

## Background

Supervising children is a fundamental responsibility for all teachers and educators. It extends far beyond simply watching children and meeting educator-to-child ratios. Under *Education and Care Services National Law* (Sections 165 and 167) it is an offence to inadequately supervise children and fail to take reasonable steps to protect children from harm and hazard. Children must be adequately supervised at all times, including during sleep and rest routines, excursions and on transportation provided or arranged by the centre.

Adequate supervision means:

- Responding immediately, particularly when a child is distressed or in a hazardous situation
- Knowing where children are at all times and monitoring their activities actively and diligently.

Teachers and educators will implement 8 strategies to achieve active supervision.



## 1. Arrangement of the learning environment

**Teachers and educators will:**

- Arrange equipment and furniture to maximise visibility of children.
- Position high-risk learning experiences and equipment in areas where they can be closely monitored.
- Never place furniture or equipment near or against perimeter/internal gates or fencing.
- Keep viewing windows into bathrooms and sleep rooms unobstructed i.e. do not hang curtains or display posters or art work on viewing windows. (Regulation 115)

## 2. Position of educators

Strategic positioning is essential for maintaining active supervision, facilitating children's learning and responding quickly when children are distressed or facing a potential hazard. Teachers and educators must balance proximity to children with fostering their independence, agency and safe risk-taking. Strategic positioning is especially important during transitions (e.g. arrival and departure times, children transitioning between indoor and outdoor environments) and when implementing an indoor/outdoor program, as maintaining active supervision is more challenging.

**Teachers and educators will:**

- Change their location as children explore and move throughout the learning environment.
- Strategically position themselves to maximise visibility of children.
- Face the majority of children, with their back against a wall or fence.
- Stay physically close to children engaged in high-risk play/learning experiences to quickly assist, support and intervene, when necessary e.g. cooking, carpentry, tree climbing, inexperienced children using scissors and climbing, water play, attempting a learning experience for the first time.

## 3. Scan and count

**Teachers and educators will:**

- Look beyond their immediate area to complete regular visual scans of the learning environment. When scanning the learning environment:
  - Identify the location of each child. Ask yourself, "Who can I see? Who can't I see?"
  - Stay alert to potential hazards such as open doors and gates, children engaging in unsafe play or placing furniture and equipment near or against perimeter fencing and gates.
- Conduct thorough 'look before you lock' visual checks for children whenever transitioning children from one learning area to another (e.g. between indoors and outdoors) and before closing storage rooms and sheds.
- Complete head counts (against the current attendance record) at key times, including (but not limited to) peak arrival and departure of children, transitions between learning environments and when implementing an indoor/outdoor program. Document key times for head counts in centre Supervision Plan.

## 4. Sight or sound

Children must always remain within sight or sound. At no time should a child be unaccounted for.

### Teachers and educators will:

- Be aware of out of sight, hidden places in learning environments. Document these locations and strategies to minimise associated risks in centre *Supervision Plan*.
- Listen to the tone or volume of children's voices or absence of sound in children's play, which may indicate a child is in distress or facing a potential danger.

When a child is unaccounted for any length of time, a regulatory notification is required.  
Refer to *Child Centre Incident Reporting Procedure (Branch/Affiliate)*  
and *Child missing or unaccounted* Procedure for required tasks and responsibilities.

## 5. Anticipate and respond to behaviour

### Teachers and educators will:

- Observe and anticipate children's behaviour and proactively intervene to protect children from harm and hazard. Be available and ready to redirect children before a circumstance or interaction escalates or becomes unsafe.
- Use knowledge of each child's strengths, abilities and peer relationships to anticipate how they may respond, act and behave. For example, an educator may 'join' a group of children who have previously experienced conflict with one another.
- Be aware of and respond to early signs of illness, especially for children with medical conditions.
- Remain close to children who may need extra support or assistance.
- Recognise transitions can be challenging for children and implement strategies to meet their needs.
- Be vigilant during peak arrival and departure times. Follow children's custodial arrangements and release children to authorised persons/emergency contacts. Refer to *Safe Arrival Departure and Access Procedure (Kindergarten and Childcare/OSHC)* for required steps and responsibilities.
- Utilise centre incident data to understand when (time of day) and where (locations) incidents are most likely to occur, to anticipate behaviour and supervision needs.

## 6. Engaging and responsive program

Active supervision is easier to achieve when children are engaged in a responsive program.

### Teachers and educators will:

- Use knowledge of each child's behaviour, culture, ideas, abilities and interests to facilitate learning experiences that actively engage their curiosity and wonder.
- Interact with and play alongside children to support their engagement.
- Minimise distractions, such as phone calls and administrative tasks, at times that may jeopardise supervision. Remain focused on supervision during high-risk routines, transitions and learning experiences.
- Respectfully decline from engaging in lengthy conversations with parents/guardians at times that will jeopardise supervision and compromise the implementation of an engaging and responsive program. Schedule meetings with parents/guardians at a more suitable time.
- Involve children in decisions and discussions regarding their safety and the safety of others. Promote children's independence and ability to self-regulate, discover and connect, while acting safely and responsibly.

## 7. Team communication and collaboration

Active supervision relies on strong teamwork and communication.

### Teachers and educators will:

- Inform colleagues when leaving an area (e.g. going to the toilet, assisting a child with a care routine) and when focusing their attention on a particular child or a group of children.
- When needed, reach out to colleagues for their assistance to provide effective supervision.
- Consider information shared by colleagues and adjust supervision accordingly.
- Be aware of and consistently implement the centre *Supervision Plan*. Actively contribute to discussion and reflection to improve centre supervision.
- Support colleague understanding and implementation of this procedure and centre *Supervision Plan*, by respectfully providing guidance and direction when appropriate.
- Observe and respond when colleagues show signs of fatigue or stress. When needed, step in to provide colleagues with supervision support.

## 8. Maintain a safe environment

Active supervision is easier to achieve when learning environments are safe and well-maintained.

### Teachers and educators will:

- Complete the *Daily Safety Checklist* with diligence and care.
- Check perimeter fencing is well maintained. Ensure gates and doors are in good working order.
- Keep outdoor emergency gates locked (know the location of key).
- Keep vegetation and soil buildup away from perimeter fencing to maintain its height and integrity. Check branches and bushes growing near perimeter fencing or gates are regularly pruned and cannot be used as footholds by children.
- Promptly report safety and maintenance issues to the centre Director and take immediate action to minimise risk and submit a maintenance request when needed.

## Centre Supervision Responsibilities

### Centre Director/Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person In Charge will:

- Lead the development and review of a centre specific Supervision Plan., in consultation with teachers and educators, and when appropriate with children. Complete an annual review AND when the following circumstances occur:
  - Upon direction of Early Childhood Education Manager (ECEM)/Committee.
  - The needs/dispositions of current cohort of children significantly change.
  - Significant changes/works to the physical building or playground are scheduled or have been completed.
  - A serious child injury or near miss occurs.
  - Prior to introducing a new experience that poses significant risks.
- Direct teachers and educators to read and complete the acknowledgement table of the centre Supervision Plan whenever changes are made.
- Display the current indoor and outdoor Supervision Map (part of the Supervision Plan) in a prominent location(s), that indicates key supervision areas and out-of-sight, hidden places.
- Include centre Supervision Plan in teacher, educator and casual educator induction material.
- Lead and facilitate team professional reflection and review of supervision practice. Date and minute discussions and agreed actions.
- Regularly remind parents/guardians of their arrival and departure responsibilities via centre communication channels such as StoryPark and displays adjacent to ICheckin and perimeter/internal doors and gates.
- Regularly monitor and assess educator supervision practice. As needed, provide individual educator and team guidance, feedback and on the job coaching and direction. When appropriate, utilise support resources such as Self-Assessment Activity – Supervision During Transitions and Supervision Assessment.
- Prior to establishing an indoor/outdoor program, consult with team, children (when appropriate) and ECEM/Committee. Consider the physical design/layout of the centre building and playground, needs of current cohort of children, skill and experience of teachers/educators and possible supervision strategies that minimise the increased risk associated with an indoor/outdoor program. Document agreed strategies in centre Supervision Plan. Note: An indoor/outdoor program may not be possible at some centres, due to the physical design/layout of buildings and playgrounds and needs of the current cohort of children.

### Early Childhood Education Managers and Early Childhood Pedagogy Advisors will:

- Monitor and assess supervision practice during centre visits. When appropriate, utilise support resources e.g. Self-Assessment Activity – Supervision During Transitions and Supervision Assessment.
- Promptly share and document findings in the Centre Visit Record. As needed, provide individual educator and team guidance, feedback and on the job coaching and direction.
- Prior to a centre commencing an indoor/outdoor program, facilitate and lead a professional discussion and reflection with the centre Director. Consider the physical design/layout of the centre building and playground, needs of current cohort of children, skill and experience of teachers/educators and possible supervision strategies that minimise the increased risk associated with an indoor/outdoor program. Ensure agreed strategies are documented in the centre Supervision Plan.

### Parents/Guardians will:

- Follow centre arrival and departure routines.
- Supervise their child upon their immediate arrival AND departure from centre.
- Inform teachers and educators of their child's arrival and departure. Never leave child in a location/area where an educator is not physically present.
- Close perimeter/internal doors and gates after entering and exiting the centre or playground.
- Be aware of the movement of others near gates and doors. Do not permit a child to exit centre unaccompanied.
- Support educators with their supervision responsibilities by asking to meet (lengthy conversations) outside program/non-contact hours.

## Quality and Legislative Requirements

### National Quality Standard

- Standard 2.2 - Each child is protected
- Element 2.2.1 - At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard

### National Law

- Section 165 - Offence to inadequately supervise children
- Section 167 - Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
- Section 174 - Offence to fail to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority

### National Regulations

- Regulation 101 (2)(f) - Supervision during excursions
- Regulation 115 - Premises designed to facilitate supervision
- Regulation 168(2)(h) - Policies and procedures are required in relation to providing a child safe environment
- Regulation 176 - Timeframes for notifying certain information to the Regulatory Authority
- Regulation 102C(2)(g) - Supervision during transportation
- Regulation 168(2)(ga) - Policies and procedures are required in relation to transportation

## References

- ACECQA – [\*Active Supervision in 6 steps\*](#)
- ACECQA Information Sheet- [\*Active Supervision: Ensuring Safety and Promoting Learning\*](#)
- Qld Government - [\*Get your supervision active\*](#)
- Qld Government - [\*Tips for strong supervision in a flexible learning environment\*](#)
- C&K Animated Video – [\*Your Responsibilities Supervision\*](#)