

Background

Supervising children is a fundamental responsibility for all early childhood teachers and educators. This responsibility extends far beyond simply watching children or meeting educator to child ratios. When children feel safe and secure, they develop the confidence to explore, take appropriate risks, build relationships, and engage deeply in their learning.

Active supervision creates the conditions for this to happen. Through timely and responsive action, active supervision protects children from harm while supporting their agency and development.



As learning environments and circumstances evolve, and children's needs change throughout the day, supervision must adapt in real time. This is where **Dynamic Supervision** becomes essential. Building upon active supervision, dynamic supervision requires educators to continuously assess situations, respond to emerging needs, adapt routines, and maintain ongoing open communication with colleagues. Teachers and educators use their professional judgement, to read a moment and act decisively to supervise and keep children safe while supporting their learning.

Under the *Education and Care Services National Law*, every teacher and educator has a legal duty of care to supervise children at all times. Key legislative requirements include:

- Law s3(2)(a) and (3)(a) - Paramount consideration - safety, rights and best interests of children
- Law s165 - Offence to inadequately supervise children
- Law s167 - Failure to protect children from harm and hazard
- Regulation 115 - Premises designed to facilitate supervision.

As outlined in this procedure, C&K educators are required to implement eight strategies to achieve active supervision.



1. Arranging learning environments to support supervision

Teachers and educators will arrange and maintain learning environments to ensure clear sightlines, minimise risks, and support active supervision.

Teachers and educators will:

- Arrange equipment and furniture to maximise visibility of children (and sightlines of colleagues working with children).
- Position high-risk learning experiences, equipment and resources in locations where they can be closely monitored.
- Never place furniture, equipment and resources near or against perimeter gate or fencing.
- Keep viewing windows (and convex mirrors) for bathrooms, nappy change areas, play rooms and sleep/rest areas clear and unobstructed at all times e.g. no curtains, posters, artwork or displays covering windows.
- Keep blinds covering staff office/administration room windows open at all times, except when private/confidential consultation meetings are being held with parents or staff members. Entry doors windows of staff office /administration rooms must remain unobstructed at all times.

Dynamic supervision

- Reposition furniture and equipment to support safety and supervision, as children's behaviour and needs change, evolve throughout the day.

2. Mindful positioning

Mindful positioning of teachers and educators is essential for maintaining active supervision, supporting children's learning, and responding promptly to potential hazards or distress. Mindful positioning is particularly important during transitions and when implementing an indoor/outdoor program, as maintaining active supervision can be more challenging to achieve.

Teachers and educators will:

- Change their location as children explore and move throughout the learning environment.
- Intentionally position themselves to maximise visibility of all children.
- During transitions (e.g. arrival and departure times, moving between indoor and outdoor environments), consider their location to maximise visibility and supervision of children. Document these locations in the centre-specific Supervision Plan
- Face the majority of children, with their back against a wall or fence, or areas of the learning environment with no children.
- Remain physically close to children engaged in high-risk play or learning experiences to provide immediate support and intervention. For example, cooking, carpentry, tree climbing, inexperienced children using scissors, or attempting a new learning experience.

Dynamic supervision

- Balance the need of being close enough to support and protect children, while also fostering independence, agency and safe risk-taking.

3. Scan and count

Teachers and educators will actively scan learning environments to account for all children.

Teachers and educators will:

- Conduct regular visual scans of the learning environment, looking beyond their immediate area. When scanning, teachers and educators will:
 - Identify the location of every child by asking, "*Who can I see? Who can't I see?*"
 - Actively look for potential hazards e.g. open doors or gates, unsafe play, or furniture and equipment positioned near or against fencing or gates.
- Complete a 'Look Before You Lock' physical visual check/Japanese Shisa Kanko POINT and CALL whenever children transition between learning environments (e.g. outdoors to indoors) and before closing storage rooms and outdoor sheds.
- Conduct head counts against the current attendance record at key times, including but not limited to:
 - Peak arrival and departure periods
 - Transitions between learning environments
 - Regularly during an indoor/outdoor program
 Document key head count times and processes in the centre-specific *Supervision Plan*.



4. Sight or sound

Children must remain within sight or sound of at all times. Teachers and educators will actively maintain awareness of all children through visual and auditory supervision strategies.

Teachers and educators will:

- Ensure every child is either within direct line of sight or within hearing range at all times.
- Identify areas within the learning environment where children may move out of sight e.g. hidden corners, behind large equipment, bathrooms, storage areas or outdoor structures. Document and implement strategies to minimise the risks associated with these places within the centre-specific *Supervision Plan*.
- Use active listening to monitor children's safety, paying attention to changes in tone, volume, or the sudden absence of sound, which may indicate distress, conflict or potential danger.
- Immediately investigate and respond if a child cannot be seen or heard.

Dynamic supervision

- Recognise and respond to which children or groups of children must remain in 'sight'.

5. Anticipate and respond to behaviour

Teachers and educators will proactively anticipate children's behaviour and respond in ways that minimise risk, prevent harm, and maintain a safe, supportive learning environment. Through professional judgement, ongoing observation, and situational awareness, staff will identify emerging risks or potential hazards early and take timely action to address them.

Teachers and educators will:

- Observe children's play and interactions closely. Intervene and provide children with guidance and support before situations become unsafe.
- Position themselves to be available and ready to redirect, support or guide children as needed.
- Monitor and respond promptly to early signs of illness or distress, particularly for children with diagnosed medical conditions.
- Use knowledge of each child's strengths, abilities, temperament, inclusion needs, and peer relationships to anticipate likely responses and behaviours. For example, educators may intentionally join groups of children who have previously experienced conflict to support positive interactions.
- Remain in close proximity to children who require additional support and comfort.
- Maintain heightened vigilance during peak arrival and departure periods. Follow custodial arrangements and ensure children are released only to authorised persons or emergency contacts.

Dynamic supervision

- Remain alert to behaviour patterns, emotional cues, and group dynamics. Identify potential risks early and make timely adjustments to the program or routine when needed.
- Recognise that transitions may be challenging for some children. Implement proactive strategies to support children's emotional regulation and engagement during these times.

6. Engaging and responsive program

Active supervision is strengthened when children are meaningfully engaged in a responsive program. High levels of children's engagement reduces unsafe behaviour, supports positive interactions, and promotes children's sense of belonging and wellbeing.

Teachers and educators will:

- Use their knowledge of each child's strengths, culture, interests, abilities, behaviour patterns, and ideas to design and facilitate a program that sustain engagement, curiosity, and wonder.
- Actively interact with, observe, and play alongside children to support engagement and monitor safety.
- Minimise distractions that may compromise supervision, including non-urgent phone calls, non-urgent cleaning tasks, administrative tasks, and informal conversations, particularly during high-risk transitions and learning experiences.
- Respectfully decline or defer extended conversations with parents if supervision may be compromised and arrange a mutually suitable time to continue the discussion.
- Involve children in conversations and decision-making about their own safety and the safety of others.
- Promote children's independence, agency, self-regulation, and capability to make safe and responsible choices.

7. Team communication and collaboration

Active supervision relies on effective teamwork, clear communication, and shared accountability. Maintaining open and regular communication with colleagues supports a shared awareness to make informed decisions about supervision.

Teachers and educators will:

- Inform colleagues when their attention is focused towards a particular child or group of children AND leaving a designated area e.g. attending the bathroom, supporting a child with a care routine, to ensure all areas of the learning environment remain actively supervised.
- Seek assistance from colleagues when supervision may be compromised or when additional support is required to maintain child safety.
- Actively consider information shared by colleagues and adjust supervision accordingly.
- Be familiar with and consistently implement the strategies outlined in the centre-specific *Supervision Plan*.
- Provide respectful guidance and direction to colleagues to support consistent understanding and implementation of this procedure and the centre-specific *Supervision Plan*.

- Monitor team wellbeing and respond when colleagues display signs of fatigue or stress by offering practical supervision support to ensure child safety is not compromised.

Dynamic supervision

- Contribute to ongoing reflection, discussion, and review to strengthen supervision practices and respond to emerging risks.

8. Maintain a safe environment

Active supervision is strengthened when learning environments are safe and well-maintained.

Teachers and educators will:

- Complete the *Daily Safety Checklist* thoroughly and consistently to identify and address potential hazards.
- Promptly report identified safety or maintenance issues to the Centre Director and take immediate action to minimise risks, including submitting maintenance requests as required.
- Inspect perimeter fencing daily to ensure it is secure, well-maintained, and free from damage.
- Check gates and doors are in good working order. Perimeter gates must self-close.
- Keep outdoor emergency gates locked at all times and be aware of the location of keys for immediate access in an emergency.
- Maintain vegetation and soil around perimeter fencing to preserve fence height and integrity. Ensure trees and shrubs near perimeter fencing and gates are regularly pruned to prevent climbing hazards.
- Check the positioning of all supervision mirrors weekly and adjust if required.

Dynamic supervision

- As a team, review and utilise centre incident and injury data to identify patterns (e.g. time of day, specific locations or experiences) and adjust supervision strategies accordingly.

Governance and Leadership

The Centre Director/Nominated Supervisor or the Responsible Person in Charge will lead and maintain high-quality supervision practices.

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

- Lead the annual review and reflection of the centre-specific *Supervision Plan* in consultation with teachers, educators and, when appropriate, with children. Lead an additional review of centre-specific *Supervision Plan*:
 - When directed by the Early Childhood Education Manager (ECEM) or Management Committee.
 - When the needs, abilities, or dispositions of the current cohort of children significantly change.
 - When significant building or playground modifications are scheduled or completed.
 - After a serious child injury or near miss.
 - Prior to introducing a new experience that poses significant risks.
- Ensure teachers and educators read and complete the acknowledgement table of the centre-specific *Supervision Plan* whenever updates are made.
- Display the indoor and outdoor Supervision Map in prominent locations, clearly indicating supervision zones and out-of-sight or hidden areas.
- Include the centre-specific *Supervision Plan* in induction material for all teachers, educators, including casual staff.
- Monitor and assess educator supervision practices using the *Supervision Practice Assessment Tool*.
- Prior to implementing an indoor/outdoor program, consult with the team, children (when appropriate), and your ECEM/Management Committee. Some centres may not be able to implement indoor/outdoor programs due to environmental design or cohort needs. Consider:
 - The physical design and layout of the building and playground.
 - Needs of the current cohort of children.
 - Skill and experience of current teachers and educators.
 - Supervision strategies to minimise risks associated with an indoor/outdoor program.
 Document and implement agreed strategies in the centre-specific *Supervision Plan*.
- Regularly remind and formally communicate with parents/guardians regarding their responsibilities to support centre supervision:
 - Follow centre arrival and departure routines.
 - Only open gates for their own child.
 - Supervise their child upon their 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.

Early Childhood Education Managers and Early Childhood Pedagogy Advisors/Management Committee will:

- Periodically monitor and assess centre compliance with this procedure and supervision using the *Supervision Practice Assessment Tool*. 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 risks associated with an indoor/outdoor program. Ensure agreed strategies are documented in the centre-specific *Supervision Plan*.

References and resources

- ECA Information Sheet – *Dynamic Supervision*
- 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*