

POOL AND WATER SAFETY

AIM:

To protect the safety and well-being of children in care whilst undertaking excursions where there may be water hazards present and whilst involved in water-based activities at the educators premises.

RATIONALE:

Drowning is the most common cause of accidental death in Australian children aged between 0-4 years. An international comparison of drowning rates indicates that Australia has the second worst record in the world for toddler drowning. Whilst most drownings occur in backyard swimming pools, it is important to be aware that children can drown in as little as 5cm of water. Other water hazards in relation to child injuries and illnesses are: nappy buckets, toilets, wading pools, spas, bathtubs, fish ponds, fountains, pet drinking bowls, dams, creeks, lakes, rivers and beaches.

POLICY:

Educators can help minimise child accidents and injuries/illnesses relating to swimming and wading pools and other water hazards by complying with the applicable regulations.

1. Any swimming pool at the premises of a Family Day Care educator must be fenced to comply with the *Swimming Pools Act 1992*.
2. Educators must register their swimming pools with their local council by providing prescribed “registration information” to be entered on a Register of Swimming Pools.
3. Written authorisation from the parent must be obtained by the educator before a child enters a swimming pool at the educators premises. The authorisation should state whether or not a school aged child is a confident swimmer.
4. If children are authorised by the parent, in writing, to swim at a **swimming pool on the premises of the educator**, there must be present within the fenced area of the pool:-
 - a) at least one (1) **authorised adult** for each child using the pool, *and*
 - b) at least one (1) **authorised adult** for each three (3) school aged children using the pool, if the school aged children are confident swimmers.

(Ratios for clause 4a) & 4b) must include the educators own child/ren)
5. All paddling pools at the educators premises are to be emptied immediately after use and stored to prevent the collection of water.
6. All other water containers at the educators premises that could constitute a drowning hazard must be safely covered or inaccessible to children.
7. Children in care may be taken on an excursion to swim in a swimming pool, **only for the purpose of learning water safety or learning to swim**. On such occasions, the minimum adult/child ratio will be one (1) adult for each child in attendance. Non-Routine Excursion documentation must be completed prior to the event.

8. If children in care are taken on an excursion to a beach, river, lake or other place where there is a water hazard, even though the children **will not be swimming**, the minimum adult/child ratio is:-

- a) one (1) adult for each child under 3 years of age, **and**
- b) one (1) adult for each two children 3 or more years of age, **and**
- c) one (1) adult for each five (5) children who normally attend school.

Children in care must not be allowed to swim in rivers, lakes, dams, or at the beach.

PROCEDURES

To prevent child accidents and illnesses relating to swimming and wading pools and other water hazards educators will:

Complete a documented risk assessment detailing the steps taken to minimise the risk to children in environments that include a swimming pool

Maintain compliance with Australian Standards for pool fencing and gates if there is a swimming pool on the premises. Check pool fencing and gates regularly to ensure they are working correctly.

Remove all objects from around a pool or other water hazard that a child could use to climb over fencing, such as logs, trees, bikes, chairs and bins.

Directly supervise children near water at all times and never leave children alone near any water. Direct supervision requires close proximity at all times.

Keep cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) guide near pool, ensure pool filters and chemicals are inaccessible to children.

Teach children how to stay safe around pools and bodies of water. (eg. no running or pushing around pools, no diving etc.)

Check that all children wear clean bathers, and go to the toilet before entering the pool, and follow correct toileting hygiene practices.

Ensure that pools on the educator`s premises are clean, hygienic and appropriately chlorinated (if applicable). (Children with diarrhoea, upset stomach, open sores, or nasal infections should not use swimming or wading pools).

Always have a mobile or cordless phone with you when supervising children during water play.

Relevant Legislation: *Education and Care Services National Regulation 2011:*

Work Health and Safety Act 2011:

Australian Standards for swimming pool safety.

Swimming Pools Act 1992; Swimming Pools Amendment Act 2012:

Key Resources: *Health and Safety in Family Day Care, Model Policies and Practices*, University of NSW, 2nd edition, 2003; Westmead Children's Hospital: www.chw.edu.au ; Child and Youth Health: www.cvh.com; *Staying Healthy in Child Care*, NHIVIRC, 4th edition 2005: www.health.gov.au Public Swimming Pool and Spa Guidelines, 1996; A Carers Guide to Kidsafe Homes, Kidsafe, 2000. Kidsafe NSW Factsheet; *Childhood Drowning:*