

Montessori Works

Background

Children are active little people – constantly learning, playing, watching and interacting with others. It is crucial for their sense of well-being, healthy growth and development to have time away from busy surroundings to rest, to reflect and to imagine. Effective sleep and rest strategies are important factors in ensuring a child is safe and feels secure while at a service.

Policy statement

This Policy sets out how the Service provides regular sleep and rest periods which follow the safe sleeping recommendations of Red Nose, the recognised national authority on safe sleeping practices for infants and children, and take into consideration the ages, development and needs of individual children and their families.

Strategies and practices

- The Service has a prime duty of care to ensure children are provided with a high level of safety when sleeping and resting, and every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and hazard.
- Services consult with parents about their child's particular needs (e.g. sleep patterns and habits, need for a comforter) and family values and parenting beliefs, cultural or otherwise, associated with sleep/rest, and consider these when determining sleep /rest needs.
- Nominated supervisors and educators receive information and training on safe sleep and rest practices, as outlined in the Service's Policy, and are made purposefully aware of their responsibilities in implementing those practices.
- Infants sleep on demand. Toddlers and older children have a scheduled sleep/rest period shortly after lunch. In addition, educators are alert to any indication that a child might need sleep/rest outside of routine. Quiet areas for children to rest or be alone are always available.
- If a family's beliefs and practices conflict with Red Nose, then the Service will only endorse an alternative practice after written advice has been received from the baby's medical practitioner. The Service may also consider undertaking a risk assessment and implementing risk minimisation plans for the baby.
- The Red Nose Safe Sleeping Poster is displayed in each sleep room.
- Babies are placed on their backs. Babies who have been observed rolling confidently front to back and back to front are able to be left in the position they roll into as long as they are not wrapped/swaddled or have loose items in the cot with them.
- All children rest with head and faces uncovered.

Sleep and Rest

- Staff ratios are maintained according to the Education and Care Services National Regulations during sleep/rest periods.
- Educators constantly monitor the children (e.g. breathing patterns) and sleep/rest environment (e.g. room temperature).
- Educators should always be within sight and hearing distance from sleeping and resting children.
- Students or volunteers involved are supervised at all times.
- Sleep/rest areas are kept well-ventilated, uncluttered and appropriately lit and, as with all other areas of the Service, are smoke-free.
- Educators ensure children are dressed suitably for the room temperature. Some items of clothing may need to be removed for safety reasons (e.g. tops with hoods and cords that may cause choking). Educators are respectful and sensitive to cultural differences in attitudes to dressing, and encourage children to be independent in dressing at these times.
- Comforters from home will be given to children who need them to settle. However, toys with ribbons, removable parts or parts that can be looped over a child's head cannot be used because of the Service's adherence to the Red Nose guidelines. Babies under the age of 7 months are not to have any loose items.
- To help children relax for sleep/rest, educators dim the lights and may use soft calming music.
- While all children need time to relax at the Service, some do not need to sleep during the day. Rather, they only require a quiet comfortable place to relax.
- Children help educators in setting up the sleep/rest area and the quiet activities for children who do not sleep.
- No child is made to sleep against their wishes or needs, although it is expected that all children will otherwise speak and play quietly at this time in a suitably lit area.
- Children are left to wake of their own accord, and educators attend to and soothe them when they do wake unless a Sleep Plan has been formulated with a child's family.
- In instances where families request that their child remain awake, that child will not be encouraged to sleep (e.g. patted). However, if the child should subsequently fall asleep, educators will not wake that child unless the child has a Sleep Plan that dictates otherwise.
- On those occasions when parents do not supply a bed set, the Service will provide a spare sheet. These sheets are laundered after each child's use.
- The children's mats are cleaned/sprayed daily with a non-rinse disinfectant daily before being stored. The covers of any cushions used for rest and relaxation are washed after each use.

Sleep and Rest

- Sleep mats are positioned so that educators may walk between them to gain easy access to every bed from all four sides.
- Every child's sleep pattern for the day (e.g. time the child went to sleep and woke up) is recorded on the Daily Feedback Board (for children over 2 years) displayed in the child's room (for children under 2 years).
- Educators receive regular first-aid training in resuscitation, and safe sleep practices.

Additional safe resting practices for babies

SUDI (Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy) is the sudden, unexpected death of a baby during sleep. Babies under twelve months are considered to be at greater risk of SUDI than children over twelve months. The Service closely follows the recommendations for safe sleeping practices from Red Nose (formerly SIDS and Kids).

- All children are placed on their back when first being settled for sleep/rest. Babies begin rolling roughly around the age of 4-5 months of age so be sure to take baby out of swaddles and into arms free sleeping bags to allow them to roll safely.
- Should a child need to sleep on their stomach or side for sound medical reasons, the Service will only endorse this alternative practice upon receiving a letter from the child's Doctor stating the need for this alternative sleeping practice and a written permission form from the parents/guardian of the child.
- All children rest with head and face uncovered. Hooded tops, bibs, shoes and any neck jewellery/ bracelets are removed before children are put to rest.
- Children are placed with their feet at the bottom of their mattress, and bedclothes are tucked in securely.
- If parents ask for their infant to be 'wrapped' as a means of settling for sleep, educators ensure that a lightweight wrap is used, the baby is not wrapped too tightly, and that the wrap is kept away from the face.
- Snuggly rugs/blankets and soft toys are not given to children under the age of 7 months old.
- Cot mattresses are sprayed and wiped with a sanitiser and paper towel at the end of a full-time child's week, or after each instance a part-time child has used the cot.
- The sleep/rest area, as are all other areas of the Service, is smoke-free.
- The temperature of the sleep room is monitored to ensure that the child is comfortable at all times. Babies should be dressed appropriately for the environment they are sleeping in.
- The Service has a designated fire cot and the *Service's Evacuation and Lockdown Policy* specifically addresses sleep and rest times.

Additional safe resting practices for a child who is unwell

Sleep and Rest

- Consistent with the Service's Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness and Supervision Policies, children who are unwell are constantly monitored until collected by their parent(s).

Responsibilities of parents

- Upon enrolment, to discuss with educators their child's particular needs (e.g. sleep patterns and habits, need for a comforter) and family values and parenting beliefs, cultural or otherwise, associated with sleep/rest. Update this information in the event of change (e.g. a child becoming anxious about sleep/rest at the Service).
- To supply a bed set consisting of a fitted bottom sheet and a loose top sheet for summer, and a light blanket for winter, and to bring the set to the Service in a draw string bag.
- To take the bed set home at least once a week, launder it, and return it on the day the child next attends the Service.
- To provide any comforters necessary.
- To read the Daily Feedback Board (for children over 2 years) or the child's individual sleeps (for children under 2 years).

Procedures and forms

- Daily Feedback Board
- Red Nose Safe Sleeping Poster

Links to other policies

- Evacuation and Lock Down Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Interactions with Families
- Tobacco, Drug and Alcohol Policy

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

Regulations	81	Sleep and rest
Regulations	97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
Regulations	103	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
Regulations	105	Furniture, materials and equipment
Regulations	110	Ventilation and natural light
Regulations	115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
Regulations	168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures

NQS	QA2.1.1	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation
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Sleep and Rest

NQS	QA2.1.2	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented
NQS	QA2.2.1	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
NQS	QA2.2.2	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented
NQS	QA3.1.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child
NQS	QA3.1.2	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained
NQS	QA3.2.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments

Sources, further reading and useful websites

- ACECQA. (2019). *Safe sleep and rest practices*. <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/supporting-materials/infosheet/safe-sleep-and-rest-practices>
- Australian Competition Consumer Commission Product Safety Australia. *Folding Cots*. <https://www.productsafety.gov.au/products/babies-kids/kids-furniture/folding-cots>
- 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>
- UNICEF. (n.d.). *What is the Convention on the Rights of the Child?* <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text-childrens-version>

Sources, 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.)

- Abbey, B. (2012). *Relaxation is a Must*. http://www.childcarebydesign.com.au/uploads/brenda_abbey_article_relaxation_is_a_must.pdf
- Red Nose – <https://rednose.com.au/section/education> Red Nose - <https://rednose.org.au/article/room-temperature>

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.

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.	

Sleep and Rest

3	29 November 2020	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Added content about a Sleep Plan. Updated references.	
4	30 December 2020	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated references.	
5	1 May 2022	ACA NSW	Updated References Added some information regarding Rednose Safe Sleeping Recommendations. Made some grammatical and sentence structure changes.	
6	August 2022	Susan Chahwan	Adapted ACA NSW policy	