throughout the day as needed
- accidents and spills will be cleaned up as quickly as possible to ensure that the preschool always maintains a high level of cleanliness and hygiene.
- educators and staff will adhere to our *Health and Safety Policy*.

When purchasing, storing and/or using any dangerous chemicals, substances, medicines or equipment, our preschool will:

- ensure all procedures are followed to maintain a safe environment
- adhere at all times to manufacturer's advice and instructions when using products to clean furniture and equipment at the venue
- keep **a register of all hazardous chemicals**, substances and equipment used at the venue. Information recorded should include where they are stored, their use, any risks, and first aid instructions.

Children's Bathroom

- supervision is provided to children when in use (whilst maintaining the rights and dignity of children)
- educators and other staff will encourage children to follow appropriate hygiene practices
- bathrooms will be cleaned at least twice a day and at other times as required
- bathroom floors will be mopped daily and additionally as required
- signage is to be used after mopping to ensure that children, educators and other staff and families are aware that the floor is wet
- educators are to ensure they follow the bathroom and toilet cleaning procedure.

Ongoing Maintenance

- the preschool will continuously reflect on its environment and put in place a plan to ensure that the environment reflects our ideology of providing an environment that is safe, and engaging for all those who interact in it
- frequent risk assessments of the indoor and outdoor environment will be conducted in order to minimise risk and hazards
- the venue hall committee is responsible for pest inspections carried out by an accredited pest control company. Venue staff will advise the director of signs of pest infestation on the premises.

- the venue hall committee is responsible for repairs and maintenance of the premises. Venue staff will document required maintenance in a maintenance log and advise the director of any repairs and maintenance required.
- The director or venue staff member (in consultation with director) will advise the venue hall management committee of any repair or maintenance requirements and any signs of pest infestation.

Maintenance of Fire Equipment

- all fire equipment at our venues will be maintained by the hall management committee
- venue staff will advise the director if the equipment requires maintenance
- the director or venue staff member (in consultation with director) will advise the hall committee if fire equipment requires maintenance
- external agencies will be employed to assist the service with this maintenance

SUN PROTECTION

- educators and staff at the venue will adhere to our *Sun Safety Policy* and procedures at all times
- a combination of sun protection measures will be implemented whenever UV Index levels reach 3 and above
- educators will continue to check the UV rating prior to going outdoors
- temperature of outdoor equipment and surfaces will be monitored during the day to ensure the area and equipment is safe for children to play

WATER SAFETY

To prevent accidents and illnesses relating to wading pools, water troughs and other water situations our preschool will:

- ensure that children's play areas are safely fenced off from water hazards such as rivers, dams, creeks, lakes, irrigation channels, wells etc. and remove any items or objects that could be used to climb into a fenced area containing water
- follow CSMP water safety policy
- make sure no child swims or plays in any body of water/swimming pool/wading pool without:
 - risk assessments being completed and approved by the director
 - written permission from family member
 - appropriate educator/child ratios in place

- having sufficient numbers of educators present who have first aid training (and recognised award in water safety and rescue for bodies of water larger than wading pool)
- ensure that at all times, children near water are closely supervised by at least 2 staff members. A child will never be left unattended near any water.
- ensure all wading pools/water troughs etc. will be immediately emptied after every use and that storage will prevent the collection of water (e.g. upright/inverted). The grounds will also be checked after rain or watering and water that has collected in holes or containers will be emptied/removed.
- ensure that wading/water troughs are hygienically cleaned and disinfected appropriately

VENUE CLOSURE

- two staff members must close the venue each afternoon
- both staff are to ensure all children and families have departed by checking sign-in and sign-out sheets AND physically checking all indoor and outdoor areas
- educators are to follow preschool-closing procedures each night
- in the case where a parent has omitted to sign their child out, and the venue staff did not witness the child leave the venue, the staff must take every step to get in contact with the family to ensure the child has safely left the venue
- if unable to contact the family, the educators are to contact any other educators present on that day for confirmation that the child was collected. The director is to then be notified before staff leave the preschool.
- individuals visiting the preschool must sign-in when they arrive, and sign-out when they leave

SOURCE

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
 Cancer Council NSW: <https://www.cancercouncil.com.au>
 Cancer Council Australia: <https://www.cancer.org.au>
Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2011).
 Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).
 Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (Amended 2020).
 KidSafe Australia: <https://kidsafe.com.au>
 National Health and Medical Research Council. (2013). *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*.
 NSW Government *Kids and Traffic Early Childhood Road Safety Education Program*
 Red nose Safe environment <https://rednose.org.au/section/safe-environment>
 Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).
Work Health and Safety Act 2011

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	June 2021	NEXT REVIEW DATE	June 2022
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DAILY SAFETY CHECKLIST OUTDOOR/INDOOR ENVIRONMENT

CHECKLIST: OUTDOORS

- ☐ **Bikes and wheeled toys** –bikes are in good working order with no rust. Correctly fitted helmets are worn every time children use ‘bikes’ and wheeled toys
- ☐ **Building maintenance** – regularly maintain and check for hazards, check building is in a safe, clean and hygienic condition. Record any damage and subsequent repairs.
- ☐ **Educator’s personal items** – Educator’s personal items such as bags, sharp instruments, toiletries and medicines are kept secure and are inaccessible to children
- ☐ **Ensure children are visible and supervised at all times.** High-risk areas and climbing and other outdoor play equipment are supervised at all times. Hazardous equipment, machinery, chemicals, and any other materials is inaccessible to children
- ☐ **Fences** – securely and effectively provide a suitable barrier to all sides of outdoor play areas from roads, water hazards, and driveways – See Venue Management Plan
- ☐ **First aid kit** is approved, maintained, and accessible throughout outdoor play
- ☐ **Rubbish** – safe and prompt disposal. Lidded secure bins are used that prevent child access and are maintained in a clean and safe condition
- ☐ **Garden** and renovation debris removed
- ☐ **Garages and sheds** – are keep locked
- ☐ **Hazardous Plants** – are identified and removed or made inaccessible to children
- ☐ **Heating, cooling, ventilation, lighting** – is comfortable, safe, maintained, guarded and kept out of reach of children
- ☐ **Machinery, tools and equipment** –all engine operated or other hazardous equipment, tools or machinery are stored securely and are inaccessible to children
- ☐ **Pet and animal droppings** are cleared or inaccessible to children in outdoor areas, dogs are excluded from children’s play areas, pet interactions with children are supervised
- ☐ **Play equipment** that is higher than 50cm has soft fall installed underneath at least 25cm in depth and extends 1.9m from the perimeter of the equipment as per Australian Standards (AS 4685). Outdoor play equipment is placed away from paths and solid garden edging
- ☐ **Play equipment and playground surfaces-** temperature of playground equipment and surfaces are checked and monitored throughout the day to ensure children’s safety
- ☐ **Safe play rules and adequate safe play areas** – we talk with children about how to play safely. We maintain safe layouts for outdoor play areas to avoid collisions between children.
- ☐ **Sandpits** – are covered when not in use, regularly cleaned, raked, and sand soiled by faeces or blood is removed. Sandpits are hosed and disinfected after removing contaminated sand and material

- ☐ **Security** - unauthorised access is minimized with appropriate fencing and locks
- ☐ **Service car park** – we ensure family members are aware of pedestrian safety rules such as holding their child’s hand and alighting children from the safety door. Families must always supervise their children in the car park to prevent accidents and injuries, which could occur as a result of reversing vehicles.
- ☐ **Soft fall** - appropriate ground cover under outdoor climbing and play equipment, meets Australian Safety standards
- ☐ **Spills** – are cleaned up as they occur
- ☐ **Sun protection** - clothing, hats, and sunscreen– we minimise play at peak sun exposure times. A sunshade or natural shade covers sandpits and play areas
- ☐ **Supervision and visibility of children** –children are visible and supervised at all times. High-risk areas requiring extra supervision include adventurous play experiences, playground equipment, ball sports
- ☐ **Surfacing used underneath and around equipment** complies with Australian and New Zealand Standards AS/NZS 4422:2016, and is maintained regularly
- ☐ **Under Service access** (including buildings on stilts and footings) – access is blocked or locked.
- ☐ **Window fly screens** are securely fitted, maintained, and permanent.
- ☐ **Water hazards** – are made inaccessible to children, e.g. ponds, dams, drains and creeks
- ☐ **Water troughs** are used under adult supervision only, are drained immediately after use and are stored upside-down.

CHECKLIST: INDOORS

- ☐ **Access for children and adults with disability** - safe access is provided into, within and out of the Service. Toilet and washing facilities, are checked for hazards for wheelchairs and people with impaired sight, hearing or mobility.
- ☐ **Barriers** - age appropriate, child proof, self-locking barriers are in place for balconies, stairways, kitchen, bathroom, laundry, garage, other levels at the venue
- ☐ **Children at risk** – we maintain extra security and supervision for children at special risk
- ☐ **Decorations and children’s artwork** – are not placed near ceiling fans, air conditioners or heaters. The use of tacks, pins, and staples is avoided
- ☐ **Educator’s personal items** –educator’s personal items such as bags, sharp instruments, toiletries and medicines are kept secure and are inaccessible to children
- ☐ **Emergency evacuations** –an evacuation plan and emergency contact numbers are displayed, families are informed, and evacuation procedures are regularly practiced

- ☐ **Fire** – fire blanket, extinguisher, fire exits, smoke detectors, electrical safety switch are checked regularly and serviced as required
- ☐ **First aid** kit with approved contents is maintained and accessible. First Aid certificates are current for relevant educators
- ☐ **Furniture and equipment** - stable, maintained and meets Australian safety standards
- ☐ **Guard and make inaccessible to Children:** heaters, coolers, fireplaces, stoves, microwaves, power points, and office equipment.
- ☐ **Hazardous indoor plants** are identified and removed
- ☐ **Heaters** –children cannot come in contact with hot surfaces. If gas heating is used ensure there is adequate ventilation while the heater is operating.
- ☐ **Hot water** - the hot water supply is regulated so as to keep it below the temperature at which a child can be scalded (the current KidSafe NSW Inc. recommendation is below 43.5°C).
- ☐ **Machinery, tools, chemicals and equipment** – all office and venue machinery, tools, chemicals and equipment is stored securely and inaccessible to children
- ☐ **Nappy changing-** nappy changing arrangements are adequate and appropriate hygiene facilities are provided for nappy changing (see specific venue management plans)
- ☐ **Noise** – we reduce excessive exposure
- ☐ **Animals** –families are informed of animals visiting the premises. Animals should be vaccinated, wormed, treated for ticks and fleas, clean, and healthy. Animal accessories such as food, litter boxes, and pet toys are kept away from children. Dogs are excluded from children’s play areas. Children/animal interactions are supervised at all times.
- ☐ **Record details** - Parents are notified of any child accident or near accident
- ☐ **Safe play rules and adequate play spaces:** we discourage running indoors and provide safe furniture layout to avoid collisions
- ☐ **Smoke / alcohol and drug free environment** in all areas
- ☐ **Stairways,** ramps, raised corridors and balconies are inaccessible or enclosed to prevent a child falling
- ☐ **Supervision and visibility of children** –children are visible and supervised at all times. High-risk areas identified require extra supervision (see venue supervision plans). At least two educators are on the premises at all times.
- ☐ **Toys** – meet safety standards, age appropriate, maintained, and non-toxic.