

7.8 (a) Hygiene Practices – Bathing Policy

Policy number: 7.8 (a)
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Reviewed by: Child Care Team

This policy relates to	
National Quality Standards Early Childhood Education & Care	2.1 Health, 2.1.1 Wellbeing and comfort, 2.1.2 Health practice and procedures, 2.1.3 Healthy lifestyle, 2.2 Safety, 2.2.1 Supervision

Purpose

Children will be provided with safe and hygienic opportunities to bathe and shower with regard to privacy and personal preferences. This service is negotiated with families and is particularly appropriate for children in care overnight and for extended periods.

Adequate supervision for all children in care must be maintained at all times if bathing or showering is to take place. A thorough Risk Assessment must occur prior to bathing or showering to ensure all children are actively supervised.

Policy

Bathing children is a risk and needs to be planned for accordingly. Educators who plan to bath children need to inform the office and complete a risk management plan or overnight care checklist.

Bathing and showering of children in care would usually occur only if necessary:

- After toileting incidents.
- For children who are in care for extended periods and where the educator has the flexibility to safely offer bathing without compromising safety and care of other children.
- As part of overnight care. An overnight care checklist needs to be completed prior to care commencing.

Procedure for bathing a young child

- The room should be warm and free from draughts with everything needed for washing, drying and dressing the child ready and close to hand.
- To avoid danger of scalding with hot water, run all the water needed before placing the child in the bath. When filling the bath, or running the shower, turn on the cold water first, then slowly turn on the hot water. To turn off the water, simply reverse the process (turn off the hot water first, then the cold).

- A young child is never to be unattended or left out of reach of the educator in the bath, even in shallow water, because of the risk of drowning. Children under the age of two have not developed the technique of holding their breath under water when their faces are submerged. A toddler falling forward in a few inches of water is likely to take a large breath to scream and draw water instead of air. The educator is the only person responsible for supervision during bathing/showering.
- Young children are not to be left unattended in the shower or bath at any time.
- When showering the child, the water temperature should be first tested on the elbow or inside of wrist rather than the hand. The water should not be too hot - around body temperature of 37°C is ideal.
- A rubber mat should be used on the bottom of the bath or shower to prevent slipping. Mats in showers need to allow free drainage of water.
- For hygiene purposes, children should be bathed separately and not share bath water. Individual towels, soap and washers should be provided for each individual child. Educators should check with parents to ensure that children are not allergic to soap products. When children are to be bathed or showered on a regular basis, parents may prefer to provide soap and towels for each child to use.
- Parental permission form to be completed prior to bathing taking place.
- It may not be possible to bath or shower children if there is more than one child in care due to supervision requirements and the ages of the children in care.

Procedure for older children

Procedures for older children should be varied to provide privacy and protect dignity, but also maintain safety. Family members' cooperation and sensitivity is needed. Length of showers with older children should be clearly discussed.

Relevant Legislation

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Key Resources

Staying Healthy in Child Care – Preventing Infectious diseases in child care – 5th Edition

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/ch43>

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines-publications>

Family Day Care Australia

www.fdca.com.au

Related Policies

[Appendix H Safe Work Practice](#)

[Appendix I Child Protection](#)