Wheelers Hill Child Care Centre
303-307 Jells Road, Wheelers Hill VIC 3150 – (03) 9561 7789
wheelershillccc@bigpond.com
www.wheelershillchildcare.com.au

Sleep and Rest for Children

POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT
Our organisation ensures the safety, health and wellbeing of all children attending our service and provides appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation. In providing for children's sleep and rest, the safety, rights and best interests of children are the paramount consideration.

BACKGROUND
The *Education and Care Services National Regulations* requires approved providers to ensure their services have policies and procedures in place for children's sleep and rest. This policy sets out how the organisation provides regular sleep and rest periods which follow recommendations on safe sleeping practices for infants and children, and takes into consideration the ages, development and needs of individual children and their families.

LEGISLATION
- National Law Act – 165, 167
- National Regulations – 77, 81, 82, 84, 84A–84C, 87, 103, 105–107, 110, 115, 162, 168, 170–172
- National Quality Standard – 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 5.1.2, 6.1.2, 6.1.3, 7.1.3

RELEVANT POLICIES
- Administration of First Aid
- Dealing with Complaints
- Dealing with Infectious Diseases
- Dealing with Medical Conditions
- Emergency and Evacuation
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Governance and Management
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing
- Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness
- Interactions with Children
- Providing a Child-Safe Environment
- Staffing Arrangements

LOCATION OF INFORMATION
- Centre Policy and Procedure Handbook
- Wheelers Hill Child Care Centre Website

MONITORING AND REVIEW
This policy is required to be reviewed at least annually by the approved provider, in conjunction with nominated supervisors, responsible persons, educators, staff members, parents, guardians, families and children.

To be Reviewed: May 2027

Dates of Review:
July 2026
January 2025
January 2024
January 2023
January 2022

Sleep and Rest for Children

PROCEDURES

Our organisation defines 'rest' as a period of inactivity, solitude, calmness or tranquillity, and can include a child being in a state of sleep. Considering the busy and energetic nature of a child's day, we feel that it is important for children to participate in a quiet rest period during the day in order to rest, relax and recharge their body. Effective rest and sleep procedures are important factors in ensuring a child feels secure and safe in an early childhood environment.

ASSESSING RISK FOR SLEEP AND REST TIMES

- The approved provider must conduct a sleep and rest risk assessment at least once every 12 months, and as soon as practicable after becoming aware of any circumstance that may affect the safety, health and wellbeing of children during sleep and rest.

- The risk assessment may include, but not be limited to:
  - Individual needs of the children
  - Location of the sleep and rest space
  - Environment
  - Equipment used
  - Supervision practices
  - Ventilation & lighting
  - Staff understanding of the *Sleep and Rest for Children* policy
  - The number, ages and developmental stages of children in each sleep and rest area
  - Children's health care needs, cultural preferences and any requests from families about their child's sleep and rest
  - Staffing arrangements for supervising and monitoring children, including the knowledge and training of the staff supervising
  - The safety and suitability of cots, beds and bedding for each child's age and developmental stage
  - Potential hazards in sleep and rest areas or on a child during sleep and rest, e.g., clothing, jewellery, dummy chains
- A record of each sleep and rest risk assessment is kept, in line with Regulation 84C.

SAFE EQUIPMENT

- All equipment used must meet Australian Standards for sleep.

- Bassinets, hammocks, bouncers, prams and strollers are not considered safe equipment to sleep in and cannot be considered a substitute for a cot. Bassinets are prohibited in the service.

- Equipment will not be used in a way that it was not originally intended.

- Equipment will not be used if it has been recalled.

- Ensure mattresses are kept in good condition. They should be clean, firm and flat, and fit a cot base with not more than a 20mm gap between the mattress sides and ends.

- Mattresses should never be elevated or tilted.

- Portacots should only be used as a temporary measure, if all regular cots are unavailable.

CHILDREN IN COTS

- Children will not be put in cots or to bed with bottles. They will be given their bottles before going to bed.
- On occasions where staff are unable to remain beside children who are sleeping or resting, staff will ensure they are always within sight and hearing distance.
- Children will be physically checked on at least every 10 minutes by checking the rise and fall of their chests and their lip and skin colour.
- CCTV, audio monitors and heart monitors are not used at the service. Children are always physically checked by staff.
- Ensure that cot mattresses are clean, firm and the correct size for the cot frame.
- Make up cots that comply with Red Nose and SIDS safe sleeping guidelines.
- Babies or children should not share cots, beds or bedding at any time.
- Babies will be placed on their backs to sleep but they will be able to find their own sleeping position once they are able to roll and change position.
- No loose bedding is to be available to the child.
- Bed linen will be firmly tucked under the mattress to reduce the risk of the child covering their face.
- Put the baby's feet at the bottom of the cot so the baby cannot slip down under the covers.
- Tuck the baby in securely so bed linen is not loose.
- Remove doonas, duvets, pillows and cot bumpers from the cot.
- Encourage the use of sleeping bags for babies with fitted neck and armholes so there is no risk of the child's face being covered.
- If a baby is not being wrapped at home, this should not be introduced or practiced in early childhood services.
- Securely lock cot sides into place to ensure children's safety.
- Be aware of manual handling practices when lifting babies in and out of cots.

BABIES AND TODDLERS

- Babies should be placed on their back to sleep when first being settled. Once a baby has been observed to repeatedly roll from back to front and back again on their own, they can be left to find their own preferred sleep or rest position.

- Babies aged younger than 5–6 months, who have not been observed to repeatedly roll from back to front and back again on their own, should be re-positioned onto their back when they roll onto their front or side.

- If a medical condition exists that prevents a baby from being placed on their back, the alternative practice should be confirmed in writing with the service, by the child's medical practitioner.

- At no time should a baby's face or head be covered, *e.g., with linen or a sleep toy*.

- To prevent a baby from wriggling down under bed linen, they should be positioned with their feet at the bottom of the cot.

- If a dummy falls out of a baby's mouth during sleep, it should not be re-inserted.
- If a baby is wrapped when sleeping, consider the baby's stage of development. Leave their arms free once the startle reflex disappears at around three months of age, and discontinue the use of a wrap when the baby can roll from back to tummy to back again (usually four to six months of age).

- Use only lightweight wraps such as cotton or muslin.

CHILDREN AGED 3-5 YEARS

- Current recommendations for children aged 3-5 years suggest that around 10-13 hours of sleep each day is typical. This is primarily made up of night-time sleep, but for some children will also include a daytime nap. For children who do nap during this period, the average duration of napping is around 1 hour.

- Children who no longer need a nap, or at least don't need one every day, should still be offered some time during the day for rest, recuperation, or to have 'down time' to relax. They can be encouraged to socialise with peers through quiet games, puzzles and books.

- It is normal for children in this age group to no longer need a daytime sleep.

TRANSITION TO SLEEP AND REST

- Children's faces and hands are to be washed before transitioning to sleep or rest. Encourage older children to do this for themselves.

- Remove excess clothing including hooded clothing, jewellery, *e.g., amber teething necklaces and bracelets*, bibs and shoes from all children. Encourage older children to do this for themselves.

- Ensure clothing is appropriate to the season and room temperature. If children change clothes, respect their need for privacy.

- Ensure staff are always within sight and hearing distance of sleeping and resting children. There must be sufficient lighting for staff to be able to assess the colour of children's skin and enable children to undertake quiet activities.

- Provide well-ventilated areas for sleeping and resting.

- Children can use safe security items, *e.g., dummies, soft toys*, at sleep and rest times to ensure they feel safe and secure in their environment. However, safe sleeping recommendations must be adhered to, and children are to be physically checked on as per active supervision procedures.

SUPERVISION DURING SLEEP AND REST

- The space used for rest and sleep will have adequate light and ventilation so staff can supervise each child effectively.
- Active supervision will take place when children are sleeping or resting so that staff can monitor their safety and wellbeing, and respond immediately when a child is distressed or in a hazardous situation.
- Children will be physically checked on at least every 10 minutes by checking the rise and fall of their chests and their lip and skin colour.

TRANSITION FROM SLEEP AND REST

- Acknowledge children as they wake.
- Dress children once they are awake and alert. Ensure children's clothing is appropriate to the season and temperature. Encourage older children to dress themselves. If children change clothes, respect their need for privacy.
- Prior to children moving to quiet learning experiences, encourage them to remove the bed linen and place it in their sleep bag.
- Store linen appropriately to prevent cross contamination.
- Clean mattresses with an approved disinfectant and store safely at the end of rest time.
- Linen is to be laundered after the child's last day of attendance each week. It is not to be shared by children without prior washing.
- Remake cot if the baby is returning to the service the following day. If not, prepare the cot for the baby in attendance on the next day.
- Sanitise the mattress after the child's last day of attendance for the week with an approved disinfectant. If a mattress or bed is soiled at any time, an approved disinfectant must be used for cleaning to minimise contamination.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

- Our organisation will consult with families about their child's individual sleep requirements, ensuring sensitivity to the different values, parenting beliefs, cultural practices or opinions associated with sleep and rest.
- Current safe sleeping recommendations state that nothing is to be placed around the neck of a sleeping child as this could tighten during sleep, make breathing difficult and may even lead to strangulation. This includes amber teething necklaces and cultural necklaces. Items such as these will be removed when a child is sleeping or resting.
- If there is conflict with current safe sleeping recommendations, the approved provider will determine if there are exceptional circumstances that allow for alternate practices, and if these are supported by the recommendations of the child's medical practitioner.
- Raise awareness about contemporary sleep and rest practices that are being modelled in the service as well as sharing this policy.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Approved Provider	• Ensure that the needs for sleep and rest of children are met, having regard to the ages, developmental stages and individual needs of the children.
	• Ensure that children's health, safety and wellbeing are upheld at all times.
	• Ensure all equipment meets Australian Standards.
	• Ensure there are adequate numbers of cots, cot mattresses, beds and bedding available to children that meet Australian Standards, and are in great condition.
	• Ensure that environments being used for sleep and rest:
	  ○ are well-ventilated
	  ○ have adequate natural light
	  ○ are maintained at a temperature that ensures the safety and wellbeing of children
	  ○ are designed to facilitate supervision
	  ○ are kept free from cigarette, tobacco or vapour smoke.
	• Ensure this policy reflects current legislative requirements, research, and recommendations from recognised authorities.
	• Ensure staff are not expected to endorse practices requested by a family, if they are different from current safe sleeping recommendations.
	• Conduct a sleep and rest risk assessment at least once every 12 months, or as soon as practicable after becoming aware of any circumstance that may affect the safety, health and wellbeing of children during sleep and rest.
	• Ensure that all children who choose to rest or sleep are actively supervised and physically checked at least every 10 minutes.
	• Ensure sleep and rest is never used as a reward or withheld as punishment.
	• Ensure that bassinets are not at the service.
	• Enforce and follow all safe sleeping recommendations in this policy.
	• Read, understand, follow and enforce the organisation's policies and procedures.

Nominated Supervisors and Responsible Persons	• Ensure that the needs for sleep and rest of children are met, having regard to the ages, developmental stages and individual needs of the children.
	• Ensure that children's health, safety and wellbeing are upheld at all times.
	• Maintain up to date knowledge regarding safe sleeping recommendations and communicate this with staff and families.
	• Provide staff with an induction that includes a comprehensive overview of the *Sleep and Rest for Children* policy.
	• Monitor staff practice to ensure it meets the requirements of this policy, and provide additional and ongoing education, training and support where required.
	• Ensure that all children who choose to rest or sleep are actively supervised and physically checked at least every 10 minutes.
	• Ensure the educational program provides opportunities for each child to sleep, rest and relax as required, based on each child's requirements and preferences.
	• Ensure there are adequate numbers of cots, cot mattresses, beds and bedding available to children that meet Australian Standards, and are in great condition.
	• Ensure that environments being used for sleep and rest:
	  ○ are well-ventilated
	  ○ have adequate natural light
	  ○ are maintained at a temperature that ensures the safety and wellbeing of children

	○ are designed to facilitate supervision ○ are kept free from cigarette, tobacco or vapour smoke. • Ensure sleeping or resting children have their face uncovered at all times. • Provide families with an overview of the *Sleep and Rest for Children* policy during enrolment and orientation. • Negotiate sleep and rest routines and practices with families to reach agreement on how these can occur for each child at the service. • Remind families that children will never be forced to sleep nor prevented from sleeping. • Ensure staff are not expected to endorse practices requested by a family, if they are different from current safe sleeping recommendations. • Ensure sleep and rest is never used as a reward or withheld as punishment. • Enforce and follow all safe sleeping recommendations in this policy. • Read, understand, follow and enforce the organisation's policies and procedures.
Educators and Staff Members	• Enforce and follow all safe sleeping recommendations in this policy. • Ensure that the needs for sleep and rest for children are met, taking into account the ages and development of each child. • Provide families with an overview of the *Sleep and Rest for Children* policy during enrolment and orientation. • Consult with families about children's sleep and rest needs. • Identify and remove potential hazards from sleep environments. • Ensure children's clothing is appropriate during sleep times and does not have any items that are loose and could get tangled and restrict breathing, *e.g., bibs, jewellery* • Arrange beds and cots in a way that will allow easy access to any child, an easy exit for any child, & reduce the risk of cross infection between children. • Ensure that children who do not sleep or rest have opportunities to play and learn, whilst ensuring it doesn't impact on the comfort of sleeping children. • Promote children's agency and decision making by providing routines and environments that facilitate rest and sleep opportunities. • Respond to children's individual cues for sleep, *e.g., yawning, rubbing eyes, disengagement from activities, crying etc.* • Actively supervise and physically check on sleeping or resting children at least every 10 minutes by checking the rise and fall of their chests and their lip and skin colour. • Remain within sight and hearing distance of children who are sleeping or resting. • Provide a comfortable, quiet place for children to sleep or rest at any time. • If sleeping outdoors, consider weather conditions, *e.g., too cold, too hot, possible rain, UV levels* • Respect a child's dignity and rights by ensuring children: ○ who are older have independent and safe access to beds and bedding that is age and size appropriate ○ are not expected or forced to rest on a bed if they choose not to ○ are not patted or rocked to sleep against their will ○ do not have their eyes physically closed by staff ○ are given time and encouragement to make and pack away their own bed and bedding • Ensure a child's comfort by: ○ encouraging children to dress appropriately for the room temperature

	○ removing shoes and restrictive clothing ○ monitoring the room temperature ○ maintaining clean and hygienic cots, beds, bedding and mattresses • Create a relaxing and comfortable environment that is safe and cosy by: ○ ensuring the location is safe and comfortable ○ adjusting lighting or turning lights off, ensuring there is enough natural light to be able to see all children and staff clearly ○ being nearby or sitting next to the child's bed or cot ○ considering the texture, colour and quality of bedding ○ considering the fabrics, furnishings, smell, noise, location and temperature ○ playing soft music or reading stories ○ ensuring clothing and bedding is comfortable and adequate ○ not forcing children to sleep or preventing them from sleeping ○ having a program that reflects the varied sleep requirements of babies and children ○ keeping staff conversations and noise levels to a minimum • Remember that children do not need to be "patted" to sleep. By providing a quiet, tranquil and comfortable environment, children will choose to sleep if their body needs it. However, if a child would like to be patted, that is ok. • Sleep and rest should never be used as a reward or withheld as punishment. • Read, understand, follow and enforce the organisation's policies and procedures.
Parents, Guardians and Families	• Keep the service updated on their child's sleep and rest requirements. • Discuss their child's sleeping routines with staff. • Work in partnership with staff to ensure their child has consistent routines and settles into care with minimal stress. • Provide informal updates on the previous night's sleep to assist with sleeping during the day. • Provide supportive documentation from their medical practitioner if they request sleep and rest practices that differ from current safe sleeping recommendations. • Understand that children will never be forced to sleep nor prevented from sleeping. • Dress child appropriately for the weather conditions and provide additional clothing. • Read, understand and follow the organisation's policies and procedures.

SOURCES

- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
- ACECQA: *Sleep and Rest for Children* – August 2023
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 – September 2023
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics 2016
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 – July 2023
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 – July 2023
- Guide to the National Quality Framework 2018 – July 2023
- Kidsafe
- NSW Government: *Safe Sleep and Rest* – April 2023

- Queensland Government: *Sleep Learning for Education Professionals* – September 2023
- Red Nose Australia
- Victorian Government: *Sleep and Rest in Early Childhood Services* – April 2023