

WATER SAFETY POLICY

Updated: February 2025



What are we talking about in this document?

This policy outlines the safety and supervision measures for children in and around water, ensuring compliance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations and promoting a safe learning environment.



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 policy ensures the safety and supervision of children during water play, excursions near water, and within the service environment. It addresses the significant risks associated with water hazards and emphasizes the importance of active supervision to prevent drowning and other water-related incidents. Our Philosophy 'The Whole Child' promotes the provision of environments that supports children to direct their own learning, this policy ensures the environment is safe

Policy Contents

[The Important Stuff](#)

[Supervision requirements](#)

[Centre Coordinator/Nominated Supervisor responsibilities](#)

[Educator responsibilities](#)

[Operational safety](#)

[Notification of incidents](#)

[Training and education](#)



Key Terms

Term	Meaning	Source
Adequate Supervision	- Ensuring an educator can respond immediately, particularly when a child is distressed or in a hazardous situation, and maintaining constant awareness of children's activities. - Knowing where children are at all times and monitoring their activities actively and diligently.	Guide to the NQF (Operational Requirements – Quality Area 2)
Risk Assessment	A systematic process of evaluating the potential likelihood and consequences of risks that may be involved in a projected activity or undertaking.	
Serious Incident	A serious incident (Regulation 12) is defined as any of the following: (a) the death of a child – (i) while that child is being educated and cared for by an education and care service; or (ii) following an incident occurring while that child was being educated and cared for by an education and care service; (b) any incident involving serious injury or trauma to a child occurring while that child is being educated and cared for	Education and Care Services National Regulations (Regulation 12)

	by an education and care service – (i) which a reasonable person would consider required urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner; or (ii) for which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital; (c) any incident involving serious illness of a child occurring while that child is being educated and cared for by an education and care service for which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital; (d) any emergency for which emergency services attended; (e) any circumstance where a child being educated and cared for by an education and care service – (i) appears to be missing or cannot be accounted for; or (ii) appears to have been taken or removed from the education and care service premises in a manner that contravenes these Regulations; or (iii) is mistakenly locked in or locked out of the education and care service premises or any part of the premises.	
Water Hazards	The National Regulations make reference to ‘water hazards’ however the term is not expressly defined. In this policy, a water hazard is defined as anything that can hold 5cm of water and fit a child’s nose and mouth. A ‘water hazard’ may include: • swimming pools, portable pools, spas • fishponds, fish tanks • sinks, basins • smaller bodies of water such as baths, mop buckets • water feature, such as a wishing well • containers for feeding animals • water troughs, containers for paddling- clam shells • dams, creeks, river or pooling water • beach • tarps or play equipment where water can gather	



The Important Stuff

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, an approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for managing water safety, including during any water-based activities and take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed [[Regulations 168 & 170](#)].

According to Kidsafe, drowning is one of the leading causes of unintentional death for Australian children. Every year a number of children drown and hundreds more are rescued from near drowning situations. Non-fatal drowning incidents are also of great concern as they can have potential long-term effects, including brain damage and permanent disability.

The most common factor in childhood drowning is lack of supervision. A child can drown in as little as a few centimeters of water. Items such as nappy buckets, sinks, pet drinking bowls, ponds, pools, water features, water tanks are all potential drowning hazards.

<https://kidsafe.com.au/water-safety/>

Supervision requirements

Direct adult supervision is crucial to prevent drowning incidents. Children must be supervised by an adult at all times around any depth of water. Supervision should be constant, active, and within arm’s reach of the children to ensure their safety.

- Active supervision includes

- Direct and constant monitoring of children
- Careful and intentional positioning of educators
- Scanning and moving around the environment
- Observing play and anticipating behaviour
- Ensuring higher adult-to-child ratios
- Ensuring no child is left unattended when in proximity to water
- Constant monitoring of any environmental changes.
- When children are engaging in water play activities, educators will be interacting with the children, ensuring active supervision of all children and the body of water. If the supervising educator(s) needs to step away, they will arrange for someone to take their place prior to leaving the activity area.
- When children are in bathroom facilities, an educator will be actively supervising the area.
- On excursions where there are water hazards present, educators will follow the control measures outlined on the risk assessment and ensure active supervision of all children.
- In any other situation where a water hazard is identified, educators will assess the hazard and eliminate or manage the risk appropriate to the circumstance (i.e. mop buckets will not be left unattended, a blocked sink will be blocked off so children cannot access it, rain puddles will be accessible to children only if educators can provide active supervision).

Centre Coordinator/Nominated Supervisor responsibilities

- Provide comprehensive education and direction to educators, staff, and families on the importance of water safety, including the risks associated with water in buckets, puddles, and other areas where water may accumulate.
- Conduct detailed risk assessments that identify and assess risks associated with any water hazards and water-based activities [[Regulation 97\(2\)](#)]
- Ensure water hazards and water play are always actively supervised [[Section 165 & 167](#)] (educators must be over the age of 18 and first aid qualified) including:
 - Direct and constant monitoring of children
 - Careful and intentional positioning of educators
 - Scanning and moving around the environment
 - Observing play and anticipating behaviour
 - Ensuring higher adult-to-child ratios
 - Ensure no child is left unattended when in proximity to water
 - Safety checks
- Ensure health and safety practices incorporate approaches to safe storage of water and water play.
- Ensure there are no items near fencing that children could climb on to gain access to a water hazard, if applicable
- Conduct a detailed risk assessment in accordance with the requirements prior to taking children on an excursion. – consider any water hazards and any risks associated with water-based activities before an excursion/incursion is approved. [[Regulation 101](#)]
- Ensure at least one Educator who holds a current approved first aid qualification is in attendance at all times [[Regulation 136](#)]
 - In the unlikely event that the service plans a water-based excursion, at least one educator has water rescue training

- Display an age-appropriate Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) guide near any water or water play experiences
- Ensure hot water is inaccessible to children.
- Ensure hot water is never transported or carried through play spaces.
- Ensure parents are notified as soon as practicable but within 24 hours if their child is involved in an incident/accident at the Service or while under Service care. Details of the incident/accident will be recorded on an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record. [\[Regulation 86\]](#)
- Ensure that if the incident/accident, situation or event presents imminent or severe risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of the child or if an ambulance was called in response to the emergency (not as a precaution) the regulatory authority is notified within 24 hours. [\[Section 174\]](#)

Educator responsibilities

- Ensure constant and active supervision of children near any water source, including water play areas, water spouts, and water pumps, to prevent accidents and ensure safety. [\[Section 165\]](#)
 - Never leave children alone near any water, including water play, waterspouts and water pumps
 - Ensure fish / frog ponds and any other water feature are effectively supervised at all times to ensure the safety of all children
 - Ensure covers are in good condition and maintained to ensure coverage at all times
- Complete a daily safety check of premises to ensure that all hazards are known and minimised. When a hazard or potential hazard is detected, Educators will complete a risk assessment to address any concerns
 - Ensure that no water has gathered in holes, containers and play equipment after rainfall or watering gardens.
- Utilise water activities in appropriate weather
- Ensure indoor and outdoor taps are turned off securely when not in use and sinks are free of debris to allow water to flow safely. [\[Section 167\]](#)
- Ensure rainwater tank taps are turned off securely when not in use
- Empty wading pools immediately after every use, store to prevent the collection of water, e.g. upright, also check garden after rain or watering and empty water that has collected in holes or containers [\[Section 167\]](#)
- If using a wading pool
 - Ensure they are hygienically cleaned and disinfected
 - Children with diarrhoea, upset stomach, open sores or nasal infections should not use the wading pool
 - Remove all children immediately, empty and disinfect wading pool should a child pass a bowel movement whilst in the pool
- Encourage children to use water effectively and along with staff learn new ways to save and re-use water [\[NQS 3.2.3\]](#)
- Allow children the opportunity to experiment with water, sand and mixing materials.
- Incorporate water safety awareness into the educational program. [\[NQS 1.2.1\]](#)
 - Talk about water safety while using water.
- Ensure children have safe, independent access to clean and cool drinking water at all times. [\[Regulation 78\]](#)

- Ensure water troughs are not used without a stand, keeping it off the ground
- Ensure water troughs or containers for water play are filled to a safe level and emptied into the garden areas after each use and not at the end of the day.
- Ensure water troughs are hygienically cleaned and disinfected appropriately
- Discourage children drinking from these water activities.
- Ensure laundry, storerooms and Educator areas are inaccessible to children at all times. [\[Section 167\]](#)
- Safely cover or make inaccessible to children all water containers (mop buckets etc.) [\[Section 167\]](#)

Operational safety

- Clearly label rainwater tanks with “Do Not Drink” signage and ensure children are supervised in these areas to prevent accidental ingestion of non-potable water. [\[Section 167\]](#)
- Educators will discuss with the children the use of rainwater tank water and how it differs from drinking water. [\[NQS 1.2.1\]](#)
- Warm water accessible to children for hand washing will be maintained at the temperature of 45°C which will be tested annually. (Australian standard AS 3498)
 - Use of either a thermostatic mixing valve or a tempering valve will ensure the temperature of water is within a safe temperature for children.
 - WA Plumbing Licencing Board Inspector – suggests that all tapware within an Early Childhood setting to be at 45°C to ensure that all vulnerable people are kept safe at all times.
 - Water available for pets and animals at the service is only accessible to children when educators are present.

Notification of incidents

Parents will be notified as soon as practicable but within 24 hours if their child is involved in an incident/accident at the Service or while under Service care. Details of the incident/accident will be recorded on an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record.

[\[Regulation 86\]](#)

If the incident/accident, situation or event presents imminent or severe risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of the child or if an ambulance was called in response to the emergency (not as a precaution) the regulatory authority will be notified within 24 hours. [\[Section 174\]](#)

Training and education

Educators/Staff

- All permanent staff will have an approved first aid certificate to ensure they have an understanding of the risks and know how to react in an emergency. (some exceptions may apply)
- All staff must read this policy at least annually. [\[Regulation 170\]](#)
- Water safety should be discussed during the in-service induction process for new educators, including being informed where the CPR posters are and the importance of

supervision during water-based experiences or in environments where access to water is a possibility.

- All staff should be involved in the completion of risk assessments.

Families

- The service will provide blog posts and opportunities for families to receive information on Water Safety. [\[NQS 6.1.3\]](#)
- Families will be notified about the water safety education children are receiving.

Staff and families can access further information on water safety at [Keep Watch - Royal Life Saving WA](#).



Supporting Documents

Policies

[Educational Program and Curriculum Policy](#)
[Excursion, Incursion and Safe Transportation Policy](#)
[Incident, Illness and Administration of First Aid Policy](#)
[Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy](#)
[Supervision of Children Policy LDC](#)
[Supervision of Children Policy OSHC](#)

Resources

[Education and Care Services National Law \(WA\) Act 2012](#)
[Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012](#)
[CPR-for-babies-under-12-months.pdf \(raisingchildren.net.au\)](#)
[CPR-for-children-and-teenagers.pdf \(raisingchildren.net.au\)](#)
[Keiki Supervision Guide – Educators](#)



Sources

- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).
- Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012. (2023).
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012. (2024).
- Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2024).
- ACECQA. Water Safety Policy Guidelines. [PolicyGuidelines_WaterSafety.pdf \(acecqa.gov.au\)](#) (2023).
- Kidsafe WA. Water Safety <https://www.kidsafewa.com.au/resources/>. (2023).
- WA Plumbers Licensing Board.
- Royal Life Saving Western Australia. Keep Watch [Keep Watch - Royal Life Saving WA](#). (2022)



Links to Regulations

National Quality Standard

Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice

1.1.3	Program learning opportunities	All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.
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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.
Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety		
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
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.
Quality Area 3: Physical Environment		
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.

Education and Care Services National Regulations	
12	Meaning of a serious incident
25	Additional information about proposed education and care service premises
73	Educational program
85	Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
86	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
87	Incident, injury, trauma and illness record
101	Conduct of risk assessment for excursion
115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
136	First aid qualifications
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available

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



Review & Document Control	
Policy Reviewed	Modifications
August 2017	Extension of Policy from regulations and set out expectations for all parties
8th January 2018	Quality Area updated to reflect changes to NQS. Centre Director term changed to Coordinator.
10th October 2018	Added that coordinators will ensure hot water is inaccessible to children
June 2019	Updated with new logo
December 2019	Grammatical changes. Remove containers contain water.
November 2020	Added appropriate weather and water pumps. Wading pools. Definition of water hazard
October 2021	Updated regs, added WA law. Added Key Terms. Updated the Why and What- added Philosophy link. Added purpose statement. Added 'detailed' to risk assessments. Added 'no leaving children unattended'. Added hot water in rooms. Added educational program information. Added Australian Standards re hot water. Updated sources – WA plumbing board, RLSWA. Added Education for staff/educators and families.
January 2022	Reviewed policy with Childcare Experts. Amended layout and redefined some points to be clearer – information the same.
November 2022	New format. Added section on supervision requirements to ensure clarity for staff.
February 2023	Added references to regulations, law & NQS throughout policy with hyperlinks. Checked sources are current.

April 2024	New document template. Checked sources and links. Reviewed policy, no changes required.
February 2025	Updated the wording for what, why, adequate supervision, rainwater tank operational requirements and added information about training exceptions around first aid. Reworded Supervision requirements around water to be direct supervision.

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.

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