

Sleep, Rest and Relaxation

Purpose of this requirement

To ensure each child's comfort is provided for and there are appropriate opportunities to meet each child's individual need for sleep, rest and relaxation in accordance with safe sleeping practices.

To ensure all babies in our care are slept in a safe sleeping environment to reduce the risk of Sudden and Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI), including Sudden Baby Death Syndrome (SIDS) and fatal sleeping accidents through best safe sleeping practice (Safe Sleep Resource Kit for Early Childhood Educators).

Definitions

Approved Disinfectant:

- Bleach 4% (dilute at 10-1)

Approved Sanitiser: Neutral Cleaner/Detergent

- Neutral Cleaner / Detergent (as per instructions)

Bedclothes: coverings for a bed, such as sheet and light blankets

Comforter: Belonging of the child that gives a sense of security.

Emergency: An incident that poses an immediate risk which requires an urgent and coordinated response

Baby: Young children between the ages of birth and 12 months.

Moro or startle reflex: Is an infantile reflex normally present in all babies, up to 4 or 5 months of age, as a response to sudden loss of support, when the baby feels as if it is falling. It involves three distinct responses.

- spreading out the arms (abduction)
- unspreading the arms (adduction)
- crying (usually)

Rest: A period of inactivity, solitude, calmness or tranquillity, and can include a child being in a state of sleep.

Relaxation: Recreation or other activity for bringing about a feeling of calm in your body and mind.

Sudden and Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI): The sudden and unexpected death of a baby under 1 year of age after they were placed to sleep. It includes explained and unexplained deaths.

Sudden Baby Death Syndrome (SIDS): The unexplained death without warning of an apparently healthy baby, usually during sleep (<http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/sudden+baby+death+syndrome>).

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Applicability of this requirement

Regulation 84B of the Education and Care Services National Regulations relating to 'sleep and rest', identifies that the educators must take reasonable steps to ensure that the needs for sleep and rest of children being educated and cared for by the service are met, having regard to the ages, development stages and individual needs of the children.

Orientation of Families:

During orientation all families are provided with a copy of the [NQS2 Sleep, Rest and Relaxation REQUIREMENT](#) and sleep and rest practices discussed.

Induction, training and knowledge of staff:

The Centre Director must ensure the local centre induction includes training and knowledge building of staff in relation to best practices for children's sleep and rest. This may include strategies such as walking through related policies and procedures and physically performing steps, and actions set out within, as well as talking and reading about it; training and checking understanding via role-play experiences, quizzes, and questions, watching and giving feedback via unscheduled room 'drop ins' to observe what educators are doing and providing feedback.

Risk Assessment:

- To ensure sleep and rest of children is safe and suitable a BM10 Sleep and Rest Risk Assessment and Control Form APPENDIX must be completed:
 - at least once every 12 months, and
 - updated as soon as practicable after becoming aware of any circumstance (risk) that may affect the safety, health or wellbeing of children during sleep and rest. NOTE: An update is only required when the existing risk assessment does not adequately describe the risk and/or if controls need to be added or amended.
- A record of each Sleep and Rest Risk Assessment is kept.
- If, after conducting a risk assessment, it is identified that a change is required to related sleep and rest policies and procedures email policiesandprocedures@goodstart.org.au as soon as practicable.

On arrival at the centre educators must:

- Seek regular information from children and families concerning sleep, rest routines and practices which relate to their values and beliefs and discuss how this will occur at the centre.
- Assist families to store any linen provided. Linen must be appropriate for the season and be provided for children on a weekly basis in an individually named sleep bag for storage.
- Have access to current safe sleeping information at the centre which can be accessed by staff or families as required.
- Educators will consider the request of families in relation to children's sleep routines while taking into account the needs of the group and individual needs of each child.

Preparation of Rest Area:

- Place the weekly NQS2 Baby Sleep Room record in the location where babies and/or children are sleeping. This will require an educator to enter the space to complete the record rather than a visual check being conducted from the entrance or observational windows.
- Bassinets are not to be used or kept on service premises at any time during which children are being educated and cared for by the service.
- Cots and other bedding equipment and accessories must meet current Australian Standards.
- Mattresses must fit the cot base, with no more than a 20mm gap between the mattress sides and ends.
- Position beds and cots with unobstructed access to assist in managing emergency situations and to reduce the risk of cross infection or injury.
- All children should be given choices and opportunities for sleep, rest and relaxation to ensure their individual comfort and wellbeing. Services need to consider how they will ensure that the location, and arrangement of the physical environment caters for non-resting children as well as resting/sleeping children. For example, consider separate resting spaces, and incorporating quiet activities into the program.

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- Provide children with a safe sleeping environment removing from reach all potential dangers including cords or strings, heaters and electrical appliances.
- Only one child is permitted per bed or cot for rest time.
- If a child does not have linen for rest time, the centre must provide clean linen for use on the day.
- Ensure that the room temperature and linen is appropriate for the climate. Refer to the Red Nose information statements - [Bedding Amount Recommended for Safe Sleep](#) and [Room Temperature](#) for further information.
- Older children are to be encouraged to make their own beds.
- Ensure sleep room viewing windows are free from obstruction.
- Cots must be prepared following the below:
 - The bottom sheet must be firmly tucked in.
 - The covering sheet and light blanket must be firmly tucked in at the bottom to prevent the baby or child from covering their head during rest.
 - Do not use doonas, pillows, lamb's wool, thick quilts, bumpers, soft toys (refer to [ACCC - Safe sleeping for babies](#)), comforters or pacifiers attached to a chain in cots.
 - Mattresses must not be elevated or tilted.
- Where a parent requests that their baby sleeps in a sleeping bag ensure the following;
 - The sleeping bag is made so that the baby cannot slip inside the bag and become completely covered.
 - The sleeping bag has a fitted neck, arm holes (or sleeves) and does not have a hood.
 - Make sure that the baby has appropriate clothing on under the sleeping bag. If additional warmth is needed, use a single, lightweight blanket over the sleeping bag, ensuring baby's feet are at the end of the mattress and the blanket can only reach as far as baby's chest and is tucked in firmly so it cannot ride up and cover baby's head during sleep.
 - Sleeping bags are not utilised once the baby is outside of the cot, and
 - The baby does not need to be slept with feet at the bottom of the cot if in a sleeping bag.
- Babies must not be moved out of a cot and onto a mattress unless they are observed attempting to climb out of a cot and it looks like they may succeed. Once this occurs the following must take place:
 - Parents are informed of the transition from cot to mattress.
 - A baby wearing a sleeping bag and not confined to a cot is at a higher risk of falling and injuring him/herself. For this reason, a cocooned bottom sleeping bag is not to be utilised once a baby is outside of the cot. However, there are a few suitable options that can be utilised instead. When choosing an alternative sleeping bag, the following must be considered:
 - The sleeping bag has separate compartments for each leg; and
 - The feet covers have a non-slip sole or feet are exposed so babies can walk around safely on slippery surfaces
 - Ensure the mattress is positioned away from the walls as babies can become trapped between the mattress and wall.
 - The baby's mattress needs to be firm to prevent sleep accidents.
 - Keep the area around the mattress clear of soft toys or similar objects that a baby can roll onto - soft objects could mould around a baby's face, resulting in suffocation.
 - Any baby or child sleeping on a mattress in a cot room must be directly supervised with an educator present at all times.

Child Transition to Rest Time:

- Each child's face and hands are to be washed before transitioning to sleep and rest time. Encourage older children to do this for themselves.
- Remove excess clothing including hooded clothing, bibs and shoes from all children All types of necklaces must be removed and stored securely. Other items of jewellery must be managed according to the NQS2 Managing Jewellery in our Centres during Sleep and/or Rest Appendix. Encourage older children to do this for themselves. During the family's orientation the Centre Director must discuss with families how jewellery is managed at sleep and/or rest time within a Goodstart centre.
- Expert guidance in Australia for safe sleep practices for babies and children, states that whether worn for cultural reasons or to soothe a teething baby, necklaces are a danger when a child is sleeping. It is advised that

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nothing is to be placed around the neck of a sleeping child as this could tighten during sleep and make breathing difficult and may even lead to strangulation. Some parents will have personal or cultural preferences that may not align with Goodstart requirements. These preferences might include the use of an amber teething necklace or cultural necklaces. During the family's orientation the Centre Director must include a visit to the cot room to show families where babies will sleep and how they will be positioned for sleep. It's important to share this with families as they may not have heard of SIDS and may not follow this advice at home. The Red Nose web site www.rednose.org.au provides information on safe sleeping with pictures and downloadable resources to share with families. During orientation the Centre Director should advise the family that appropriate clothing should be worn to the season and room temperature at sleep and/or rest time. If children change clothes, respect their need for privacy.

- Ensure staff are always within sight and hearing distance of sleeping and resting children. There must be sufficient lighting for staff to be able to regularly assess the breathing and colour of children's skin and enable children to undertake quiet activities.
- Provide well-ventilated areas for sleeping and resting.
- A bottle required prior to rest, must be offered before laying the baby down. Babies are not to be placed in the cot with a bottle. Young children must always be sitting down while feeding from a bottle or sippy cup.
- Where the parent request that their baby is wrapped ensure the following:
 - Wrapping is only to be used if requested by the parent.
 - Wrap the baby from below the neck to avoid covering the face.
 - Wrap should be firm but not tight. When wrapping baby, allow for hip flexion and chest wall expansion.
 - The baby is not over dressed under their wrap, has the head uncovered and does not have an infection or fever. Use only a nappy and singlet in warmer weather and add a lightweight grow suit in cooler weather.
 - Wrap should be of muslin or light cotton material. Bunny rugs and blankets are not safe alternatives as they may cause overheating.
 - Modify the wrap to meet the baby's developmental changes, e.g. arms free once 'moro' or 'startle' reflex begins to disappear at round 3 months. Refer to the [Red Nose guidelines for safe wrapping of young babies](#) brochure and [Safe Swaddling Vignette](#).
 - Discontinue wrapping as soon as the baby shows signs of being able to roll.
 - All staff must demonstrate to the Centre Director that they are able to wrap a baby in line with the Red Nose guidelines for safe wrapping of young babies' brochure. A professional development record must be completed for this.
 - Please note that as the responsible person for the centre, the Centre Director, is responsible for ensuring that they themselves are appropriately trained. To do this a Centre Director must ensure they understand the Red Nose requirements. Centre Directors may like to request assistance from their State Performance Lead (SPL), Coach, Practice and Inclusion Helpdesk or ask Red Nose to attend the centre to ensure they are appropriately trained; and
 - Position baby in the cot as outlined below.
- To reduce the risk of SIDS and fatal sleep accidents ensure the following practices are being carried out:
 - Always place babies on their back to sleep. Babies who are easily able to turn over and move around in the cot must still be placed on their backs while resting, even if they later choose their own resting position. This usually occurs when the child is six months or older. Once a baby has been observed to repeatedly roll from back to front and back again on their own for several weeks, they can be left to find their preferred sleep position.
 - If a family requests their child sleeps contrary to these requirements, staff are to provide them with current evidence based educational resources such as [Red Nose](#) information statements in order to facilitate informed decisions regards safe sleeping. If the family is still not in agreement due to a rare medical condition, then a letter from a medical practitioner or specialist must be provided, outlining alternative sleep positions for the child. The [Inclusion Support PROCEDURE](#) will also need to be followed.
 - When using bedclothes position the baby's feet at the bottom of the cot.
 - Ensure the baby's head and face remains uncovered.

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Sleep and Rest Time:

Staff must adequately supervise babies and children during sleep and rest time in accordance with relevant legislative requirements. The circumstances and needs of each child in care should be assessed to determine any risk factors that may mean physical checks are required more frequently. For example, babies or children with colds, chronic lung disorders or specific health care needs may require a higher level of supervision and more frequent checks while sleeping.

Children:

- Ensure children's needs for sleep and rest are met, having regard to each child's age and development.
- Children must sleep and rest with their face uncovered.
- Routines and physical environments should be flexible enough to support children who do not require a sleep and to ensure opportunities are provided for rest and relaxation throughout the day as needed (Guide to the National Quality Framework, page 400).
- Provide quiet play activities for children who choose not to sleep or rest.
- Children may be provided with a comforter where necessary, ensuring adequate supervision is provided by educators at all times.
- Staff ensure that sleeping children are closely monitored. Physically check resting/sleeping children at regular intervals. Check each child to ensure that their chest or back is rising and falling and the colour of their skin to ensure their safety and wellbeing.
- Staff must ensure that their daily Flexible Room Routine is up to date and outlines the centre's sleep and rest periods.
- Where children are sleeping or resting in separate sleep spaces refer to baby requirements below.

Babies:

- Babies must not sleep in any equipment other than a cot.
- Cot sides must be pulled up when a baby is placed in a cot.
- Staff ensure that sleeping babies are closely monitored. Physically check resting/sleeping babies at regular intervals. Check each child in the baby sleep room to ensure that their chest or back is rising and falling and the colour of their skin to ensure their safety and wellbeing.
- The NQS2 Baby Sleep Room Record APPENDIX is to be completed as educators monitor sleeping babies at 5 minute intervals. The educator conducting the physical baby check must record their initial and the number of sleeping babies. Document each child's individual sleep/rest on the Routine Information Record of your choice.

Child Transitioning Out of Rest Time:

- Acknowledge children as they wake.
- Ensure babies and children's clothing is appropriate to the season and temperature. Encourage older children to dress themselves. If children change clothes, respect their need for privacy.
- Prior to children moving to quiet learning experiences, encourage them to remove the bed linen and place it in their sleep bag.
- Store linen appropriately to prevent cross contamination.
- Clean beds with an approved neutral cleaner/detergent and stack safely at the end of rest time.
- Linen is to be laundered after the child's last day of attendance each week. Only Centre provided linen is to be washed at the Centre. Note: if children do not use the same centre linen every day, wash daily and when visibly dirty. If children do use the same centre linen every day, wash weekly and when visibly dirty. Soiled linen should not be carried against clothing, instead use a basket, waterproof bag or other alternative. Linen is not to be shared by children without prior washing. Ensure there is sufficient clean linen for the number of children attending each week.
- Remake the baby's cot if they are returning to the centre the following day. If not, prepare the cot for the baby in attendance on the next day. Sanitise the mattress after the child's last day of attendance for the week with an approved neutral cleaner/detergent. If a mattress or bed is soiled at any time, an approved disinfectant must be used for cleaning to minimise contamination.
 - If a child has soiled themselves during rest time refer to the [Toileting PROCEDURE](#). Parent provided linen that has been soiled should be handled wearing gloves and be placed into a waterproof bag,

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labelled with the child's name and then into a sealed plastic container. Centre provided soiled linen should be:

- handled wearing gloves and soaked to remove the bulk of the contamination.
- Washed separately in hot water and detergent.
- Dried in the sun or on a hot cycle in the clothes dryer.

Things you might like to consider when thinking about sleep, rest and relaxation:

- Play suitable rest music to create a soothing atmosphere. Music should be played quietly, creating a consistently low-level of noise. Refer to the [NQS1 Music GUIDELINE](#) for further information regards choosing suitable music.
- Sleep and rest practices that are consistent with best practice guidance about children's safety, health and wellbeing and that meet children's individual needs (Guide to National Quality Framework Part A, page 160). Research has found that there are long-term benefits of sleep, particularly in babies. Sleep is an important part of the cognitive process in which activity in certain brain regions are more active during sleep than when awake.
- Sleep plays a critical role in consolidating learning into long term memory throughout the lifetime (Oats et al. 2012).

For professional development resources including information sheets, podcasts and examples of positive sleep, rest and relaxation in practice visit the [Queensland Government Early Childhood Education and Care](#) webpage and [ACECQA Safe sleep and rest practices](#).

Related Documents

[NQS2 Baby Sleep Room Record APPENDIX](#) ; [NQS2 Routine Record – Option 1 APPENDIX](#) ; [NQS2 Routine Record – Option 2 APPENDIX](#) ; [NQS2 Routine Record – Option 3 APPENDIX](#) ; [NQS2 Routine Record – Option 4 APPENDIX](#) ; [NQS2 Toileting PROCEDURE](#) ; [BM10 Sleep and Rest Risk Assessment and Control Form APPENDIX](#) ; [NQS6 Enrolment and Orientation PROCEDURE](#) ; [NQS2 Managing Jewellery in our Centres during Sleep and/or Rest – Centre only REQUIREMENT](#).

Related policies

[NQS2 Safety, Health and Wellbeing POLICY](#)

Responsibilities

This requirement is to be implemented by: All centres across Australian States and Territories

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