

HAZARDOUS PLANTS POLICY

AIM:

To reduce the risk to children of poisoning or other injury caused by hazardous plants.
To create and maintain safe play environments for children in Family Day Care.
To comply with the health and safety requirements of the Education and Care Services National Regulation 2011.

RATIONALE:

Many common indoor and outdoor plants pose health and safety risks for children. Children who are crawling or toddling, particularly around twelve months of age, are most at risk of eating bits of plants. Poisoning can occur if children eat some types of plants, or some plants can cause allergies or injure children.

Family Day Care educators are responsible for protecting children from the risks associated with hazardous plants and they must ensure that any poisonous vegetation in children's play areas on their premises is identified and maintained so that it does not present a hazard to children.

In particular, any vegetation on the premises that can lead to injury or severe discomfort for example, because of sharp prickles or prominent thorns, must be identified and maintained so as to ensure that it does not present a hazard to children.

PROCEDURES:

To minimise risk of and respond effectively to child accidents relating to contact with hazardous plants, educators must:

- **Identify both indoor and outdoor poisonous plants** and ensure they are not accessible to children – remove them, or otherwise prevent any chance of child contact. Ensure plants with thorny, spiky branches are kept trimmed back from pathways and children's play areas.
- **Identify potentially hazardous plants that can cause injuries, skin irritations, or choking**, such as cactus plants, rose bushes, or berries, ensure they are inaccessible to children or maintain the plant to remove the hazard.
- **Be aware that eating poisonous plants can cause a range of symptoms** such as gastrointestinal (nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain), cardiac (irregular or fast heartbeat), skin (burning of the mouth or skin rash), and allergy (hives, difficulty breathing, wheezing, asthma, anaphylaxis). The type and severity of symptoms will vary according to the type of plant eaten, the amount swallowed and the size of the child. The most common problems are stinging around the mouth and skin allergies
- **Supervise children at all times when close to plants**, teach children not to put any plants or berries into their mouth, nose or ears.

- **Remove plants from the care area that can cause serious poisoning.** (refer to the Kidsafe Playground Advisory Unit publication “**Plants For Play Spaces**” to help determine the toxicity level of plants and to develop strategies to protect children. **Any plant listed in this publication as having a toxicity rating of 3 is to be removed from the care area, or made fully inaccessible to children.** Some common examples are – angels trumpet, arum lily, castor oil plant, cycads, deadly nightshade, dumbcane, elephants ears, english ivy, foxglove, hyacinth, hydrangea, iris, lantana, oleander, rhubarb, rhus, white cedar, wisteria.

- **Where possible use an on-line plant reference** with photos to assist in identifying poisonous plants.

Local councils can provide an inspection and give advice about noxious weed control.

- **If poisoning occurs call 000 for an ambulance and follow first aid and emergency procedures. Emergency advice may be sought from the Poisons Information Centre 13 11 26 24 hours a day, seven days a week.**

Relevant Legislation: *Education and Care Services National Regulation 2011;*
Work Health and Safety Act 2011.

Key Resources: *The Children’s Hospital at Westmead: www.chw.edu.au*
Plants for Play Spaces, Kidsafe NSW : www.kidsafensw.org
Health & Safety in Family Day Care: Model Policies & Practices – 2003