

# Rest and Sleep Policy

## Rationale

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Effective rest and sleep strategies are important factors in ensuring a child feels secure and safe in a child care environment. The service's Rest and Sleep Policy is based on recommendations from the recognised national authority SIDS & Kids. The service consults with families about their child's individual needs and to be aware of the different values and parenting beliefs, cultural or otherwise that are associated with rest. If a family's beliefs and practices are in conflict with SIDS & Kids, then the service will not endorse an alternative practice, unless the service is provided with written advice from a medical practitioner.

The service defines 'rest' as a period of inactivity, solitude, calmness or tranquillity, and can include a child being in a state of sleep. Fleurieu Occasional Community Children's Centre has a duty of care to ensure that all children are provided with a high level of safety when resting or sleeping while in care. It is understood by educators/staff, children and families that there is a shared responsibility between the service and other stakeholders that the Rest and Sleep Policy and procedures are accepted as a high priority. In meeting the service's duty of care, it is a requirement that management and staff implement and adhere to the service's Rest and Sleep Policy.

SIDS & Kids is considered the recognised national authority on safe sleeping practices for infants and children.

## Legislation and Government Requirements

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Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic)

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Laws relating to Duty of Care

State and Federal Health and Occupational Safety Legislation

## Strategies and practice

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The primary safe resting and sleeping practices for children in care at this service are:

- All children will be placed on their back to rest when first being settled for a rest. If a child turns onto their side or stomach during sleep, then allow them to find their own sleeping position.
- All children will rest with their face uncovered.
- Children's rest environments are free from cigarette or tobacco smoke as detailed in the service's Smoke Free Environment Policy.
- The rest environment, equipment and materials will be safe and free from hazards

### **Safe resting practices for babies**

- Babies will be placed on their back to rest.
- If a medical condition exists that prevents a child from being placed on their back, the alternative resting practice must be directed in writing by the child's medical practitioner.
- If older babies turn over during their sleep, allow them to find their own sleeping position, but always lay them on their back when first placing them to rest.
- At no time will a baby's face be covered with bed linen.
- To prevent a baby from wriggling down under bed linen, they will be placed with their feet closest to the bottom end of the cot.
- Quilts and duvets will not be used as bed linen. Pillows, soft toys, lamb's wool and cot bumpers are not recommended.
- Light bedding is the preferred option, which must be tucked in to prevent the baby from pulling bed linen over their head.
- Sleeping bags with a fitted neck and arm holes are an alternative option to bed linen and encourage a baby to rest on their back. Sleeping bags should not have a hood.

### **Safe resting practices for toddlers and preschoolers**

- Due to the Occasional Care nature of our service, not all children are required to sleep. Quiet, solitary play experiences are available for those children who request the need for a rest or time away from their peers.
- Toddlers will be placed on their back to rest, unless otherwise directed in writing by the child's medical practitioner.
- If toddlers turn over during their sleep, allow them to find their own sleeping position, but always lay them on their back when first placing them to rest.
- At no time will a toddler's face be covered with bed linen.
- If using a cot, toddlers will be placed with their feet closest to the bottom end of the cot to prevent them from wriggling down under bed linen.
- Quilts and duvets will not be used to cover toddlers in a cot or on a mattress. Pillows, soft toys, lambs wool and cot bumpers are not recommended.
- Light bedding is the preferred option, which must be tucked in to prevent the toddler from pulling bed linen over their face.
- Sleeping bags with a fitted neck and arm holes are an alternative option to bed linen and encourage a toddler to rest on their back. If parents request to continue using the sleeping bag option when the toddler rests on a mattress, then the service will comply.
- Quiet experiences may be offered to those toddlers who do not sleep.

### **Safe resting practices for a child who is unwell**

Refer to the service's Illness, First Aid and Supervision policies for additional information.

- A child will be placed on their back to rest when displaying signs of being unwell. If a child turns onto their side or stomach during sleep, then allow them to find their own sleeping position.
- All children will rest with their face uncovered.
- Children who are unwell will be given the highest supervision priority and monitored constantly especially if the child has: a high temperature, vomited or received minor trauma to their head.

## **Protective behaviours and practices**

### *Supervision of resting children*

- All children who are resting will be supervised by staff/educators
- Students or volunteers will not be left unsupervised when settling children for a rest.
- All children who have fallen asleep in the service will be monitored regularly with specific attention to breathing patterns.
- Adults will not rest or sleep in same environment as a child or group of children.
- If a child is not breathing commence First Aid Emergency Procedures as per policy.

### *Settling children for rest*

- The techniques and strategies for settling children before and during a rest period are varied and may be influenced by the service's philosophy, the professional values of staff/carers and current best practice. The techniques and strategies for settling a child/children for rest may reflect the:
  - individual needs of the child or group of children;
  - parenting beliefs and values of families accessing the service;
  - professional philosophy, knowledge and experience of staff/carers;
  - cultural and religious practices;
  - frequency of days that the child attends care;
  - circumstances or events happening at home;
  - consistency of practices between home and care;
  - child's general health and wellbeing;
  - status or condition of the rest environment; and
  - use of comforters or resting aids (including dummies and security blankets).
- There is no definitive recognised authority for settling practices for resting children. However, there are general best practice standards. When considering settling procedures for resting children, it is important for staff/carers to:
  - meet the individual needs of children;
  - maintain health and safety practices;
  - minimise any distress or discomfort;
  - acknowledge children's emotions, feelings and fears;
  - avoid using settling and resting practices as a behaviour guidance strategy because the child begins to relate the rest environment, which should be calm and secure, as a disciplinary setting; and
  - understand that young children (especially from 0 to 3 years of age) settle confidently when they have formed bonds with familiar and trusted staff/carers. Services should prioritise their staffing needs with individuals who are familiar with the young children in care before using relief staff whom children may not know.

### *Staff/carers, students and volunteers as role models*

- Brief and concise detail of the service's strategy.
- Children learn through example and role modelling is an important strategy in child care to maintain quality standards.
- Staff/carers, students and volunteers must comply with the Rest and Sleep Policy.

## **The rest environment and equipment**

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### **Provision and maintenance of rest and sleep equipment and environment**

- Every 6 months the service will conduct a safety check of the resting environments, equipment and/or aids. If staff/carers identify any hazards they will lodge a report as instructed in the Maintenance of Building and Equipment Policy.
- Hanging cords or strings from blinds, curtains, mobiles or electrical appliances must be tied away from cots or mattresses to prevent a child from choking or hanging.
- The service does not permit the use of hot water bottles, electric blankets or heated

### **Cots**

The following information is directly referenced to: SIDS & Kids. (2005c)

- All new and second hand cots sold in Australia must meet the Australian Standards for Cots and be labelled AS 2172. Cots that are not labelled with the Australian Standards will not be used by the service.
- Staff/carers will ensure that all cots are placed in area that is a safe distance from heaters, electrical appliances and hanging cords or string.
- Staff/carers will not place an extra mattress or padding under or over the manufacturer's cot mattress.
- Staff/carers will look for the following hazard signs:
  - loose or broken parts;
  - missing or loose knobs, screws or sharp catches;
  - peeling, cracking paint or splintered wood; and
  - any design flaw that reduces the safety of the cot. For example, missing or broken safety latches to sides.
- Staff/carers will report any hazards as detailed in the service's Maintenance of Building and Equipment Policy.
- Note: Staff/carers should assess whether older babies or toddlers have the ability to climb over the sides of a cot as this presents a safety risk.

### **Mattresses**

- Cot mattresses should be in good condition, clean, firm, flat and must fit the cot base with no more than a 25mm gap between the mattress and the sides of the cot.
- Soft mattresses increase the risk of SIDS as it encourages a baby to roll onto their stomach.
- A poor fitting mattress increases the size of the gap between the mattress and the sides of the cot. If lodged in the gap, a baby is unable to move their neck and head, which may cause them to stop breathing.

### **Prams and strollers**

- Never use a pram or stroller as a substitute for a cot. If a baby is left to sleep in a pram or stroller they can become trapped or suffer serious injury.
- Child safety experts recommend that a pram may not be a suitable place for a baby to sleep.
- Families/carers will sign a Pram Waiver Form if they wish for their children to be put to sleep in their own pram.
- Loose restraints are a safety risk and may lead to choking or hanging.
- Children are not left unattended in prams or strollers.
- Staff/carers will restrain children correctly as directed by the manufacturer.

- A five-point restraint (defined as: straps over each shoulder, a waist belt and a crotch strap between the legs that all meet and are secured) is recommended and should replace existing restraints. (ACCC, 2006)

### **Hygiene practices**

- Every week the babies' cots are cleaned with disinfectant
- Every day the children's resting mattresses are cleaned with disinfectant and a soft cloth
- Each child has their own bed linen.
- Children's bed linen will be washed daily

### **Rest environment aesthetics**

- Our service will maintain an appropriate temperature for sleeping including ventilation. Soft music will be played while children sleep.

### **Sleepwear**

- Staff/carers monitor the temperature of the rest environment and address children's clothing needs.
- Children's sleepwear meets Australian Standards.
- Children resting in jumpers with hoods and cords are at higher risk of choking and should not be encouraged to wear these garments when resting.
- Sleepwear should take into consideration the:
  - child's age;
  - safe resting practices established by the service;
  - temperature of the rest environment;
  - bed linen used for resting; and
  - child's individual needs.

### **Communicating with different stakeholders**

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- Rest strategies and practices are outlined in the Family Handbook, enrolment forms, newsletters and excursion permission forms.
- Information regarding SIDS & Kids Safe Sleeping Practices will be displayed on noticeboards.
- Staff/carers receive regular first aid training in resuscitation as defined by licensing regulations/best practice standards.

### **Policy review**

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- The service will review the Rest and Sleep Policy and procedures, and related documents, including behaviours and practices every 12 months
- Families are encouraged to collaborate with the service to review the policy and procedures.
- Staff/carers are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be encouraged to be actively involved.

## Links to other policies

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- Child protection
- Supervision Policy
- Occupational health and safety
- Sun protection

## Sources and further reading

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SIDS & Kids. Safe sleeping practices Please refer to:

- SA Safe Sleeping Guidelines – revised 9/12/16
- SIDS & Kids. (2005b). *SIDS & Kids: Safe sleeping in child care kit*. NSW: Author.
- SIDS & Kids website: <http://www.sidsandkids.org/>

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