

Water Safety Policy

2019

National Quality Standard

2.2	Each child is protected
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National Regulations

101	Conduct risk assessment for excursion
104	Fencing
274	Swimming Pools

Aim

To provide children with a safe environment, where precautions are put in place and the benefits of water are respected, while the risks related to it are appropriately monitored.

RATIONALE

In all experiences where children engage with water, educators must be mindful that children can drown in shallow water, with drowning being the greatest cause of accidental death in children under five in Australia.

Medowie Gumnut Preschool recognises that water poses numerous risks to children and is committed to minimising the potential risks of water hazards. While recognising these risks, the service also sees the benefits of providing opportunities for children to be involved in water play. Medowie Gumnut Preschool is committed to providing children with opportunities to connect with the natural environment.

Who is affected by this Policy?

- * Management
- * Educators
- * Children
- * Families

Implementation

Accepting the role of supervising another family's children during water activities is a significant measure of trust and responsibility. Educators must never underestimate the potential for risk during any activity using, or conducted near, water. Educators must always evaluate the positive, educational outcome of an activity against the inherent risks involved. Young children are especially at risk, they can drown in less than 2 inches (6 centimetres) of water. That means drowning can happen where you'd least expect it – the sink, the toilet bowl, fountains, buckets, inflatable pools. Always watch children closely when they're in or near any water.

Water within the Care Environment

- All children near water will be monitored and supervised.
- When fencing for water sources is not applicable, children can be involved in the democratic development of water rules and safety, including visual fencing and/or delay barriers.
- All fish ponds or similar water features that collect or fill with water in the Medowie Gumnut Preschool working area should be included in the curriculum with appropriate risk assessment and water safety discussions.
- If situated within the care and education working area and there are no barriers, ponds or garden water features should be: (a) secured in position; (b) covered by material; or (c) designed to prevent a child putting his/her face into the water e.g. installing large rocks/ boulders that will significantly reduce the depth of water.
- Medowie Gumnut Preschool encourages Educators to include water play in the curriculum with appropriate risk assessment and water safety discussions. When not in use (i.e. between play periods), water play sources should be adequately covered and visual fencing displayed.
- Any containers holding water deep enough to pose a threat to young children, should be either safely covered, made inaccessible to children, or have a Benefit Risk Assessment done to mitigate the risk. If there are objects in your yard such as buckets or mud kitchens that can fill up with water from the rain over night, best practice would be to have a Benefit Risk Assessment in place to reflect the levels of risk identified for children at the service.
- Water play sources should not be left to stagnate or harbour mosquito larvae, and wading pools and other water play containers/toys must be emptied and cleaned after regular use to prevent mould, fungi and bacteria build up.
- Grey water systems or water tanks will be labelled with "do not drink" signage and the children will be supervised in this area to make sure they are not accessing this water for drinking. Educators will discuss with the children that this water is for play and not for consumption.

Excursions and Regular Outings that include Beaches, Dams, Lakes, Creeks Rivers and other water play experiences

- * All children near water will be monitored and supervised.
- * Medowie Gumnut Preschool encourages educators to allow children to explore the natural environment including water as part of their curriculum. Educators are required to conduct a benefit risk assessment as part of the services excursion and regular outing policies.
- * The curriculum should include discussions with children around water safety and risk.
- * Educator's should consider the skills and abilities of the children in their care when choosing excursions and regular outing

Benefit Risk Assessments

- The educators benefit risk assessment process will determine if the water activity to be undertaken is to be considered swimming, paddling, wading or water play.

Sources

- * Early Childhood Australia: <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/>
- * <https://www.inspiredec.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Water-Safety-Policy-August-2017.pdf>
- * Privacy Act: <http://www.privacy.gov.au/law/act>
- * Safework Australia: <http://safeworkaustralia.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>
- * The Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority: <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/>

Review

Last Reviewed: May 2019

Date for Next Review: May 2020