

Acorn Child Care Centres

Policies and Procedures



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2.19 Dangerous Products, Plants, Vermin and Objects

Background

The Early Years Learning Framework, as well as My Time, Our Place and the various state and kindergarten guidelines

emphasise the importance of the physical environment in children's learning. According to these documents, children's

capacity to understand and respect the social and natural environments is fostered in those environments where

children can explore and make choices, including those that challenge their physical capabilities. Further, their

competence, confidence and independence are supported.

Young children, however, have limited understanding of the potential dangers of certain products, plants and objects in

the environment and must rely on adults to ensure the environment is safe for them.

Policy statement

This Policy outlines the precautions the Service takes to ensure potentially dangerous products, plants and objects are

inaccessible to children, and the plans it has in place in the unlikely event of a child having contact with one of these

items.

Strategies and practices

- During their orientation, all staff are made aware of the need to strictly adhere to the contents of this Policy, and the Policy is discussed during team meetings, at staff appraisals and as and when required. QA 2.3.1, 2.3.2
- The Service maintains an up-to-date list of all chemicals and cleaning agents used in the Service. Material Safety

Data Sheets (MSDS), together with any additional first-aid instructions required, are maintained for each item,

and kept wherever potentially hazardous materials are stored in the Service. The MSDS are filed in a way that

staff can readily retrieve the information in an emergency. In such emergency, staff follow the procedures

detailed on the particular MSDS. In addition, staff seek advice from the Poisons Information Service whose

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number is posted beside the Service telephone. QA 2.3.2, 2.3.3

- All potentially hazardous materials are kept in locked child-proof cupboards and, wherever possible, beyond the reach of children, when not being used. Only frequently used items are stored in the rooms that children access. QA 2.3.2
- All bulk chemicals are stored in their original containers in cupboards which are not accessible to children. Access to this room is restricted to staff. Warning notices are displayed. Clear warning signs are displayed wherever potentially hazardous materials are stored. As part of the program, educators discuss with the children various safety issues relating to hazardous materials, poisonous plants and other dangers such as vermin. QA 2.3.2
- Wherever possible, hazardous products are kept in their original labelled container. When decanted, the alternative container is clearly labelled with the product name as written on the supplier's label. Staff check all labels regularly for legibility. QA 2.3.2
- When using any hazardous products, all staff follow the instructions on the labels. Staff members who cannot understand the instructions seek guidance from other staff. QA 2.3.2
- Hazardous products and chemicals are disposed of in strict accordance with the instructions on the labels. QA 2.3.2
- Staff conduct daily safety checks of the building and outdoor play areas for foreign objects, vermin, sharps, possible harmful plants or damaged equipment. Refer to the Service's Safe Play Spaces Policy. QA 3.1.2
 - The Service is treated by a pest controller licensed by the relevant state health authority, when necessary. The Service maintains a record of the chemicals used by the pest controller and the frequency of use. QA 3.1.2
 - The Service maintains a record of the products used by the cleaners and the frequency of use. QA 2.3.2
 - The Service's Administration of Medication Policy contains guidelines for parents when bringing medications into the Service, and for the staff handling and storing these medications. QA 2.1.1, 2.3.2
 - Any item brought into the Service is checked by educators to ensure it does not pose any danger to children, and any identified risk discussed with the family to ensure they are aware of the danger and why the item cannot be left at the Service. QA 2.3.2
 - Safety plugs are fitted to all low power points. Electrical appliances are inaccessible to children. All electrical appliances are appropriately 'tested and tagged' annually. QA 2.3.2
 - The Service minimises the use of plastic bags, and these are stored inaccessible to children. When used for soiled clothing, the bags are kept out of reach of children. QA 2.3.2
 - The centre is aware of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, 2011 which requires that any childcare centre "must not have any plants accessible to children that are poisonous or otherwise pose an unacceptable danger to the children". As such there are no plants at the centre which are considered poisonous or harmful to children. Any new plants or trees are considered for their suitability at a child care centre.
 - Poisonous and hazardous plants are identified and action taken in accordance with advice from the Poisons Information Service (Telephone 13 11 26). Educators intentionally teach children of the danger posed by these plants. QA 2.3.3

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- In the event of a sharp/dangerous object such as razor or knife blade or broken glass being found at the Service, the item is disposed of safely wrapped into an external bin at the centre. QA 2.2.3
- In the event of a hypodermic needle being found at the Service

Educators:

- Do not attempt to pick up the syringe
- Remove children from the area and keep them away until the needle has been removed
- Notify the Nominated Supervisor immediately
 - The Nominated Supervisor will:
- Call the sharps hotline to find out how and where to safely dispose of the syringe Act according to advice from the hotline. QA 2.3.3, 6.3.4
- In the event of vermin being found at the Services:

Educators:

- Do not attempt to pick up or kill the vermin
- Remove the children from the area and keep them away until the vermin has been removed
- Notify the Nominated Supervisor immediately
 - The Nominated Supervisor will:
- Call the contracted pest controller on the emergency list displayed beside the telephone
- Act according to advice from the pest controller. QA 2.3.3, 6.3.4
- In the event of a snake being found at the Service

Educators:

- Do not attempt to pick up or kill the snake
- Remove the children from the area and keep them away until the snake has been removed, or
- the Nominated Supervisor gives direction to the contrary
- Notify the Nominated Supervisor immediately
 - The Nominated Supervisor will:
- Call the relevant herpetologist/wildlife authority on the emergency list displayed beside the telephone
- Act according to the advice from that authority. QA 2.3.3, 6.3.4

Responsibilities of parents

- To follow the Service's Administration of Medication Policy at all times. In particular, to ensure medication is never left in children's bags but handed directly to educators.
- To refer to educators all play items being brought into the Service.

Links to other policies

- Administration of Medication
- Cleaning Policy
- Safe Play Spaces Policy
- Supervision Policy

Sources, Further reading and useful websites

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- DET Education. (2012). Health & Safety Factsheet: Safe handling & disposal of needles and syringes. <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/pdfs/healthsafety/usedneedles-factsheet.pdf> accessed 22 November 2013
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011
- RSPCA. (2011). There’s a snake in my backyard what should I do? http://kb.rspca.org.au/Theres-a-snake-in-mybackyard-what-should-I-do_443.html accessed 22 November 2013
- Snake Catchers by Areas Queensland. (2013). <http://www.snakecatchers.com/snakeremoval/index.php> accessed 22 November 2013
- Environment and Resource Management. http://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/wildlife/livingwith/snakes/frequently_asked_questions.html accessed 22 November 2013
- Kids Health. (2011). Fact Sheet: Poisonous or harmful plants. <http://kidshealth.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/sites/kidshealth.chw.edu.au/files/fact-sheets/pdf/poisonousplants.pdf> accessed 22 November 2013
- Kidsafe – <http://www.kidsafe.com.au/> Queensland Health. (2008). Basic First Aid for poisoning by plants or fungi. http://www.health.qld.gov.au/poisonsinformationcentre/plants_fungi/firstaid.asp accessed 22 November 2013
- Queensland Health – <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/>
- Queensland Poisons Information Service – www.health.qld.gov.au
- Snake Catchers – www.snakecatchers.com/index.html
- Wildlife-RSPCA – www.rspcaqld.org.au/en/WildlifeQueensland

15/03/2016							
15/04/2017							
28/02/2019							

Next Review Date: 28/02/2020