

Rest and sleep policy

Link to National Quality Standards: 2.1 and 2.2

Policy statement

- Effective rest and sleep strategies are important factors in ensuring a child¹ feels secure and safe in a Preschool and Occasional 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.
- Torrensville Preschool and Occasional Care have 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 staff/carers, 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.

Rationale

- SIDS & Kids is considered the recognised national authority on safe sleeping practices for infants and children.
- The SIDS & Kids Safe Sleeping Practices are based on scientific research.
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the leading cause of post neonatal infant death from one to twelve months of age in Australia. (ABS, 2003)
- The SIDS & Kids evidence-based health promotion program Safe Sleeping Education has saved over 4,000 Australian babies, which equates to a 90% decline in SIDS cases since the risk reduction campaigns began in 1989. (ABS, 2003; SIDS & Kids, 2005a)
- Encouraging babies to play on their tummy assists in the development of gross motor strength, especially for crawling. It also helps in the prevention of flat spots forming on the head. However, babies should be supervised at all times during tummy play. (SIDS & Kids, 2006a)

¹ For the purpose of this policy, a child or children is defined as a person or group of persons aged from birth to eighteen years (UNICEF).

- A safe sleeping practice, which includes placing a baby on their back to rest, does not affect a child's physical development and does not delay the age they begin walking. (SIDS & Kids, 2006b)

Please refer to:

- SIDS & Kids. (2005b). *SIDS & Kids: Safe sleeping in child care kit*. NSW: Author.
- SIDS & Kids website: <http://www.sidsandkids.org/>

Strategies and practices

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
- Staff monitor resting children at regular intervals and supervise the rest environment.

Safe resting practices for babies²

- 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.
- Light bedding is the preferred option, which must be tucked in to prevent the baby from pulling bed linen over their head.

Safe resting practices for toddlers³

- 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.
- Light bedding is the preferred option, which must be tucked in to prevent the toddler from pulling bed linen over their face.
- Quiet experiences may be offered to those toddlers who do not fall asleep.

Safe resting practices for a child who is unwell

Refer to the service's **Illness**, and **First Aid** 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.⁴
- All children will rest with their face uncovered.

² For the purpose of this policy, a baby is defined as a child aged from birth to 24 months.

³ For the purpose of this policy, a toddler is defined as a child aged from eighteen months to three years.

- 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. Parents will be notified immediately.

Protective behaviours and practices

Supervision of resting children

- All children who are resting will be supervised by staff.
- All children who have fallen asleep in the service will be monitored regularly with specific attention to breathing patterns.

Settling children for rest

- When considering settling procedures for resting children, staff will:
 - 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.

Prams and strollers

- Children will be restrained at all times when in a pram or stroller, this includes resting or sleeping.
- Children are not left unattended in prams or strollers.
- Staff/carers will restrain children correctly as directed by the manufacturer.
- Staff will not overload the handles of prams or strollers with bags (or other materials) as this may force the pram or stroller to flip backwards due to the difference in weight distribution

Rest environment

- Children resting in jumpers with hoods and cords are at higher risk of choking, therefore we will remove these garments when sleeping.

Experiences

Policy review

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

Sources and further reading

- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). (2003). *SIDS in Australia 1981-2000: A statistical overview*. Retrieved 14 February, 2007, from http://www.sidsandkids.org/documents/finalsidspaper2003_002.pdf
- Hughes, L., & Owens, A. (2007). Children in overnight care. *Family Day Care Quality Assurance Factsheet #13*. NSW: National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc.
- National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc. (2005). *Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) Quality Practices Guide*. NSW: Author.
- *Occupational Health & Safety Act*.⁵
- Raising Children Network. (2006). *Wrapping a baby*. Retrieved February 14, 2007, from http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/wrapping_newborn.html?highlight=wrapping%20babies
- SIDS & Kids. (2005a). *Fast facts: Past, present & future*. Retrieved 12 February, 2007, from <http://www.sidsandkids.org/documents/11504%20SIDSKids%20FastFacts.pdf>
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- SIDS & Kids. (2005c). *SIDS & Kids: Safe sleeping – Lullabies aren't the only things you'll need to know to put you baby to sleep*. [Brochure]. NSW: Author.
- SIDS & Kids. (2005d). *Information statement: Second hand mattresses*. Retrieved 21 February, 2007, from http://www.sidsandkids.org/pdf/october05_statement.pdf
- SIDS & Kids. (2005e). *Wrapping infants*. Retrieved February 13, 2007, from <http://www.sidsandkids.org/documents/nov05WrappingSTATEMENT1.pdf>
- SIDS & Kids (2006a). *Information statement: Baby's head shape*. Retrieved May 13, 2007, from <http://www.sidsandkids.org/documents/Plagiocephaly%20January%202006.pdf>
- SIDS & Kids. (2006b). *Sudden Unexpected Death in Infants (SUDI) frequently asked questions: SIDS & Kids: Safe sleeping in child care kit*. NSW: Author.
- UNICEF (n.d.). *Fact sheet: A summary of the rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Retrieved January 18, 2007, from http://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights_overview.pdf

Reviewed by:

Governing council chairperson: 

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