

## HOLISTIC ENVIRONMENT POLICY

Updated: August 2025



### What are we talking about in this document?

This policy is Keiki’s commitment to creating safe, inclusive, and thoughtfully designed spaces that support children’s wellbeing, decision-making, connection to nature, and environmental responsibility through a whole-child approach. It integrates layout, supervision, and sustainability to nurture every aspect of a child’s development.



### Who is this for?

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, students, and visitors of the service.



### Why do we need this policy?

This document provides a clear framework for how Keiki designs and manages environments that support the whole child, physically, emotionally, socially and cognitively. It ensures that safety, wellbeing, inclusion, sustainability, and child agency are consistently embedded across all aspects of the learning environment, aligning with regulatory and quality standards.

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## Key Terms

Term	Meaning	Source
AEDC Data	For early childhood educators, the AEDC data can be a useful predictor of future development and learning. Alongside other data sources, the AEDC data can help educators to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discover how well early childhood programs are preparing children for school</li> <li>• develop target resources and services to support children's and families' wellbeing.</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/about/data-and-reports/australian-early-development-census">https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/about/data-and-reports/australian-early-development-census</a>
Agency	The ability of children to make choices and influence decisions that affect them, fostering independence and confidence.	
Cultural Safety	An environment where children feel respected, valued, and free from discrimination, with their cultural identity acknowledged and celebrated.	
Free Flow (Indoor–Outdoor Flow)	The uninterrupted movement of children between indoor and outdoor environments.	

Wellbeing	A holistic state encompassing physical health, emotional security, social connection, cognitive engagement, and spiritual grounding.	
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## The Important Stuff

At Keiki Early Learning, we are committed to creating holistic environments that support every aspect of a child’s development—physical, emotional, social and cognitive. A holistic approach means viewing the child as a whole, recognising that wellbeing and learning are shaped by the interconnectedness of relationships, experiences, and the environment.

Our environments are intentionally designed to:

- **Minimise risk of harm and hazard**, ensuring children’s safety and wellbeing at all times.
- **Promote children’s agency and decision-making**, offering opportunities for independence and choice throughout the day.
- **Enable free flow between indoor and outdoor spaces**, allowing children to move safely and confidently between environments based on their interests, needs, and developmental stages.
- **Support inclusive and responsive design**, with layouts that are flexible, accessible, and tailored to meet the diverse needs of children and families.
- **Foster environmental responsibility**, embedding sustainable practices and encouraging children to connect with and care for the natural world.

By integrating these elements, we create environments that are not only safe and engaging but also nurturing, empowering, and reflective of each child’s unique learning journey.

## Design and Layout of Service

Our service environments are purposefully designed to ensure **visibility and audibility** across all areas—including cot rooms, bathrooms, and transition spaces—to enable active supervision and maintain a safe, responsive environment for all children.

Our physical spaces are inclusive and adaptable, supporting children with diverse developmental needs, and are thoughtfully arranged to reflect cultural safety and wellbeing. The design and location of each service are appropriate for its operation, ensuring safe and accessible entry and exit for children, families, staff, and visitors.

We provide sufficient, flexible spaces for play, rest, and learning that promote:

- Competence and independence
- Exploration and discovery
- Play-based and collaborative learning

Our environments are intentionally aligned with the Early Years Learning Framework, supporting all domains of development—physical, emotional, social, and cognitive. We use AEDC data to inform the design of play spaces that target areas where children may need additional support.

Children are empowered to make choices and move freely and safely through the environment. Spaces are open-ended, imaginative, and nature-based, encouraging creativity and connection with the natural world.

Furniture and equipment are:

- Selected to create a home-away-from-home atmosphere that fosters a sense of belonging.
- Age-appropriate, safe, and regularly inspected.
- Organised to reduce clutter and support predictability.

The layout supports emotional regulation and smooth transitions by incorporating quiet zones, rest areas, and stable, familiar spaces that are not frequently altered. Environments are tailored to the age and developmental stages of the children in our care.

Where major maintenance or renovations are required, a risk management plan is implemented to ensure the ongoing safety of children, families, staff, and stakeholders.

Our outdoor spaces are designed to:

- Invite open-ended interactions, spontaneity, risk-taking, and connection with nature.
- Support active supervision, especially during transitions between indoor and outdoor areas.

To minimise the risk of children leaving the premises:

- Fence lines and exit gates are kept clear of climbable objects.
- Bins are stored away from boundaries.
- Fences are regularly checked for damage or gaps.
- Gate mechanisms are secured and inaccessible to children.

We maintain a safe and natural outdoor environment by:

- Immediately removing any poisonous or toxic plants.
- Ensuring new plant additions are safe for children and animals.
- Assessing and mitigating risks posed by non-toxic plants that may still present hazards.
- Providing adequate shade through both natural elements like trees and by adding structures such as patios, pergolas, play structures and shade sails.

## Indoor-Outdoor Flow

We recognise the value of uninterrupted access between indoor and outdoor environments as a powerful contributor to children's learning, wellbeing, and development. During most of the day, children are supported to move freely between these spaces, fostering a strong sense of agency and autonomy. This freedom allows children to choose play spaces and experiences that align with their interests, developmental needs, and emotional states.

This approach supports inclusive learning by catering to diverse learning styles and sensory preferences, and it strengthens children's connection to nature and sustainability. Both environments are equally valued as learning spaces and are intentionally designed to promote exploration, creativity, and holistic development.

To ensure safety and quality of care during indoor–outdoor flow:

Environments are designed to support clear visibility and audibility across all areas, enabling active supervision at all times. Blind spots are minimised through thoughtful layout and educator positioning.

Daily safety checks and regular risk assessments are conducted to ensure all areas remain safe and hazard-free. Children are encouraged to participate in these assessments, developing their awareness of safety and responsibility.

Educators adjust access to indoor and outdoor spaces based on weather conditions, group dynamics, planned experiences, staffing arrangements, and individual needs. The safety and wellbeing of children remain the highest priority in all decisions.

Supervision Plans are regularly reviewed and updated by the Nominated Supervisor to reflect the current use of the environment and ensure adequate supervision is maintained across both spaces.

The Environment Risk Assessment includes specific considerations for indoor–outdoor flow, addressing:

- Emergency management procedures
- Supervision strategies
- Inclusion and support for children with additional needs
- Management of challenging behaviours
- Fence and gate safety
- Staff training and communication
- Weather-related risks
- Knowledge of individual children and their needs

## Child Safe Environment

Keiki Early Learning is committed to maintaining a child safe environment where children are protected from harm, feel secure, and are empowered to thrive physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively. This commitment is embedded across all aspects of our practice and aligns with the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations.

In addition to the areas outlined in this and other Keiki policies, the following measures are in place to support a child safe environment:

- **Substance-Free Environment:** Keiki Early Learning is a tobacco, drug, vape, and alcohol-free environment. Staff must not use or be affected by any such substances while working or present on Keiki property, in accordance with Regulations 82 and 83.
- **Hygiene and Laundry Facilities:** All long day care services are equipped with laundry facilities, and OSHC services have access to laundry facilities at their local early learning service. Hygiene facilities are maintained to support health and safety, in line with Regulations 106 and 109.

These practices support our broader commitment to child safety, wellbeing, and regulatory compliance.

## Children's Wellbeing and Cultural Safety

We recognise and honour the whole child, acknowledging that each child's learning journey is unique. Our environments are thoughtfully designed to promote emotional regulation, positive relationships, and self-expression, supporting children's wellbeing across physical, emotional, social, and cognitive domains.

We understand that cultural safety extends beyond inclusion, it is about ensuring every child feels respected, valued, and free from discrimination. Keiki services embrace and reflect diverse family structures, customs, languages, and kinship systems. Educators demonstrate a commitment to learning about and responding to each child's cultural identity, integrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives meaningfully into daily practice. This includes connection to Country, use of Noongar language, and storytelling that reflects local culture and heritage.

To support cultural and emotional wellbeing:

- Quiet spaces are provided for children to engage in cultural rituals, mindfulness, or personal reflection.
- Resources and environments are selected to accommodate different learning styles and sensory needs, supporting neurodiversity and emotional regulation.
- Yoga, breathing techniques, mindfulness, and grounding practices are embedded in the educational program to foster early development of emotional regulation and co-regulation skills.

A dedicated Design Manager works with each service to create environments that reflect the needs of children, families, and the community, while incorporating Keiki's signature elements that promote a home-away-from-home atmosphere.

Educators use AEDC data and collaborate with families, children's first teachers, to identify areas of developmental need and tailor support accordingly. This ensures that every child is nurtured in an environment that is safe, inclusive, and responsive to their identity and wellbeing.

## Environmental Responsibility and Sustainability

At Keiki Early Learning, we are committed to embedding sustainability as a guiding principle across all age groups and services. Sustainability is understood as the ability to maintain

healthy environmental, social, and economic systems in balance indefinitely. Our approach reflects the principles of the EYLF and MTOP and aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which set a global agenda for sustainable development through 2030.

We promote sustainable practices such as recycling, gardening, composting, and conservation, and actively encourage children's participation in caring for the environment. Educators and children work together to create sustainable communities where inclusion, fairness, and care for the planet are part of everyday practice. Children are supported to understand their role in protecting the environment, using resources responsibly, and thinking about future generations.

Our staff model sustainable behaviours and encourage children to:

- Turn off lights when natural light is sufficient or rooms are not in use.
- Participate in recycling activities and use recycle bins.
- Include sustainable practices in daily routines, such as managing food scraps.
- Care for gardens and natural spaces.
- Advocate for environmental responsibility and support others in learning sustainable practices.

We actively source and purchase environmentally friendly, biodegradable products that contain no harmful toxins wherever possible. Educators and staff reduce the use of plastic and disposable items, opting for natural materials and second-hand resources from Tamala Park, local donations, or community stores.

Our sustainability principles include:

- **Reduce:** Actively work towards waste reduction.
- **Repurpose:** Use items that can be upcycled and repurposed.
- **Rot:** Compost and/or maintain worm farms where possible.
- **Recycle:** Promote recycling within our services and community.

Sustainable practices are embedded in our daily routines through:

- Recycling, composting, and waste reduction.
- Water and energy conservation (e.g. dual flush toilets, water-saving taps).
- Use of natural light and ventilation.
- Electronic communication to reduce paper use.

Curriculum integration includes:

- Nature-based play and inquiry.
- Projects on ecosystems, gardening, and conservation.
- Children's participation in environmental audits and planning.

Educators provide engaging learning experiences that help children explore their rights and responsibilities as citizens in both local and global communities. Children's agency is respected and supported, encouraging them to take part in decisions, express ideas, and act for positive change. Sustainable practices are co-created with children, empowering them to care for the environment and promote social fairness.

We recognise the ongoing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country and include learning about sustainable practices, histories, and cultures. Our approach goes beyond nature play to also teach about social justice, equity, responsible resource use, and the interconnectedness of all living things.

Every positive action, no matter how small, has the power to make a difference. Educators listen to children's ideas, seek opportunities for active participation, and provide frameworks

for children to influence and make a difference in their communities—teaching for both now and the future.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**Nominated Supervisor/Centre Coordinator:**

- Network with the local community to stay informed on current sustainability practices.
- Encourage engagement in sustainable practices across educators, staff, families, and children.
- Ensure sustainability is incorporated into daily routines and reflected in policies and procedures.
- Promote electronic communication to reduce paper use.
- Source environmentally friendly and second-hand materials.
- Maintain a safe, clean, and well-kept environment.
- Foster a workplace culture that supports mental and physical wellbeing and prevents discrimination.
- Ensure staff complete child safety and protection training.
- Collaborate with families and the community to support quality practice.

**Educators:**

- Role model and teach environmental awareness through daily practices and educational opportunities.
- Share sustainable ideas and practices with families and encourage home application.
- Communicate sustainability initiatives through meetings, emails, newsletters, and conversations.
- Conserve energy and water by turning off unused lights and air-conditioning, and emptying water play containers onto gardens.
- Choose environmentally friendly equipment and reduce reliance on plastic and disposable items.
- Embed the “reduce, reuse, recycle” concept into everyday practice.
- Collaborate across teams, valuing each other’s strengths.
- Take reasonable care of their own mental and physical health and wellbeing.

**Links between the NQS and SDG**

Through adherence to the National Quality Standard, the service addresses the SDGs on a daily basis. The SDGs can be mapped against the NQS as follows.

For further information on the goals visit the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) website.

Quality Area	Related SDG
QA 1 – Educational Program and Practice	1 No Poverty 3 Good Health and Wellbeing 4 Quality Education 5 Gender Equality 10 Reduced Inequalities 14 Life under water. Content and conservation 15 Life on land. Content and conservation 17 Partnerships for the Goals
QA 2 – Children’s Health and Safety	1 No Poverty 2 Zero Hunger 3 Good Health and Wellbeing 4 Quality Education

	11 Sustainable Cities and Communities 12 Responsible Consumption 17 Partnerships for the Goals
QA 3 – Physical Environment	3 Good Health and Wellbeing 4 Quality Education 6 Clean Water and Sanitation 7 Affordable and Clean Energy 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure 17 Partnerships for the Goals
QA 4 – Staffing Arrangements	3 Good Health and Wellbeing 5 Gender Equality 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities 17 Partnerships for the Goals
QA 5 – Relationships with Children	1 No Poverty 2 Zero Hunger 3 Good Health and Wellbeing 4 Quality Education 17 Partnerships for the Goals
QA 6 – Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities	3 Good Health and Wellbeing 4 Quality Education 5 Gender Equality 10 Reduced Inequalities 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities 17 Partnerships for the Goals
QA 7 – Governance and Leadership	4 Quality Education 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure 10 Reduced Inequalities 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities 12 Responsible Consumption 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institution 17 Partnerships for the Goals



**Supporting Documents**

**Policies**

- [Child Safety Policy](#)
- [Cleaning of Service and Equipment Policy](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Educational Program and Curriculum Policy](#)
- [Food and Nutrition Policy](#)
- [Food and Nutrition Policy - OSHC](#)
- [Positive Guidance and Interactions with Children Policy](#)
- [Service Cleaning and Maintenance Policy](#)
- [Supervision of Children Policy](#)
- [Volunteers, Relief Staff and Students Policy](#)

**Resources**

- [Education and Care Services National Law \(WA\) Act 2012](#)
- [Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012](#)

Sustainable Development Goals



**Sources**

- ACECQA – Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority.
- Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012. (2024).
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012. (2024).
- Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2024).
- International Journal of Early Childhood Environmental Education. Connecting the UNESCO Sustainable Development Goals with Australian Early Childhood Education Policy to Transform Practice. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1324255.pdf>. (2021)
- World’s Largest Lesson. <https://worldslargestlesson.globalgoals.org/campaign/introducing-the-goals-to-young-children/>. (2022).



**Links to Regulations**

**National Quality Standard**

**Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice**

1.1	Program	The educational program enhances each child’s learning and development
1.2	Practice	Educators facilitate and extend each child’s learning and development.
1.2.1	Intentional teaching	Educators are deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful in their decisions and actions.
1.2.2	Responsive teaching and scaffolding	Educators respond to children’s ideas and play and extend children’s learning through open-ended questions, interactions and feedback.
1.2.3	Child directed learning	Each child’s agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world.

**Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety**

2.1	Health	Each child’s health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
2.1.3	Healthy lifestyle	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.
2.2.3	Child protection	Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.

**Quality Area 3: Physical Environment**

3.1.1	Fit for purpose	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.
3.1.2	Upkeep	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.
3.2.1	Inclusive Environment	Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child’s participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
3.2	Use	The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.
3.2.1	Inclusive environment	Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child’s participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
3.2.2	Resources support play-based learning	Resources, materials and equipment allow for multiple uses, are sufficient in number, and enable every child to engage in play-based learning.
3.2.3	Environmentally responsible	The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.

**Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements**

4.1	Staffing arrangements	Staffing arrangements enhance children’s learning and development.
4.2.1	Professional collaboration	Management, educators and staff work with mutual respect and collaboratively, and challenge and learn from each other, recognising each other’s strengths and skills.

4.2.2	Professional standards	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
<b>Quality Area 5: Relationships with children</b>		
5.1	Relationships between educators and children	Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.
5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.
5.2.1	Collaborative learning	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.
5.2.2	Self-regulation	Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.
<b>Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities</b>		
6.1	Supportive relationships with families	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.
6.2	Collaborative partnerships	Collaborative partnerships enhance children’s inclusion, learning and wellbeing.
6.2.3	Community engagement	The service builds relationships and engages with its community.
<b>Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership</b>		
7.1.1	Service philosophy and purpose	A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service’s operations.
7.1.2	Management systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.

<b>Education and Care Services National Regulations</b>	
55	Quality Improvement Plans
56	Review and revision of quality improvement plans
73	Educational program
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
81	Sleep and rest
82	Tobacco, drug and alcohol-free environment
83	Staff members and family day care educators not to be affected by alcohol or drugs
97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
99	Children leaving the education and care premises
103	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
104	Fencing
105	Furniture, materials and equipment
106	Laundry and hygiene facilities
107	Space requirements – indoor space
108	Space requirements – outdoor space
109	Toilet and hygiene facilities
110	Ventilation and natural light
113	Outdoor space – natural environment
114	Outdoor space - shade
115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
136	First aid qualifications
155	Interactions with children
156	Relationships in groups
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed

<b>Education and Care Services National Law</b>	
165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards



<b>Review &amp; Document Control</b>	
<b>Policy Reviewed</b>	<b>Modifications</b>

July 2025	Creation of Policy from Sustainability Policy and Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy.
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### Disclaimer

It is each employee, family and visitor to the service's responsibility to read, understand, follow and address any concerns with management about this policy.

Are you looking at the most recent version of this document?

You can find it at: <https://keikiearlylearning.com.au/policies-and-procedures/>

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