SLEEP AND REST FOR CHILDREN POLICY GUIDELINES

The approved provider, nominated supervisor and family day care educator must take reasonable steps to ensure children's needs for sleep and rest are met, having regard to each child's age, developmental stages and needs.

Basing your service's *Sleep and rest for children policy* on recognised and evidence-based principles is an important way of demonstrating that you are taking reasonable steps.

Red Nose (formerly SIDS and Kids) is the recognised national authority on safe sleeping practices for infants and children. Approved providers and service leaders can rely on this resource to regularly review and maintain up-to-date sleep and rest policies and procedures.

Also consider safety requirements for equipment, such as cots, mattresses, bedding and evacuation cots. How these work in practice will be in your procedures.

Your policy should be guided by the principles, practices and outcomes of the approved learning frameworks and the National Quality Standard.

Under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations,* education and care services must have policies and procedures in place for sleep and rest for children. These guidelines are part of a series and are intended to assist in the development of your *Sleep and rest for children policy*. They have been designed to guide you in the development of your policy and are not an exact format.

1. Title

Sleep and rest for children policy

2. Policy statement

The policy statement will reflect your service's philosophy about sleep and rest for children.

For example:

The purpose of the *Sleep and rest for children policy* is to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending our service and appropriate opportunities are provided to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.

3. Background

Your policy needs to include a statement of why this requirement is in place.

For example, the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* require policies and procedures are in place for sleep and rest for children.

Fortunately, cases of children dying in education and care services are very rare. Some of these deaths have occurred when the child is sleeping. Coroner reports into these deaths have found that poor sleeping environments and poor supervision are risk factors. While all children need rest and sleep to be happy and healthy, this is an area of service policy and procedure where much more can be at stake.

Further information is available at www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/supporting-materials/infosheet/safe-sleep-and-rest-practices

4. Legislative requirements

Your policy should refer to legislative requirements for sleep and rest for children. Examples include, but are not limited to:

Reg 81	Sleep and rest
Reg 87	Incident, injury, trauma and illness record
Reg 103	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
Reg 105	Furniture, materials and equipment
Reg 106	Laundry and hygiene facilities
Reg 107	Space requirements – indoor space
Reg 110	Ventilation and natural light
Reg 115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
Reg 116 (FDC only)	Assessments of family day care residences and approved family day care venues
Reg 168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
Reg 169	Additional policies and procedures - family day care
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

When writing your policy you will need to break down what is required under each Regulation and how your service will meet these requirements. How these work in practice will be in your procedures.

As you reflect on the *Sleep and rest for children policy,* it might highlight the need to split its various areas into different policies that can be readily accessed by the educators and staff to follow in relation to the service's philosophy and their roles and responsibilities. For example, you may wish to have separate policies for *Safe sleeping practices* and *Physical environments.*

5. Principles to inform your policy

All decision-making about your procedures should be carried out in accordance with the principles of your service's *Sleep and rest for children policy.* Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Our approach to supporting and promoting children's health and physical activity, including safe sleep and nutrition, is informed by current recognised guidelines and up-to-date information.
- Our service's safe sleep and rest procedures and practice follow Red Nose guidelines, the recognised national authority in this area.
- Effective sleep and rest strategies are important factors in ensuring a child feels secure and is safe at our service.
- Educators, staff and management have a shared duty of care to ensure children are provided with a high level of safety when sleeping and resting, and every reasonable precaution is taken to protect them from harm and hazard.
- Children sleeping and resting will always be within sight and hearing distance so that educators can monitor children's safety and wellbeing.
- Child safety is our first priority. Educators can confidently refer to the service's *Sleep and rest for children policy* and *procedures* if families make requests that are contrary to the safety of the child.
- Opportunities will be provided to meet each child's sleep, rest and relaxation needs and ensure children feel secure and safe.
- We will consult with families about their child's routine for sleep and rest at home and carry this out at the service where possible and safe to do so.

General consideration

- The circumstance and needs of each child should be considered to determine any risk factors that may impact on the adequate supervision of sleeping children. For example, babies or children with colds or chronic lung disorders might require a higher level of supervision while sleeping.

Considerations for overnight or extended care

- Services providing overnight or extended care may need to develop sleep and rest policies and procedures specific to this type of care (or incorporate overnight care into overarching policies and procedures), as overnight practices will differ to those used during the day.

- Policies and procedures should consider: the physical safety of the child's sleeping environment; plans for the supervision of the child while they are sleeping, including how they will be monitored during the night; access of the child to other parts of the house during the night; access of other people to the child's sleeping environment; and night time emergency evacuation plans/lockdown (or just emergency) (e.g. in the case of a fire, intruder, etc).

Additional consideration for family day care

- A family day care service should have an agreed and documented practice for the supervision of sleeping children, tailored to the unique layout and safety considerations of each family day care residence or venue, as well as the ages and developmental stages of the children. For example, the service should ensure that children are not placed in the educator's bedroom if they would have access to medication or other dangerous items.

Considerations for the physical environment

- Include information about the bedding equipment and how it will meet the relevant Australian standards that govern the use and maintenance of equipment.
- All the children have rights and have the expectations of choice within the day. How will you ensure the physical environment caters for non-resting children? (Consider separate resting spaces or quiet activities after a short rest.) How will quality practice be reflected in your policy?
- How do you reflect inclusion and cultural practices within this policy? Will this influence the physical environment? Is there a possible conflict with your safe sleeping guidelines and, if so, how is this addressed?

6. Key terms

To make it easier for your audience, provide definitions of key terms that may not be used every day. For example:

Term	Meaning	Source
ACECQA – Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority	The independent national authority that works with all regulatory authorities to administer the National Quality Framework, including the provision of guidance, resources and services to support the sector to improve outcomes for children.	
Infant	Young child between the ages of birth and 12 months.	
Rest	A period of inactivity, solitude, calmness or tranquillity, and can include a child being in a state of sleep.	
Relaxation	Relaxation or other activity for bringing about a feeling of calm in your body and mind.	
Sudden and Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI)	A broad term used to describe the sudden and unexpected death of a baby for which the cause is not immediately obvious.	https://rednose.org.au/article/what-does-sudden-unexpected-death-in-infancy-sudi-mean
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)	The sudden and unexpected death of an infant under one year of age with an onset of a fatal episode occurring during sleep, that remains unexplained after a thorough investigation, including performance of a complete autopsy and review of the circumstances of death and the clinical history.	https://rednose.org.au/article/what-is-sudden-infant-death-syndrome-sids

7. Links to other policies

Refer to related policies and procedures, for example:

- The administration of first aid
- Enrolment and orientation
- Interactions with children
- Providing a child safe environment
- Staffing

8. Induction and ongoing training

State information about induction training and the frequency of ongoing training and information sharing to assist educators to fulfil their roles effectively.

9. Policy created/reviewed

Include the date the policy was created, reviewed or changes were made.

10. Monitoring, evaluation and review

State when the policy will be reviewed and who will be responsible for this.

11. Checklist

- ☐ Have you referenced the relevant Regulations and are these reflected in the policy?
- ☐ Does the title provide a clear and concise statement identifying the intent of the policy?
- ☐ Have you checked the policy requirements and referenced related legislation that applies to your service type?
- ☐ Does your policy statement provide a framework for decision-making and ensure consistent practice?
- ☐ Does your policy statement reflect your service philosophy?
- ☐ Is it clear why this policy exists?
- ☐ Are best practice principles for sleep and rest for children reflected in your policy?
- ☐ Are the most up-to date sleep and rest policies and procedures from Red Nose (the recognised national authority) reflected throughout your policy and procedures?

SLEEP AND REST FOR CHILDREN PROCEDURES GUIDELINES

The approved provider must ensure the service has procedures in place in relation to sleep and rest.

Your procedures should be written in clear and concise language, making them easy to read and understand. This makes it easy for anyone within your service to implement the procedures.

You will need to be specific within your induction training and procedures so that the educators who are casually employed, new to a service or moving between rooms, can refer to this document when they are unsure about their roles and responsibilities.

The steps and guidelines you document will not only guide your practice, but also inform regulatory authorities of educator and staff expectations and responsibilities.

When thinking about your procedures for sleep and rest for children, they need to be practical and achievable. For example, if your procedures outline that sleep checks are undertaken every 10 minutes, then this will need to be observed and evidence of documentation needs to be available.

Under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations,* education and care services must have policies and procedures in place for sleep and rest for children. These guidelines are part of a series and are intended to assist in the development of your *Sleep and rest for children procedures*. They have been designed to guide you in the development of your procedures and are not an exact format.

1.   Title

Sleep and rest for children procedures

2.   Reference to policy and philosophy

Here you refer to your *Sleep and rest for children policy* as seen in your policy documents. You can reference where you will find the policy to help those looking for it.

Your procedures will also reflect your service's overall philosophy, the *Sleep and rest for children policy*, and supervision and action plans for specific children.

3.   Procedures

This is where you discuss the way you will implement the *Sleep and rest for children policy*.

Some areas that will be outlined here will include:

- where the procedures will be kept
- when they were last reviewed
- templates or documents that might be required and/or used as a part of the procedures (e.g. Sleep and Rest Time Check chart or digital device)
- systems to monitor the implementation of procedures.

It is the 'How to' in your service and includes specific step-by-step procedures for each age group.

Age is particularly important with sleep and rest, due to the risk associated with the younger age group.

Your procedures need to reflect the safe sleep recommendations and guidelines set out by Red Nose, the recognised national authority on safe sleeping.

As you reflect on the *Sleep and rest for children policy*, it might highlight the need to split its various areas into different procedures, which will be displayed or accessed by educators and staff (including casuals) to follow in relation to their actions. For example, your service's bed and linen cleaning procedures may need to be displayed in the storeroom where the beds are kept.

4. Roles and responsibilities

This is where you will designate specific roles and responsibilities for the different people within the service. This needs to align with the Regulations (Reg 81).

It is important to note that it is the legal responsibility of approved providers to ensure systems are in place to minimise risk and ensure health and safety procedures are implemented by the responsible people in services and home environments. Ultimate responsibility lies with the approved provider to ensure their service/s are meeting the requirements under the National Quality Framework.

When developing this section consider:

- What are the roles and responsibilities of the approved provider, nominated supervisor, educators or family day care coordinator in your service around rest and sleep?

- How will you clearly define these roles and expectations and where will it be documented?

- The information you need from families to ensure their child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation are met, e.g. Enrolment Form, conversations with families, communication books.

- Do the roles and responsibilities reflect your service type?

An example of roles and responsibilities could include, but is not limited to:

Roles	Responsibilities
Approved provider	- ensure sleep and rest policies and procedures are in place - ensure educators receive information and induction training to fulfil their roles effectively, including being made aware of the sleep and rest policies, their responsibilities in implementing these, and any changes that are made over time - take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators, staff and volunteers follow the policy and procedures - ensure the needs for sleep and rest of children being educated and cared for by the service are met, having regard to the ages, developmental stages and individual needs of the children - ensure the premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and in good repair - ensure that each child has access to sufficient furniture, materials and developmentally appropriate equipment suitable for the education and care of that child - ensure that the indoor spaces used by children is well ventilated; has adequate natural light; and is maintained at a temperature that ensures the safety and wellbeing of children - ensue that the premises are designed to facilitate supervision - ensure copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, educators, staff and volunteers, and available for inspection - notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will: - affect the fees charged or the way they are collected or - significantly impact the service's education and care of children or - significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the service

Roles	Responsibilities
Nominated supervisor / Family day care coordinator	• ensure the needs for sleep and rest of children being educated and cared for by the service are met, having regard to the ages, developmental stages and individual needs of the children • ensure educators understand and follow the service's policies and procedures • ensure procedures are tailored to the specific service or home environment • ensure educators understand their legal roles in the implementation of the policies and procedures
Educators	• ensure procedures are relevant to their particular service type • have a good understanding of the service's policy and procedures • identify and remove potential hazards from sleep environments • document children's sleep and rest needs and provide information to families about their child's sleep and rest patterns • consult families to gather information about individual children's needs and preferences • model and promote safe sleep practices and make information available to families
Families	• regularly update the service on their child's sleeping routines and patterns • provide informal updates on the previous night's sleep to assist with sleeping during the day • provide specified bedding if required by the service • dress child appropriately for the weather conditions and provide additional clothing

The following table will assist you in developing procedures specific to your needs and context. Don't forget to refer to the Regulations when you are writing your procedures to make sure you are meeting your obligations.

Areas to include in your procedures	Things to consider and outline in each area *(this will be specific to the context of your service)*	Strategies for monitoring and implementing procedures	Related policy and/or procedures
Beds and Linen **Reg:** 103,105,106 **QA2:** 2.1.1, 2.1.2 **QA3:** 3.1.1 **QA7:** 7.1.3	• Where bedding is stored • When and how the cots and beds are made • The cleaning process for cots, beds and linen • Compliance with Australian standards for cots and other bedding equipment	• Clearly defined roles and responsibility statements • Consider creating shift descriptions or checklists that include these responsibilities. • Periodic WHS checks of the physical environment, furniture and resources • Manufacturer standards checked upon purchasing new furniture, linen and resources	Health and hygiene Providing a child safe environment

Sleeping Environment/s are Fit for Purpose
 	
Reg 103, 105, 106, 107, 110, 115, (116 FDC only)
 	
QA2: 2.1.2
 	
QA3: 3.1.1
 	
QA6: 6.1.2
 	
QA7: 7.1.3
	• How your overall sleep/rest environment and sleep equipment is fit for purpose. This includes:
	
	  - how these spaces are ventilated, lighting and any other considerations, specific to your service environment
	
	  - consider how the beds or cots will be placed to minimise cross infection
	
	  - an appropriate sleep and rest environment, including sufficient spaces in sleep and rest areas and flexible for the age group
	
	  - other considerations, specific to your service environment, e.g. number of cot rooms
	
	• That all hazards are removed or controlled
	
	• How you intend to meet Regulation 106, 107, 110, 115
	
	• How you reflect diversity within these areas
		• Clearly defined roles and responsibility statements, checklists or shift description
		
		• Responsibility included in shift descriptions
		
		• Periodic WHS checks of the physical environment, furniture and resources
			Health and hygiene
			
			Providing a child safe environment

Areas to include in your procedures	Things to consider and outline in each area _(this will be specific to the context of your service)_	Strategies for monitoring and implementing procedures	Related policy and/or procedures
Health, safety and supervision **Reg:** 81, 87, 170, 171 **QA 2:** 2.1.1, 2.1.2 **QA 3:** 3.1.2 **QA6:** 6.1.2 **QA7:** 7.1.3	• How you will keep your children safe during their sleep and rest times, including: - identifying the different practices for the varying ages and sleep needs and preferences for children. Refer to Red Nose for best practice • How you develop your partnerships with families with regard to sleep and rest routines - including how you will explain to families that you cannot comply with requests that are contrary to safe sleep guidance without the written authorisation of the child's medical practitioner • How will your service reflect inclusion and children's agency, e.g. children's need or want to sleep or rest • Outline effective supervision for sleeping and resting children, including: - how you will closely monitor and record your sleeping children and ensure safe sleep practices are being implemented. (Section 165; Guide to the NQF p.163 and p.367) - sleep practices and sleep check routines to ensure monitoring is happening	• Make sure your policy and procedures are available for all to access • Clearly defined roles and responsibility statements or shift descriptions • Periodic WHS checks of the physical environment, furniture and resources • Collecting information from families through questions in enrolment documents • Opportunities for family input and involvement embedded in practice • Consider creating checklists to ensure health and safety measures are being met • Supervision plans • Daily ratio checks • Sleep check charts • Staff sign in/out sheets • Clearly marked First Aid Access and Management Plans • Safe Sleep Practices information included in educator and staff induction pack and training • Regular meeting agenda items to discuss safe sleep practices and any changes to service procedures	Supervision Providing a child safe environment Staffing Interactions with children Enrolment and orientation Dealing with medical conditions in children

Areas to include in your procedures	Things to consider and outline in each area *(this will be specific to the context of your service)*	Strategies for monitoring and implementing procedures	Related policy and/or procedures
	• Think about the differences between the rooms and/or age groups in your service. Do you need specific information for: - *Family day care:* Monitoring and recording sleep checks, safe sleep environment, supervision of sleeping children, mixed age groups, sleep routines, diverse family and cultural preferences - *Infants:* Monitoring and recording sleep checks and sleep routines, diverse family and cultural preferences. Consideration should be given to infants' room routines based on individual children's needs - *Toddlers:* Monitoring and recording sleep checks, options for rest, supervision for children who choose not to rest		

5. Procedures created/reviewed

Include the date the procedures were created or reviewed.

6. Monitoring, evaluation and review

Your service, in consultation with educators, staff, families and other stakeholders, should review the effectiveness of these procedures within a set timeframe or earlier if there is a change in relevant legislation or recommended safe sleep practices.

State when the procedures will be reviewed and who will be responsible for this.

7. Checklist

- ☐   Do the procedures align with your *Sleep and rest for children policy?*
- ☐   Have your procedures been written in plain English and can they be easily implemented by an educator new to your service?
- ☐   Is it clear who is responsible for the implementation of the procedures?
- ☐   Are all educators and staff aware of the procedures and can implement them if required?
- ☐   Do you need to develop any resources to monitor and record the procedures?

Useful Resources

Include links to useful resources that have helped inform the development of your policy. Be mindful of any state- or territory-specific content.

Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- Red Nose is considered the recognised national authority on safe sleeping practices for infants and children. Approved providers and service leaders are encouraged to use this resource to regularly develop, review and maintain the most up-to-date sleep and rest policies and procedures.
- Safe sleep and rest practices - www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/supporting-materials/infosheet/safe-sleep-and-rest-practices
- Sleep health and sleep development - earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/aboutUs/Documents/factsheet-sleep-health.pdf
- Meeting children's sleep, rest and relaxation needs - eprints.qut.edu.au/114096/3/114096c.pdf
- Guide to the National Quality Framework - www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide
- Sleep learning for early education professionals - earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/about-us/publications-and-research/sleep-learning-for-early-education-professionals