

SLEEP & REST POLICY

QUALITY AREA 2 | VERSION 1.0

PURPOSE

This policy will provide clear guidelines for the implementation of safe relaxation and sleep practices that meet the individual needs of children attending LEVNT EC Services.

POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

LEVNT EC Services are committed to:

- providing a positive and nurturing environment for all children attending LEVNT EC Services.
- recognising that children have different requirements for relaxation and sleep, and being responsive to those needs to ensure that children feel safe and secure at the service.
- consulting with parents/guardians about their child's individual rest and sleep requirements/practices, and ensuring practices at the service are responsive to the values and cultural beliefs of each family.
- its duty of care to all children in their care, and ensuring that adequate supervision is maintained while children are sleeping, resting or relaxing.
- complying with all legislative requirements, standards and current best practice and guidelines, including recommendations by Red Nose.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in day-to-day Charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of LEVNT EC Services.

BACKGROUND

The *Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)* and the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)* include a focus on social, emotional, spiritual and physical wellbeing and health. Development Outcome 3 in both framework documents refers to a child's ability to take increasing responsibility for their own wellbeing. One of the indicators for this capacity is that children 'recognise and communicate their bodily needs (for example thirst, hunger, rest, comfort, physical activity)'. The EYLF suggests that to promote this, educators should:

- consider the pace of the day within the context of the community.
- provide a range of active and restful experiences throughout the day, and support children to make appropriate decisions regarding participation.

Employers have a responsibility under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* to provide a safe and healthy working environment. This duty extends to others present in the workplace, including children and volunteers. Providing a safe environment for children at the service includes complying with current Australian/New Zealand standards in relation to equipment, such as cots and mattresses.

DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms refer to the Definitions file of each LEVNT EC policy folder.

Red Nose: (formerly SIDS and Kids), the recognised national authority on safe sleeping practices for infants and children

Relaxation/rest: A period of inactivity, solitude, calmness or tranquillity.

SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome): The unexpected and unexplained death of an infant, usually occurring during sleep.

RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to the table below, the Approved Provider, persons with management and control, nominated supervisor and/or persons in day-to-day charge are responsible for meeting requirements set out in [Attachment 1: Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor Responsibilities](#). Actions which are legislated requirements of the ECEC sector are indicated with **LR**.

	Approved provider and/or persons with management and control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teachers, educators and all other staff	Parents, guardians and carers	Contractors, volunteers and those on student placement
Regularly reviewing practises to ensure compliance with the recommendations of Red Nose in relation to safe sleeping practises for children	✓	✓	✓		
Providing information and training to ensure staff are kept informed of changing practises in relation to safe sleeping practises for children		✓			
Ensuring staff that work with children under the age of three years complete annual Safe Sleep training		✓	✓		
Ensuring parents/guardians are consulted about appropriate relaxation and sleep practises for their child		✓	✓	✓	
Ensuring that hammocks, prams and strollers are not used to settle children to sleep	✓	✓	✓		
Ensuring compliance with WorkSafe Victoria's <i>Children's services – occupational health and safety compliance kit</i> , including in relation to staff lifting children into and out of cots	LR	✓	✓		
Providing adequate supervision of children at the service at all times, including during relaxation and sleep		✓	✓		
Educating families about evidence based safe sleeping practises		✓	✓		
Assessing whether there are exceptional circumstances for alternative practises where family beliefs conflict with current recommended evidence-based guidelines for safe sleeping practises, seek written support from a professional and develop a risk management plan		✓			
Implementing the documented sleep regime and risk management strategies where, in exceptional circumstances, family beliefs conflict with current recommended evidence-based guidelines for safe sleeping practises		✓	✓		
Ensuring that each child has their own bed linen and storing items such as bedding in a hygienic manner to prevent cross-contamination (refer to 2.21 <i>Hygiene Policy</i>)		✓	✓		
Providing each child with appropriate opportunities for relaxation and sleep according to their needs			✓		
Ensuring children are allowed to sleep one sleep cycle (approx. 40 minutes) before being woken, if the parent has asked that they not be allowed to sleep or not be allowed to sleep for a long time.			✓		
Developing relaxation and sleep practices that are responsive to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the individual needs of children at the service – parenting beliefs, values, practices and requirements – the length of time each child spends at the service 			✓		

	Approved provider and/or persons with management and control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teachers, educators and all other staff	Parents, guardians and carers	Contractors, volunteers and those on student placement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – circumstance or events occurring at a child’s home – consistency of practice between home and the service – a child’s general health and wellbeing – the physical environment, including room temperature, lighting, airflow and noise levels 					
Minimising distress or discomfort for the children in their care			✓		
Ensuring that resting and sleeping practises are not used as a behaviour guidance strategy (refer to <i>Interactions with Children Policy</i>)		✓	✓		
Conducting regular safety checks of equipment used for sleeping/resting, such as cots and mattresses		✓	✓		
Ensuring that any hanging cords, mobiles, curtains and blinds are inaccessible to children who are resting or sleeping	✓	✓	✓		
Supervising children displaying symptoms of illness closely, especially when resting or sleeping (refer to <i>Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy</i>)			✓		
Ensuring that artificial heating, such as heat bags and hot-water bottles, is not used to provide warmth	✓	✓	✓		
Documenting and communicating children’s rest and sleep times to co-workers during shift changes			✓		
Providing information to families about the service’s relaxation and sleep practices		✓	✓		
Developing communication strategies to inform parents/guardians about their child’s rest and sleep patterns, including times and length of sleep		✓	✓		
Encouraging children’s independence, and assisting children with dressing as needed			✓		
Providing information on the child’s enrolment form if the child requires special items while resting or sleeping e.g. a comforter or soft toy				✓	
Providing a written medical report if their baby/child is not to be placed on their back during sleep. Parents/guardians must communicate alternative resting practices to staff				✓	

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness.
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy.
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice.
- revise the policy and procedures as part of a policy review cycle, or as required.
- notify all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk.

AUTHORISATION & REVIEW

This policy was adopted by Lutheran Education VIC, NSW, TAS and ACT Ltd (as delegate of the Lutheran Church of Australia Victorian District) as Approved Provider on 31 March 2022.

REVIEW DATE April 2023 or earlier as required.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT 1: Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor Responsibilities

In addition to the responsibilities outlined in the table above, the Approved Provider and/or persons with management and control, and the Nominated Supervisor and/or persons in day-to-day charge have a number of additional responsibilities relevant to their position.

In relation to the Sleep and Rest policy, those additional responsibilities include:

- taking reasonable steps to ensure the sleep/rest needs of children at the service are met, with regard to the age of children, developmental stages and individual needs (Regulation 81(1)).
- protecting children from hazards and harm (Section 167).
- ensuring cots provided at the service comply with the most current Australian/New Zealand Standards.
- consulting with staff in relation to OHS issues when purchasing new equipment for the service.
- ensuring that rooms used for sleep and relaxation are well ventilated.
- ensuring that there is adequate space to store bedding in a hygienic manner (refer to 2.21 *Hygiene Policy*).

ATTACHMENT 2: Cots

Household cots usually have a lower base and mattress, and WorkSafe Victoria have expressed concern for staff in relation to the manual handling risks posed when working with cots at a lower height.

The Institutional Cot Standard allows for cots with a higher base and mattress and to have a drop side that can be lowered to the level of the mattress. The early childhood sector has expressed concerns in relation to the safety of cots with sides that lower to the level of the mattress.

Services should investigate options either for:

- cots that meet the Australian/New Zealand Standard – Cots for household use – Safety Requirements (AS/NZS 2172:2010) and have a higher base and mattress, or
- cots that meet the Australian/New Zealand Standard – Cots for day nursery, hospital and institutional use – Safety Requirements (AS/NZS 2130:1998).

No alterations should be made to purchased cots under any circumstances, as this may have serious consequences in relation to liability in the event that an incident occurs.

LEVNT does not recommend that services use portable or folding cots, as they present an increased risk of injury or death to a child if erected incorrectly. Portable cots also pose an increased risk of manual handling injuries to staff. If a service requires an extra cot to be available for occasional use, it is possible to purchase a cot that meets the Australian/New Zealand Standard – Cots for household use, and folds flat for easy storage.

Further information on portable or folding cots is available as outlined below:

- Red Nose: <https://rednose.org.au/article/portable-cots>
- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission: www.productsafety.gov.au
- ELAA's OHS website: www.ohsinecservices.org.au

REFERENCES

LEGISLATION & STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Act 2012
- Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Regulations 2012
- Australian/New Zealand Standard – Cots for household use – Safety Requirements (AS/NZS 2172:2010)
- Australian/New Zealand Standard – Cots for day nursery, hospital and institutional use – Safety Requirements (AS/NZS 2130:1998)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

SOURCES

- Australian/New Zealand Standards: (at the time of printing) the current relevant standards are:
 - Australian/New Zealand Standard – Cots for household use – Safety Requirements (AS/NZS 2172:2003), and
 - Australian/New Zealand Standard – Cots for day nursery, hospital and institutional use – Safety Requirements (AS/NZS 2130:1998)

Current standards are available on the SAI Global website at: www.saiglobal.com

- *Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* (EYLF): <https://docs.education.gov.au/documents/belonging-being-becoming-early-years-learning-framework-australia>
- The Royal Children’s Hospital Melbourne, *Grow and Thrive - Sleep*, Volume 2 No 1, February 2014, Centre for Community Child Health: https://www.rch.org.au/ccch/publications-resources/grow-thrive/Grow_Thrive_-_Sleep/
- Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (2016), *Consumer product safety – a guide for businesses & legal practitioners*: <https://www.accc.gov.au/publications/consumer-product-safety-a-guide-for-businesses-legal-practitioners>
- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority, *Safe sleep and rest practices*: <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/supporting-materials/infosheet/safe-sleep-and-rest-practices>
- WorkSafe Victoria, *Children’s services – occupational health and safety compliance kit*: <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/resources/childrens-services-occupational-health-and-safety-compliance-kit>
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* (VEYLDF): <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/veyldf.aspx>

RELATED POLICIES

- 2.06 Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- 2.11 Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy
- 2.14 Supervision of Children Policy
- 2.21 Hygiene Policy
- 3.02 Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- 5.01 Interactions with Children Policy