Rest and Sleep Policy

Policy Statement

Red Nose is considered the recognised national authority on safe sleep practices for infants and children and is based on scientific research. There may be occasions where a family’s beliefs and practices conflict with Red Nose guidelines. In this circumstance our service will not be able to endorse the alternative practice, unless provided with written advice from a medical practitioner e.g. in the event of a rare medical condition it may be necessary for a baby to sleep on its stomach or side. Our services will only be able to support this practice if the baby’s medical practitioner supports the alternative sleeping practice in writing with sound medical reasons.

Rest is defined as a period of inactivity, solitude, calmness or tranquillity and can include a child being in a state of sleep.

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Chapter 4: Operational Requirements
Part 4.2: Children’s health and safety
  • Regulation 81: Sleep and rest

National Quality Standard

Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety
Standard 2.1: Each child’s health and physical activity is supported and promoted
  • Element 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.
Standard 2.2 Each child is protected.
  • Element 2.2.1: At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.

Strategies and Practices

• Educators are to consult with families about their child’s individual needs and are to be aware of different values, parenting beliefs, cultural or otherwise that are associated with sleep and rest.

• In a Family Day Care setting, alternate experiences are to be offered to those children who do not sleep.

• All children will be placed on their back to rest when first being settled.

• All children will rest with their face uncovered.
Education and Care Policy and Procedure Manual

- All equipment/materials must be safe and free from hazards
- Due to possible choking hazards children will not be put to bed wearing hooded items of clothing or necklaces (i.e. teething necklaces)
- Children are not to be put to bed holding their bottle, wearing bibs or with dummies connected to their clothing or bed linen
- To prevent a baby from wriggling down under bed linen, they will be placed with their feet closest to the bottom end of the cot
- Quilts, duvets, pillows, lambs’ wools and cot bumpers are not to be used in cots
- Comfort toys such as a small teddy bear may be used if the child requires this to feel safe and secure when sleeping
- Light bedding is to be used, which can be tucked in to assist in preventing a young child from pulling linen over their head
- Children’s pull-out sofa type seats are not to be used for children to sleep on
- Sleeping bags with a fitted neck and arm holes are an alternative option to bed linen for a young baby. Sleeping bags are not to have a hood
- Prams or strollers are not to be used as a bed/sleeping tool

Primary School Aged Children

- A designated area will be determined if a school age child requests a rest/quiet period; while this area should ideally be away from the group of children, there must still be effective supervision
- The designated rest area may be a cushion, mat or seat in a quiet section of the care environment
- Educators are to ensure that quiet, solitary play experiences are available for those school age children who request the need for quiet time or resting

Supervision of resting children

- Students/volunteers will not be left unsupervised when settling children
• Educators are to regularly check the rest environment a minimum of every 10-15 minutes and are to observe the following:
  
  o The position of each child’s body in their cot/on their mattress and their breathing rate
  o The arrangement of bed linen/comfort toy. If a child's face is covered, the educator is to uncover the child’s face
  o The environment e.g. Room temperature and general environment safety

**Overnight care**

• Overnight care is not considered the same as sleep/rest time during a normal care day; the provision of overnight care can have implications that are minimal or non-existent in regular family day care operations e.g. educators do not rest in the day-time when children are sleeping and are therefore, alert to children’s needs. However, an educator would also be asleep during a child’s overnight care experience, which poses different implications to the provision of care

• Educators wishing to provide overnight care must first obtain approval from the coordination unit; the coordination unit will assess the educators home for the suitability of overnight care

• Educators providing overnight care are to ensure that:
  
  • Each child has a cot, bed or mattress (children are not to sleep on the floor or on a couch unless the couch is a sofa bed and the bed section is used)
  
  • School aged children are not to share a bedroom unless they are siblings or of the same sex and a similar age (preschool aged children may share a room)
  
  • Bunk beds are to be inaccessible to children (this includes all styles of bunk beds e.g. cabin beds/loft beds with desks underneath etc.)
  
  • The sleeping rooms are safety checked by the coordination unit
  
  • Children in overnight care cannot access other parts of the home that have not been safety checked

**Provision and maintenance of rest and sleep equipment and environment**

• Educators are to conduct regular safety checks of the resting environments and equipment. Identified hazards are to be immediately rectified

• Hanging cords or strings from blinds, curtains, mobiles or electrical appliances must be out of reach (1.75mts) to prevent a child from choking or hanging
The use of the following items is not permitted; hot water bottles, electric blankets or heated wheat bags in children’s cots or on mattresses

Cots

- All full-size cots are to meet the Australian Standards for Cots (AS 2172). Cots that do not comply with the Australian Standard are not to be used
- All portable cots are to meet the Australian Standard (AS 2195). Portable cots that do not comply with the Australian Standard are not to be used
- Educators are not to place an extra mattress or padding under or over the manufacturer’s cot/portable cot mattress
- All cots are to be used as per manufacturer’s instructions; this includes the weight capacity of the cot. Children who are heavier than the recommended weight are to be placed on beds/mattresses
- Educators are to assess whether older babies or toddlers can climb over the sides of a cot/portable cot, if they can, they are to be placed on beds/mattresses

Hygiene practices

- All cots, mattresses, beds, cushions etc. are to be cleaned on a regular basis
- Each child is to have their own individual clean bed linen that is regularly washed

Rest and sleep times of the day

- To meet the individual needs of children, educators need to provide children with as much flexibility as possible when determining the times and length of sleep/rest time

Sources and further reading


Mornington Peninsula Shire acknowledges and pays respect to the elders, families and ancestors of the Bunurong/Boon Wurrung people, who have been the custodians of this land for many thousands of years. We acknowledge that the land on which we meet is the place of age-old ceremonies, celebrations, initiation and renewal; and that the Bunurong/Boon Wurrung peoples’ living culture continues to have a unique role in the life of this region.