

Safe transportation of children attending ECEC services

The NSW Regulatory Authority's oversight function

The NSW Department of Education, as the NSW Regulatory Authority, is responsible for effective oversight across all early childhood education and care services (ECEC). Our primary objective is the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending ECEC services with the rights and best interests of children being paramount.

The Regulatory Authority is focused on harm prevention to ensure children's safety as they attend ECEC settings in NSW, with a commitment to working with ECEC providers to ensure they are aware of their obligations. This includes ensuring the safety of children who are transported to and from ECEC services on transport provided by or arranged by the service.

Transportation can present serious risks to children's safety

There is significant risk of critical injury to a child left on a vehicle or bus for a lengthy period of time. This risk increases during warmer weather.

Services must implement safe transportation requirements and practices at all times to prevent serious incidents and ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children on transport provided by or arranged by the service. It is crucial that all educators and staff, including new or casual staff, understand regulatory requirements and follow your service's safe transportation policies and procedures. Staff can be supported to do this through a comprehensive induction process, regular training and ongoing discussions about their roles and responsibilities for keeping children safe during transportation.

Robust policies and procedures for your specific service

For services that provide or arrange for the transportation of children, the approved provider must ensure the service has policies and procedures for transportation ([regulation 168\(2\)\(ga\)](#)).

Your transport procedures are to consider the same requirements that must be addressed in your service transport authorisations and risk assessments. This includes, procedures for embarking and disembarking the vehicle and vehicle checks.

For centre-based services, approved providers and nominated supervisors must ensure a staff member (other than the driver) is present to account for each child as they embark and disembark at the service premises, ensure records are made showing how each child was accounted for, and that a vehicle check has been completed to ensure no children are left behind ([regulation 102E,102F](#)). The number of educators, staff members or other responsible adults that is appropriate to provide supervision must also be clearly outlined.

Your transport policy and procedures must be specific to your individual service and address the unique circumstances and factors in your service's transportation process. Your policy and procedures should also include details about induction training, the frequency of ongoing training, and regular information sharing to ensure all educators and staff are supported to fulfil their roles effectively.

The Regulatory Authority and ACECQA have resources to assist with reviewing and developing your transport policies and procedures:

[Changes to regular transportation of children](#)

[Minimising the risk of children being left behind in vehicles](#)

[Guidance for adequate supervision during transportation](#)

Adequate supervision during transportation

Services who provide or arrange transport, must ensure children are safe and appropriately supervised during all periods of transportation.

Educator to child ratios apply at all times, and across all locations, that a service is operating ([regulation 123](#)), this includes during excursions and any transport provided or arranged by the service. If the driver of a vehicle, transporting children, is an educator they may be included in ratio calculations.

However, meeting ratio requirements alone may not mean there is adequate supervision. A risk assessment must be completed prior to transporting children ([regulation 102C](#)) which considers the number of educators or other responsible adults required to provide supervision during transportation.

Services must consider additional safety requirements during transportation including the presence of first-aid, asthma and anaphylaxis trained staff and supervision during embarking and disembarking procedures.

The safety of children on transportation not provided by or arranged by your service

There may be children attending your service who are transported to/from the service via a public or private bus.

While private transport arrangements do not form part of your service, to ensure the safety of these children, the Regulatory Authority strongly recommends your service implement policies and procedures relating to:

- The delivery of children to, and collection of children from, your service premises ([regulation 168\(2\)\(f\)](#)), including procedures for receiving and accounting for children arriving at your service.
- The process and responsibilities relating to signing in children as being in attendance ([regulation 158](#)), how children arrive at your service and the process to sign children in as being in attendance.
- Working with families and third parties to ensure children are safe and accounted for at every step of the transport process. Your policies and procedures should clearly state the responsibilities of the family, transport company and the service.
- Your service's process if a child does not arrive from a private transport arrangement. Clear communication processes with families and/or third parties are required to ensure educators and staff are proactively alerted and take necessary steps if a child is enrolled on the day but does not arrive at the service at the expected time.

For example, the Regulatory Authority recommends implementing a procedure which requires a parent/carer to contact the service when they have placed their child on the public or private bus to attend the service. This would support your service to know that the child is due to arrive, assist with your procedures for receiving the child, and your service is able to take immediate action if the child does not arrive.

In cases where there is no message from the parent/carer, your service should still check that a child is safe and accounted for if the child is enrolled on the day but is not in attendance. Communication processes could involve text messages, emails or app based messages. Remember, your diligence to ensure routine practices are followed by all service staff may well prevent serious harm to a child as they make their journey to and from your service on any given day.

A thorough risk assessment to identify and mitigate risks

Approved providers, nominated supervisors and Family Day Care educators must ensure that a transport risk assessment is conducted before the service transports children ([regulation 102B](#)). [Regulation 102C](#) specifies the matters that must be considered in this risk assessment, as a minimum. These matters must also be addressed in your policies and procedures related to transportation.

Your service's risk assessment must identify and assess risks that transporting the child may pose to the safety, health or wellbeing of the child, and specify how the identified risks will be managed and minimised.

For children who are transported on private transport arrangements not arranged by the service, the Regulatory Authority recommends that services consider conducting a risk assessment for the individual transport arrangements. This will assist you to ensure all children arrive at your service safely.

Children being unaccounted for, left on vehicles or injured are the most severe risks which need clear risk minimisation strategies. It is important that all educators and staff in your service understand their specific roles and responsibilities in implementing these strategies.

Authorisations and communications with parents/carers

Approved providers, nominated supervisors and Family Day Care educators must ensure the service has written authorisation for a child to be transported ([regulation 102D](#)). Transport authorisations should be a standalone document containing all the information required by [regulation 102D](#) to inform parents/carers of your transport arrangements.

Additionally, you should have procedures to maintain communication with parents/carers during your transport process including having emergency contact details updated and accessible. This may be needed, for example, when there are changes or delays in the journey, or if a child is absent or unaccounted for.

How to contact us

To contact the NSW Regulatory Authority, you can email NSW Department of Education ececd@det.nsw.edu.au or phone **1800 619 113**.

Resources and information

NSW Department of Education

[Guidance unpacking the transportation regulations](#)

[Transporting children safely written resources and video practice examples developed with Kids and Traffic](#), including:

[Transporting children safely](#) (PDF 4 MB)

[Sample safe transportation of children policy and procedures](#) (PDF 3.7 MB)

[Sample safe transport checklist](#) (PDF 332 KB)

[Transport safety risk assessment and management guide, including sample risk assessments](#) (PDF 1.3 MB)

[Safe travel and transport](#) (PDF 1.7 MB)

[Transportation authorisation template and samples](#) (PDF 1.3 MB)

ACECQA

[Changes to regular transportation of children](#) (PDF 866 KB)

[Minimising the risk of children being left behind in vehicles](#) (PDF 2 MB)

[Guidance for adequate supervision during transportation](#) (PDF 258 KB)

[Safe transportation of children – Policy guidelines](#) (PDF 534 KB)

[Safe transportation of children safety checklist and regular transportation record form](#) (DOCX)

[Transporting children risk assessment and management template](#) (DOCX)

[Safe transportation of children information sheet](#) (PDF 124KB)