

JUNEE PRESCHOOL POLICIES

Work Health and Safety Policy

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

Quality Area 3: Physical Environment

Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership

Introduction

The Preschool aims to ensure the health and safety of all staff working in the Preschool, along with all children, families and visitors. The Approved Provider will provide and maintain a safe work environment and have effective policies and procedures in place to manage health and safety risks and staff must ensure their own health and safety, and that of colleagues, families and all other visitors to the workplace. They must know and follow all health and safety policies and procedures, at all times.

Goals/ What are we going to do?

The Preschool will have good work health and safety policies, procedures and practices ensure that:

◁ management fulfils its responsibility to provide a safe work place, without any negative impact on the health and wellbeing of employees; ◁ employees meet their health and safety obligations AND are safe in the workplace; ◁ children, families and all service visitors come to a safe workplace that protects their health and wellbeing; and ◁ the work environment supports quality early education and care.

Strategies/ How will it be done?

A safe and healthy work environment will be maintained through:

◁ health and safety polices and procedures including this policy, along with other policies such as the first aid policy, child protection policy, cleaning and maintaining the environment policy, emergency and evacuation policy and safe storage of dangerous goods policy.

◁ consultation between the Approved Provider and staff on health and safety matters.

◁ Ensuring staff training on work health safety practices.

◁ Hazard identification and risk assessment and management.

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Manual Handling

Manual handling refers to any form of lifting, pushing, pulling, carrying, nursing and, or holding children or objects. Educators routinely undertake a wide range of manual handling tasks in their day to day work and this is a key hazard.

To prevent manual handling injuries the Approved Provider will:

◀ provide training/information on manual handling techniques.

To prevent manual handling injuries staff will:

◀ practice safe lifting and carrying

◀ use aids such as trolleys and step ladders

◀ store heavy and awkward objects close to where they are needed

◀ use furniture and equipment suitable for adult use (for example adult sized chairs)

Slips, Trips and Falls

Good housekeeping can reduce hazards that could potentially cause injuries – particularly slips, trips and falls.

To minimise slips, trips and falls staff will:

◀ Conduct daily safety checks of building, equipment and toys. ◀ Clean spills immediately and display safety signs in hazardous areas. ◀ Keep all walkways clear.

◀ Pack away toys and equipment when not in use. ◀ Report damaged floor coverings and broken tiles to the Approved Provider to be repaired or replaced. ◀ Encourage older children to recognise and report hazards.

Communicable Diseases

Infections are common in children and people may be contagious without realising they are ill. As educators comfort and care for children who are sick at the Preschool, there is a risk of catching a communicable disease.

Educators who are pregnant should be made aware that some infections can harm an unborn child particularly rubella, chicken pox and cytomegalovirus. Pregnant staff should also avoid manual handling where possible.

To minimise the spread of infections staff will:

◀ ensure their immunisations are up to date.

◀ ensure good hygiene practices (hand washing, using disposable gloves)

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◁ follow the Managing Infectious Diseases Policy, the Cleaning and Maintaining the Environment Policy and the General Health and Well-being Procedures.

Stress

No workplace is stress free, however high levels of stress can cause a variety of health issues. It is important to recognise that workplace stressors can damage our health and wellbeing, and to seek to eliminate or control hazards as far as possible. Some physiological responses to stress are:

- ◁ Increased blood pressure
 - ◁ Insomnia
 - ◁ Rise in heart rate
 - ◁ Stomach ulcers
 - ◁ Digestive disorders
 - ◁ Headaches
 - ◁ Fatigue
- Some emotional and behavioural responses to stress are:
- ◁ Tension, anxiety or depression
 - ◁ Increased workplace conflict and aggression
 - ◁ Absenteeism

To minimise stress the Approved Provider will:

- ◁ Have adequate staff, resources and training for all required tasks.
- ◁ Ensure educators take scheduled breaks and regular annual leave
- ◁ Provide information about workplace bullying – and what to do about it.
- ◁ Ensure educators understand your conflict resolution and grievance policy and procedures.
- ◁ Encourage a healthy lifestyle

To minimise stress staff will:

- ◁ Maintain open communication and encourage supportive peer relationships.

Chemical Hazards

Many chemicals and hazardous substances are used in early childhood settings. Educators exposed to dangerous products risk poisoning, inhalation, swallowing and irritation to the skin and eyes.

To control chemical hazards the Approved Provider will:

- ◁ Clearly label all chemicals.
- ◁ Store chemicals safely and out of reach of children.
- ◁ Display warning signs where dangerous products are stored.

To control chemical hazards staff will:

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- ◀ Read the material safety data sheet (MSDS) and have information readily available with first aid instructions.
- ◀ Use all personal protective equipment provided.
- ◀ Read and apply instructions for use e.g. use correct dilution.
- ◀ Colour code materials and equipment to minimise spread of infection.

Electrical Hazards

Electrical hazards are not foremost in our minds in an early childhood environment, yet most services have a large range of electrical equipment which can be dangerous if not treated properly.

To control electrical hazards the Approved Provider will:

- ◀ Maintain electrical equipment in good working order.
- Have equipment checked by a qualified electrician and tagged to notify the date of inspection, if required.

To control electrical hazards staff will:

- ◀ Not use equipment with any sign of damage to the equipment, the cord or the plug. Tag equipment in need of repair.
- ◀ Avoid use of double adapters and power boards.
- ◀ Keep electrical cords untangled and out of reach of children.
- ◀ Put safety plugs in unused power points.

Injury Management

Should an employee sustain workplace injury or illness, their return to work will be carefully managed. Where there has been a workers' compensation claim, a return to work plan will generally be developed in consultation between the employee, employer, the relevant insurance company representatives, rehabilitation provider and medical professionals treating the employee.

Work restrictions placed on the employee by their treating physician will be observed and they will not be required to undertake duties that will exacerbate their injury. Depending on the severity of the injury, the employee may need to return on reduced hours and gradually increase their work time to the pre-injury hours.

The employee's rehabilitation provider and the employer's insurance company can provide information about the rights and responsibilities of both the employee and the employer in achieving a successful return to work after an injury.

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Work Health Safety Responsibilities

The Approved Provider will:

◁ protect the health and safety of workers and anyone else affected by workplace activities including children, families, contractors and visitors ◁ identify and control workplace health and safety risks for all people in the workplace including staff, children, families, contractors and visitors ◁ consult with employees on matters that affect their health, safety and welfare; and ◁ provide adequate training and supervision for all employees to work safely.

Employees will: ◁ carry out their work in a way that does not put their own health and safety, at risk, or that of others in the workplace ◁ identify and report potential workplace hazards ◁ report all work-related injuries ◁ implement service's policies and procedures; and ◁ participate in workplace consultation about health and safety matters.

SOURCES

◁ Work Health Safety in Education and Care Services -
<http://www.echr.edu.au/docs/default-source/resources/ipsp/work-health-and-safety-in-education-and-care-services.pdf?sfvrsn=8>

USEFUL RESOURCES

◁ Safe Work Australia - www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au
◁ Work Cover Authority of NSW - Ph: 13 1050
www.workcover.nsw.gov.au

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every two years.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Policy Review Date May 2023

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Related Legislation:

The Work Health Safety Act 2011 (NSW), Model Work Health Safety Act 2011, Model Work Health Safety Regulations, Model Codes of Practice.