

Acorn Child Care Centres

Policies and Procedures



2.10.2 Death of a Child

Background

The death of any child can have a profound effect on those who have known that child. It is an unfortunate event that occurs rarely in early education and care services, but services need to be prepared so that they respond in a way that upholds the dignity of the child, and the wellbeing of those affected.

Policy statement

This Policy is to be followed in the event of the death or serious injury to a child at the Service. It is intended to: encourage staff to respond in a calm, professional and planned manner which prioritises the needs and dignity of the child and the family; minimise possible distress to other children, staff and bystanders; ensure all relevant people and authorities are advised in a timely manner and in accordance with the law; and, ensure all required documentation is completed and stored confidentially.

Strategies and practices

In the event of a child who is not breathing being found in the Service:

- The staff member finding the child will strictly follow the Non-Responsive Child/Person - Procedure. QA 2.3.3, 7.3.5
- The Nominated Supervisor will call the parents of the child, calmly advise that the child has been taken to hospital by ambulance, and arrange to meet them at the hospital. QA 2.1.1, 6.1.2
- The Nominated Supervisor – or a staff member delegated – will accompany the child in the ambulance and remain with the child until the parent(s) arrives. QA 2.3.1, 2.3.2
- Medical staff will advise parents of the child's condition. In the event of a death, staff may not give this information to parents because only a medical professional can pronounce a death. QA 6.3.1
- If the child has been transported via ambulance to hospital, the immediate Service environment is not to be cleaned or otherwise disturbed until the Nominated Supervisor gives the clearance. The police and other relevant authorities may need to undertake a detailed investigation. QA 2.3.3
- The Nominated Supervisor will notify the Approved Provider of any death or serious injury. Either the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor will notify the Regulatory Authority as soon as practicable but within 24 hours of the pronouncement of death, and submit the Reporting of Serious Injury or Death Form. QA 7.3.2, 7.3.3
- If death has been pronounced, the Nominated Supervisor will notify the police of a death in the Service, and follow police instructions. The Nominated Supervisor will also notify Workplace Health and Safety, as well as the Service's insurance company. QA 7.3.2, 7.3.3

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- The Approved Provider or, if delegated, the Nominated Supervisor are the only persons to comment on the incident. No other staff member is to provide information about the incident to the family concerned, to other families, or to the media. In addition, no staff member is to make public comment or admit liability for the incident. QA 4.2.1., 5.2.3
- The Service's Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record will be completed as soon as practicable after the event. All staff directly involved will prepare and sign statements listing the sequence of events and actions taken. All documentation including copies of forms will be filed in accordance with the Service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*. QA 7.3.1, 7.3.2
- The Service will support the family with sympathy and in every reasonable way. QA 6.2.2
- In the event of a death at the Service, the Service will provide staff with immediate debriefing and counselling from a suitably qualified professional. QA 7.3.2

Additional safe practices for babies

- No additional practices required.

Responsibilities of parents

- N/A

Links to other policies

- Evacuation and Lockdown Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

Sources, Further reading and useful websites

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011.
- Office for Early Education and Care (Queensland) – <http://deta.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/>
- St John (2013). *Factsheets*.

http://www.stjohn.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=22&Itemid=34

accessed 24 November 2013

- Workplace Health and Safety Queensland – <http://www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/>
- WorkCover Queensland – <http://www.workcoverqld.com.au/>

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- Date(s) reviewed:

15/03/2016							
15/03/2017							
06/09/2018							
15/07/2019							

Next review Date: 15/07/2020