



7.13 Play Sessions, Outings and Excursions Policy

Policy number: 7.13
Date last reviewed: February 2024
Reviewed by: Child Care Team

This policy relates to	
National Quality Standards Early Childhood Education & Care	<p>QA</p> <p>2- Children’s Health and safety</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>4.1 staffing arrangements enhance children’s learning and development.</p> <p>7.1.2 Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.</p>
Policies related to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident, injury, trauma and illness • Dealing with medical conditions in children • Emergency and evacuation • Safe transportation of children • Providing a child safe environment • Nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements • Sun protection • Water safety • Sleep and rest for children • Acceptance and refusal of authorisations • Delivery of children to, and collection of children from, education and care service premises • Transport policy • Car restraint policy



Purpose

The service has procedures in place to ensure that play session, outings and excursions are in the best interest of the children. Documentation is used to show risk management, adequate supervision and safety precautions are taken into account. Effective supervision is critical to the safety of children. Effective supervision also requires educators to be actively involved with children. A thorough risk assessment should be used to determine whether minimum ratios are sufficient to provide adequate supervision while attending an excursion.

Policy

Outings should be child-orientated and planned for the interest and learning outcomes of each individual child in care. Educators need to provide a balance of care that takes place within the home and on outings.

All children must be actively supervised at all times during which the children are being educated and cared for.

Educators are required to provide evidence of planned and spontaneous experiences that support children to develop and practice the skills required to participate in group discussions and shared decision making with their peers.

A visit to the proposed excursion destination will assist in conducting a risk assessment. During a site visit information can be gathered about the availability of toilets, hand washing, drinking and shade facilities at the destination and details can be checked such as mobile phone coverage and access for emergency services.

Outings where water is accessible must be treated as high risk. Prior to the outing, a risk assessment must be completed by the educator and approved by the parent. The service requires a copy of the outing details and risk assessment prior to the outing. Outings to areas where there is water may not be approved by the service due to high risks associated. It is essential that outing venues such as parks are visited prior to the outing to ensure that risks have been fully assessed. Adult to child swimming ratios need to be met for any outing where there is a water risk, including beaches, canals, waterways, ponds and dams:

- For children who are less than 3 years – 1 adult accompanying for each child;
- For children who are at least 3 years but not yet 6 years of age – 1 adult accompanying for each 2 children;
- For children who are 6 years of age – 1 adult accompanying for each 4 children.

These ratios include all children in the Family Day Care service and include the educator's own children up to the age of 13 years.

Educator-to-child ratios alone do not determine what is considered adequate supervision and does not automatically allow for the outing to occur where there is water accessible. The benefits of the outing must be higher than the risks- this needs to be documented in full and be provided to the

service prior to the outing for discussion. Outings where there is water have a much higher potential of risk and are generally discouraged.

This information needs to be part of the educator's risk management plan that the service has already been provided with.

The role of the educator is directly to:

- Ensure the safety and well-being of all children;
- Ensure that there has been thorough risk assessment of the outing, including the venue, prior to the outing occurring;
- Actively engage with the children;
- As part of risk assessment consider the suitable time frames for the outing and transport route;
- Promote and encourage positive learning outcomes;
- Consider meal and rest routines of all children. It is not appropriate for children to eat in the car, or for sleep times to be planned to occur in the car.

Procedure

It is essential that outings are discussed with parents and that written permission is received in advance. For regular outings, educators complete a "Regular Outing" form at the commencement of each year for parents to sign. The service is to be provided with a signed copy prior to the outings occurring. All outing forms should be accompanied by a map showing the planned route to the destination, or written directions on the outing form. Outing forms need to be emailed to fdc@beaucare.org.au prior to occurring for approval.

Updates to this information should be provided to parents and the service as regular visits change due to new bookings or change of routines. For any outings not listed on the Regular Outings form, educators must obtain written permission from parents on an Outing form in advance and forward this form to the service for approval.

Outings planned for a venue where water is accessible to children must have a risk assessment and outing form completed and approved by the parents and forwarded to the service **before** the outing takes place not same day.

Outing forms need to be retained by the educator and a copy sent to the office prior to the outing occurring. It is important to seek permission prior to the outing, giving families plenty of notice to ensure parents are able to plan appropriately for the day, considering food, clothing, footwear and individual routines. Outings should be negotiated with families to ensure the learning outcomes for children are clear and agreed to. Families not wanting their child to attend outings should have their views respected and accommodated where possible.

The educator should maintain active supervision for the safety of the children. This requires that educators be actively involved with the children. The educator should maintain attentive concern for the safety of the children at all times particularly when providing care away from the home. First aid kit, emergency numbers (including service and parent's contact numbers), and a mobile phone are required to be taken on all outings to ensure that educators are contactable by phone. Emergency contact numbers should be written and stored somewhere accessible on outings, as the educator's phone may be inaccessible in an emergency. Drinking water and nappy change supplies are also a requirement. (Refer Policy, Transport 7.18). If food is to be provided on the outing, it needs to meet nutritional guidelines and advised in advance to parents. Sunscreen, hats and shoes for all children and adults must be taken. Children must be restrained in correctly fitted car seats.

Advance planning for the outing would include risk management consideration and planning to minimise any potential risks.

First Aid kits should also be taken when leaving the service premises for excursions, routine outings and emergency evacuations.

Regular Outings

Regular outings must be the actual outing on the day noted and at the actual times on the regular outing form, the route must be attached, and no variation of the route can occur because parents have not given written permission. There is **no flexibility** allowed to change days or times for, regular outings or outings the information must match the information on the forms that the parents have signed and that have been approved by the office.

If an outing is not a Regular Outing, the educator is required to notify the service prior to commencing the outing. This will assist with emergency situations, planning, coordinator visits and communication between coordination unit and educator. The completed outing form is to be scanned to the office prior to the visit occurring, and the original form should be retained by the educator for coordinator to sight on visits. Forms to be emailed to fdc@beaucare.org.au or Monica.l@beaucare.org.au

Parents and the office must know where educators and children are at all times. Risk assessment must be thoroughly completed.

Outings to non-approved areas of educator property must not occur unless approved by the manager to ensure that sufficient risk assessment has occurred. Outing forms will be required for all outings to any areas not approved to ensure that the area has been risk assessed each time. This is not approved to occur on a flexible basis.

Play Sessions

Educators are encouraged to attend play sessions held in various areas of the service. Play sessions are an opportunity for children to experience a larger group and explore play and learning opportunities that may differ from those offered by their own educator. Educators also benefit by sharing ideas and experience with other educators.

Play sessions can be recorded on the regular outing form, with an outing form completed prior to the initial outing documenting risk assessment.

Planning for the larger group of children is accommodated with a play session planning and evaluation form which considers the age, current knowledge, ideas, culture and interests of each of children based on the educational programs, which are the Early Years Learning Framework and My Time Our Place Framework. Coordinators will attend play sessions from time to time and contribute by taking observations and assisting with planning. Host and visiting educators are required to display a play session plan prior to the play session occurring.

The approved national learning frameworks outline that assessment is a process used by educators to gather information about what children know, understand and can do. This information should be analysed by educators to plan effectively for each child's learning. Assessment information can also be used to reflect on their own values, beliefs and teaching practices, and to communicate about children's learning with children and their families. Assessment documentation must be kept for each child. There is no prescribed method in the National Law or National Regulations for documenting the assessment of children's learning. For children who are prep age or under, this documentation should include:

- Assessment of the child's developmental needs, interests, experiences and participation in the educational program;
- Assessment of the child's progress against the learning outcomes of the educational program;

It is recommended that play sessions are no longer than 2 1/2 hours duration, including the meal break.

Several types of play may be provided, such as singing, reading stories, blocks, low balancing beam, dress ups, painting, sand play, water play, and play dough. Effective supervision also requires educators to be actively involved with children at play sessions. Toilet access (with running water and liquid soap for washing hands) and an accessible nappy change area should be available.

All children should be seated for morning tea. A mat on the ground is sufficient. Rugs and/or soft mats should be available for infants. Plenty of water should be available to the children.

Relevant Legislation

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 165,167,174
 Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 100-102,168,166,176 National Quality Framework 2011

Section 165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
Reg 89	First aidkits
Reg 90	Medical conditionspolicy
Reg 99	Children leaving the education and care service premises
Reg 100	Risk assessment must be conducted before excursion
Reg 101	Conduct of risk assessment for excursion
Reg 102	Authorisations forexcursion
Reg 122	Educators must be working directly with children to be included in ratios
Reg 123	Educator to child ratios - centre-based services
Reg 123A	Family day care co-ordinator to educator ratios - family day care service
Reg 124	Number of children whocan be educated and cared for - family day care educator
Reg 136	First aidqualifications
Reg 168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
Reg 169	Additional policies and procedures – family day care service
Reg 170	Policies and procedures to be followed
Reg 171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
Reg 172	Notification of change to policies or procedures

Key Resources

Family Day Care Australia

www.fdca.com.au

Raising Children Network: *Play and Learning / Playgroups*

http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/why_play_is_important.html/context/249

<http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/playgroups.html/context/249>

Kid safe Queensland: *Benefits of Play*

www.kidsafeqld.com.au/playground-safety/benefits



Excursions and regular outings – <https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/legislationAndGuidelines/PPORresources/Fact%20sheets/excursions-regular-outings-NQF.docx>
Guide to the National Quality Framework – <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide>
Plan your adventure – <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/newsletters/acecqa-newsletter-issue-1-2015> Risk assessment and management - <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/media/29421>
Template excursion risk assessment (Queensland) - <https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/legislationAndGuidelines/ECSactresources/Templates/ecs-excursion.doc>
Template excursion risk management plan – <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-12/Excursionriskmanagementplan.docx>

Related Policies

[Appendix H Safe Work Practice](#)

[Appendix I Child Protection](#)