

## POLICY: 6.1 Child Safe Environment

### Procedure: 6.1 Assessment of Educator's Residence

The assessment of the Educator's physical environment at the residence plays a critical role in keeping children safe, reducing the risk of unintentional injuries, contributing to their wellbeing, happiness, creativity and developing independence, and determining the quality of the children's learning.

#### 6.1.1 Linking to Policy

This procedural guidance should be read in conjunction with the service **6.1 Child Safe Environment** and will assist the Approved Provider, Management, Staff (Nominated Supervisors, Coordinators, and Administrative Staff members) Educators, Educator Assistants and parents/guardians to implement the policy. The procedure covers:

#### [6.1.2 Definition](#)

#### [6.1.3 Roles and Responsibilities](#)

#### [6.1.4 Staff Training, Support, and Mentoring](#)

#### [6.1.5 Educator's Residence Initial Assessment](#)

#### [6.1.6 Assessment and Approval](#)

#### [6.1.7 Ongoing Maintenance of the Residence by the Registered Educator](#)

#### [6.1.8 In Case of Proposed Renovations](#)

#### [6.1.9 Annual Re-assessment](#)

#### [6.1.10 Home Safety Assessment Guidance Tool](#)

#### 6.1.2 Definitions

##### **A VENUE**

A venue is a place other than a house and must be approved by the Regulatory Authority before any Educator provides education and care at this place. The Service will consider the suitability of the venue for the purpose of childcare and the requirements (restrictions) of the legislation before they make an application for approval of a venue.

##### **A RESIDENCE**

The National Law defines a family day care residence as 'a residence at which a family day care Educator educates and cares for children as part of a family day care service.' A 'residence' is defined as being 'the habitable areas of a dwelling.' A habitable dwelling includes:

## 6.1 Assessment of Educators Residence

- Class 1a – A single dwelling being a detached house, or one or more attached dwellings, each being a building, separated by a fire-resisting wall, including a row house, terrace house, townhouse or villa unit
- Class 2 – A building containing two or more sole-occupancy units each being a separate dwelling

These are the areas of the dwelling fit for human habitation. Habitable areas are likely to be indicated by those meeting the requirements in National Regulations 103, 104, 105, 106, 109, 110, and 116

- Structural stability, safe, clean and in good repair
- Contains, or has access to, amenities in working order, including a kitchen, toilet and washing facilities
- There are natural lighting and ventilation
- Has electricity and water supplied
- Appropriate drainage and sanitary facilities are available
- The hallways from the front door of the house that provides access to the areas used within the residence to provide family day care are considered part of the approved family day care residence.

PLEASE NOTE: education and care proposed to be **provided solely from an unconverted concrete garage within an Educator's residence would not meet the legislative requirements** for appropriate ventilation, natural lighting, cooling and heating. A garage space is not fit for the provision of childcare unless it is converted into a room and has a source of natural light and ventilation, allowing for fresh air and is only one of the spaces used within the residence, not the ONLY space used.

### 6.1.3 Roles and Responsibilities

#### 1. The Approved Provider (ICH) will:

- have policies, procedural guidance and forms that support all staff and Educators to understand what and how the residence will be assessed. And how this relates to the safety, health, and wellbeing of children informed by relevant authorities
- ensure they have employed suitably qualified staff able to follow the guidance, use their professional judgement and make an assessment of the residence including completing a risk assessment of a proposed residence/venue before education and care is provided at the residence
- have processes in place and employed staff able to support and monitor and ensure the standard of safety is maintained via Coordinator visiting
- ensure there is a plan for the Educator's residence to be re-assessed at least annually as part of the re-registration process
- have reporting processes in place to ensure these obligations are met and policies and procedures are reviewed

**2. The Nominated Supervisor will:**

- familiarise themselves with the 6.1 Child Safe Environment Policy and the procedural guidance documented in this procedure
- ensure staff have the training required to undertake an assessment of the residence
- support staff and Educators to understand their obligations in relation to the health, safety and wellbeing of children which is fundamental to maintaining standards of safety at the residence
- set the standard on making an assessment of the Educator's residence by modelling the process with Coordinators
- ensure no Educator commences with the Service if the residence is not suitable and/or the tasks required to bring the residence up to the standards required are not met
- have a management process in place to audit the assessment of residences and review risk assessment practices to ensure consistency in assessment processes across the Service
- ensure the workplans of Coordinators include a planned approach to the of monitoring each Educator's residence, and
- annual re-registration includes a reassessment of each Educator's residence in collaboration with each Educator

**3. The Coordinators will:**

- familiarise themselves with 6.1 Child Safe Environment Policy and the procedural guidance
- attend training on risk assessment and/or assessing a residence before they undertake this process solo
- seek support from their colleagues if unsure of any aspect
- provide support to Educators (new and existing) on the standard of health, safety and wellbeing required in relation to the care environment they offer
- work with the Educator to assess the suitability of the residence for the provision of education and care
- develop any risk assessment and management plans to address areas that do not meet the requirements with Educators
- visit the Educator's residence regularly to monitor and ensure the residence is maintained at the agreed standard
- address any health, safety and wellbeing concerns as soon as they are noticed
- ensure a risk assessment and management plan is in place to rectify any health, safety and wellbeing concerns
- work with the Nominated Supervisor and other staff to ensure there is a planned approach to the monitoring visits and annual re-registration

**The Educator will:**

- maintain the agreed standards of health and safety in their residence to ensure children's wellbeing is protected
- undertake daily checks of their environment to ensure the standards are maintained and address any concern when noticed
- work with the Coordinator and Nominated Supervisor to audit their residence annually at re-registration
- collaborate with Coordinators and the Nominated Supervisor to complete a risk assessment and develop a management plan to address any identified concerns

**6.1.4 Staff Training, Support, and Mentoring**

**The Approved Provider will** ensure the Nominated Supervisor and Coordinators are appropriately skilled to conduct a Home Safety Check, including

- Capacity to identify hazards – they have had training on how to make an assessment and document this assessment.
- Where hazards are identified, and/or areas of the residence do not meet the standards required by the National Law and Regulation, the Nominated Supervisor and/or Coordinator can work with the prospective or existing Educator to develop a Risk Assessment Plan for the individual Educator's residence and/or approved venue to ensure the environment is appropriate for the provision of education and care before they commence with the Service.
- This will be achieved by:
  - o Providing induction on this policy and the associated forms for all staff (including any new staff who join the team in the future)
  - o Accessing training or information from an external organisation with expertise in risk assessment and developing management plans
  - o Buddying up new staff with existing experienced staff members to develop skills before allowing new staff to undertake an assessment or monitoring and support visits
  - o At staff meetings review the assessment process for initial registration and assessment of the Educator's residence and randomly check a completed Risk Assessment Plan to determine if they are being completed appropriately
  - o Use scenario-based training to assist the development of skills in making an assessment of the residence using the Service forms.

**The Nominated Supervisor:**

- has developed, reviewed, and maintained a suitable Home Safety Checklist
- relevant authorities underpin the Home Safety Checklist, and
- there is sufficient information added to support staff to assess a residence
- is written in a way that Educators are clear about what is expected of them and their residence

- both staff and Educators will receive training on using the checklist.

**The Nominated Supervisor will** mentor and support Coordinators to ensure they know about the required safety standards for the physical environment where education and care are being provided by:

- o buddying up exist experienced staff with new staff on monitoring and support visits
  - o reviewing monitoring and support visits records as a team, with other staff and new staff in particular
  - o ensuring where possible two staff (Nominated Supervisor and/or Coordinators) attend any assessment visit to the proposed residence or venue so that there are two sets of eyes looking at the environment and opportunities to reflect with an Educator on what was noticed.
- The Service will have weekly staff meetings to:
    - o review the Monitoring and Support Visit Records to ensure staff members are completing this correctly and consistently
    - o assess if staff members have taken the time to look at and assess the physical environment as well as interactions and the program being provided to ensure all standards are maintained as part of this process; and
    - o where a hazard (or practice concern) is identified, a Risk Assessment Plan is in place. The completed Risk Assessment Plan provides clear instructions on what is required of the Educator and the service, including appropriate measures to check progress.

### 6.1.5 Educator's Residence Initial Assessment

**In relation to the initial assessment and approval of a prospective Educator's residence or in the event an Educator moves residence, the Nominated Supervisor will:**

- ensure a prospective Educator (or existing Educator if moving) receives a copy of the home safety checklist and any relevant information for undertaking a self-assessment before the Coordinator and/or Nominated Supervisor undertake a formal assessment
- provide instruction to the prospective Educator (or existing Educator if moving) on what and how they will undertake a self-assessment of their residence and the steps involved in determining the suitability of the residence to provide education and care. (Usually over the phone)
- after prospective Educator has self-assessed the environment and believes it is suitable an application is submitted to Service
- once reviewed and if collectively it is agreed that the self-assessment indicates the residence may be suitable for the provision of education and care, the Nominated Supervisor and/or the Coordinator will follow the below steps:
  1. Book time with the prospective Educator (or existing Educator if moving) for the Nominated Supervisor and/or Coordinator to undertake a site visit at the residence to

## 6.1 Assessment of Educators Residence

- perform the initial informal assessment of the residences suitability to provide education and care.
2. Communicate the process involved to ensure the Educator understands a formal assessment will be undertaken.
  3. Identify any areas requiring further attention or improvement.
  4. If the assessment reveals the residence is not suitable, this will be discussed with the candidate and a formal response in writing will be provided outlining the reasons.
  5. If after completing the assessment they identify the residence is suitable however improvements are required. The prospective Educator (or existing Educator if moving) and Nominated Supervisor and/or Coordinator will make a time by when those improvements will be completed.
  6. Identified hazard or improvements required as noted on the Home Safety Checklist – this will be documented.
  7. Both the staff member who undertook the initial assessment of the potential residence and the prospective Educator (or existing Educator if moving to a new residence) will sign off on the plan and the agreed actions.
  8. The Nominated Supervisor and/or Coordinator will document the contact details of this person who will do the reassessment, so the prospective Educator (or existing Educator if moving) can contact them if they need clarification or require additional support.
  9. Provide information on what will occur if the improvements are not undertaken within the agreed period, e.g. the process of assessment and approval will not proceed if the prospective Educator (or existing Educator if moving) is not able to make the physical improvements required within the agreed timeframe.
  10. The prospective Educator (or existing Educator if moving to a new residence) will notify the Family Day Care Service Office if they decide not to proceed with the approval process any further.

Before the date for reassessment, the Nominated Supervisor and/or Coordinator will:

- make contact with the prospective Educator to ascertain their progress; and
- reiterate the date for the next assessment.

### 6.1.6 Assessment and Approval

**In relation to seeking an initial assessment and gaining approval to operate a Family Day Care business from a residence, the prospective Educator will:**

1. On receipt of the welcome letter:
  - Undertake the self-assessment using the home safety checklist of their residence.

6.1 Assessment of Educators Residence

- Consider each aspect of the Home Safety Checklist by reading through this and document what they have identified is in place and what may need some improvement or adjustment
  - If unsure of any aspect, note this on the Home Safety Checklist to discuss with the Nominated Supervisor or Coordinator at a later time
  - Collect evidence of certification for specified areas such as fire equipment, safety glass and pool fencing (if applicable) etc
  - Note equipment you may need to purchase and consider what costs are involved, e.g. cots & car seats, learning resources
  - Give thought to any changes/improvements and strategies for mitigating/controlling or eliminating any hazards that may be a risk to children and note these in the comment section applicable to the hazard/risk.
2. Once the self-assessment is completed, the Educator will inform the Service Office they are ready to be assessed by the Nominated Supervisor and/or Coordinator.

The Nominated Supervisor and/or a Coordinator will provide feedback on the self-assessment:

- if they believe the residence may be suitable, will make contact to book a time for a full formal assessment.
3. Be present when the Nominated Supervisor and/or Coordinator are completing their formal assessment of the residence. The Nominated Supervisor and/or the Coordinator will encourage the prospective Educator to listen to the advice being provided, consider options and check-in with the Educator to see if they are prepared to make the changes being suggested (improvements required). Also encourage them to talk to other family members as there may be a significant cost involved in making the changes required.
4. Consider if they can make the changes/improvement required and what this would need to look like to have the residence approved for providing education and care.
- If they believe the residence is not suitable, feedback and follow up in writing. The prospective Educator (or existing Educator if moving) can request a meeting to discuss this further by calling the Service Office
5. Work with the Coordinator to identify for each area the improvement required, and
6. Make a list inclusive of different ways to address the hazard.
7. Sign off on the agreement.
8. Contact the Service office if they decide not to proceed or once the improvements are made.
- Continue with process until all requirements are met.

### 6.1.7 Ongoing Maintenance of the Residence by the Registered Educator

The ongoing maintenance, upkeep and compliance with the National Law, Regulation and National Quality Standards of the Educator's residence or approved venue is a matter for both:

- **The Educator** in ensuring they uphold their obligation to continue to meet the agreed standards for the residence/venue which ensures the health, safety, and wellbeing of children being provided with education and care; and
- **The Approved Provider** delegated to the Nominated Supervisor and/or Coordinator responsible for ensuring the approved residence/venue is maintained in accordance with all policies which are underpinned by the National Quality Framework.

#### **Nominated Supervisor and/or Coordinators will:**

- undertake a re-assessment of the residence/venue annually (see guidance on this below)
- undertake to do both spot (unannounced) checks and planned monitoring and support visits at each Educator's residence/approved venue regularly and where non-compliance is identified more frequently (this will be set out through a Breach Notice, a continuous Improvement Plan and/or a Risk Assessment Plan developed as part of addressing the non-compliance)
- before going on a monitoring and support visit, refer to the last Home Safety Checklist and any Risk Assessment Plans which have identified concerns in the past.
- while on the monitoring and support visits undertake to check that the residence/approved venue is maintained in accordance with the Home Safety Checklist standards by using the Visit Sheet as a guide. This will ensure all areas within the residence/approved venue are compliant.

If the Coordinator identifies any non-compliance, they will discuss this with the Educator to understand why this has occurred; and

- Document their observation, (this may include photos), and determine if:
  1. Interim control measures could be utilised. If appropriate:
    - o The interim measures will be documented, and a plan developed to ensure further work is completed to address the hazard and risk to children – see below: the process for Risk Assessment Plan.
    - o Both parties will sign a record of this agreement, and a copy will be provided to the Educator, and original will be kept on the Educator's file.
    - o The Coordinator will discuss the identified concern/s and interim measures with the Nominated Supervisor on return to the office, so they are aware of the agreement.
    - o The Coordinator will follow up with the Educator to ensure the agreed changes are made by the date identified.
    - o The information and support provided will be noted on a Continuous Improvement Plan
  2. After discussing this with the Educator, if it is apparent that an interim control measure is not possible and/or appropriate, the Coordinator will contact the Nominated Supervisor to let them know what has occurred.

**3. The first action will be:**

- To stay at the Educator's residence until the hazard is addressed, that is if the materials able to address the concern are available at the residence.
- Document how this was addressed and work with the Educator on strategies to ensure the area that was non-compliant does not return to this in the future
- If this is not possible (no materials are available);
- The families will be asked to collect their child from the care setting; the Educator will explain this is a health, safety, and wellbeing concern which will need to be addressed before children can return into care.
- The Coordinator will stay until all children have left the residence.

**4. Once the children are removed from the residence, the Educator and Coordinator will work through a Risk Assessment Plan:**

The process for developing a Risk Assessment Plan - this will identify and document:

- what hazards were identified during the safety audit process,
- what actions are required to mitigate the risk to children with the Educator,
- explicit direction on what outcomes the Family Day Care Service expects and if possible, how the Educator could achieve this outcome (ideas and strategies),
- Who is required to undertake each identified action?
- timeframes for the Educator to undertake the defined actions
- who is responsible for reassessment; and
- when will re-assessment be conducted?

**5. Ensure the Educator is not able to operate until they are satisfied the hazards are addressed and risk to children reduced, controlled or mitigated.**

**6. Once the re-assessment of the hazards are undertaken and deemed to mitigate the risk of harm to children, the Educator can commence their education and care operations.**

**7. The record of the action will be kept on the Educator's file for three years after they cease to be an Educator with the Service.**

**Educators will:**

**1. If the Coordinator or a Nominated Supervisor identifies non-compliance with regards to the physical environment, the Educator will participate in the development of a Risk Assessment Plan addressing:**

- what hazards were identified during the safety audit process,
- what actions are required to mitigate the risk to children,
- contribute to determining the explicit direction on what outcomes the Service expects and if possible, how they will achieve this outcome (ideas and strategies),

6.1 Assessment of Educators Residence

- Who is required to undertake each identified action?
  - timeframes to undertake the defined actions,
  - discuss and determine who is responsible for reassessment; and
  - when will re-assessment be conducted?
2. In some cases (where the risk to children is identified), cease operating until the hazards of addressed and risk are reduced or controlled.
  3. Consistently conduct daily safety checks and monitor the maintenance of their residence, buildings, and equipment, by completing the Daily Home Safety Checks to ensure that the residence continues to be safe for all children and meets the service standards. The co-ordinator will monitor this process when undertaking monitoring visits.
  4. Follow safety advice from recognised authorities and manufacturers when purchasing any new equipment or resources – giving particular attention to the recommended age and other factors (e.g. weight and height) of the child
  5. Ensure all toys and all equipment are cleaned regularly and maintained (broken or missing parts are removed), and all equipment is age-appropriate and complies with Australian Standards.
  6. Ensure the residence, furniture, and equipment are safe (have already been assessed), clean and well maintained (there is a plan in place if regular maintenance or monitoring is required, e.g. fencing materials).
  7. Are familiar with and can comply with all aspects of the Home Safety Checklist by referring to their completed Home Safety Checklist regularly.
  8. Notify the Service office immediately of the following matters and seek approval:
    - Before any proposed renovations to your residence or approved venue
    - Before or as soon as possible of any changes to your residence or approved venue that may affect the matters considered as part of the assessment of the premises – for example, acquiring a pet
    - Before children enter care, of any other changes at the residence or approved venue that will affect the education and care being provided to children at the Service.

**6.1.8 In Case of Proposed Renovations**

1. Educators will notify the Nominated Supervisor/Coordinator of their intention to renovate their residence.
2. The Nominated Supervisor/Coordintor will ensure they consider the prevention of accidents, injuries, and exposure to hazardous substances and maintain safety standards before any building works and renovations are started.
3. The Approved Provider or the Nominated Supervisor/Coordinator must:
  - Work with the Educator to develop a Home Improvement/Repairs Risk Assessment highlighting the concerns or hazards which will/may pose a risk to children.

6.1 Assessment of Educators Residence

- Consider if there are interim measures that reduce or mitigate the risk to children. Consider what materials and processes are required
  - Before the renovation commences, review the plans
  - Provide the Educator with notice of the outcome of their review and/or approval to continue care, identifying any modifications required. Work with the Educator to complete the Home Improvement/Repairs Risk Assessment or determine the period of service closure if this is the outcome
  - Notify families if the Educator can continue to operate and include the approved Home Improvement/Repairs Risk Assessment. Or provide advice to families if the risk is not able to be addressed or deemed high risk and the Educator must cease care until the renovation is completed and note the expected timeframe
  - If the Educator can operate because they have applied controls and mitigated the risk, a review of the Educator's Home Improvement/Repairs Risk Assessment between the Educator and Coordinator will occur each week to ensure the controls continue to ensure the safety of children or apply new controls
  - Families will be kept up to date on the process via email from the Coordinator
  - If the Service (Educator's residence) must close for the whole, or part, of the time building works and renovations are in progress, assist in arranging alternative care for children, if required by parents
  - Where the care of children continues during building works and renovations, arrange for spot checks weekly to inspect and review the provisions of the Home Improvement/Repairs Risk Assessment.
4. Educators are responsible for maintaining safety standards for children at all times. Additional risks are present for children when building works & renovations are in progress.
5. Educators, in consultation with the Service (i.e. Nominated Supervisor and/or Coordinator), must develop strategies to ensure all Service users are safe during building works and renovations.

**Steps:**

To prevent accidents, injuries and exposure to hazardous substances and maintain safety standards while building works and renovations are in progress, Educators must:

1. Notify the Service (Nominated Supervisor) in writing at least two weeks before commencing any building works and renovations at the Service. Notification is to be made by:
  - o Submitting a **Home Improvement/Repairs Risk Assessment**, to the Service office.
2. Work with the Nominated Supervisor to identify the hazards, assess the risk, consider the controls and document this on the Home Improvement/Repairs Risk Assessment.
3. Wait for approval to continue care (while building works and renovations are in progress, from the Nominated Supervisor), before the building work commences.
4. Be aware that the provision of childcare at the residence may be required to close for the whole or part of the time building works and renovations are in progress.

## 6.1 Assessment of Educators Residence

5. Comply with all regulatory requirements, safety standards, policies, and procedures throughout the building works and renovations and prevent children in care gaining access to hazardous substances or equipment.
6. Carry out a daily inspection of the works area, before care commences, to ensure barricades are in place and Service users can enter and leave the premises safely. (e.g., paths are not obstructed; no hazardous materials or equipment are left indoors or outdoors).
7. Carefully inspect the works area to ensure the residence or venue complies with all regulatory requirements, safety standards, policies, and procedures, before allowing Service users to reenter the area when building works and renovations are complete.
8. Inform any Educator Assistant, engaged for any time during the period, that building works and renovations are proceeding, of the plan for the management of additional risks.
9. Give parents of children in care notice of the building works and renovations.

### 6.1.8 Annual Re-assessment

The full annual re-assessment of each Educator's residence starts with the Educator completing a self-assessment, which will be completed between May and June each year for all Educators.

The re-assessment of the residence is a legislative requirement however the Service also has processes in place ensuring all Educator's residence provides for the health, wellbeing, and safety of each child enrolled through the ongoing regular monitoring and support visits.

Improvements to the environment are identified and new strategies developed to ensure the Educator's residence is compliant and improves the outcomes for children.

The annual re-assessment is linked to the 6.1 Child Safe Environment

The steps below guide how the annual re-assessment of the residence will occur:

1. The Service will provide all Educators with a new Home Safety Checklist annually along with the *Home Safety Assessment Guidance Tool* (see below) to assist them in undertaking a self-assessment of their environment.
2. The Educator will undertake a self-assessment using the Home Safety Checklist and the *Home Safety Assessment Guidance Tool* to assist them to;
  - Assess whether they have maintained the standard required as outlined; and
  - Identify any areas needing attention.
3. The completed self-assessment Home Safety Checklist will be returned to the office by the due date for perusal by Nominated Supervisor and/or Coordinator.
4. The Nominated Supervisor and/ or Coordinator will:
  - review the outcome
  - make relevant notes
  - reflect on any previous Risk Assessment Plans

6.1 Assessment of Educators Residence

- once they are satisfied with the preparation for undertaking the annual re-assessment will contact the Educator and book in a time to work through the re-assessment of the residence/venue with the Educator
5. The Nominated Supervisor and/or Co-ordinator will attend the residence, using the self-assessment completed by the Educator they will:
    - Discuss the outcomes the Educator identified in their self-assessment Home Safety Checklist
    - Together with the Educator, begin the review and assess the environment while referring to the Educator's self-assessment Home Safety Checklist and the Home Safety Assessment Guideline Tool.
  6. If any general improvements are identified by the Educator and the Nominated Supervisor and/or Coordinator, they will develop a Quality Improvement Plan for the next year.
  7. If any area is deemed non-compliant, the Educator and Nominated Supervisor and/or Coordinator will identify the hazards, potential risks, and control ideas and complete the Home Improvement/Repairs Risk Assessment or complete a Permanent Fixture Home Risk Management – see the process below.

***The Home Improvement/Repairs Risk Assessment will identify:***

1. What hazards were identified during the safety audit process?
  2. What actions are required to mitigate the risk to children with the prospective Educator?
  3. Explicit direction on what outcomes the Family Day Care Service expects and if possible, how the Educator could achieve this outcome (ideas and strategies).
  4. Who is required to undertake each identified action?
  5. Timeframes for the Educator to undertake the identified action.
  6. Identify who is responsible for reassessment.
  7. When will re-assessment be conducted?
8. In assessing the non-compliance, the Coordinator and Educator will give consideration to the risk to children being provided with education and care to determine if:
    - there are interim controls which would allow the Educator to continue to operate
    - it is in the best interest of children for the Educator to cease operation until the hazard is addressed
    - he Educator is determined as non-compliant in a number of areas which pose a serious risk to children, the Educator's registration may be cancelled or suspended on the spot
    - children are present, the families will be contacted, and the Coordinator will stay at the Educator's residence until all children have been collected
    - the Educator's registration cancellation/suspension will be enacted until compliance is attained.
  9. The Nominated Supervisor and Educator will work together to determine what measures are required and add this to the Home Improvement/Repairs Risk Assessment.

10. The Nominated Supervisor or Coordinator will make contact within three working days with the Educator to check-in on how they are progressing with the identified actions.
11. The Coordinator will arrange a follow-up visit after the set date, to assess whether or not the outstanding issues have been rectified:
  - if rectified the Educator and Coordinator will sign off on the Home Safety Checklist; and
  - a copy provided to the Educator and original copy kept on the Educator's file at the office
  - however, if the measures do not comply with the requirements, the Educator and Coordinator will work through the Home Improvement/Repairs Risk Assessment again and look for alternative approaches to dealing with the hazard.
  - book another time for the reassessment of the hazard
  - if after the above process is followed the Educator is not able to rectify the hazard; the Educator will have their registration cancelled
  - the Nominated Supervisor will add a cease of registration date to the Educator's Register.
12. **Record Keeping:** A copy of the Home Safety Checklist and Home Improvement/Repairs Risk Assessment of each Educator's residence will be kept on the Educator's file for 3 years after the date on which the record was made.

### 6.1.9 Home Safety Assessment Guidance Tool

The Home Safety Assessment Guidance Tool will support staff and Educators in making an assessment of the residence and determining if improvements are required of the residence being proposed to be used to provide childcare.

Assessment (and reassessment) of the residence will occur before a person will be considered as an Educator and may result in the Nominated Supervisor and/or Coordinator determining the residence is not suitable based on this assessment.

If the assessment identifies the residence or venue is suitable, but there are areas of improvement the Nominated Supervisor and/or Coordinator will provide feedback and work with the Educator to undertake a risk assessment and together complete the Home Improvement/Repairs Risk Assessment

The Educator, Nominated Supervisor, and Coordinator will assess as to the suitability (initial and ongoing) of the Educator's residence or venue consider the following areas and aspects.

#### **This guidance will be used in conjunction with the Home Safety Checklist**

##### **1. Identify the areas within the residence that will be used for FDC**

- Using the residence floor plan identify the out of bounds areas that will not be used in the provision of Family Day Care
- Discuss and document how the identified area that is out of bounds will be made inaccessible to children while being provided with education and care
- This should include how the Educator will ensure their own family members comply with the agreed actions

## 2. The overall presentation of the home/venue

This is particularly important in the initial process of assessing the residence and will give the person assessing the environment insight into the likelihood and capability of the (proposed) Educator and their family's capacity to maintain the standard required.

If, at the initial assessment of the residence/venue the environment and furnishings are unclean, untidy, and un-kept, it is highly unlikely the standard will be maintained as required.

At this meeting, the Nominated Supervisor and/or the Coordinator will discuss the standards and have examples of what a clean residence looks like.

In assessing the residence/venue, the Educator and staff will consider the:

**SUITABILITY OF MULTI-STORY RESIDENCES:** If the home is multi-story – are there two exits from the top floor for emergency exit purposes that children can access – if using only downstairs do the facilities there include bathroom, kitchen with fridge and heating, ventilation, natural light, and cooling. Is this a habitable space for children to be located?

- The lawns are mowed, and yards are clean and tidy (no long grass or old furniture and white goods or old cars present)
- There is security on the front door – security screen or deadbolt front door
- Key to locks on entry doors are kept adjacent to the door but inaccessible to children (ensure emergency evacuation can occur as required)
- The floors and walls are free from clutter, stains, dirt, well presented, and in good repair
- Furniture is clean, in good repair and appropriate for children (not located near windows or other furniture the children can climb on)
- All furniture to which a young child could gain access is away from windows or other hazards or are eliminated from the area where education and care may occur
- No child will be left unattended or unsupervised on any raised surfaces – e.g. is there access to all items required to change a child's nappy or clothes
- Potentially unstable furniture, such as chests of drawers, bookcases, televisions, and shelving units, are secured to prevent them from falling onto a child – check this by rocking the draws
- Rugs and carpets should be secure and in reasonable condition (clean) to prevent a child from tripping and falling – have tape or non-slip backing
- The proposed spaces used to provide education and care are habitable – meaning the environment is set up for living spaces, and children have access to the kitchen, toilet, and handwashing facilities
- The Proposed space is suitable for the number of children – more than one area and is open, easy for supervising a range of age groups
- All blind cords are short and out of reach of children
- All power points in the home are covered to prevent children from accessing them

- The residence is fitted with electrical safety switches - [https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0013/102514/saftey-switches-dl-brochure.pdf](https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0013/102514/saftey-switches-dl-brochure.pdf)
- No power leads are hanging or accessible to children
- The home has natural lighting (meaning the lights do not need to be on at all times) is well ventilated, including the capacity to open windows to create air circulation.
- The residence has a comfortable temperature. There are ceiling fans or air conditioning and heating to ensure the environment is kept at a suitable temperature. Pedestal or table fans are secured, inaccessible to children and moving parts are guarded
- There are facilities to store each child's belongings where children can access their possessions independently
- There is an outdoor shaded area to facilitate outdoor play experiences
- All prescribed information is displayed (see list) – (note where this will be displayed if the person hasn't commenced with the Service)
- There is a secure place for personal information to be stored. A filing system for child and parental private information
- There is a consistent space where the parent can sign their child in and out
- The TV is strapped to the cupboard or attached to the wall if deemed unstable
- No pests or vermin are present, no evidence of this at the residence
- No free weight gym equipment is present and large equipment is fixed or covered.
- BBQs and gas bottles are turned off, have a child-proof lock over tap or are suitably covered with no access to children
- The gates are of a height that a preschool child cannot climb – at least 1.2 meters (see further guidance below in fencing) and children cannot open the gate

### **Toys and resources:**

Does the Educator have sufficient and appropriate resources to meet the range of interests, ages, and abilities of children using or proposed to use the environment (consider the educational program and each child's developmental age and stage)

- for infants (books and educational resources such as soft rattles)
- for toddlers (books, play resources including blocks, books, crayons paints, and paper outdoor equipment e.g. balls, bikes)
- preschool children (pretend items, dress up resources, craft materials, books, etc. and outdoor play resources e.g. balls bats, climbing frames)
- school age children (dress up resources, craft materials, books, outdoor play equipment: e.g. bats balls, climbing frame, etc)
- storage used has no lids to trap children

- Remove faded plastic equipment as it is brittle, easily broken and sharp edges may pose a risk to children's safety

### **Stairs and Balustrades:**

The design of stairs and balustrades should be in accordance with relevant codes or standards, including the Building Code of Australia. Including the following safe practices:

- Stairways, ramps, corridors, hallways, external access balconies or bridges, with one or more sides 1m or more above the floor or ground, should be bounded by a wall or balustrade.

### **To prevent children from falling from a balcony:**

- The balcony balustrades (railings) are at least 1m high
- Vertical bars in the balustrade are no more than 125mm apart
- Furniture, pot plants, and other climbable objects are kept away from the edge of the balcony
- Children are always supervised when on the balcony
- Doors leading to balconies are locked closed so that children cannot gain access to them

### **Nursery equipment:**

- Strollers/prams must be fitted with a five-point harness and should comply with AS/NZS 2088
- Highchairs are sturdy, stable and must be fitted with a five-point harness and should comply with AS 4684 (the model and ensure this is AS)
- Cots must comply with AS/NZS 2172, and all bedding is available for each child
- Portable/folding cots must comply with AS/NZS 2195 and are in clean and good condition
- ***Baby walkers, jolly jumpers and indoor swings must not be used in the provision of FDC***
- Baby bouncers should not be placed on a raised surface

### **Kitchen:**

The kitchen is well maintained, clean and promotes the safety, health (hygiene) and wellbeing of children

- The kitchen benches are clear of any clutter and clean, the sink is clean, and no dirty dishes left unwashed for long period
- All chemicals are in a locked cupboard (dishwashing and other detergents, fly spray and other poisons)
- There is a first aid kit accessible to an adult but inaccessible to children (fully stock – as noted on first aid kit list requirements)
- Plastic bags are kept in a locked draw or cupboard
- Sharp knives and scissors are in a locked draw or cupboard

6.1 Assessment of Educators Residence

- All electrical appliances are out of reach
- There is a working fridge – first aid box with lockable lid is available
- There is a waste disposal bin which is inaccessible to children
- There is running hot and cold water
- There is sufficient furniture for children, including enough seats (highchairs) and utensils for children to use at mealtimes?
- The stove has a guard or only back hot plates are used
- Dishwasher, washing machine and dryer are always kept shut

**Bathroom:**

- The bathroom facilities are clean, free of mould, no chipped tiles and well maintained
- No chemicals including shampoo, conditioner or other hair or body wash are accessible to children
- Bathroom cupboards have child-proof locks to prevent children from accessing the content if deemed unsuitable
- No razors, hairdryers, hair irons or other electrical items (including use of plug-in heater) are accessible to children (locked in a cupboard or draw)
- The Educators clean regularly and ensure all chemicals are removed from the bathroom daily
- The hot water tap is not accessible to children (make inaccessible) or regulated - hot water will be controlled to a maximum of 50°C in the bathroom. This can be achieved by installing a thermostatic mixing valve or tempering valve into the hot water system (refer to AS 3500)
- If a bathtub contains water, the Educator will:
  - a. Maintain constant supervision
  - b. Remain within arms-reach of children and the water
  - c. Empty water immediately after supervised use
  - d. Plugs are out of reach of children

**Toileting facilities**

- Are clean (will be cleaned daily) and accessible (step provided for young children)
- Children do not have access to any toilet cleaning systems
- Handwashing facilities are close by and easy to access
- Children have a towel or paper towel available at all times

**Nappy changing facilities**

- All Educators providing care to preschool children must have a change table/change mat that is impervious and placed where it is easily accessible to running water.

## 6.1 Assessment of Educators Residence

- And have a disposal bin that has a foot peddle to open bin
- Personal protection equipment – gloves, paper towel for cleaning surfaces are available
- Handwashing facilities are close by

### **Firearms and Guns:**

- The firearms owner/user must be aware of their responsibility to themselves, their family, friends and visitors, fellow shooters, and to the community
- This includes ensuring:
  - o The firearms are registered (evidence of this must be provided to the Service)
  - o The firearms and ammunition are stored separately; and
  - o Are safely locked away in an appropriate cupboard when not in use
  - o Are not used or out when children enrolled at the Service are present.

### **Sleeping areas**

- The area where sleeping occurs is open airy and in a space that is easy to supervise – discuss how this will occur.
- The sleeping temperature for infants should be around 20 degree Celsius - <https://rednose.org.au/article/room-temperature>
- Educators must provide sleeping facilities, including cots to Australian standards, mattress/mats/beds that have impervious covers for ease of cleaning
- Each child has their own linen – the parent or Educator could supply this

### **Laundry and Hygiene Facilities**

- There is a place for soiled clothes to be stored and washed
- Includes running water and washing facilities
- Laundry products are locked away in a childproof cupboard or out of reach of children 1.7 meters from the ground

### **Alcohol, Drug, and Tobacco-free:**

- All alcohol and drugs (prescription and non-prescription drugs) are kept in a locked cupboard or out of reach or sight of children (more than 1.7m from the ground)
- There is no evidence of smoking occurring at the residence
- No alcohol is kept in the refrigerator – or the refrigerator has a childproof lock activated

### **Glass/Glazed Areas:**

Ensure any glazed area of an Educator's residence approved for use during the provision of education and care that is accessible to children 0.5 metres or less above floor level must be

glazed with safety glass, treated with a product that prevents glass from shattering if broken or guarded by barriers that prevent a child from striking or falling against the glass [R.117].

- All glass areas accessible to children must meet the Australian Standard for glass (AS1288) or have a barrier to make this inaccessible to children; or
- All windows 0.5 metres or under and doors have safety film or are certified as safety glass
- All glass doors have decals.

**Water hazards:** (refer to water safety policy)

- Enclose swimming pools and spas with a barrier (fence) that complies with the current Australian Standard, and that completely separates them from the house and other parts of the yard
- Spas are inaccessible including a locked pool cover or an isolation barrier that conforms to the above Standard
  - o Isolation barriers should be at least 1.2m high and without footholds that would allow a young child to climb over
  - o Ensure that gates are self-closing, self-latching, and have a child-resistant lock
  - o The Service will not allow direct access from the house to the pool unless the door is self-closing, child-resistant lock and kept key locked
  - o Windows that allow direct access to a pool or spa will not open more than 10cm
  - o There are no objects that could help a child to climb over a fence or open a gate, door or window, including furniture and climbable plants or shrubs growing on the pool fence
  - o Remove the ladder from above-ground pools and store safely when not in use
  - o Display a permanent notice within the pool area detailing resuscitation procedures
  - o There are no containers that can collect water in the outdoor space
  - o When using a wading pool, after use, they must be emptied and removed from outdoor space to ensure they do not collect water
- Ponds or garden water features will be:
  - o Secured in position; and
  - o Covered by material; or
  - o Completely enclosed by a barrier, such as a fence, wall, gate or door

**Pets/animals**

- There is a separate space to house animals that is inaccessible to children
- Food and water are accessible to the animals but inaccessible to children

**Outdoor environment**

- Playground maintenance and safe play:
  - o The play equipment is strong, sturdy, and securely anchored

6.1 Assessment of Educators Residence

- Have secured ropes top and bottom so they cannot form a noose
- The footings are at least 200mm below ground level
- Play equipment does not have sharp edges, splinters or protruding parts that could pierce the skin, tangle clothing or remove cords out of clothing
- Assess the condition of all play items for rust, detachments, or weakening from sun exposure
- Inspect all chains and metal components for rust, wear and tear
- Locate play equipment in an area that is densely shaded and easily accessible, away from driveways, pools, or other hazards, and that can be easily supervised
- Check all play items for spiders and insects
- Check the sandpit has a cover that is used when sandpit is not in use
- There is no rubbish, old household items, cars, or other unused item and litter in the play-space
- Gas bottles are locked and/or inaccessible to children
- Lawn mowing equipment is locked out of the reach of children
- There is outdoor equipment, which is sufficient in number to support the number and ages of children accessing the space
- If the height is over 60cm, soft fall material will be added – grass cushioning or soft fall material such as high impact materials
- Equipment built by the Educator or another person must meet Australian Standards for play equipment or be certified by a play equipment certifier– kid-safe have this service
- Trampolines cannot be used in Family Day Care
- No equipment or chairs or other climbing items (trees) are near the fence to support the capacity to climb over
- Equipment is not placed near a path and will not collect water (must be overturned if this is the case)

**Fencing** is a structure that any preschool children could not use to climb over:

- a. Children must not be able to go over, under or through any fence
- b. No foot holds (no chain fence or wire fencing is appropriate unless there is another material added to prevent foot holes from being accessed)
- c. Rails must be at least 90 cm apart
- d. Or a mixture of horizontal and vertical rails, which would support capacity to climb over.
- e. Sturdy – test by shaking to see if the fence can be knocked over and crawled under

**Gates**

- are sturdy, have a child-proof latch or can be locked
- the key is placed out of reach of children, but is easy to access.

### **Gardens**

- contain no hard, jagged or protruding surfaces or objects onto which young children could fall
  - a. They are regularly maintained and checked
  - b. There are no poisonous plant present - refer to <https://www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/chq/our-services/queensland-poisons-information-centre/plants-mushrooms/> this has pictures and descriptions of common poisonous plants.

### **Garden sheds**

- Garden equipment is in a locked shed
- Garden shed is key locked, and the key is inaccessible
- Chemicals, petrol, paint, and other toxic materials are locked in the garden shed

### **Fire Management**

- Smoke detectors are in each room, and the Educator has checked at least annually to ensure that they are operational (refer to AS 3786).
- A fire blanket is installed in the kitchen area, and Educators should be familiar with how to use it in the event of a fire, or
- A fire extinguisher is installed at the residence and maintained as required (refer to AS 1841.1) and inspected and approved for use in the last six months
- If an existing Educator – the emergency evacuation plan is in place, and there is evidence of the quarterly rehearsed practice drills in accordance with the Emergency Evacuation Policy
- Parent emergency numbers are accessible – in the Educator'[s mobile and a hard copy is also accessible
- A working telephone is available.

### **Medication kept at the residence**

- Where will the medication be kept at the home? How will the Educator make this inaccessible to children?
- The Educator has considered medication requiring refrigeration – the Educator will have a key-locked container for this medication and other medication will be keep in a locked cupboard
- Where the Educator keeps medication is for medical conditions: the medication will be needs keep in a locked/childproof cupboard
- Health Management Plan will be kept with this medication and is easily accessible

## Review

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Details</b>
Revision 00	07/2015	Original Policy Issued
Revision 01	12/2016	Reviewed
Revision 02	08/2017	Reviewed
Revision 03	10/2020	Reviewed and separated from Policy

## Related Documents

### Policies

6.1 Child Safe Environment Policy

### Forms

Home Safety Checklist  
Risk Assessment Plans

### Reference

Refer to 6.1 Child Safe Environment Policy

Kids safe FDC Guidelines – Edition 6:

[http://www.kidsafesa.com.au/files/f/11828/Kidsafe\\_Family\\_Day\\_Care\\_Safety\\_Guidelines\\_2014.pdf](http://www.kidsafesa.com.au/files/f/11828/Kidsafe_Family_Day_Care_Safety_Guidelines_2014.pdf)

Kidsafe QLD Factsheets: [www.kidsafeqld.com.au](http://www.kidsafeqld.com.au)

Poisonous Plants - <https://www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/chq/our-services/queensland-poisons-information-centre/plants-mushrooms/>