

SAFE TRANSPORTATION POLICY

Transportation of children is sometimes provided as part of our education and care service. Compliance with the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations is mandatory to ensure the safety of children at all times and new provisions and amendments to these regulations are reflected in our procedures and policy for transportation and the safe handover of children.

We acknowledge our ensuring duty of care obligations by adhering to relevant legislation providing adequate supervision of children at all times, maintaining correct educator to child ratios, maintaining accurate attendance records and providing appropriate child restraints for children under our care.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS AND LAW	
4 (1)	Definition regular transportation
85	Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
98	Telephone or other communication equipment
99	Children leaving the education and care service premises
100	Risk assessment must be conducted before excursion
101	Conduct a risk assessment for excursion
102A	Transportation of children other than as part of an excursion
102B	Transport risk assessment must be conducted before service transports child
102C	Conduct of risk assessment for transporting of children by the education and care service
102D	Authorisation for service to transport children
123	Educator to child ratios apply wherever the service is operating

136	First aid qualifications
158	Children's attendance record to be kept by approved provider
161	Authorisations to be kept in enrolment record
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
168(2)(ga)	Education and care service must have policies and procedures (transportation)
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
s165	Failure to adequately supervise children
s167	Failure to take reasonable precautions to protect children from harm and hazards

PURPOSE

We aim to ensure that all children being educated and cared for by our Service are adequately supervised at all times. This includes ensuring educator to child ratios are met whenever and wherever the service is operating including providing transportation as part of our service activity.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

The safety of children enrolled at our service is paramount. Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury. Appropriate safety measures have been implemented through our comprehensive risk assessment process to ensure supervision is adequate at all times including transportation. Educator to child ratios are adhered to in addition to ensuring the maximum numbers on the service approval are not breached at any time. Adequate supervision is therefore not static as it is dependent upon a range of considerations documented in risk assessments.

Definitions (effective 1 October 2020)

Regular outing: in relation to an education and care service, means a walk, drive or trip to and from a destination

- (a) that the service visits regularly as part of its educational program; and

- (b) where the circumstances relevant to the risk assessment are *substantially* the same on each outing

Regular transportation: in relation to an education and care service, means the transportation by the service or arranged by the service (other than as part of an excursion) of a child being educated and cared for by the service, where the circumstances relevant to a risk assessment are *substantially* the same for each occasion on which the child is transported.

Written authorisation: authorisation given by a parent or other person named in the child's enrolment record as having authority to authorise the child being transported by the service or on transportation arranged by the service. If the transportation is regular transportation, the authorisation is only required to be obtained once in a 12-month period. The authorisation must state:

- a) the child's name; and
- b) the reason the child is to be transported; and
- c) if the authorisation is for a regular outing, a description of when the child is to be taken on the regular outings; and
- d) if the authorisation is **not** for a regular transportation, the date the child is to be transported; and
- e) a description of the proposed pick-up location and destination; and
- f) the means of transport; and
- g) the period of time during which the child is to be transported; and
- h) the anticipated number of children likely to be transported; and
- i) the anticipated number of staff members and any other adults who will accompany and supervise the children during the transportation; and
- j) any requirements for seatbelts or safety restraints under a law of each jurisdiction in which the children are being transported; and
- k) that a risk assessment has been prepared and is available at the education and care service; and
- l) that written policies and procedures for transporting children are available at the education and care service.

Transport specific risk assessment

As per the Education and Care Services National Law, our service will '*ensure that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children...from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury*' (Section 167).

Our Service will conduct comprehensive transport specific risk assessments to minimize and manage all potential risks for transporting children before authorisation is sought to transport a child. [Reg. 102B, 102D(4)].

A risk assessment will be undertaken at least annually for '*regular transportation*' of children. Each time our Service transports, or arranges, the transport of children as part of an excursion, a new risk assessment will be conducted. All risk assessments will be regularly assessed and evaluated as to facilitate continuous improvement in our service.

Our risk assessment process is guided by will:

- **identify** any hazards or potential hazards that transporting the child may pose to the safety, health and wellbeing of the child
- **assess** the risk of harm or potential harm using a risk matrix
- **specify how the identified risks will be managed** by eliminating or minimising the impact using control measures
- **evaluate** the current risk or potential harm by implementing control measures
- **review** and monitor the risk or potential harm to ensure it continues to be managed as a low risk

source: Risk assessment and management ACECQA (2020)

Our risk assessment will consider:

- a) the proposed route and duration of the transportation; and
- b) the proposed pick-up location and destination; and
- c) the means of transport; and
- d) any requirements for seatbelts or safety restraints (as per the law of our jurisdiction); and
- e) any water hazards; and
- f) the number of adults and children involved in the transportation; and
- g) given the risks posed by transportation, the number of educators or other responsible adults to provide supervision and whether any adults with specialized skills are required; and
- h) whether any items should be readily available during transportation (mobile phone, list of emergency contact numbers) and;
- i) the process for entering and exiting-
 - i. the education and care service premises; and
 - ii. the pick-up location or destination (as required); and
- j) procedures for embarking and disembarking the means of transport, including how each child is to be accounted for on embarking and disembarking.

Management/ Nominated Supervisor will ensure:

- risk assessments are carried out prior to seeking authorisation for transporting children is made with the Approved Provider
- risk assessments for 'regular transportation' are evaluated regularly to ensure potential risks are identified and managed
- risk assessments for 'regular transportation' are reviewed at least annually
- details of the safest route for travel, type of vehicle and required restraints are included in the risk assessment
- every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and hazards likely to cause injury
- adequate supervision is provided (see below)
- compliance with first aid requirements of Regulation 136 are met at all times
- parents/guardians complete a written authorisation for transportation of their child and a copy of this is filed in the child's enrolment record
- children are instructed on processes for entering and exiting the service premises and are aware of the pick-up and destination locations
- children's attendance is checked against an accurate attendance record showing when children are within the care of the service. The record of attendance must record the time that the child arrives and departs the service and signed by the nominated supervisor or educator
- children's attendance is checked by the supervising educator/staff before departure from the designated pick up location and marked as present as they disembark from the vehicle
- procedures for the safe handover of children between the Service and other educational site is documented correctly
- educator to child ratio requirements are maintained at all times, including when children are being transported as part of the service activity
- children exit the vehicle using the 'safety door'
- children wear approved seatbelts/restraints whilst the vehicle is in motion in accordance to [state/territory] Road Rules and Road Transport Act
- children are never left unattended in the vehicle
- education on road safety for children is included in the Service's programming (for example Kids and Traffic, Vic Roads Primary School roads information)
- safety rules are developed with children to ensure a clear understanding of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour

- staff are aware of appropriate procedures to be followed in the event of a vehicle crash involving staff and children from the service
- a working mobile phone or other similar means of communication to communicate with the service, parents/carers is provided in case of emergency
- a list of emergency contact numbers for the children being transported is available
- every effort will be made to notify parents/carers of delays returning to the Service if applicable
- relevant criminal history requirements and Working with Children Checks are made for any person transporting children. WWCC is recorded in staff records
- the person driving the vehicle/bus holds a current Australian driver's licence
- any allegation of misconduct of the educator or staff member will be reported immediately as per the Reportable Conduct Scheme detailed in our Child Protection Policy and/or Child Safe Environment Policy.

Safe Maintenance of Transportation vehicle

Management/Nominated Supervisor will ensure:

- the transportation vehicle is fitted with the required child restraints, approved by the Roads and Traffic Authorities (see Rule 266 of the Australian Road Rules)
- the vehicle has enough fuel to transport the children each day as in accordance to schedule
- the vehicle is registered, roadworthy and insured (general legal requirements and best practice standards are adhered to)
- any repairs are completed as soon as possible by a qualified mechanic
- drivers hold a current Australian driver's licence, licenced to carry the required number of passengers for the vehicle
- in the event of any mechanical or other breakdown, children will be kept safe, comfortable and occupied with suitable activities
- every effort will be made to notify parents/carers of delays returning to the Service if applicable

Management/Nominated Supervisor will ensure:

- adequate supervision is provided when children are being transported. Consideration must include:
 - the number, age and ability of children
 - visibility and accessibility
 - physical positioning of educators
 - risks related to the mode of transportation (including travel on foot)

- risks in the environment, location and while travelling
- the experience, knowledge and skill of each educator.
- an easily recognised and suitably equipped first aid kit is easily accessible during transportation
- educators carry medication, health plans and risk assessments for individual children
- educators are aware of emergency procedures in case of an incident, injury or illness of a child
- at least one staff member accompanying children during transportation holds:
 - an approved first aid qualification and
 - a current approved anaphylaxis management training qualification and
 - an approved emergency asthma management training qualification.

Picking up children and during transportation

- the vehicle/bus will be parked in a safe location where children are not required to cross any roads (if this is unavoidable, a risk assessment and dedicated procedure for crossing the road will be completed)
- a 'head count' and check of the children's attendance record is made by the supervising educator/staff member as children assemble in a predetermined location prior to boarding
- children are continuously supervised during transportation by a designated educator/staff member sitting in a location that provides clear vision of all children
- children are to remain seated and secured in appropriate child restraints until the vehicle/bus has completely stopped
- the designated driver of the vehicle/bus complies with all appropriate road, safety and transport regulations
- under no circumstances will the driver of the vehicle/bus and educators supervising the children use handheld mobile phones unless safely parked
- under no circumstances will the driver and educators/employees supervising children be under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- the designated driver of the vehicle has the right, *if required* to stop in a safe place until the children conform to the safety guidelines. Parents will be notified if their child continues to be challenging and/or behaving in a dangerous manner.

Dropping off children

- children are to remain seated until the vehicle/bus has completely stopped
- a designated educator/staff member will assist children to safely disembark the vehicle/bus
- children will exit the vehicle/bus using the 'safety door' or door located near the kerb

- a 'head count' of children against the attendance record will be checked by the supervising educator/staff as they assemble in a predetermined location at the end of the journey and verified by a witness
- educators/staff conduct a final sweep of the vehicle/bus, checking on and under seats to ensure there are no children or belongings left behind
- once inside (or on location) the children are signed in which will provide an additional attendance check to confirm all are present
- educators will record the time when children are signed in to the service or other venue

Educator/driver will ensure:

- driver's licence is current, and they are licenced to carry the required number of passengers for the purpose
- every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury
- they adhere to the road rules and regulations mandated by law within each state/territory
- children remain seated and do not behave in a dangerous or inappropriate manner
- the vehicle is parked in a secure and safe location for children to access
- the number of passengers does not exceed the legal requirement
- a working mobile phone is taken in case of an emergency
- a fully equipped first aid kit is easily accessible
- educators/drivers wear a high visibility vest
- once all children have exited the vehicle/bus, a final sweep of the vehicle will be made checking that there are no children or belongings left behind

Families will:

- adhere to the *Service's Arrival and Departure Policy* and *Safe Transportation Policy*
- communicate any change in transportation requirements for their child with management/nominated supervisor as soon as they are aware (for example: no transport is required on a particular day as the child has returned home from school due to illness)
- notify the Service if their child is going to be absent on a particular day and not require transport
- ensure written permission for transportation of their child by the Service is granted by either the parent or authorised nominee named in the child's enrolment record
- update emergency contact numbers regularly

Resources

Childcare Centre Desktop

Safe Transportation of Children Module

- Transporting Children Risk Assessment Template
- Safe Transportation Procedure
- Transportation Pick Up/Drop Off Checklist

Kids and Traffic- Early Childhood Road and Safety Education Program

- Transporting children safely- Guidance on Understanding safe transport and travel requirements for education and care service providers (2020).
- Safe Travel and Transport- Advice for working with children, families, schools and communities (2020).

SOURCE

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Government Department of Education Skills and Employment. (2011). *My Time Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia*.

Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2018).

Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2011)

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2018). (Amended 2020).

Kids and Traffic Early Childhood Road Safety Education Program (NSW)

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

Road Transport (Safety & Traffic Management) Act 1999.

Vic Roads- Primary school road safety education resources

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	OCTOBER 2020	NEXT REVIEW DATE	JULY 2021
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• relevant National Law added• clarification of adequate supervision added• additional information re: communication/telephone• additional resources added- Kids and Traffic		

POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE
AUGUST 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New policy created for LDC Links to Regulations added to sources	JULY 2021