

Children's Belongings

We acknowledge that children will bring to the Service or carry with them certain personal belongings, and as such, it is important to clarify responsibilities. This policy therefore outlines the types of belongings that children may bring with them on a regular basis and the level of associated responsibility.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.

QUALITY AREA 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN		
5.1	Relationships between educators and children	Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.
5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships, which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.

RELATED POLICIES

Enrolment Policy Orientation of New Families Policy	Respect for children
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PURPOSE

To ensure families and educators are aware of their responsibility regarding children's belonging including keeping them safe.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the service.

IMPLEMENTATION

It can be distressing for children to misplace their toys from home and can also sometimes cause conflict between children. Children often want to share or show other children or staff special things from home, but these treasures may be inadvertently broken or lost. To save the upset and heartache, parents are requested to encourage children to leave their toys at home, unless they are essential to a child's emotional wellbeing and/or sense of belonging (security items). We have numerous stimulating and challenging toys and resources catering to children's interests that are to play with each day.

- Children are able to bring with them personal belongings for news, including special items from gifts, holiday souvenirs, or items relating to a current interest. News is a great way to encourage children to talk about their special toy or personal belonging during group time. This practice encourages children's social development, enables children to verbalise thoughts, fears, and feelings, broaden the cultural and social understandings of all children involved in group time activities, assist in the development of language skills, and provide an opportunity for development of special interests for the group. Educators will store these items in a safe place throughout the day, retrieving them for news time, and then returning them to safety.
- If families choose to leave belongings in the Service during the day it is completely at the family's own risk.
- If personal belongings are particularly valuable, fragile, or hold irreplaceable emotional value, it is recommended that the child bring in the item, show it to friends and educators, and then have the parent take it with them. This allows for the child to share the excitement and experience without the risk of loss or damage.
- We will provide appropriate storage for lost property that will be available to children and families at all times.
- Any grievances or concerns related to lost, damaged, or stolen property of the children will be managed in accordance with the grievance and complaints procedure.
- Where children wish to bring in DVD/Blu-ray, music, or electronic games, these should be discussed with management and be 'G-rated'. Although media rated 'PG' (Parental Guidance) is generally appropriate for children, it cannot be assumed that all parents want their children exposed to this rating.

- We will take as much care as possible in ensuring that personal belongings are returned to the correct family. To assist us with this we ask families to ensure that any item that can be labelled, either has the child's name on it, or the child's initials (for example, on the tag of soft toys where space is limited). If an item cannot be labelled it is the parent's responsibility to advise an educator that their child has this item in their possession.
- We will encourage children who bring special belongings into care to place them in a special "toys from home" box or keep the toy in the child's bag to reduce the prospect of them becoming lost or broken. For added security this box will be placed in a position that requires the assistance of an educator to access.
- We will enforce a non-violent toy policy in which we seek family assistance in preventing their children from bringing in violent toys from home. Any such toys will be removed from the child immediately and placed in the reception area for parental collection at the end of the day.
- Whilst children may wear dress-up clothes to the service, we ask that accessories such as guns, knives, swords, or other weaponry is left at home. Such items can encourage violent play and may present a danger to the child and others within our child care environment.
- The staff and educators will take as much care as possible in ensuring that children's clothing and linen items are returned to their correct family. Again, the labelling of all items can help us achieve this. However, we must make it clear that the Service is not responsible for damaged, lost or stolen items.
- We will actively encourage children to care for their belongings by:
 - Reminding children appropriately when belongings need to be placed in storage or their bags. For example, lunch box into bag.
 - Providing suitable storage to keep belongings safe if requested.
 - Negotiating a secure and safe position with families for any item or personal belonging that is either special, expensive, or at risk of being damaged but is nevertheless being left at the service.
- We will inform the family through relevant newsletters and publications such as the family handbook of appropriate personal belongings required at the Service each day.

Families Will:

- Be responsible for providing the child with appropriate belongings and property required for active participation in all service activities and experiences. This property may include (but is not limited to):
 - Enclosed footwear.
 - Weather appropriate clothing.
 - Wide brim hat.
 - Suitable School bag (backpack).
- Ensure all personal property and belongings are clearly named or labelled, or have been shown to an educator upon arrival if labelling is not possible.

Comfort toys/ Security Items

Many children have a 'security' item that soothes them and helps them to cope throughout a busy day. Security items may include things such as a special blanket, dummy, soft toy, or even a strip of satin ribbon from a blanket etc. We recommend that if children have a comfort toy or security item that it is labelled (if possible) and brought to the service each day. When not required or in use we will ensure that it has a designated storage space that is known to the child.

Source

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2017).

Privacy Act 1988.

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	March 2019	NEXT REVIEW DATE	March 2020
MODIFICATIONS	Introduction re-worded to be more concise. Re-wrote & added information to 'Comfort toys' section. Additional information added to points. Sources/references alphabetised.		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE	
March 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor grammatical change made 	March 2019	
October 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated the references to comply with revised National Quality Standard 	March 2018	
March 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy reviewed, no changes made. 	March 2018	