NSW Early Learning Commission

Practice guide

Safe sleep and rest

By implementing safe sleep and rest requirements, you can help reduce risks to the health and safety of children and young people.

Conduct risk assessments

A sleep and rest risk assessment must be completed at least every 12 months to identify and address any hazards or risks. Everyone at your service should be involved in creating these assessments and putting risk management strategies into action every day.

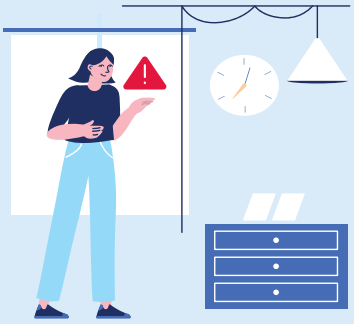
Apply service policies

Sleep and rest policies and procedures must be understood and implemented consistently. Don't just read your service's policies and procedures – review them regularly and bring any questions or ideas to your leadership team.

Maintain safe sleep and rest environments

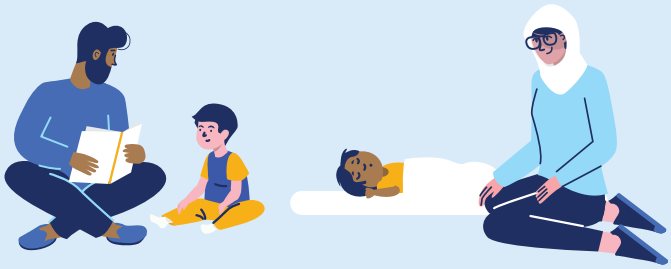
Check all sleep spaces before each use and remove any unnecessary items that could cause accidental injury or become a trip or falls hazard. Physical environments must be maintained to ensure they are safe and suitable for sleep and rest. This includes maintaining visibility and appropriate lighting, temperature and ventilation.

Look up, look down, look all around. Are there any hanging cords, blinds, clocks or wall hangings such as bunting, pictures or canopies that could pose a danger to a child?



Remove items from infants' cots

All items that could cover a child's head or face must be removed before placing a child in a cot. Remove amber necklaces, dummy chains, soft toys and comforters. Make sure the sleep space is clear of pillows, bumpers, lambswool or thick loose bedding. These pose significant suffocation and choking risks.



Maintain adequate supervision, including physical checks

Children must be adequately supervised at all times. Actively monitor and supervise sleeping and resting children, while making sure those who are awake do not have unsupervised access to other areas.

Adequate supervision of a sleeping or resting child includes:

- conducting physical checks from the side of the cot (or floor mattress for older children)
- not being distracted by other activities or responsibilities
- having the time and space to observe and physically check each child
- responding immediately when a child is distressed or in a hazardous situation.

Practise effective record keeping

Documentation such as sleep checks must be completed accurately every time you conduct a physical check of sleeping or resting children.

Download Red Nose Australia's 'Safe sleep and rest physical checks' template at:

rednose.org.au/resources-category/early-childhood-educators

Conduct physical checks

Each child must be physically checked while resting or sleeping. Ensure each child is breathing by checking the rise and fall of their chest, changes in the colour of their lips and skin, and their sleeping position.

In line with best practice from Red Nose Australia, services must conduct regular physical checks of all sleeping and resting children. It is recommended these checks are completed at least every 10 minutes for children under 2 years of age.

Discover more guidance and resources to support quality practice.

linktr.ee/ECECEducatorResources

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