

Early Learning

Supervision of Children Policy

Policy Statement

Uniting Early Learning is committed to:

- providing adequate supervision of all enrolled children in all aspects of the service’s program;
- ensuring all children are directly and actively supervised by educators employed or engaged by the service;
- maintaining a duty of care to all children;
- ensuring there is an understanding of the shared legal responsibility and accountability between, and a commitment by all persons to implement the procedures and practices outlined in this policy.

Executive Summary

Supervision is critical in ensuring that children’s safety is protected in the service environment. All children must be adequately supervised at all times and in keeping with duty of care responsibilities. As a minimum requirement, the legislated educator-to-child ratios must be complied with at all times. A minimum of two educators must be rostered on at all times that the children are in attendance at the service. Exception to this requirement are services that are classified as Family Day Care and Single Staff Services.

Supervision strategies should be implemented to suit the service environment; educator knowledge and skills; the age mix, dynamics and size of the group of children being supervised, as well as the activities being undertaken. A risk management process should be used to identify high-risk activities, potential risks during excursions, water-related hazards, etc., and include strategies that can be implemented to minimize hazards and ensure children’s safety at all times. Supervision procedures are to be evaluated regularly.

Adequate, effective and active supervision requires educators to make ongoing assessments of the child and the activities in which they are engaged. In centre-based settings, this requires teamwork and effective and constant communication between educators.

Current Environmental Context

Educator-to-child ratios do not determine what is considered adequate supervision. Adequate supervision means that, an educator can respond and intervene immediately, including when a child is distressed or in a hazardous situation. This includes while sleeping (refer to *Relaxation and Sleep policy and the Sleep Room Record*).

Every child is to be monitored actively and diligently. This means knowing where children are at all times. Active supervision requires focussed attention, intentional observation and physical positioning of educators combined with knowledge of individual children’s development and abilities.

Effective supervision also requires educators to be actively involved with children, planning thoughtfully and making decisions throughout the day to enable appropriate supervision strategies.

A flexible approach that considers context and contingency is essential, particularly at end-of-day procedures, excursions and regular outings, transporting children, nappy change and sleep routines.

Attachment 11a Responsibilities relating to the Supervision of Children Policy

Attachment 11b Educator supervision behaviours

Attachment 11c Supervision risk management template

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Printed hard copies of this document are considered uncontrolled.

Please refer to the Uniting Intranet/Document Management System for the latest version.

Reference/Sources

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Keeping Children Safe Policy of the Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, Approved May 2017:

- *Complaints and Grievances Policy*
- *Uniting Feedback policy*
- *Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy*
- *Excursions Regular Outings and Service Events Policy*
- *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*
- *Interactions with Children Policy*
- *Workplace Health and Safety Policy*
- *Relaxation and Sleep Policy*
- *Staffing Policy*
- Children's Services Act 1996: S26, 27, 29A
- Children's Services Regulations 2009: r 50, 51, 53-56
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Sections 165, 167, 169, 174
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulations 101, 122, 123, 126, 168, 176, 355, 357, 360
- Kidsafe: www.kidsafe.com.au
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
- Tasmanian Licensing Standards for Centre Based Child Care Class 5 2014 (0-12 years): s2,3
- Tasmanian Work Health and Safety Act 2011 <https://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au/>
- The Royal Children's Hospital Community Information team: www.rch.org.au

Authorisation

This policy was adopted by Uniting Early Learning on: 21 September 2018

Review

This policy will be reviewed by: 30 September 2020

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Attachment 11a: Responsibilities relating to the Supervision of Children Policy

Approved Provider/Licensee

- Comply with the legislative educator-to-child ratios at all times and that relevant educators have required qualifications.
- With the exception of Family Day Care and single staff services, ensure a minimum of two educators are rostered on duty at all times children are in attendance at the service.
- Ensure that children attending the service are adequately supervised (refer to *Glossary*) at all times they are in the care of that service.
- Consider the design and arrangement of the service environment to support active supervision. This may be supported by a supervision plan (Refer to *Attachment 11b*).
- Manage the risks of abuse or harm to each child, including fulfilling duty of care and legal obligations to protect children and prevent any reasonable, foreseeable risk of injury or harm.
- Identify high-risk activities by conducting a risk assessment, (refer to *Excursion, Regular Outing and Service Events, Safe Travel (Children)* and *Water Safety Policies*) and implement strategies to improve children's safety e.g. increasing adult-to-child ratios above regulatory requirements.
- Ensure supervision standards are maintained during educator breaks, including during lunch breaks.
- Provide safe play spaces for children, which allow for adequate supervision, including safe fall zones, good traffic flow, maintenance of buildings and equipment, and minimising trip and slip hazards.
- Report to the responsible person where circumstances: do not allow for adequate supervision, require maintenance to the building and/or equipment and provide tripping hazards.
- Provide staff rosters, and casual and relief staff lists.
- Develop and implement procedures to inform casual and relief staff about the supervision strategies outlined in this policy.
- Notify the Regulatory Authority and Uniting Quality Performance and Planning within 12 hours of any serious incident (refer to *Glossary*), complaint alleging the health, safety or wellbeing of a child has been compromised or that a law has been breached.
- Reporting notifiable incidents (refer to *Glossary*) to WorkSafe Victoria.
- Evaluate supervision procedures regularly in consultation with Responsible Person.
- Ensure educators and staff comply with the *Safe Travel (Children)* Policy.

Responsible Person

- Ensure that the prescribed educator-to-child ratios are met at all times and that educators have required qualifications.
- Count only those educators who are working directly with children at the service in the educator-to-child ratios.
- Ensure a minimum of two educators are rostered on duty at all times while children are in attendance at the service (Family Day Care and single service models are exempt from this requirement).
- Communicate with and receive acknowledgement from other educators regularly, to ensure adequate supervision at all time for every child.
- Ensure volunteers, students, visitors and support people are not responsible for the supervision of children.
- Consider the design and arrangement of the service environment to support active supervision. This may be supported by a supervision plan (Refer to *Attachment 11c*).
- Maintain safe play spaces for children, which allow for adequate supervision, including safe fall zones, good traffic flow, maintenance of buildings and equipment, and minimising trip hazards.
- Identify high-risk activities by conducting a risk assessment (refer to *Excursion, Regular Outing and Service Events Policy, Safe Travel (Children) Policy*), and implement strategies to improve children's safety e.g. increasing adult-to-child ratios above regulatory requirements.

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- Review and evaluate each excursion undertaken and adjust supervision strategies accordingly for any future excursion.
- Ensure supervision standards are maintained during educator breaks, including during lunch breaks.
- Ensure educators comply with the *Safe Travel (Children) Policy*.
- Report to the Approved Provider/Licensee if additional supervision is required and provide rationale.

Educators

- Provide active and adequate supervision (Refer to *Attachment 11b*).
- Be alert to, and aware of, risks and hazards and the potential for incidents and injury throughout the service and not just within your own immediate area. Use active and diligent supervision skills to reduce or prevent incident or injury to children and adults.
- Manage the risks of abuse or harm to each child, including fulfilling duty of care (refer to *Glossary*) and legal obligations to protect children and prevent any reasonable, foreseeable risk of injury or harm.
- Develop procedures to ensure that all children are accounted for, by referring to attendance records at various times throughout the day (including during excursions and whilst travelling), and the accurate identification of each child, both before and after outdoor activities.
- Adjust supervision strategies to suit the service environment, educator skills, and age mix, dynamics and size of the group of children being supervised and the activities being undertaken.
- Actively maintain a duty of care to children at all times (including when the child is on the premises but not signed into or out of the service and the parent or person delivering or collecting the child is responsible for supervising that child).
- Work as a team to supervise children's daily departure from the service and be aware of the person who has authority to collect the child (refer to *Delivery and Collection of Children policy*).
- Inform parents and volunteers at the service about the *Supervision of Children Policy* and the ways that they can adhere to its procedures.
- Ensure doors and gates are closed at all times to prevent children from leaving the service, family day care residence/venue unaccompanied or from accessing unsupervised/unsafe areas of the service.
- Decide when to interrupt and redirect children's play to ensure safety at all times.
- Identify opportunities to support and extend children's learning while also recognising their need to play without adult intervention.
- Conduct and record daily safety checks of the environment to assess safety and to remove hazards.
- Arrange the environment (equipment, furniture and experiences) to ensure effective supervision while also allowing children to access quiet/private spaces.
- Provide direct and constant supervision when a child is near water.
- Conduct a risk assessment prior to an excursion, regular outing and service event to identify risks to health, safety or wellbeing, and specify how these risks will be managed and minimised.
- Follow the incident reporting and escalation process (refer to the *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*) and notify the Responsible Person in the event of a serious incident or notifiable complaint (refer to *Glossary*). Examples include when a child appears to be missing or is unaccounted for, or a complaint has been made alleging the health, safety or wellbeing of a child has been compromised.
- Assist the Responsible Person to evaluate supervision practices regularly.
- Supervise children's daily departure from the service and be aware of the person who has authority to collect the child (refer to *Delivery and Collection of Children Policy*).

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Parents

- Ensure educators are aware that your child has arrived at or departed from the service or family day care residence.
- Ensure that doors and gates, including playground gates, are closed after entry or exit.
- Be aware of the movement of other children near gates and doors when entering or exiting the service or family day care residence.
- Enable educators to supervise children at all times by making arrangements to speak with them outside program hours.
- Supervise own children before signing them into the program and after having signed them out.
- Supervise other children in their care, including siblings, while attending or assisting at the service, including in the vicinity of the service, i.e. service carpark.

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Attachment 11b: Educator supervision behaviours

Definition - Adequate supervision: *(in relation to this policy) entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service/family day care residence/Venue, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used.*

Adequate supervision refers to constant, active and diligent supervision of every child at the service, family day care residence/venue. Adequate supervision requires that educators are always in a position to observe each child, respond to individual needs, and immediately intervene if necessary. Variables affecting supervision levels include:

- number, age and abilities of children
- number and positioning of educators
- current activity of each child
- areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility)
- developmental profile of each child and of the group of children
- experience, knowledge and skill of each educator
- need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies).

It is expected that educators will:

- Maintain constant communication with all team members to ensure constant supervision.
- Actively engage with children.
- Be physically present and position themselves to maximise visual supervision.
- Be in a position to respond to individual needs in a timely manner.
- Maintain an awareness of activity levels and changes to these.
- Listen and respond to increased noise levels.
- Align program decision making regarding activities and experiences, to supervision requirements.
- Use communication skills and verbal responses to supervision issues and intervene where necessary.
- Regularly scan and visually monitor play spaces.
- Anticipate likely hazards.
- Not use personal mobile phones while working with children.
- Avoid carrying out activities that may draw their attention away from active supervision, e.g. cleaning, reading and limiting use of service phone to urgent calls and messages, and agreeing to call people back at an appropriate time.
- Conduct regular headcounts during the day to ensure the presence of each and every child.

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Attachment 11c - Supervision risk management template

Area/equipment	Potential supervision risk	Action to reduce or eliminate risk
Fixed equipment e.g. swings, fixed climbing equipment, slides etc.		
Layout of the internal and/or external areas of the service including a description of areas that provide challenges to supervision e.g. children's bathrooms, L-shaped playgrounds or playrooms, behind structures or features in the playground etc.		
Staff supervision responsibilities including: quiet/active learning spaces; during indoor and outdoor programs; specific programmed experiences; and the supervision of students and volunteers		
Potential hazards e.g. protruding tree roots, small pieces of equipment etc.		
Arrival and departure of children		

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