

## 7.7 Equipment Policy

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| <b>Policy number:</b> 7.7                 |
| <b>Date last reviewed:</b> September 2024 |
| <b>Reviewed by:</b> Child Care Team       |

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| This policy relates to     |   |
| Family Day Care/Venue Care |   |
| National Quality Standards | <p>National Standards.</p> <p>2.1.1 Each child’s wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child’s need for sleep, rest and relaxation,</p> <p>2.2.1 At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard</p> <p>Nappy change arrangements</p> <p>3.1 The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service.</p> <p>3.1.1 Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.</p> <p>3.1.2 Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained</p> <p>3.2 The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.</p> <p>3.2.1 Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child’s participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.</p> <p>3.2.2 Resources, materials and equipment allow for multiple uses, are sufficient in number, and enable every child to engage in play-based learning</p> <p>7.1.2 Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service. The process for the FDC educator to report to the approved provider any renovations, damage or other changes to the FDC residence or approved FDC venue which may pose a risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of children, including a pet.</p> |

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|                 | <p>7.13 Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision-making and operation of the service. The assessment process for any changes to the FDC residence or approved FDC Venue, such as a renovation.</p>  |
| <p>Policies</p> | <p>Engagement or registration of FDC educators<br/>         Incidents, injury, trauma and illness<br/>         Animal policy<br/>         Safe sleeping<br/>         Emergencies, Lockdown and Evacuation policy<br/>         Nappy changing<br/>         Fencing and Verandas<br/>         Sun Protection<br/>         Water Hazards, Water Features or Swimming Pools</p> |

**Purpose**

Play equipment used for childcare must be safe and should always meet Australian Standards and be used as stated by manufacturer’s instructions and recommended age groups.

**Playground equipment should refer to Australian Standards for Playgrounds.**

**Policy**

Equipment used for childcare must be safe and always used according to manufacturer’s instructions.

**Baby Walkers**

Baby walkers are not recommended for use and are only to be used if the wheels have been removed and the equipment is secure and safe for the age of the child. This type of equipment should only be used for small amounts of time as it is restricting to the child.

**Highchairs**

Highchairs should be used for infants at mealtimes only for short periods of time. Children must be properly restrained using a 5-point harness and closely supervised at all times while in highchairs (actively supervising means not leaving a child alone in a highchair at any time) as injuries involving highchairs account for 25% of nursery furniture incidents. These injuries are mainly due to falls from the highchair. Highchairs must only be used for appropriate ages of infants, (refer to manufacturer details for recommended ages).

Children must be fully supervised and in reach of the educator at all times. Children should never be allowed to stand up in a highchair or climb into or out of it. Children trying to stand up is an indicator that the child may have outgrown the highchair and should be transitioned to a child size table and chairs that's more appropriate and safe. If possible, the highchair should be placed in an area to prevent children climbing on to or toppling out of it.

### ***Selection of Highchair***

Highchairs must have a 5-point harness with straps over the shoulders, between the legs and around the waist. Highchairs without a harness may have an appropriate separate shoulder harness attached. Ensure that the highchair does not have any gaps that could trap a baby's arm or leg and that there are no finger traps or sharp edges under the tray (any gap between 5 to 12 mm is a finger trap). Make sure that the highchair is stable with a wide base.

### ***Location***

Ensure that the highchair is placed at least 500mm away from walls, stoves, appliance cords, curtains or blind cords and located so that the chair could never fall into a glass surface. Folded up highchairs should be stored in a secure way that will not allow toppling.

### ***Maintenance***

Attend to loose nuts and broken parts immediately. Repair/replace any torn seats before the foam padding is exposed to prevent risk of choking.

### ***Usage***

Ensure that the highchair's instructions regarding weight and height are adhered to. If the highchair has a reclining seat, do not attempt to adjust the angle while the infant is still in the chair. If the highchair's height can be adjusted, make sure any locking devices are locked firmly into place before putting the infant in it.

Educators should limit the amount of time babies and toddlers spend in highchairs, and this time should only be for specific purposes (e.g. mealtimes).

### **Table and Chairs**

It is a requirement for all educators to have child size table and chairs to meet the needs of the children for eating and play activities. The table and chairs need to be stable and suitable for the ages of the children. Adult size table and chairs are not suitable for small children under the age of 3, unless a secured booster seat with a 5-point harness is in place as they pose a fall height risk which can be serious for a young child.

### **Strollers and Prams**

Strollers and prams are required to meet the Australian Standard AS/NZS 2088:2000. Strollers and prams present many potential hazards to children if not used and stored safely:

- Children can be put in dangerous situations and risk serious injuries or death if a pram or stroller rolls away from the educator's control. Educators should always use parking brakes and tether straps to ensure the pram or stroller cannot move away when stopped.
- Children should be secured using the harness at all times when the pram or stroller is in use.
- When not in use, prams and strollers should be folded and/or stored in an area that is inaccessible to children.
- Children should never be allowed to climb or play on the pram or stroller.
- Prams and strollers are not to be used as a sleep alternative to a cot or bed. If a child falls asleep in a pram or stroller, they should be transferred as soon as possible to an appropriate sleep surface.
- Children should not be restrained in prams or strollers for extended periods of time. They should not be used as an alternative to a highchair for mealtimes in the home.

### **Bumbo Seats**

Bumbo seats are designed for use on the **floor only**. They are never to be placed on a raised surface such as a bench, table or chair, and babies must be supervised at all times whilst using the Bumbo. The safety harness must be used at all times. Bumbos must be used strictly according to manufacturer's instructions, and only for short periods of time. They are only suitable for use with babies who have adequate head control.

### **Playpens**

Playpens are not recommended for use as they limit developmental opportunities for babies, toddlers and young children. It is important that in small groups of children in family day care all children are able to interact and be part of the group.

Routines, experiences and activities should be planned to accommodate the interactions and involvement of all children. Playpens prevent opportunities for children to explore and interact with their environment.

If educators identify or are concerned with safety issues regarding age groupings this should be discussed with coordinators.

### **Cubby Houses**

Educators with cubby houses in their outdoor environment will identify it as part of the daily safety environment checklist and monitor the following for compliance:

- Equipment should be a safe design which complies with Australian standards.
- For heights over 500mm, soft fall to a depth of 250mm- 300mm is recommended.

- Ensure it is an appropriate size for young children, including handrails (large timber logs do not allow a child a firm hand grip).

### ***Equipment higher than 600mm***

Kidsafe Queensland recommends that a fall height is no greater than 1000mm for 0-3yrs and 1500mm for children over 3yrs. With mixed age groups the cubby needs to meet the requirements of the youngest children who will be able to access the equipment. It is not suitable to let some children use equipment and not others, so it is important that this is considered before installing equipment.

- Soft fall is recommended for equipment higher than 500mm (***refer Soft Fall section below***).
- If equipment and soft fall is not in place, preventing access to the equipment is required. This means physical barriers in place to prevent access. Supervision alone is not sufficient.
- The design of the cubby should not allow children to climb onto the roof or onto surrounding structures.
- All barriers on the cubby structure should be vertical, not horizontal, with a recommended guard rail height of 900mm.
- Ensure there are no sharp edges, splinters or entrapment areas on or within the unit.
- Fall Zones need to be considered for all equipment where a fall could occur ensuring that the surface is suitable to prevent serious injury.
- Fall Zones need to ensure there are no hazards, equipment, barriers, around climbing equipment that a child could land on if they fell. There should be a minimum clearance around each item of equipment to prevent children landing on other equipment or materials.
- Borders of soft fall must not be in the fall zone. E.g.: border around soft fall material cannot be close to the climbing equipment or swing set in case a child falls off and could land on the border which would increase the risk of injury.

***A cubby at ground level reduces the risk of falls and provides easy access for different age groups of children.***

### **Swings**

Swings should be well anchored with a soft surface underneath, and a large clear space all around them. Install swing sets away from fences, sandpits and walkways (where other children will not run into a swinging child). Seats should be maintained and kept free of cracks. Chain links can crush little fingers and should be covered with plastic tubing. Be aware that all glide swings and boat swings can cause crush injuries and head injuries. A 1.9 metre clear space around swings is

recommended, measured from the extended swing point. Swings should be checked to ensure that any protruding bolts are covered or shaved back.

### **Trampolines**

If a trampoline is used, safety mats covering the frame and springs are required. Trampolines with safety nets around them help prevent injury from falls. The trampoline must be enclosed and placed on a level, stable surface clear of obstacles around all sides to ensure that if a child does fall off the trampoline, they will not complicate an injury by falling onto any objects such as wood, concrete, bricks, toys or fences.

The surface below the trampoline should be grass or soft fall material.

Children must be strictly and constantly supervised at all times when the trampoline is in use.

Only one child shall be permitted on the trampoline at any one time.

Educators must ensure that children remain clear from underneath the trampoline at all times. They must regularly check that the springs are securely attached, leg braces are locked, the mat does not have holes or tears, and that the frame is not bent. Mini trampolines/exercise trampolines are also required to be sited with sufficient clearance from obstacles.

Trampolines are limiting pieces of equipment with only one child being able to use at any time, and close supervision is required. Educators need to ensure children know how to land correctly and are able to dismount safely. Educators should assess the risks of using trampolines particularly for the age of child using them.

### **Soft Fall**

#### **\*Refer to Kidsafe Factsheets for further information**

It is recommended that all equipment with a fall height over 500mm must have a tested impact-absorbing surface under and around it to help prevent serious head injuries. The surface should comply with Australian/New Zealand Standard 4422:1996 Playground surfacing - Specifications, requirements and test materials.

Grass should not be relied upon to provide protection for equipment over 500mm, as its ability to cushion a fall depends on wear and environmental conditions. There is no one ideal impact absorbing surface, and your choice will depend on a variety of considerations. The two main types of materials are loose fill (such as bark, woodchip or sand) and unitary, or solid, materials (rubber or synthetic compounds).

Loose fill material should be installed to whichever is the greater depth, 300mm or the depth that your soft fall supplier specifies for the height of your equipment. An extra 20% is required for heavy traffic areas (e.g. under fireman's poles) or compaction.

A unitary material is a material which is laid as a solid or whole piece. Products include synthetic grass, rubber compounds formed into sheets, tiles, or mats, and 'wet pour' rubber substances that are mixed and trowelled into place on site. The cushioning effect of these materials varies according to the thickness of the layer and the composition of the material. You must use a tested and

approved material and have the manufacturer specify the required depth (from CFH test report) to match your equipment. Unitary materials are recommended in heavy traffic areas such as under swings and track rides.

Impact absorbing surfaces must comply with Australian/New Zealand Standard 4422: 1996 Playground Surfacing specifications, requirements and test materials and the supplier should provide you with laboratory test results for Critical Fall Height (CFH). Suppliers of any surfacing materials should only install an approved product to the depth specified in their CFH Test report to suit the height of your equipment.

### **Wading Pools**

Wading pools may only be used with active constant supervision by the educator. Wading pools must only be used if the water is less than the height of the smallest child's knees.

Wading pools must be filled immediately before and emptied immediately after each separate use.

Wading pools must be stored in a place inaccessible to children.

Activities involving wading pools must be planned and documented with a risk assessment displayed in advance to seek parents' consideration. (Planning in advance is recommended 5-7 days for parents to have opportunity to provide input, feedback or choose for their child to not participate). The correct documentation must then be forwarded to the coordination unit for approval.

### **Relevant Legislation**

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

Section 50A Approval of a place as a Family Day Care venue

Section 54 (1A), (8A) Amendment of service approval on application

Section 103(A) Offence relating to places where education and care is provided as part of a family day care service

165 Offence to inadequately supervise children

Section 167 Precautions to be taken to protect children from harm or hazard

Section 174 Offence to fail to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority

Section 174 A Family Day Care educator to notify certain information to approved provider

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

26 Application for service approval- family day care service

81 Sleep and rest

98 Telephone or other communication equipment.

103 Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair

104 Fencing

105 Furniture, materials and equipment

106 Laundry and hygiene facilities

107 Space requirements indoor space

108 Space requirements outside

109 Toilet and hygiene facilities

110 Ventilation and natural light

112 Nappy Change facilities

113 Outdoor space- natural environment

114 Outdoor space shade

115 Premises designed to facilitate supervision

116 Assessments of family day care residences and approved family day care residences and approved family day care venues.

117 Glass

168(2)(a)(v) Education and care service must have policies and procedures in relation to sleep and rest for children

169 Additional policies and procedures- family day care service

170 Policies and procedures to be followed

171 Policies and procedures to be kept available

172 Notification of change to policies or procedures

176 A Prescribed informed to be notified to approved provider by family day care educator

177 Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by approved provider

### **Key Resources**

CHOICE online

[www.choice.com.au/reviews-and-tests/babies-and-kids.aspx](http://www.choice.com.au/reviews-and-tests/babies-and-kids.aspx)

Fair Trading Facts (Cot safety, Baby walkers, Highchairs, Hazard to Children Under 3 years)

[www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au](http://www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au)

[www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au/safety-initiatives.htm](http://www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au/safety-initiatives.htm)

Red Nose Safe Sleeping brochure, Red Nose Safe sleeping information sheet





[Home](#) | [Red Nose Australia](#)

Kid Safe Factsheets

<https://kidsafeqld.com.au/news-and-media/>

Family Day Care Australia

[www.fdca.com.au](http://www.fdca.com.au)

Product Safety Recalls Australia

<https://www.productsafety.gov.au/recalls>

### **Related Policies**

[Appendix F QIP and Compliance](#)

[Appendix H Safe Work Practice](#)