

4.15 (a) Back Care and Manual Handling Policy

Policy number: 4.15 (a)
Date last reviewed: December 2024
Reviewed by: Child Care Team

This policy relates to	
	Refer Beucare Policy
National Quality Standards Early Childhood Education & Care	7.1.2
Work place Health and Safety	4.15

Purpose

Educators and coordinators will minimise the risk of back injury by applying the principles of back care, and correct lifting and carrying techniques.

Definitions

Manual handling means any activity requiring the use of force exerted by a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any person or object.

Policy

Child care staff are at risk of work related ergonomic injuries particularly back injuries related to lifting and carrying children, bending, reaching and not using adult size furniture.

All new educators are required to watch a Safe Manual Handling DVD prior to commencing care.

Recommended Handling Techniques for Lifting

Think Before Lifting/Handling

Plan the lift. Can lifting aids be used? Where is the load going to be placed? Will help be needed with the load? Remove obstructions such as discarded wrapping materials, toys or loose clothing. For a long lift, consider resting the load midway on a table or bench to change grip.

Keep the Load Close to the Waist

Keep the load close to the body for as long as possible while lifting. Keep the heaviest side of the load next to the body. If a close approach to the load is not possible, try to slide it towards the body before attempting to lift it.

Adopt A Stable Position

The feet should be apart with one leg slightly forward to maintain balance (alongside the load if it is on the ground). The worker should be prepared to move their feet during the lift to maintain their stability. Avoid tight clothing or unsuitable footwear which may make this difficult.

Get A Good Hold

Where possible the load should be hugged as close as possible to the body. This may be better than gripping it tightly with hands only.

Start in A Good Posture

At the start of the lift, slight bending of the back, hips and knees is preferable to fully flexing the back (stooping) or fully flexing the hips and knees (squatting).

Don't Flex the Back Any Further While Lifting

This can happen if the legs begin to straighten before starting to raise the load.

Avoid Twisting the Back or Leaning Sideways, Especially While the Back is Bent

Shoulders should be kept level and facing in the same direction as the hips. Turning by moving the feet is better than twisting and lifting at the same time.

Keep the Head Up When Handling

Look ahead, not down at the load, once it has been held securely.

Move Smoothly

The load should not be jerked or snatched as this can make it harder to keep control and can increase the risk of injury.

Don't Lift or Handle More Than Can Be Easily Managed

There is a difference between what people can physically lift and what they can safely lift. If in doubt, seek advice or help.

Put Down and Then Adjust

If precise positioning of the load is necessary, put it down first, and then slide into the desired position.

General Responsibilities of Educators

To minimise the risk of back injury and to comply with the Work Health & Safety Act and other relevant legislation, educators should:

- Where possible, kneel rather than bend down, in order to avoid neck or back problems
- Carry children only when necessary. The correct way to carry a child is with one arm under the child's buttocks and the other arm supporting the child's back. At the same time, hold the child facing you, as close to your body as possible. Try to avoid repetitively carrying a child on your hip, because this may strain your back
- When lifting awkward loads, be careful to lift with a balanced and comfortable posture. Assess the task to see if it can be broken down into steps which give opportunity to reposition feet or holding positions
- Minimise the need to reach above shoulder level. Use a stepladder or step stool or rearrange items to be stored on lower levels
- Modify the load. Repackage items to lessen the weight to make it more manageable
- Have cots with drop sides if possible. When lifting babies out of cots, lean close against the cot and raise the child as close as possible to your body, move smoothly. Do not stretch over and lift
- If a child needs comforting, instead of bending over and picking the child up, sit down and encourage her or him to climb onto your knee, or kneel so that you are closer to her or his level. Use small chairs with good back support instead of squatting or bending for interaction with children
- Instead of lifting a child into a car, encourage the child to climb in on their own
- Consider the design of the work or work practices being used, to minimise the risk of injury. For example, place lighter items higher on shelves, avoid lifting from the floor and reduce the weight of items to be moved, vary the work or reduce repetitive handling

General Responsibilities of Staff:

As noted in each position description, staff will be expected to adhere to Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Law, National Quality Standards, Early Years Learning Framework, My Time Our Place, service policies and procedures and Beaucare Policies.

- Proactively support Beaucare personnel and the Board in the achievements of Beaucare mission, goals and plans.
- Ensure the maintenance of timely, efficient and effective records as are appropriate to the position, and to Beaucare and external funding requirements.

Relevant Legislation

National Law

National Regulations

National Quality Standard

Qld Government Department of Justice and Attorney-General: *Workplace Health and Safety Regulations 2008*

<http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/W/WorkplHSaR08.pdf>

Qld Government Department of Justice and Attorney-General: *Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003*

<http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/legisltn/current/w/workerscompa03.pdf>

Qld Government Department of Justice and Attorney-General: *Manual Tasks Involving the Handling of People Code of Practice*

<http://www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/subjects/manualhandling/index.htm>

http://www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/resources/pdfs/handlingpeople_code2001.pdf

Key Resources

Child Care OHS Workbook Australasian College of Health Safety 2006

Health & Safety in Family Day Care Model Policies and Practices 2002

Training notes from Workshop Feb 2005 Physiotherapist Tony Nicholson

Manual Handling; Solutions you can handle –Health and Safety Executive 03/04

Related Policies

[Appendix H Safe Work Practices](#)