



Sleep, Rest & Relaxation Policy

Purpose:	The purpose of this policy is to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to meet the needs for sleep, rest and relaxation of children being educated and cared for in River School Early Childhood Centre early childhood program, having regard to the ages, development stages and individual needs of the children.	
Scope:	Children attending the early childhood program, parents and employees, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements	
Status:	Approved	Supersedes: All previous Sleep & Rest Policies
Authorised by:	Dee Farquharson	Date of Authorisation: 15 June 2022
References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) • Education and Care Services National Regulations: Reg 81, 103,105,110, 115, 168(2)(a)(v) • National Quality Standard • Factsheet: Sleep health and sleep development – Children 3-5 years • Factsheet: Meeting children’s sleep, rest and relaxation needs in ECEC – Children 3-5 years • Factsheet: Sleep Health and Sleep Development – Babies & Toddlers • Factsheet: Meeting children’s sleep, rest and relaxation needs in ECEC – Babies & Toddlers • Factsheet: Sleep, rest, and relaxation and the NQS for ECEC – Children 3-5 years • Factsheet: Sleep, rest, and relaxation and the NQS for ECC – Babies and Toddlers • Child centred approach to sleep and rest • Sleep cycle Explanation 	
Related Policies & Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River School Early Childhood Centre Enrolment and Orientation Policy • River School Early Childhood Centre Interactions with Children Policy • River School Early Childhood Centre Supervision Policy 	
Review Date:	Every 2 years	Next Review Date: 15 June 2024
Policy Owner:	AMEL Board	

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Policy Statement & Principles

River School Early Childhood Centre recognises that sleep and rest strategies are important factors in ensuring children feel secure and safe at our service.

Sleep, rest, and relaxation is an important part of the lives of children. Children need opportunities to learn to rest and relax their bodies and minds and the environments we provide for them to do so can influence their sleep, rest and general wellbeing. Poor sleep and rest practices may negatively affect children’s concentration, memory and behaviour.

Children’s sleep needs change over time and vary from child to child. It is normal for children in the kindergarten age group to no longer need a daytime sleep¹.

Education and care services are required by national law to ensure the health and wellbeing of children being educated and cared for by the service².

River School Early Childhood Centre is committed to taking reasonable steps to ensure that the needs for sleep, rest and relaxation of children being educated and cared for by the service are met, having regard to the ages, development stages and individual needs of the children³.

Children will be encouraged to sleep, rest or relax during a flexible routine rest period each day. The routine is flexible to support:

- Children who do require a sleep
- Children who do not require a sleep, and/or
- Children who seek rest and relaxation throughout the day

During the flexible routine rest period children will not be forced to sleep, prevented from sleeping or forced to lie down. Children who do not require a sleep will be encouraged to relax by engaging in quiet experiences during the flexible routine rest period (for example, drawing, reading, puzzles). Children will also be encouraged to engage in opportunities for relaxation throughout the day.

While taking into account individual needs of families and children, should requests for particular routines or practices impact significantly on the wellbeing and comfort of other children attending the service and/or the safety of the child, educators will work closely with the family to achieve a suitable outcome.

The service will ensure:

- Maintenance of appropriate educator-to-child ratios at all times
- Adequate supervision of children at all times, including the close monitoring of sleeping children - educators remain within hearing range and regularly observing
- A safe, comfortable sleeping and resting environment, considering space, ventilation, and hygiene requirements.
- Sleep, rest and relaxation is incorporated into program planning.

¹ Sleep health and sleep development – Children aged 3-5 years in ECEC

² *Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) s.51(1)(a)*

³ *Education and Care Services Regulations s.81*

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- Consultation with parents upon enrolment and regularly thereafter about their child's individual sleep, rest and relaxation requirements and practices to ensure practices at the service are responsive to:
 - the individual needs of the children
 - parenting and cultural beliefs, values, practices and requirements
 - the length of time each child spends at the service
 - the circumstances or events occurring at a child's home
 - consistency of practice between home and the service
 - a child's general health and wellbeing
- Recording and communicating with families regarding each child's daily sleep and rest patterns.
- Educators have up to date information on good sleep, rest and relaxation practice, including safety precautions.

Implementation

If a family's beliefs, values and requests conflict with current recommended evidence-based guidelines, Educators will communicate to the family that we respond to the individual needs of each child. Educators will be guided by the physical indicators displayed by the child. Educators will remain respectful to ensure the family understands that children will not be forced to sleep, or alternatively, be prevented from sleeping. Children should be allowed to wake on their own accord. Children's natural sleep and rest rhythms will be supported. Should a service have a request from a parent to wake a child, the child's natural sleep cycle will be observed, and the child may be woken at the beginning of a REM cycle. REM is individual to each child and can be observed as the child or toddler shuffling, rapidly moving/ fluttering eyelids, and vocal sounds. Children's behaviours should also be monitored after waking to ensure that the amount of sleep cycles is sufficient for the individual child. Refer to Early Childhood Australia [video](#).

Exceptions to this policy, is if an individual child, is suffering from a diagnosed medical condition. The family will need to provide the service with written documentation from the child's medical practitioner identifying the condition, along with the inclusion of the alternative practises they have been medically approved for the child and complete a medical conditions and risk minimisation and communication plan.

Educators should make rest time a comfortable, positive experience for all the children by understanding a child's individual needs and the family's expectations for rest and sleep for their children.

River School Early Childhood Centre's commitment to ensuring that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the sleep, rest and relaxation needs of children are met safely and respectfully.

Awareness

The service will regularly raise awareness of the importance of sleep, rest and relaxation with families and staff, including the development and implementation of this policy and related procedures. Information on sleep, rest, and relaxation for the appropriate age group and in general will be made available in this policy and upon request. River School Early Childhood Centre will enable access to resources in relevant languages, where possible, to support families engaging with the service.

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River School Early Childhood Centre will engage with parents/carers to provide opportunities, on enrolment and when required, to discuss any issues in relation to sleep, rest and relaxation practices for their child, adjust, if needed, to support the wellbeing of the child, taking into consideration good practice, service philosophy, cultural and family practices, and the individual needs of the child.

River School Early Childhood Centre will ensure that nominated supervisors and educators at the service are advised of:

- changes to good practice in the area of sleep, rest and relaxation
- their obligations under the National Law to provide for the safety, health and wellbeing of the children in their care
- any changes to the Sleep, Rest and Relaxation Policy and associated procedures.

Parents of children enrolled at the service will be notified at least 14 days before the service makes any change to a policy or procedure that may have a significant impact on the service's provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service, or the family's ability to utilise the service.

Accessibility

Copies of this policy and any related procedures are readily accessible at the service and available for inspection by the Regulatory Authority, Nominated Supervisor, employees, and families.

Training

The service will ensure that staff are aware of the Sleep, Rest and Relaxation Policy on induction and at appropriate review times.

The service will educate its employees in procedures relating to sleep, rest, and relaxation for children, including how to manage parent/carer requests, children's individual needs, managing sleep and rest equipment, strategies for creating a relaxing environment and recording of children's rest patterns if requested.

Compliance and Monitoring

In accordance with its responsibilities, River School Early Childhood Centre will undertake the following compliance and monitoring activities:

- Keep up to date and accurate records of parent/carer requests for particular practice for their child.
- Keep up to date and accurate records of sleep, rest and relaxation patterns of children and provide as appropriate to parents/carers if requested.
- Communicate sleep, rest and relaxation information to parents and employees.
- Review and update the Sleep, Rest and Relaxation Policy and procedures as required.

Complaints

Suggestions of non-compliance with the service's processes may be submitted as complaints under River School Early Childhood Centre Complaints Handling Policy.

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Complaints alleging that a serious incident has occurred or is occurring while a child was or is being educated and cared for at the service or that the National Law has been contravened, will be reported to the regulatory authority within the specified time frame.⁴

The service will ensure appropriate records of complaints or circumstances at the service relating to a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child are kept, stored, and retained according to this policy and the River School Early Childhood Centre privacy and record retention policies.

⁴ *Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) s.174(2)(b)*

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