

WATER SAFETY

Early Years Services

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to provide an environment that is free, as far as practicable, from risks associated with water and the use of water within the education and learning program. According to Kidsafe, drowning continues to be one of the main causes of fatalities of Australian children. The most common factor in childhood drowning is lack of supervision, a child can drown in as little as a few centimetres of water. Vigilant supervision while managing water safety, including safety during any water-based activities is imperative within Early Years Services.

2. Policy

Educators should take every precaution to identify the risks, document and implement hazard management strategies that protect children from risk associated with water. Recognising the attraction water holds for children, and that it is essential to maintain high standards in relation to water safety and children's access to water while incorporating safe water based experiences in the educational and learning program.

3. Scope

This policy applies to parents/guardians of children enrolled in the service and all Educators within Early Years Services, including agency relief Educators engaged by the City of Stonnington.

4. Responsibilities

Early Years Coordinator
Team Leaders
Educators
Students/Volunteers

5. Procedures

Excursions

- All Educators must adhere to the Excursions and Safe Transportation of Children Policy and complete appropriate risk assessment and permission forms prior to any excursions particularly where any bodies of water may be present.

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Date issued: 26 October 2011

Date reviewed: 27 July 2021

Next review: 1 July 2023

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- If bodies of water or water hazards are present then the excursion may require additional Educators to assist with supervision. The Early Years Coordinator may need to assess whether the excursion is appropriate.

Water Based Activities

- Water based activities provide a valuable opportunity within the education and learning program for children to experience sensory play to support the development of cognition and scientific experimentation.
- Water is a natural resource and plays a vital part in our environment so it is important for Educators to discuss the significance of water conservation as part of educating children about the world around us and the sustainability program.
- Educators are providing opportunities for children to learn and develop in all areas of health, wellbeing and safety; this must include incorporating water safety awareness into the educational and learning program.
- While taking part in water based activities Educators must ensure that experiences are age appropriate for all children within the environment and must be adequately supervising children.
- Educators must ensure children with medical conditions that can be affected by water borne bacteria are closely supervised around any potential hazard.
- Educators must ensure that equipment used for water based activities, such as water troughs or containers, are filled to a safe, shallow level prior to, and emptied immediately after each use.
- All play equipment or items where water can collect must be stored safely to prevent water accumulating, these must be checked prior to children entering the area i.e. outside after it has been raining.

Rain Water Tanks

- Rain water tanks must be labelled with a sign “do not drink” as this water is not for drinking as it is not safe for consumption. Educators will discuss with children that this water is for play and watering the garden and not for drinking.
- Services with rain water tanks must ensure the water is tested every quarter to make sure the quality of the water is safe.
- Educators must supervise children accessing water from the rainwater tank during outdoor play.

6. Relevant Legislation, Policies and Guidelines

Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACEQA)

Australian Government Department of Health Guidance on use of rainwater tanks

[https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-enhealth-
raintank-cnt.htm](https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-enhealth-
raintank-cnt.htm)

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

*Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011 SI 653) Version 1st
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Kidsafe - Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia
<https://kidsafe.com.au/water-safety/>

National Quality Standards

Queensland Government Early Childhood Education and Care
<https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/legislationAndGuidelines/Documents/water-safety-policy-guidelines.PDF>

7. Related Services Policies/Forms

Excursion and Safe Transportation of Children Policy
Excursion Risk Assessment Form
Interactions with Children (Guiding Children's Behaviour)
Program Planning Policy
Supervision Policy

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