

POLICY AIM

To ensure all children have appropriate opportunities to sleep, rest and relax, in accordance with their individual needs and requirements. The sleep environment will also be well supervised ensuring all children feel secure and safe at our services.

RATIONALE

Regular sleep or rest times are essential for healthy development. The risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) for infants will be minimised by following practices and guidelines set out by the national authority on safe sleeping practice for infants and children- *Red Nose* (formerly SIDS and Kids). Our policy sets out quality practice and is informed by recognised and evidence-based principles. Safe Sleep practices are informed by *Red Nose* and guidance from ACEQCA.

If a family's beliefs and requests are against current recommended evidence-based guidelines, each Service will need to determine if there are exceptional circumstances that allow for alternate practices. Our services will only approve an alternative practice if the service is provided with written advice from, and the contact details of a registered medical practitioner accompanied by a risk assessment and risk minimisation plan for individual children.

We have a 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 them from harm and hazard. In meeting each Service's duty of care, it is a requirement that all educators implement and adhere to this policy to ensure we respect and cater for each child's specific needs.

SCOPE - WHO IS AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY?

- Management
- Children
- Educators
- Families
- Students/Volunteers

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD

QUALITY AREA 2 - CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Standard 2.1 (Health) - *Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted*
- Element 2.1.1 (Wellbeing and comfort) - *Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's needs for sleep, rest and relaxation.*
- Standard 2.2 (Safety) - *Each child is protected.*
- Element 2.2.1 (Supervision) - *At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.*

QUALITY AREA 3 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- Standard 3.1 (Design) - *The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service.*
- Element 3.1.2 (Upkeep) - *Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.*

QUALITY AREA 5 - RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN

- Element 5.1.2 (Dignity and Rights of the Child) - *The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.*

RELATED POLICIES & LEGISLATION

RELATED SWEETPEAS POLICIES:

- Administration of First Aid Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Child Safe Environment Policy
- Clothing Policy
- Dental Hygiene Policy
- Emergency and Evacuation Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Tobacco, Drug and Alcohol-Free Environment Policy
- Work Health and Safety Policy

RELATED EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS:

- Law Section 165 - Offence to inadequately supervise children
- Law Section 167 - Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazard
- Regulation 81 - Sleep and Rest
- Regulation 82 - Tobacco, drug and alcohol-free environment
- Regulation 84A - Sleep and rest
- Regulation 84B - Sleep and rest policies and procedures
- Regulation 84C - Risk assessment for purposes of sleep and rest policies and procedures
- Regulation 84D - Prohibition of bassinets
- Regulation 87 - Incident, injury, trauma and illness record
- Regulation 103 - Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
- Regulation 105 - Furniture, materials and equipment
- Regulation 107 - Space requirements-indoor space
- Regulation 110 - Ventilation and natural light
- Regulation 115 - Premises designed to facilitate supervision
- Regulation 168 - Education and care service must have policies and procedures
- Regulation 170 - Policies and procedures to be followed
- Regulation 171 - Policies and procedures to be available
- Regulation 172 - Notification of change to policies or procedures
- Regulation 176 - Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority

TERMINOLOGY

- **Infant** - A young child between the ages of birth and 12 months
- **Red Nose** - Australia's leading authority on safe sleep practices for children
- **Relaxation** - Relaxation or other activity for bringing about a feeling of calm in your body and mind.
- **Rest** - A period of inactivity solitude, calmness or tranquillity and can include a child being in a state of sleep.

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

- **ACECQA** - Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority
- **LDC** - Long Day Care
- **NQF** - National Quality Framework
- **OOSH** - Outside Of School Hours care
- **SIDS** - Sudden Infant Death Syndrome - *The sudden and unexpected death of an infant under one year of age with an onset of a fatal episode occurring during sleep, that remains unexplained after a thorough investigation, including performance of a complete autopsy and review of the circumstances of death and the clinical history.*
- **SUDI** - Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy - *A broad term used to describe the sudden and unexpected death of a baby for which the cause is not immediately obvious.*

IMPLEMENTATION AND STRATEGIES

'Children have different sleep, rest and relaxation needs. Children of the same age can have different sleep patterns that Nominated Supervisors and educators need to consider within the Service. As per Standard 2.1 (Element 2.1.1) of the National Quality Standard, each child's comfort must be provided for and there must be appropriate opportunities to meet each child's sleep, rest and relaxation needs.' (ACECQA).

Sweetpeas 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 children'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 strategies are important factors in ensuring a child feels secure and safe in both an early childhood environment and outside of school hours care, recognising that older children also have a right to rest.

'Children have a right to both passive and active leisure. Children and young people may engage in passive leisure to re-energise or reset, and active leisure including sports, dance and games. Leisure is intrinsically valuable and does not have to be productive.' (My Time, Our Place, p.22)

Our services will consult with families about their child's individual needs, ensuring all parties are aware of the different values, cultural, and parenting beliefs and practices, or opinions associated with sleep and rest requirements.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE APPROVED PROVIDER:

- Take reasonable steps are taken to ensure that the needs for sleep and rest of children being educated and cared for by the Service are met, having regard to the ages, developmental stages and individual needs of each child.
- Ensure all educators and new employees are provided with a copy of this policy as part of their induction program.
- Ensure Nominated Supervisors, educators, staff and volunteers follow the policy and procedures.
- Ensure there are adequate numbers of cots and bedding available to children that meet Australian Standards.
- Ensure sleep and rest environments will be safe and free from hazards including cigarette and tobacco smoke.
- Ensure areas for sleep and rest are well ventilated and have natural lighting.
- Ensure the supervision window (or similar) will be kept clear to ensure safe supervision of sleeping infants.
- Nominated Supervisors and educators are not expected to endorse practices requested by a family if they differ from *Red Nose* (formerly SIDS and Kids) safe sleeping recommendations.
- Ensure a risk assessment is prepared in relation to sleep and rest. Risk assessments must identify and assess risks in relation to sleep and rest and specify how the identified risks will be managed and minimised. The risk assessment must include assessment of the matters set out below and how risks will be managed and minimised:
 - the number, ages and developmental stages of children at the education and care service;
 - the individual sleep and rest needs of children at the service (including specific health care needs, cultural preferences and requests from families);
 - the staffing arrangements required to adequately supervise and monitor all children during periods of sleep and rest;
 - the level of knowledge and training of the staff supervising children during periods of sleep and rest;
 - the location of the sleep and rest areas, and the arrangement of the cots and beds within the areas;
 - the safety of cots, beds and bedding equipment and whether it is appropriate for the ages and developmental stages of the children who will use them;
 - any potential hazards in the sleep and rest areas, cots, beds and bedding equipment;
 - any potential hazards on the child, such as clothing or jewellery;
 - physical safety and suitability of sleep and rest environments, including the temperature, lighting and ventilation of the areas.

Sweetpeas St Marys

- All cots used in our Service will meet the current mandatory Australian Standard for Cots (AS/NZS 2172) and will carry a label to indicate this.
- All portable cots used in our Service will meet the current mandatory Australian Standard for children's portable folding cots, AS/NZS 2195, and will carry a label to indicate this.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/RESPONSIBLE PERSONS:

- Prepare a risk assessment with the Service WHS Officers in relation to sleep and rest, ensuring it includes the matters listed above. This should be reviewed at least once every 12 months, and as soon as practicable after becoming aware of any circumstance that may affect the safety, health or wellbeing of children during sleep and rest.
- Ensure safe sleep practices are documented and shared with families.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that the needs for sleep and rest of children being educated and cared for by the Service are met, having regard to the ages, development stages and individual needs of the children.
- Ensure educators understand and follow the *Sleep and Rest Policy*.

- Maintain up to date knowledge regarding safe sleeping practices and communicate this information to educators and families.
- Provide opportunities for educators to participate in *Red Nose* professional training, where practicable.
- Ensure that bassinets are not on the education and care service premises at any time that children are being educated and cared for by the service.
- Ensure there are appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation including providing children with comfortable spaces away from the main activity area for relaxation and quiet activities.
- Provide children with safe sleeping equipment and environment, including adequate ventilation and adequate lighting to enable effective supervision.
- Negotiate sleep and rest routines and practices with families to reach agreement on how these occur for each child at the Service.
- Ensure they receive information and training to fulfil their role effectively, including being made aware of the sleep and rest policies, their responsibilities in implementing these, and any changes that are made over time.
- Ensure the child's safety is always the first priority.
- Ensure children who are sleeping or resting have their face uncovered at all times.
- Ensure the sleep and rest environment is free from cigarette or tobacco smoke.
- Provide information to parents and families about Safe Sleep practices. (see *Red Nose*)

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- Ensure that sleeping infants are closely monitored and that all sleeping children are within hearing range and observed. This involves physically checking/inspecting sleeping children at regular intervals (10mins) and ensuring that they are always within sight and hearing distance of sleeping and resting children so they can easily monitor a child's breathing and the colour of their skin. It is recommended that educators will not perform administrative duties that would take their attention away from sleeping/resting children.

Sweetpeas OOSH Cranebrook

- Children will be encouraged to engage in leisure and rest on our provided soft furnishings, e.g. beanbags.
- If educators observe a child falling asleep, they will offer the child a bed (sheets provided) for them to rest or sleep on safely. Sleep check responsibilities apply.
- Children may request a bed for sleep or rest at any time, and educators will ensure quiet, calm spaces are provided for children to utilise at their leisure.
- *'Passive leisure is important in helping children and young people to relax and refresh in the hours outside school and during vacation periods. Providing a range of active and passive leisure choices allows children and young people to share experiences that are enjoyable, accessible and engaging. For some children with disabilities or experiencing barriers to participation, reasonable adjustments should be considered.'* (MTO, p.47)

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR EDUCATORS:

General

- Have a thorough understanding of the Service's policy and practices and embed practices to support safe sleep into everyday practice.
- Be sensitive to each child's needs so that sleep and rest times are a positive experience.
- Ensure there are appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.
- Ensure that each child's comfort is provided for.
- Ensure there are no loose aspects of clothing that could entangle the child during sleep/rest (including bibs).
- Encourage children to dress appropriately for the room temperature when resting or sleeping. Lighter clothing is preferable, with children encouraged to remove shoes, jumpers, jackets and bulky clothing. The room temperature will be considered to ensure maximum comfort for children.
- Encourage self-help skills, where possible.

- Remember that children do not need to be “patted” to sleep. By providing a quiet, tranquil environment, children will choose to sleep if their body needs it. Educators may provide additional comfort (such as patting) to children who request it.
- Sit near children who are resting and encourage them to relax and/or listen to music.
- Encourage children to rest their bodies and minds for 20-30 minutes. If children are awake after this time they will be provided with quiet activities for the duration of rest time.
- Ensure no child sleeps in the same room that an adult sleeps in.
- Consider a vast range of strategies to meet children's individual sleep and rest needs.
- Respond to children's individual cues for sleep (yawning, rubbing eyes, disengagement from activities, crying etc).
- Acknowledge children's emotions, feelings and fears in regard to sleep/rest time.
- Develop positive relationships with children to assist in settling children confidently when sleeping and resting.

Sleep Environment and Resources

- Ensure sleep routines are embedded by having routines for each child displayed for all educators.
- Ensure that beds/mattresses are clean and in good repair.
- Report issues with day-to-day sleep practice, environment and equipment to the nominated supervisor.
- Ensure beds and mattresses are wiped over with warm water and neutral detergent solution between each use.
- Ensure that children use their own bed linen provided from home and that their linen is returned to their bags after rest. (LDC only)
- Ensure that bed linen is clean and in good repair.
- Ensure spare bed linen is used by an individual child and is washed before use by another child.
- Arrange children's beds and cots to allow easy access for children and staff.
- Ensure children rest/sleep with their beds/mattresses head to toe to minimise the risk of cross infection.
- Arrange children's beds to allow for appropriate air flow.
- Create a relaxing atmosphere for resting children by playing relaxation music, reading stories, cultural reflection, turning off lights and ensuring children are comfortably clothed. The environment should be tranquil and calm for both educators and children.
- Maintain adequate supervision and maintain educator ratios throughout the sleep period.
- Ensure they are not engaged in other duties that will take their attention away from actively supervising sleeping and resting children.
- Ensure sleeping spaces are not too dark- there needs to be sufficient light to allow supervision and to physically check children's breathing, lip and skin colour.
- Monitor the room temperature to ensure maximum comfort for the children.
- Ensure that children who do not wish to sleep are provided with alternative quiet activities and experiences, whilst those children who do wish to sleep are allowed to do so, without being disrupted. If a child requests a rest, or if they are showing clear signs of tiredness, regardless of the time of day, there should be a comfortable, safe area available for them to rest. It is important that opportunities for rest and relaxation, as well as sleep, are provided.

Sleep Checks

- Assess each child's circumstances and current health to determine whether higher supervision levels and checks may be required.
- Physically check that the child is breathing by checking the rise and fall of the child's chest and the child's lip and skin colour from the side of the cot (or floor mattress/toddler bed)
- Ensure physical checks of a sleeping child occur at regular intervals.
 - If the child's face/body appears blue and the child is not breathing, initiate first aid immediately including calling an ambulance and beginning resuscitation.
- Ensure a record is maintained recording the time and observation of each physical check immediately after checks are made.

With Families

- Consult with families about children's sleep and rest needs.

- Communicate with families about their child's sleeping or rest times and the service policy regarding sleep and rest times.
- Respect family preferences regarding sleep and rest and consider these daily while ensuring children feel safe and secure in the environment. Conversations with families may be necessary to remind families that children will neither be forced to sleep nor prevented from sleeping. Sleep and rest patterns will be recorded daily for families.
- Record sleep and rest patterns on HubHello to provide information to parents/families.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FAMILIES:

- Our Service requests parents/families provide educators with regular updates on their child's sleeping routines and patterns, especially for infants.
- Families with a child who rests or sleeps are required to provide specific bedding for their child each day (as detailed in enrolment information for long day care).
 - Families of school aged children enrolled in outside of school hours care are not required to provide bedding for the child to rest.

SAFE SLEEP STRATEGIES FOR BABIES (SWEETPEAS ST MARYS)

- 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 (this is usually around 5-6 months of age). Babies aged younger than 5-6 months, and 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.
- Babies over four months of age can generally turn over in a cot but may not always be able to roll back again. When a baby is placed to sleep, Educators should check that any bedding is tucked in securely and is not loose. Babies of this age may be placed in a safe baby sleeping bag (i.e., with fitted neck and arm holes, but no hood). At no time should a baby's face or head be covered (i.e., with linen). To prevent a baby from wriggling down under bed linen, they should be positioned with their feet at the bottom of the cot.
- Ensure any bed linen is securely tucked underneath the mattress so it cannot ride up and cover the baby's chest or cover his/her head.
- 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.
- Ensure there is no soft bedding in baby's sleep environment (pillows, doonas, loose bedding, lambswool or soft toys)
- If being used, a dummy should be offered for all sleep periods. Dummy use should be phased out by the end of the first year of a baby's life (in consultation with parents). If a dummy falls out of a baby's mouth during sleep, it should not be re-inserted.
- Babies or young children should not be moved out of a cot into a bed too early; they should also not be kept in a cot for too long. When a young child is observed attempting to climb out of a cot, and looking like they might succeed, it is time to move them out of a cot. This usually occurs when a toddler is between 2 and 3½ years of age but could be as early as 18 months.

EDUCATORS WILL:

- give bottle-fed children their bottles before going to bed.
- ensure children are not put in cots or in beds with bottles as per the *Dental Health Policy*.
- ensure sleeping infants are closely monitored and that all sleeping children are within hearing range and observed.
- maintain supervision of sleeping and resting children including regular physical bed-side checks including visual inspection of the child's:
 - sleeping position,
 - skin and lip colour,
 - breathing,
 - body temperature,

- head position,
- airway,
- head and face, ensuring they remain uncovered.

Educators must go into the cot room and physically observe babies. The educator will then officially record this on a Safe Sleep Record.

- encourage the use of sleeping bags with fitted neck and armholes for babies as there is no risk of the infant's face being covered.
- securely lock cots sides into place to ensure children's safety.
- turn off wall-mounted heaters before children use the room for sleeping. Cot rooms may be air conditioned and maintained at an appropriate temperature.
- be aware of manual handling practices when lifting babies in and out of cots.
- participate in staff development about safe sleeping practices.
- understand that bassinets, hammocks and prams/strollers do not carry safety codes for sleep. Babies should not be left in a bassinet, hammock, or pram/stroller to sleep, as these are not safe substitutes for a cot.
- ensure mattresses are kept in good condition; they should be clean, firm and flat, and fit the cot base with not more than a 20mm gap between the mattress sides and ends. A firm sleep surface that is compliant with the new AS/NZS Voluntary Standard (AS/NZS 8811.1:2013 Methods of testing infant products - Sleep surfaces - Test for firmness) should be used.
- not elevate or tilt mattresses.
- remove any plastic packaging from mattresses.
- ensure that waterproof mattress protectors are strong, not torn, and a tight fit.
- use firm, clean, and well-fitting mattresses on portable cots.
- remove pillows, doonas, loose bedding or fabric, lamb's wool, bumpers and soft toys from cots.
- record sleep and rest patterns to provide information to parents/families.

COVID-19 AMENDMENTS

In the height of the COVID-19 pandemic the following amendments were observed:

- Through the COVID-19 pandemic we will sleep outside where possible and where children have appropriate clothing and blankets.
 - This may not be able to happen where there is not adequate staff supervision or adequate quiet and comfortable spaces.

COVID-19 restrictions have now lifted. Sweetpeas Services may now choose if/when appropriate for children to sleep outdoors and will continue to abide by *NSW Health* recommendations.

REFERENCES

- ACECQA Policy Guidelines: Sleep and rest for children - https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-08/PolicyGuidelines_Sleep%26RestForChildren_August.pdf
- ACECQA: Safe sleep and rest practices - <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/supporting-materials/infosheet/safe-sleep-and-rest-practices>
- Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia V2.0 (EYLF)
- Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- My Time, Our Place: Framework
- National Quality Framework (NQF)
- Red Nose - <https://rednose.org.au/section/safe-sleeping>
- Sweetpeas Philosophy
- The National Quality Standard (NQS) (Revised 2018)

RELATED SWEETPEAS DOCUMENTS

- Each Sweetpeas service has its own *Sleep and Rest Risk Assessment*
- Sleep and rest resources and information from *Red Nose* for educators and families (including posters, flyers and info sheets) can be located in the Sweetpeas Company Files > Resources and Fact Sheets > Red Nose-Safe Sleep Resources

REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS

This policy will be updated regularly to ensure compliance with all relevant legal requirements. Appropriate consultation of all stakeholders (including staff and families) will be conducted on a timely basis. In accordance with *Regulation 172* of the National Regulations, families of children enrolled will be notified at least 14 days and their input considered prior to any amendment of policies and procedures that have any impact on their children or family.

Version	Amendment(s)	Review Date	Updated By
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapted previous Sweetpeas policy 	February 2017	Cassandra Way (Educator/Admin) Janine Evans (Director)
1.1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checked links No changes required 	February 2018	Cassandra Way (Educator/Admin)
1.2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checked links No changes required 	February 2019	Cassandra Way (Educator/Admin)
1.3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed no changes required 	January 2020	Janine Evans (Director)
1.4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated the sleep and rest through COVID-19 pandemic Updated that we sleep outside where we can 	July 2021	Janine Evans (Director)
1.5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated sleep routine Implemented a chart to ensure individual sleep routines are embedded by all educators 	March 2022	Janine Evans (Director)
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cosmetic changes for new formatting template and colours Updated responsibilities for approved providers, nominated supervisor/RPs and educators in line with latest Red Nose recommendations Added Safe Sleep Strategies for Babies for St Marys service Added the recommendation for recorded sleep checks for children of all ages 	August 2022	Cassandra Way (Assistant Manager) Janine Evans (Managing Director)
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fixed policy version numbering (Aug22 previously version 3.2) Updated list of Regulations to include new regs relating to sleep and rest Added information about new risk assessment requirements Checked and fixed hotlinks and updated references We are reviewing what sleep and rest procedures could/should be separated from the policy for display in the service. 	October 2023	Cassandra Way (Assistant Manager) Janine Evans (Managing Director) Sarah Williamson (Assistant Director - St Clair/WHS Officer)
3.1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated wording to include school-aged children. Added <i>Sweetpeas OOSH Cranebrook</i> heading Checked all hotlinks Updated references to include My Time, Our Place 	November 2024	Cassandra Way (Assistant Manager) Janine Evans (Managing Director)