



4.10 Relaxation, Rest and Sleep

This policy was approved by the Nominated Supervisor in consultation with staff and families.

Date Approved: April 2026

Review Date: April 2029

Aim

All children have individual sleep and rest requirements. The service will provide a safe, comfortable and well-supervised environment that supports children to rest or sleep according to their needs.

Rest and relaxation are an integral part of the daily program. A balance of active and passive experiences will be provided throughout the day. Following lunch, children will be encouraged to participate in quiet experiences such as reading, puzzles and relaxation. Children who require sleep or rest at other times will be supported accordingly.

The service will ensure all children have appropriate opportunities to sleep, rest and relax in accordance with their age, development and individual needs.

Policy Statement

The service will take all reasonable steps to ensure children's sleep and rest needs are met while maintaining their safety, health and wellbeing at all times.

Safe sleep practices will be implemented in line with current evidence-based recommendations, including guidance from recognised authorities.

Roles and Responsibilities

Approved Provider will:

- Take reasonable steps to ensure children's sleep and rest needs are met in accordance with Regulations 84A–84D
- Ensure adequate numbers of cots, beds and bedding that meet Australian Standards
- Ensure all cots comply with AS/NZS 2172
- Ensure sleep and rest environments are safe, well ventilated and appropriately lit
- Ensure supervision arrangements support safe monitoring of sleeping children
- Ensure a sleep and rest risk assessment is conducted and reviewed (Regulation 84C)

Nominated Supervisor will:

- Ensure sleep and rest practices are implemented in accordance with Regulations 84A-84D
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of safe sleep practices
- Support educators and communicate information to families
- Ensure risk assessments are conducted, implemented and reviewed

Educators will:

- Consult with families about each child's sleep and rest needs
- Provide a calm, safe and supportive environment for rest
- Ensure beds and bedding are clean, safe and used by individual children
- Arrange sleep equipment to allow safe access and supervision
- Use responsive and individualised settling strategies to support children
- Ensure children are appropriately dressed for the sleep environment

- Maintain required educator-to-child ratios at all times
- Actively supervise and monitor children during sleep and rest
- Record sleep and rest patterns daily
- Communicate with families about their child's rest and sleep
- Respect family preferences where safe and appropriate

Children will not be forced to sleep or prevented from sleeping.

Sleep and Rest Risk Assessment (Regulation 84C)

A sleep and rest risk assessment will be conducted to identify and minimise risks to children's safety, health and wellbeing.

The risk assessment will consider:

- the number, age and developmental stages of children
- individual needs, including medical conditions and sleep history
- the sleep and rest environment, including visibility, lighting, ventilation, temperature and hazards
- the arrangement of cots, beds and mattresses
- educator positioning and line of sight
- educator-to-child ratios during rest periods
- the use of monitoring devices (as a supplement only)
- procedures for checking sleeping children
- any specific risks for individual children

Risk assessments will be:

- conducted prior to enrolment of infants where applicable
- reviewed when there are changes to the environment or children's needs
- regularly monitored and updated

Supervision and Monitoring

Sleeping and resting children will be actively supervised at all times.

Educators will:

- maintain continuous visual and auditory awareness of sleeping and resting children
- position themselves to ensure clear sightlines to all children
- ensure children are within sight and/or hearing at all times
- conduct regular physical checks of sleeping children, including:
 - breathing
 - skin colour
 - sleep position
 - airway safety

The frequency of checks will be based on the risk assessment, considering age and individual needs.

As a guide:

- infants: approximately every 5–10 minutes
- older children: at regular intervals

Educators will physically enter sleep areas to conduct checks and document observations. Monitoring devices (e.g. baby monitors) may be used as a supplementary tool only and do not replace direct supervision.

Safe Sleep Practices

All Children

- Sleep environments will be free from hazards and smoke
- Children's faces will remain uncovered during sleep and rest
- Safe supervision will be maintained at all times

Babies and Toddlers

- Babies will be placed on their back to sleep
- Once able to roll independently, babies may adopt their own sleep position
- Alternative sleep positions require written medical advice
- No loose bedding, pillows, doonas, bumpers or soft toys in cots
- Bedding will be securely tucked
- Babies will be placed with their feet at the bottom of the cot
- Safe sleeping bags may be used (no hood)
- Wrapping will be developmentally appropriate and discontinued when rolling begins
- Dummies may be offered but not reinserted once the child is asleep
- Bottles will not be provided in cots or beds

Children will be transitioned from cots to beds when developmentally appropriate.

Sleep Environment and Equipment

Cots and Equipment

- Must comply with AS/NZS 2172 (cots) and AS/NZS 2195 (portable cots)
- Must be maintained in safe working condition
- Prams, bassinets and similar equipment will not be used for routine sleep

Mattresses

- Firm, clean, flat and well-fitted
- No gaps exceeding 20mm
- No additional padding added

Bedding

- Lightweight and securely tucked
- No soft or loose items in sleeping environments

Environment

- Clean, safe and well ventilated
- Temperature monitored and adjusted for seasonal conditions (generally 18–22°C where practicable)
- Free from hazards including cords, heaters and electrical risks

Meeting Individual Needs

- Children who do not sleep will be offered quiet activities
- Children showing signs of tiredness will be supported to rest
- Individual routines and cultural practices will be respected where safe
- Sleep and rest will not be used as a behaviour management strategy
- Children will be supported emotionally to feel secure and relaxed

Where family requests differ from recommended safe sleep practices:

- child safety will be prioritised
- evidence-based guidelines will be followed
- medical advice will be required where necessary
- risk minimisation strategies will be implemented

Documentation and Accessibility

- Sleep and rest patterns will be recorded daily
- Families will be informed about their child's sleep and rest
- Policies and procedures will be readily accessible to families, educators and staff

These are available:

- in the service's policies and procedures folder located in the office
- on the service website

Educators will support families to access policies as required.

Relevant Legislation and Standards

- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act
- National Quality Standard (Quality Area 2)

Resources

- Red Nose Safe Sleeping Guidelines
- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC)
- Standards Australia
- NSW Health – Cot Safety

Version History

V1.0 – Initial policy (pre-2017)

V2.0 – Review and minor updates (pre-2017)

V3.0 – Reviewed April 2026

Updates include:

- Alignment with current safe sleep guidance from Red Nose Australia
- Strengthened supervision and risk-based monitoring requirements
- Inclusion of sleep and rest risk assessment requirements
- Updated regulatory terminology aligned with Education and Care Services National Regulations (Regulations 84A–84D)
- Improved infant sleep safety, cot and bedding compliance wording
- Clear separation of roles and responsibilities