

## Safe Sleep and Rest

Gowrie NSW is committed to ensure that each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.

### Responsibilities of Gowrie NSW Education and Care Centres

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulation 2011, Centres must comply with

- Regulation 168
- Regulation 81

Under the National Quality Standards, Centres must meet:

- Standard 2.1
  - Element 2.1.1

This policy and procedures have been developed to:

- Clearly describe and outline how Gowrie NSW employees, student and volunteers will provide and support a child in need of sleep, rest or relaxation
- Describe safe sleep and rest practices
- Clearly outline safe environments and equipment
- Provide information for families and other stakeholders about how Gowrie NSW Employees and volunteers will provide and support a child in need of sleep, rest or relaxation

**Safe Sleep and Rest Practices**

In relation to All Children
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children should sleep and rest with their face uncovered.</li> <li>• Children’s sleep and rest environments should be free from cigarette or tobacco smoke.</li> <li>• Sleep and rest environments and equipment should be safe and free from hazards.</li> <li>• Supervision planning and the placement of educators across a service should ensure educators are able to adequately supervise sleeping and resting children.</li> <li>• Educators should closely monitor sleeping and resting children and the sleep and rest environments. This involves checking/inspecting sleeping children at regular intervals, and ensuring they are always within sight and hearing distance of sleeping and resting children so that they can assess a child’s breathing and the colour of their skin.</li> <li>• For both children and infants, a safe sleeping environment is between 18 and 22 degrees.</li> <li>• Adequate ventilation of the sleeping room and area</li> <li>• Adequate light of the sleeping area to ensure educators can see children while they are sleeping</li> <li>• Overheating has been linked to sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), so it’s important to dress babies appropriately and not overdressed.</li> </ul>

In relation to Birth to Children up to 3 years old
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before a baby is placed to sleep, educators should check that any bedding is secure and is not left loose. Infants of this age may be placed in a safe infant sleeping bag (i.e. with fitted neck and arm holes, but no hood). At no time should a baby’s face or head be covered (i.e. with linen).</li> <li>• Infants should be placed on their back to sleep when first being settled. Once an infant has been observed to repeatedly roll from back to front and back again on their own, they are to be placed on their back to sleep but can be left to find their own preferred sleep or rest position (this is usually around 4–6 months of age). Infants aged younger than 4–6 months, and who have not been observed to repeatedly roll from back to front and back again on their own, should be re-positioned onto their back when they roll onto their front or side.</li> <li>• If a medical condition exists that prevents an infant from being placed on their back, the alternative practice should be confirmed in writing with the centre, by the child’s medical practitioner.</li> <li>• To prevent a baby from wriggling down under bed linen, they should be positioned with their feet at the bottom of the cot.</li> <li>• If an infant is wrapped when sleeping, consider the baby’s stage of development. Leave their arms free once the startle reflex disappears at around three months of age and discontinue the use of a wrap as soon as baby shows signs of attempting to roll (usually four to six months of age).</li> <li>• When wrapping a baby, allow for hip flexion and chest wall expansion. Wrapping should be firm but not tight.</li> <li>• If a dummy falls out of a baby’s mouth during sleep, it should not be re-inserted by the educator and should be removed from the cot.</li> <li>• Use only lightweight wraps such as cotton or muslin.</li> <li>• If a child requires a comforter for sleep, the comforter should be removed out of the child’s cot or bed once the child falls asleep.</li> </ul>

**Safe Environments and Equipment**

### In relation Safe Cots

- All cots sold in Australia must meet the current mandatory Australian Standard for Cots (AS/NZS 2172) and should carry a label to indicate this.
- All portable cots sold in Australia must meet the current mandatory Australian Standard for children's portable folding cots, AS/NZS 2195, and should carry a label to indicate this. Portable cots should not be used unless in circumstances deemed necessary.
- Where there is a separate sleep room, sleep monitors must be used.
- Bassinets, hammocks and prams/strollers **do not carry** safety codes for sleep. Babies should not be left in a bassinet, hammock or pram/stroller to sleep, as these are not safe substitutes for a cot.

### In relation Safe Cot Mattresses

- Mattresses should be in good condition; they should be clean, firm and flat, and fit the cot base with not more than a 20mm gap between the mattress sides and ends. A firm sleep surface that is compliant with the new AS/NZS Voluntary Standard (AS/NZS 8811.1:2013 Methods of testing infant products – Sleep surfaces – Test for firmness) should be used.
- Mattresses should not be elevated or tilted. Unless parent gives centre manager a medical condition letter.
- Remove any plastic packaging from mattresses.
- Ensure waterproof mattress protectors are strong, not torn, and a tight fit.
- In portable cots, use the firm, clean and well-fitting mattress that is supplied with the portable cot. Do not add any additional padding under or over the mattress or an additional mattress.

### In relation Safe Bedding

- Light bedding is the preferred option; it should be tucked in to the mattress to prevent the child from pulling bed linen over their head.
- Remove pillows, doonas, loose bedding or fabric, lamb's wool, bumpers and soft toys from cots.
- Soft and/or puffy bedding in cots is not necessary and may obstruct a child's breathing.

<b>In relation Safe Placement</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure a safety check of sleep and rest environments is undertaken on a regular basis.</li> <li>• If hazards are identified, lodge a report as instructed in the service’s policies and procedures for the maintenance of a child safe environment.</li> <li>• Ensure hanging cords or strings from blinds, curtains, mobiles or electrical devices are away from cots and mattresses.</li> <li>• Keep heaters and electrical appliances away from cots</li> <li>• Do not use electric blankets, hot water bottles and wheat bags in cots.</li> <li>• Do not place anything (e.g. amber teething necklaces) around the neck of a sleeping child. The use of teething bracelets (e.g. amber teething bracelets) is also not recommended while a child sleeps.</li> </ul>

<b>Alternative Sleep/Rest Areas</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible sleep/rest areas e.g outdoor areas</li> <li>• Ensure all hazards are removed before entering the space</li> <li>• Ensure thought and planning has considered the above points</li> </ul>

### Meeting Children’s Sleep, Rest and Relaxation needs

<b>In relation Individual Children</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that children who do not wish to sleep are provided with alternative quiet activities and experiences, while those children who do wish to sleep can do so, without being disrupted. If a child requests a rest, or if they are showing clear signs of tiredness, regardless of the time of day, there should be a comfortable, safe area available for them to rest. It is important that opportunities for rest and relaxation, as well as sleep, are provided.</li> <li>• Minimise any distress or discomfort before putting a child to sleep in a cot. Children who are highly distressed should not be left alone to sleep</li> <li>• Look for and respond to children’s cues for sleep (e.g. yawning, rubbing eyes, disengagement from activities, crying, decreased ability to regulate behaviour and seeking comfort from adults).</li> <li>• Educators will work in partnership with families regarding their preferences regarding sleep and rest. Educators will consider these daily while ensuring children feel safe and secure in the environment. Children will neither be forced to sleep nor prevented from sleeping. Sleep and rest patterns will be recorded daily for families.</li> <li>• Avoid using settling and rest practices as a behaviour guidance strategy because children can begin to relate the sleep and rest environment, which should be calm and secure, as a disciplinary setting.</li> <li>• Patting of children is discouraged. Educators to ask if the child would like them to sit beside them</li> <li>• Understand that younger children (especially those aged 0–3 years) settle confidently when they have formed bonds with familiar Educators</li> <li>• Ensure that the physical environment is safe and conducive to sleep. This means providing quiet, well-ventilated and comfortable sleeping spaces. Wherever viewing windows are used, all children should be visible to supervising educators.</li> <li>• Bottles should be given to children before being placed to sleep or rest.</li> </ul>

### Safe Resting Practices for School aged children

- If a school age child requests a rest then there is a designated area for the child to be inactive and calm, away from the group of children. Educators will ensure they are always aware of the position of all children, to provide appropriate supervision as per centre supervision plans.
- There are always to be indoor and outdoor rest and relaxation/’chill out’ zone spaces available. The designated rest area may be cushions, mat or seats in a quiet section of the environment.
- Safe resting practices are relevant to school age children because, if they are resting and sleeping, they should be monitored at regular intervals and the child’s face should be uncovered when they are asleep.
- If children require sleep, families are encouraged to provide a sheet, pillow (if desired) and sheet or blanket for on top of the child. For rest and relaxation purposes families are encouraged to pack spare clothes for children to be able to choose to change into. These will then be taken home by the family each day, for laundering. Children will be provided with a quiet space to sleep, with supervision always provided by educators. (Particularly with Kindergarten children during transition from Pre-school to school at the start of each year).
- Although school aged children are not considered at high risk of SIDS, the SIDS guidelines for safe sleeping will be followed.
- All Educators consider the risk for each individual child, and tailor Sleep and Rest Policies and Procedures to reflect the levels of risk identified for children at the service. Factors to be considered are the age of the child, medical conditions, individual needs and history of health and/or sleep issues. (including the frequency of checks/inspections of children/referencing medical checklists and children’s individual allergy and health action plans)

### Related Legislation/Standards

- Education and care Services National Regulation, 2011 (regulation 81)
- Education and care services National Law Act, 2010
- National Quality Standard 2.1
- National Quality Framework

### Related Gowrie Policies and Procedures

- Enrolment and Orientation
- Providing a safe environment
- Child protection

### References

- Red Nose Saving Little lives (June 2007) Cot to bed Safety  
[https://rednose.com.au/downloads/Cot\\_to\\_Bed\\_Brochure.pdf](https://rednose.com.au/downloads/Cot_to_Bed_Brochure.pdf)
- Red Nose Saving Little lives (June 2007) Wrapping or Swaddling babies  
<https://rednose.com.au/article/wrapping-babies>  
[https://rednose.com.au/downloads/Safe\\_Wrapping\\_Brochure.pdf](https://rednose.com.au/downloads/Safe_Wrapping_Brochure.pdf)
- Keeping them Safe- a guide to infant and nursey products  
<https://www.productsafety.gov.au/publication/keeping-baby-safe-a-guide-to-infant-and-nursery-products>
- Raising Children Network  
<https://raisingchildren.net.au/newborns/sleep/understanding-sleep/about-sleep>
- Red Nose Saving Little lives (June 2007) Bedding amount recommended for safe sleep

<https://rednose.com.au/article/bedding-amount-recommended-for-safe-sleep>

- ACECQA National Quality Framework Resource Kit (2012) Quality Area 2 –Children’s Health & Safety Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011), R 81 Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010), S 165