

Acorn Child Care Centres

Policies and Procedures



2.17 Animals

Background

Contact with animals and caring for them increase children's awareness of the interdependence of creatures, humans and the physical environment, and is beneficial to the children.

Policy statement

This Policy sets out the clear guidelines needed to ensure the safety of the children and the wellbeing of animals kept at or brought into the Service.

Strategies and practices

- At enrolment, parents are asked to inform the Service if their child has any allergy to animals. All staff are notified and details of the allergy are displayed throughout the Service. Animals are kept inaccessible to children with pet allergies. QA 2.1.1
- Children are supervised at all times whilst handling animals at the Service. QA 2.3.1, 2.3.2
- Due to the high risk of disease transmission for children under 5 years, reptiles and amphibians are not brought into the Service by other than qualified Rangers. Children are discouraged from handling these creatures or their containers. QA 2.3.2
- Any animal or pet kept at the Service is given food and water regularly and its enclosure is kept clean. QA 2.1.3, 3.1.2
- Pet food is stored in a place inaccessible to children, as is any equipment needed to care for it. QA 2.3.2
- All pet cages and containers are secured so as not to be a hazard. QA 2.3.2
- Educators intentionally teach children to respect all animals and how to handle and care for them. Educators also teach children that not all animals are friendly, and to always check with an animal's owner before petting the animal. QA 2.3.2
- Animals and pets are kept away from:
 - Where any child eats or sleeps
 - Food preparation areas
 - Children's toilet and hand washing facilities
 - Children's hand washing sinks
 - Other areas that cannot be cleaned and sanitised readily (e.g. carpets)
 - Sandpits. QA 3.1.2
- All persons including children wash their hands immediately after they have touched an animal, and children are taught the reasoning for this. QA 2.1.3, 2.3.2

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- In the event of a child being scratched or bitten by an animal and the skin penetrated, the wound will be cleansed with soap and water immediately and appropriate antiseptic applied. An Incident, Injury Trauma and Illness Report will be completed, and the parent contacted and advised to take the child to a medical practitioner. QA 2.1.4
- Children's pets can only be brought into the Service with prior permission from the Nominated Supervisor. The owner remains responsible for the pet at all times it is in the Service. QA 2.3.2
- Any pet brought to the Service other than for an approved visit must be tethered outside the Service and out of the reach of children. QA 2.3.2

Responsibilities of parents

- To obtain prior permission from the Nominated Supervisor before bring any pet to the Service. The owner remains responsible for the pet at all times it is in the Service.
- To tether outside the Service and out of the reach of children any pet brought to the Service for other than an approved visit.

Links to other policies

- Handwashing Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Supervision Policy

Sources, Further reading and useful websites

- Early Years Learning Framework 2009.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011.
- My Time, Our Place 2009.
- Queensland Health. (2008). Infection control guidelines for animal contact: Education and childcare services http://www.health.qld.gov.au/ph/documents/cdb/zoo_guidelines.pdf accessed 21 November 2012
- Animal Ethics Committee – www.decs.sa.gov.au/animalethics
- Department of Environment and Primary Industries – State Government of Victoria. (2013). *Pets in Victoria*. <http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/pets> accessed 21 November 2013
- National Health and Medical Research Council. (2012). *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*. 5th edition.

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- http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/publications/attachments/ch55_staying_healthy_cildcare_5th_edition_0.pdf accessed 21 November 2013
- Kidsafe – <http://www.kidsafe.com.au>
- NSW Government Health. (2005). *Petting zoos and personal hygiene*. <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/Petting-zoos-and-personal-hygiene.aspx> accessed 21 November 2013
- Owens, A. (2007). *NCAC Factsheet: Animals and domestic pets*. http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/educator-resources/factsheets/fdcqa_factsheet_11.pdf accessed 21 November 2013

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