FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT SAFETY POLICY

Adequate and safe furnishings and equipment are an essential component of quality early childhood education and care. Under the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations, we have a responsibility to protect the health and safety of children enrolled at the Service. Whilst this is reflected in our health and safety policies, nursery furniture and equipment require careful consideration to minimise risks to all those entering the Service.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
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.

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.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
103	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
105	Furniture, materials and equipment
111	Administrative space
112	Nappy change facilities
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures must be followed
175	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority
176	Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority

RELATED POLICIES

Child Safe Environment Policy Health and Safety Policy Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy	Physical Environment Policy Safe Sleep Supervision Policy Work Health and Safety Policy

PURPOSE

Management and educators have a responsibility and duty of care to ensure the building, furniture, grounds, and equipment are safe and hygienic. We aim to ensure that all furniture and equipment at the Service adheres to recognised safety standards and is age appropriate for the children.

SCOPE

This policy applies to management, the approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, staff, families, visitors (including contractors) and children of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our Service understands the importance of children experiencing and learning about risk through safe and creative play. All children have the right to be safe. The provision of safe environments for children is essential to prevent injury and enable them to grow and develop. We will only use furniture and equipment that has been made in accordance with Australian mandatory design standards.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER AND NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL ENSURE:

- that obligations under the *Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations* are met
- educators, staff, students, visitors and volunteers have knowledge of and adhere to this policy and associated procedures
- a proactive process of risk management is implemented, and clear processes are in place for the identification of hazards, risk minimisation and other control measures
- daily routine visual inspections are made to identify obvious hazards in surfacing, fixed and mobile equipment, moving parts, swings, ropes, chains, tyres, fences, sandpits
- a qualified person is employed on an annual basis by council to complete comprehensive inspections of outdoor equipment including:
    - timber structures
    - swings
    - ropes, chains, tyres

  - metal frames
  - slides and linking items
  - playground surfacing and impact areas
  - entrapment hazards
- records are kept of inspections and maintenance of furniture, playgrounds and equipment
- educators and staff are aware of their responsibility to identify hazards and potential risks, conduct safety checks of all equipment and furniture and abide by Work Health and Safety requirements
- mandatory Australian Safety Standards are always adhered to when
  - purchasing new equipment or furniture, in particular in relation to cots, prams and strollers, baby dummies and dummy chains, baby walkers, bicycle helmets, and child restraints
  - installing equipment (for example: equipment footings, clustering equipment, free height fall, swings)
- the Service joins Product Safety Recall mailing lists and/or registers products where possible, to keep up to date with any recalled products (e.g., electronics/furniture)
- any banned products will be removed immediately from the Service as required
- to adhere to the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations and licensing requirements that relate to the safety of children at the Service
- the equipment and furniture used in providing education and care at the Service is safe clean and in good repair
- there is sufficient furniture and developmentally appropriate equipment so each child can take part in the educational program depending on their interests, ages and abilities
- the age recommendation in relation to the age and developmental stage of the children using the furniture and equipment is adhered to
- educators are aware of appropriate instructions for use and supervision for all equipment and furniture
- furniture in the Service is securely built so it will not collapse, is easy to clean, and non-toxic
- an administrative space or area is provided to conduct administrative functions, consult with parents of children and conduct private conversations (Reg. 111)
- to implement recommendations from organisations, such as Kidsafe, on fall zones and suitable heights of furniture, equipment and playground equipment (minimum height of equipment requiring fall zone is 600 mm)
- entrapment hazards are identified and appropriate measures to reduce the risk of harm implemented. (It is easy for small fingers and limbs to get caught in gaps. Head and upper body

entrapments can cause death by asphyxiation. Be aware that fingers can get caught in holes or openings between 5-12mm, limbs in gaps between 30-50mm and heads in gaps over 85mm.)

- all equipment and furniture is kept in a clean and hygienic state, particularly before and after food service
- furniture and equipment do not contain any lead (This is most likely to occur with second-hand furniture.)
- they carefully consider all aspects regarding the use of furniture and equipment and how it suits the age and stage of the children's development
- all cupboards have safety locks and remain locked when not in use
- regularly testing is conducted on locking devices to ensure they are functioning correctly
- the Regulatory Authority is notified of any serious incident involving serious injury or trauma to a child within 24 hours.

EDUCATORS WILL:

- provide effective supervision of children, including the supervision of infants at all times to minimise the risk of accidents and injuries that could result from the furniture and equipment within the learning indoor and outdoor learning environment and nursery
- regularly check furniture and equipment for stability and wear and tear- (corners, surface- splinters, missing bike handle grips, faulty cleats in boards or ladders, heavy objects on climbing frames that destabilise the equipment)
- keep records of daily/weekly inspection of indoor/outdoor equipment
- keep an accurate record of any furniture or equipment that needs maintenance in the *Equipment and Maintenance Record* and ensure this is reported to management
- ensure non-toxic, easy to clean surfaces will be sourced for all equipment
- reflect on common accidents and incidents in the learning environment and implement an action plan to ensure the safety of children and minimise accidents at the Service
- provide a safe physical environment that allows children to play safely
- remain up to date with health and safety changes within the early childhood sector by attending appropriate professional development
- ensure the furnishings and equipment within the program support and stimulates children's development.

Nursery Furniture

- all equipment will comply with compulsory Australian safety standards- (AS/NZS 2172 for cots AS 4684 for highchairs)
- locking devices and stability of cots and highchairs will be checked daily/weekly
- inspections will be made regularly and a record kept checking bolts and nuts on cots to ensure they are maintained as per instructions supplied with the cot
- nappy change facilities should be properly constructed benches and designed and located in an area that prevents unsupervised access by children
- the nursery will be free from small objects or items that can break and become a potential hazard
- cots will be positioned away from heaters, power points, windows or curtain and blind cords
- cot rooms will not be used as storage areas
- our Service will always use furniture and equipment that is free of rough surfaces, sharp edges, points, projections and/or small pieces that can break off
- the use of unsafe equipment such as baby walkers will be avoided
- to reduce the risk of harm, collapsible furniture and furniture that presents possible entrapment hazards will not be used in the Nursery (e.g. toy boxes with heavy lids)
- infants will never be left unattended at any time
- all infants will be safely secured in their highchair when eating
- educators will ensure that the sides of cots are put up when occupied by children

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Furniture & Equipment Safety Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis in consultation with children, families, staff, educators and management.

Source

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2024). *Guide to the National Quality Framework.*
Australian Competition & Consumer Commission. (2013). Keeping baby safe – a guide to infant and nursery products: https://www.productsafety.gov.au/publication/keeping-baby-safe-a-guide-to-infant-and-nursery-products
Australian Competition & Consumer Commission. (n.d.). Product safety Australia: Mandatory standards: https://www.productsafety.gov.au/product-safety-laws/safety-standards-bans/mandatory-standards
Australian Government Department of Education. *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia.V2.0, 2022*
Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).
Education and Care Services National Regulations. (Amended 2023).
Kidsafe NSW Inc. Home and community safety information sheets:

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY:	Krystle Hills	Centre Manager	21/08/2024
POLICY REVIEWED	August 2024	NEXT REVIEW DATE	August 2025
MODIFICATIONS	• policy maintenance - no major changes to policy • sources checked and updated as required		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS		NEXT REVIEW DATE
April 2024	• annual policy maintenance • additional information added regarding Regulation 111 • additional information regarding storage of cots/bedding • continuous improvement/reflection section added		April 2025