

Dangerous Products, Plants, Vermin and Objects

Montessori Works



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.
- 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 an emergency, staff follow the procedures detailed on the particular MSDS. In addition, staff seek advice from the Poisons Information Service whose number is posted beside the Service telephone.
- All potentially hazardous materials are kept beyond the reach of children, preferably in child-proof cupboards, when not being used. In addition, only frequently used items are stored in the rooms that children use.
- 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.
- 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, and the date of decanting. Staff check all labels regularly for legibility.

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- 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.
- Hazardous products and chemicals are disposed of in strict accordance with the instructions on the labels.
- 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 *Child Safe Environments Policy*.
- 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.
- In the event of contract cleaners being used, the Service maintains a record of the products used by the cleaners and the frequency of use.
- Natural cleaning products are used wherever their use does not compromise hygiene. Only warm soapy water and non-toxic, natural products are used for cleaning when children are present.
- 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.
- 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.
- Safety plugs are fitted to all power points. Electrical appliances are inaccessible to children. All electrical appliances are appropriately 'tested and tagged' annually.
- Parents are encouraged to use alternatives to plastic wrap when packing children's lunches. Should any child's lunch be wrapped in plastic, staff ensure the wrapping is disposed of and inaccessible to children.
- The Service minimises the use of plastic bags, and these are stored inaccessible to children. When used for soiled clothing, the bags are kept in a sealed container out of reach of children.
- Poisonous and hazardous plants are identified and action taken in accordance with advice from the Poisons Information Hotline (Telephone 13 11 26). Educators intentionally teach children of the danger posed by these plants.
- 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 in the Sharps Disposal Container.
- 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

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- Notify the Nominated Supervisor immediately
- The Nominated Supervisor will:
 - Call the Needle Clean-up Hotline on 1800 633 353.
 - Act according to advice from the hotline.

- 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.

- 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.

Additional safe practices for babies

- No additional practices required.

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.

Procedure and forms

- N/A

Links to other policies

- Administration of Medication
- Child Safe Environments
- Cleaning Policy
- Supervision Policy

Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2011

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Regs	85	Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
	90	Medical conditions policy
	97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
	168	Education and care must have policies and procedures

QA	2.1.1	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation
	2.2.1	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
	2.2.2	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented
	3.1.2	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained
	6.2.3	The service builds relationships and engages with its community

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Guide to the National Quality Framework 2018 (September 2020 Update): Section 4 – Operational Requirements <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-09/Guide-to-the-NQF-September-2020.pdf> accessed 30 December 2020
- NSW Government Health. *Community sharps disposal options in NSW*. <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/csm/Pages/disposal-options.aspx> accessed 30 December 2020
- NSW Government Health. *Community sharps management*. <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/csm/Pages/default.aspx>
- RSPCA. (2011). *There's a snake in my backyard, what should I do?* http://kb.rspca.org.au/Theres-a-snake-in-my-backyard-what-should-I-do_443.html accessed 30 December 2020

Further reading and useful websites (Consistent with the approach of the National Quality Framework, the following references have prioritised efficacy and appropriateness to inform best practice, and legislative compliance over state or territory preferences.)

- Australian Government Department of Health. (2019). *Needle and Syringe Programs: Your Questions Answered*. <http://health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/illicit-pubs-needle-kit-ques-toc~illicit-pubs-needle-kit-ques-con> accessed 30 December 2020
- Kidsafe – <http://www.kidsafe.com.au/> accessed 30 December 2020
- Not Stated. *What snake is that?* <http://www.whatsnakeisthat.com.au> accessed 30 December 2020
- NSW Poisons Information Centre – <https://www.poisonsinfo.nsw.gov.au/> accessed 30 December 2020

Policy review

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur and any issues identified as part the Service's commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

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Version Control

Version	Date Reviewed	Approved By	Comments/Amendments	Next Review Date
1	8 January 2018	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated to changed NQF requirements 1 February 2018. Service to modify policies to its specific needs.	
2	6 September 2019	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated references.	
3	30 December 2020	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated references.	
4	August 2022	Susan Chahwan	Adapted NSW ACA policy	