

1.5 Delivery and Collection of Children

Policy: A duty of care exists at all times the child is attending a children's service. In addition, the service has a duty of care to a child while he/she is on the service's premises even if he/she hasn't yet been signed into the service or has been signed out of the service, and is legally under the care and supervision of the parent/guardian (refer to Supervision of Children Policy).

Relevant legislation:

- Education and Care National Law Act 2010: Sections 165, 167
- Education and Care National Regulations: 99, 158-159, 168(f), 176
- Family Law Act 1975 (Cth), as amended 2011
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998

Key Resources:

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – www.acecqa.gov.au
- National Quality Standards for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care: Standard 2.2 Element 2.2.1, Standard 6.1 Element 6.1.2, Standard 6.2 Element 6.2.1.

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety, Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities

Practices:

A child may only leave the education and care service premises under any of the following circumstances:

- a parent/guardian or authorised nominee collects the child
- a parent/guardian or authorised nominee provides written authorisation for the child to leave the premises
- a parent/guardian or authorised nominee provides written authorisation for the child to attend an excursion
- the child requires medical, hospital or ambulance treatment, or there is another emergency.

Accurate arrival and departure documentation is a legislated requirement in all services approved by the Regulatory Authority and is necessary to claim Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

A record is also required for days that a child has been absent. Furthermore, accurate arrival and departure records ensure successful implementation of efficient emergency evacuation and lock down procedures.

Goals / What are we going to do?

- Keep an accurate record of child attendance to ensure that there is a record of the children being cared for or educated by the service and that the correct child/staff ratios are being met by the service.
- Practical and safe approaches to the delivery and collection of children at the education and care service will promote a smooth transition between home and the service, assure the completion of the required records and confirms the child's presence or absence from the service. This ensures a child's arrival and departure at the service continues their safe care and custody and that the service is meeting its duty of care obligations under the law.

Strategies / How will it be done?

Attendance Sheet record kept at the service, includes:

- date;
- the full name of each child booked to attend for that day;
- arrival and departure times; and
- signature of the person who delivers and collects the child or the nominated supervisor or educator.

Attendance and enrolment records

The approved provider of an education and care service must ensure that a record of attendance is kept for the service that:

- records the full name of each child attending the service; and
- records the date and time each child arrives and departs; and
- is signed by one of the following persons at the time that the child arrives and departs:
 - the person who delivers the child to the education and care service premises or collects the child from the education and care service premises;
 - a nominated supervisor or an educator. (Education and Care Services National Regulations, Chapter 4, Part 4.7 , Division 1 , Subdivision 1)

Review of the Attendance Sheet

- Staff will regularly review the attendance sheet to ensure its accuracy at all times.
- In instances when a parent or authorised nominee has not signed the child in, a staff member will sign that the child is in attendance.
- Prior to closing the service, two staff members must verify all children have been signed out of the centre. If a child is not signed out, educators/staff members will check all areas of the centre and look for clues such as bags remaining in lockers, to ensure no child remains. This will be recorded in the Attendance Sheet.

Authorised Nominees

- On enrolment parents/guardians are to provide the names of two people who are authorised nominees for the purpose of collecting their child/ren from the service.
- Authorised Nominees will be required to show photo ID to educators prior to collecting and signing out child/ren.
- Staff members are to check the name on the photo ID against the list of approved persons to collect a child and sign the roll in completion. A person is not allowed to collect a child if they do not have ID, or if the ID does not match the authorisation list.
- If the educator cannot confirm that the person trying to collect the child is authorised to collect the child, the child's parents will be contacted immediately.
Please note: Both parents have lawful authority of their children and are consequently permitted to remove children from the centres' care unless a Magistrates Court or Family Law Court make different orders prohibiting contact with the child. Court orders must be provided to the service and will be stored with the child's enrolment information.

Concerns for the Safety, Health and Wellbeing of Children

Educators and staff will always act in the interest of safety for the child, themselves and other children in the care and education service. If staff members are concerned for the safety of a child or do not consider that a person is in a fit state to take responsibility for a child, they will exercise their duty of care by not allowing the child to be removed from the service by that person. In this circumstance, staff will contact an authorised nominee to collect the child.

Situations when this may occur include:

- when a parent or other person who is authorised to collect the child seems to be ill or affected by drugs or alcohol and does not appear to be able to safely care for the child;
- when a young person who is authorised to collect the child, for example a sibling, does not seem sufficiently mature to safely care for the child; and
- Staff will immediately refer to the Child Protection Policy and implement the appropriate strategies.

Roles and Responsibilities

Approved Provider

- Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011 with regard to the delivery and collection of children at all times).

Nominated Supervisor

- Provide supervision, guidance and advice to ensure adherence to the policy at all times.
- Ensure children are adequately supervised, are not subject to inappropriate discipline, and are protected from harms and hazards.
- Ensure children do not leave the education and care service premises except in accordance with the National Regulations (for example, with a parent, on an authorised excursion, or for emergency medical treatment).

- Ensure that a parent of a child being educated and cared for by the service may enter the service premises at any time when the child is being educated and cared for by the service – except when:
 - permitting entry would pose a risk to the safety of the children and staff or conflict with the duty of the supervisor under the National Law, or
 - the supervisor is aware the parent is prohibited by a court order from having contact with the child.
- Ensure an unauthorised person (as defined in the National Law) is not at the service while children are present unless the person is under direct supervision.

Early childhood Educators

- Ensure accuracy of attendance record at all times.
- Be available for individual greeting and settling of children.
- Provide a supportive and welcoming environment for children and families to assist with separation and settling.
- Follow all service procedures regarding the delivery and collection of children.
- Educators will greet and farewell parents and caregivers directly

Families

Completely fill in the details of the attendance at the service upon arrival and at the time of departure, including signature.

- Communicate any changes of routine with educators.
- Leave your child in the direct care of a staff member.
- Ensure educators are aware your child has been collected from the service.
- Provide the service with any court orders relating to your child

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every 18 months. Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved. In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

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