POLICY: 6.3 Workplace Health and Safety

Procedure: 6.11 Risk Assessment and Management

This procedure aims to ensure there is a robust and effective approach to identifying hazards, assessing the risks and applying controls to ensure the risk of harm to children and adults is mitigated where possible.

6.11.1 Linking to Policy

This procedural guidance should be read in conjunction with the Service **6.3 Workplace Health and Safety Policy** 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:

6.11.2 Work Health and Safety

The Work Health and Safety Act 2011, supported by the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011, aims to protect the health, safety, and welfare of people at work. It lays down general requirements for health, safety and welfare, which must be met at all places of work in Queensland.

The Act covers self-employed people as well as employees and employers.

Self-employed people (e.g. Family Day Care Educators) must ensure the health and safety of people visiting or working at their places of work (their residence), who are not their employees, by not exposing them to risk.

For Educators, this includes people that come into their residence while the children are in care, including the people dropping off and picking up the children, the Coordination Unit staff who visit, and any workers paid to do a job for the Educator (e.g. fire protection workers).

In WHS terms, risk management is the process of recognising situations that have the potential to cause harm to people or property and doing something to prevent the hazardous situation occurring or the person being harmed.

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Risk Management involves:

- *Step 1: Identify the problem (hazard), which is known as hazard identification.*

- *Step 2: Determine how serious a problem (hazard) is, risk assessment.*

- *Step 3: Deciding what needs to be done to solve the problem, known as risk elimination, or control.*

- *Step 4: Consider the Risk Benefits*

- *Step 5: Reassess after controls are in place – consider has this reduce the risk to the child or others*

6.11.3 Minimising Risk

Minimising risk will involve:

- All staff members and Educators must have the skills and knowledge to be able to identify, eliminate, or minimise potential hazards in the environment exposed to them and others.

- All staff and Educators being able to use hazard elimination equipment or implement controls to minimise or mitigate the risk to children and others

- All staff and Educators are aware of self-protection equipment (such as gloves, glasses, hats, shoes and hand sanitiser etc.) which ensures they and others are not exposed to hazards.

The Nominated Supervisor will ensure the recruitment and induction process for both staff and Educators incorporates the training and ongoing development of their professional practice in identifying hazards and responding to any risk of harm to children and others.

6.11.4 Roles and Responsibilities

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Ensure the office, Educator's residence and other venues used by staff, Educators, children and families are assessed and deemed to be safe for all above mentioned.

- Undertake a home safety audit on the potential Educator's residence before they are engaged as an Educator and identify if there are hazards which need to be addressed and reassessed before children commencing care; and

- Never allow a child to enter the care environment until all identified hazards are addressed, reassessed and deemed to be adequate to ensure children and other people's health safety and wellbeing are protected;

- Develop a Risk Management Plan identifying all hazards and will work with the potential Educator to ensure the suitable management of the hazard is addressed, inspected and approved before commencement at the Service.

- Induct all Educators and ensure they are aware of their obligation to maintain an environment that is free from hazards that could potentially cause harm to children, families, staff, and others. Including:

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- o Providing training on undertaking a safety checks on the residence, and

- o Completing a risk management plan if a hazard is found – identify the hazard, determine how serious the risk to children is (risk assessment) consider the strategies to minimise or mitigate the risk to children and balance the risk benefits in any decision to control the risk.

- Provide information to Educators on health, hygiene and safety matters in education and care services. This may be through:

  - o Newsletters;

  - o Information and fact sheets;

  - o Professional Development sessions;

  - o and Educator meetings or on staff visits.

- Ensure reassessment of an Educator's residence occurs at least annually; and

- Where hazards are identified, a documented Risk Management Plan is developed and the Coordinator will monitor the agreed actions.

- Develop policies and practices on Workplace Health and Safety matters in consultation with stakeholders of Family Day Care.

Coordinators will

- Monitor the compliance of Educators to ensure they maintain the agreed safety standards in their residence by checking that Educators complete a Home Safety Check, and by conducting impromptu support and monitoring visits; and

- Where a hazard is identified, assessing risks and implementing controls to ensure before leaving the residence, interim measures are in place and a plan for addressing the risk is completed and timelines for completion documented; and

- The date and time for revisiting the plan are noted.

- If a hazard poses a risk which cannot be eliminated or reduced through interim measures, the families will be contacted and asked to collect their children; and

- The Coordinator will contact the Nominated Supervisor for support; and

- Stay at the residence until all children are collected;

- Work with the Educator to develop a risk management plan to address the hazard ensuring the plan covers:

  - o What hazard was identified,

  - o What were the agreed actions required to reduce or eliminate the risk to children and others,

  - o Who is responsible for what actions,

  - o When this is required to be completed,

  - o How and when the Coordinator will reassess the identified hazard to ensure this is safe for children to return to the care of the Educator and note when the Educator can commence providing education and care (not until the hazard is mitigated).

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- Undertake a re-assessment of the residence at least annually to ensure all standards are maintained in collaboration with the Educator.
- Review the systems and procedures relating to risk management with Educators and other staff of the Service on at least an annual basis.

Educators will:

- Comply with the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 as a self-employed business operator (refer to 6.11.2 Work Place Health and Safety).

- Comply with the WHS practices that are documented in the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations for Family Day Care that relate to their education and care service.

- Always maintain a safe environment in their residence while conducting their education and care service by undertaking a daily safety audit check.

- Implement policies and safe work practices, including:
  - 4.1 Hygiene and Infection Control Policy
  - 4.7 Sun Protection Policy
  - 4.8 Sleep Rest and Relaxation Policy
  - 5.1 Food Safety and Nutrition Policy
  - 6.1 Child Safe Environment Policy
  - 6.2 Child Safe Equipment Policy
  - 6.4 Water Safety Policy
  - 6.5 Tobacco, Alcohol, and Drug- Free Environment Policy
- Complete home safety checks on the environment and equipment, which complies with the 6.1 Child Safe Environment Policy and 6.2 Child Safe Equipment Policy and associated Procedures.
- Ensure regular excursions are conducted in a safe manner in accordance with 3.2 Excursions Policy and associated Procedures.

A breach of this policy by an Educator or staff member may result in disciplinary action.

6.11.5 Hazard Considerations

Educators and staff will consider the below factors when determining the likelihood of an incident occurring:

- How often the situation arises;
- The number of factors that contribute to the probability and degree of risk;
- How many people are exposed to the risk;

- The skills, knowledge, experience, and age of the people exposed to the risk;

- Any additional needs of the people exposed to the risk;

- The duration and frequency of any exposure;

- The position of any hazard in relation to the people affected and any other hazards in the environment;

- Any distractions;

- The type and amount of equipment that is available (or not available) in the environment;

- Environmental conditions such as the presence of water, temperature, other people, amenities; and

- The effectiveness of current health, safety and/or wellbeing practices; and

- The cost and capacity for controlling risks.

6.11.6 Hierarchy of Control

Hazard Control using the "Hierarchy of Control"

Controls should be determined according to the "Hierarchy of Control" system described below.

The following control elements should be used in the order presented and where appropriate used in conjunction.

1. Elimination
    ↓
2. Substitution
    ↓
3. Isolation
    ↓
4. Engineering
    ↓
5. Administration
    ↓
6. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Elimination

This control measure involves eliminating or removing the risk in its entirety. For example:

- **Risk**: High levels of a swimming pool. **Control:** the swimming pool is fenced and no climbing hazards are near the fence.

Substitution

This form of control involves substituting a safer process or material for the hazardous process/material identified. For example:

- **Risk:** Cleaning solution causing allergic reactions and nausea. **Control**: Substituting a less toxic or non-allergenic cleaning solution for the task.

Isolation

This control involves separating the hazard, sick child, or hazardous practice from the other children's play areas. This may include sectioning off the area by erecting barriers or by relocating either the hazard, hazardous work practice or the child. For example:

- **Risk**: Animals at the Educator's residence. **Control**: Provide an enclosure that provides an isolating barrier between the animal and the spaces being used by the child.

Engineering Controls

This method of control involves designing and/or adding physical safety features to equipment.

Equipment and Workplace Design: The provision of new and/or additional equipment or redesign of the space can be used to control identified hazards.

For example:

- **Risk**: Play equipment (over 60cm) **Control**: soft fall or impact matting.
- **Risk:** Manual handling lifting a child to change nappy impacting on the Educator's back **Control:** Re-design the nappy changing area to incorporate a ladder for children to stand on to reduce bending.
- **Risk:** SIDS **Control:** smoke-free, well ventilated, cool and free of obstructions;
- **Risk:** guarding children against a hazardous situations e.g. staircase. **Control**: a barrier preventing children from accessing the stairs.

Administrative Controls

This type of control is most effective when used in conjunction with the measures mentioned above or as an interim control while more effective control measures are developed and implemented. It requires systems to be established or amended in order to control the risk presented. Most often it requires the assessment and modification of the task(s) performed. It may include measures such as:

(i) **Amendment or establishment** of new Policies and Procedures. For example: developing documented safe work practice guide for a hazardous task, or implementing restrictive policy to prevent staff or Educators from coming in contact with identified hazards.

(ii) **Introduction or review** of existing office and Educator's residence maintenance schedules, for the environment and equipment, or existing safe work practices. This measure is used to ensure that the existing environment, equipment, and procedures do not deteriorate to the point where they become hazardous.

(iii) **Limit the exposure** of personnel to elements that are only hazardous when exceeding a certain threshold. These types of hazards can include noise, UV sun exposure, or chemicals such as pest control etc and can be controlled by introducing elements as simple as considering the length of time or when this occurs.

(iv) **Provide training and information** in safe work practices and other workplace health issues so that personnel can work safely.

Personal Protective Equipment

It is important to select the correct PPE for the hazard identified, and advice should be sought in this regard if you are not sure.

- **Risk**: exposure to bodily fluids. **Control**: wearing disposable gloves;
- **Risk:** sun damage to skin and eyes **Control**: sunscreen, protective clothing, hat, and sunglasses.

Implementing the Hierarchy of Control:

The above "Hierarchy of Control" provides a basic guide for controlling hazards in the workplace (Educators' residence, Service office, or other space used regularly).

Staff and Educators are required to undertake a risk assessment approach for all aspects of their work. It is important to consider the means available to you to protect yourself, children and others in an attempt to find solutions by working your way down the hierarchy.

Once appropriate controls are identified it is necessary to consult the nominated supervisor and other Service staff to ensure the controls are adequate.

This will reduce the possibility of oversights and help to gain the support of the staff in the implementation phase.

6.11.7 Assessing the Risk

What is a Hazard

A hazard is an act or condition resulting in an illness or injury. The type of outcome can categorize the hazards into the following four hazards types:

Ergonomic hazards may be described as problems that can occur when an Educator's physical workplace (residence or office) or typical work procedures do not match up with the children or their physical size or work positions.

Examples of ergonomic hazards are where there is no consideration given to the provision of both child, and adult size chairs OR steps are not in place to assist the Educator in lifting toddlers to the nappy changing table.

Physical hazards are workplace (residence or office) hazards that can affect the body.

Examples of physical hazards are falls, trips or lifting and manual handling hazards. These hazards are the number one cause of workplace injuries, and they can be easily avoided by mandating clear walkways, ensuring toys are packed up after use and engaging in proper lifting procedures – bending the knees and pushing up with the legs.

In child care the physical hazards are increased for children, because of the number and ages of children. Educators should be conscious of and actively consider hazards when setting up an area or going on excursions. This is an important starting point in the risk assessment process.

Chemical work hazards may result if an Educator, staff and children inhale or absorb harmful chemicals through their mouths, nose, or skin contact. Examples of chemical hazards can come in several forms, such as liquids, vapors, gases, mists, fumes or solids.

Biological work hazards may occur if an Educator, staff member, or child (and others) are exposed to living organisms or properties, such as parasites, viruses, fungi and bacteria. These types of work hazards may also come from infectious diseases, and handling bodily fluids and can be avoided by using personal protective equipment and implementing consistent hygiene practices. In some cases isolation or social distancing measures may be required. Increasing surveillance on handwashing, and asking families and children when entering the residence to use hand sanitisers and then washing hands thoroughly once inside the residence may be necessary. Where there is a pandemic it may be appropriate to ask families not to enter the home rather the Educator will meet families and children at the door to collect the child.

What is a Risk

A risk is the chance of something happening that will have a negative effect or impact on a child or adult. The level of risk reflects:

- the likelihood of the unwanted event (*see below Risk Matrix*)
- the potential consequences of the unwanted event (*see below Risk Matrix*)

When identifying a risk

- Identify the hazard – what about the activity, equipment or environment is hazardous
- Determine the likelihood of this occurring (*see the Risk Matrix*)
- Determine the consequences of any incident "what harm could it cause?"; and
- Combine the potential likelihood and consequence estimate using the '*Risk Matrix chart*'

See **When making a judgment about**: for guidance

When making a judgment about:

a. The severity of the **potential consequences,** factors to consider may include:

- Any potential for an ongoing or chain reaction;
- The concentration of any substances and the amount of materials involved;
- Consequences of the hazard in terms of risk to the child e.g. drowning – death could be the consequence

b. How can you **reduce or mitigate the risk of harm** to children?

- What control can be used to reduce or mitigate the risk of harm to children (review the 6.11.6 HIERARCHY OF CONTROL and 6.11.5 HAZARD CONSIDERATIONS

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c. What are the **risk benefits** for children?

- E.g. What will children gain from the excursion experience whether this is a routine excursion or a non-routine excursion.

d. Consider the risk to children, others, and self after the controls are in place:
    Has the risk been mitigated or reduced in likelihood and/or consequences?

    Is this acceptable (meaning; the risk is no longer at high risk of injury/illness/death).

The Risk Management Plan will address:

Activity/ Excursion	Identified possible Hazards	Likelihood and why	Consequences	Rating – risk calculator	Precautions/controls in place to reduce risk of injury	Risk Benefits	Rating after the control is applied – Risk calculator

Risk matrix				
What are the consequences of someone being injured/exposed?	**How likely is it to occur?**			
	Could happen at any time	Could happen sometime	Could happen but very rare	Could happen but probably never will
Death or permanent disability	H	H	H	M
Serious injury/illness	H	H	M	M
Medical attention and days off work	H	M	M	L
Pain/discomfort experienced or first aid required	M	M	L	L

RED – H – High Risk; ORANGE – M – Medium Risk; GREEN – L – Low Risk

The level of risk is the combination of the **consequences** and the **likelihood** of a specific risk.
E.G if the **consequence is a serious injury** and the **likelihood is could happen, but very rare** the risk **outcome is (M) Medium**

Risk Outcome

Examples of low risks include an event that is likely to occur but has minimal consequences.

Examples of a medium risk include an event that is extraordinarily unlikely to occur but has moderately severe consequences.

Examples of high risks include an event that is likely to occur and has moderately severe consequences, An event that is extraordinarily unlikely to occur but has catastrophic consequences.

PLEASE NOTE: Where the Risk is High Risk unless the control applied reduces the risk to Medium or Low the Nominated Supervisor will not approve this activity

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Review

	Date	Details
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

6.3 Workplace Health and Safety Policy

Reference

Refer to 6.3 Workplace Health and Safety Policy