

### What are the characteristics of the service?

The service is a community based kindergarten run by a body of parents. The families primarily consist of one income families with either mum or dad looking after the children. The service has two groups across the week; one with 23 children, and one with 22 children. All children attend a 5 day fortnight. The service runs an approved kindergarten program with children ranging in age from 3 to 5 years. The service has a one full-time director/teacher, plus 3 part-time teaching assistants. The service also has two additional needs assistants. The service prides itself on being inclusive of children with additional needs, and also of adults working at the service with additional needs. The physical layout of the service includes one single room. The space is small, however is used well with the service trying to make the space feel welcoming and homely. Children are included in decision regarding how to use the room, as a collaborative process.

### What are the services current sleep practices?

The services philosophy regarding sleep and rest is that that they should always cater to individual needs of the children and not service needs. The service has an individual discussion regarding sleep and rest with each family on enrolment. This discussion includes identifying the needs of the family and child, and also discussion of the services beliefs and practices regarding sleep and rest. The service has a rest time following lunch. During this time children are given a choice and are asked what they would like to do. The service never sets out beds for all the children. The service typically uses comfortable couches and cushions to give children a range of places to choose to rest and relax. These areas can be also accessed by children at other times of the day for rest and relaxation as needed.

Rest and relaxation activities are not standard but vary each day. Choices are made by the children and include reading books, doing puzzles, or drawing. The children sometimes request to listen to stories. "We listen and watch specific stories the children request...including aboriginal stories". Sometimes the children do yoga, or uses outdoor spaces for rest and relaxation. The service attempts to make sleep and rest times as relaxed and non-stressful for children as possible. The primary focus is on ensuring the children feel safe and secure. Some children in the service do fall off to sleep during sleep and rest times, but the service finds that this is rare particularly later in the year. When children fall asleep, the service works around these children to allow them space to sleep without distraction from other children. In these circumstances the service caters for different needs by moving children not sleeping to other areas of the room or moving outside.

The service has found that parents typically do not wish for their kindy age child to sleep while at their service, because it disrupts their night-time sleep. However the service policy, conveyed through conversation with parents, is that if a child needs a sleep they are permitted opportunity to do so and are not kept awake. Occasionally parents will request that their child may need a sleep or rest on a particular day (perhaps due to a late night or busy weekend). The service responds to these requests by encouraging a child to rest and relax their body.

### **How did the service arrive at these sleep practices?**

Sleep and rest has been a long journey for the service; with the service discussing and revisiting sleep and rest on a regular basis. Across time the services practices have changed, in line with broader changes to educator practices and attitudes to children, as well as through a continual process of questioning and reflection. In the past sleep and rest time had been used as a time when educators got other things done. However, over time, the service has become more respectful to the children's needs and gradually attempting to do things differently. This service is constantly undertaking research and asking for advice from others within the sector about what is and isn't working for them to provide ideas and solutions. The service remains open to finding and incorporating other quiet, relaxing things for the children to choose to do during sleep and rest times.