

STORAGE OF DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES AND EQUIPMENT

RATIONALE:

Accidental poisoning is a common reason for hospital admission for child injuries in Australia. 67% of accidental poisonings are attributed to medications, however other main agents of poisoning in children are cleaning materials, including detergents, disinfectants and bleaches, pesticides, poisonous plants and other dangerous substances including some toiletries. Many of these chemical products are routinely used in the home and are potentially dangerous.

Tools and equipment, including some first aid equipment, can be dangerous and pose a hazard to children. Objects with sharp or jagged edges, such as knives and scissors can also be dangerous.

POLICY:

Educators will minimise the potential for harm to children, families, Family Day Care staff and visitors from the risks associated with potentially dangerous chemicals and hazardous substances. Educators will also protect children and other stakeholders from harm that could be inflicted by equipment used in their home environment.

PRACTICES:

Whenever possible, educators will not use potentially dangerous chemicals or hazardous equipment on the premises when children are in care. If it is necessary to use such materials/equipment while children are in care, educators should choose the least hazardous chemical, product or equipment for the job and children should be excluded from the area where the substance/equipment is being used. Educators are to ensure that they follow the manufacturer's instructions for use for any chemicals or hazardous substances they use.

Where educators store bulk volumes (ie. in larger containers than normally available from the supermarket) of hazardous chemicals etc. on the registered premises for decanting prior to use, a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) must be obtained and kept safely stored with the chemicals used. Decanted liquids must be clearly labelled on the new container.

If an accident occurs while using chemicals or dangerous substances, the first aid instructions given by the manufacturer should be followed.

When using or storing any dangerous substances or equipment, educators should endeavour to:-

- choose the least hazardous chemical, product or equipment for the job.
- choose chemicals or medicines with child resistant lids or caps.
- have **lockable** storage facilities that are secure to children for the following types of items: -
 - hazardous cleaning materials,
 - poisonous and other dangerous substances
 - toiletries
 - medications
 - emergency medical equipment and drugs
 - scissors, knives and other sharp implements

First aid kits and Epipens must be stored so as to be inaccessible to children, but must be readily accessible to the educator.

- Ensure that any hazardous cleaning materials, poisons and other dangerous substances and medications that are decanted into another container are clearly labelled.
- Do not store pesticides, herbicides, solvents, petroleum or kerosene on the premises unless contained in a **secure** facility, separate from the children's play areas and environment. They should not be stored at ground level and should not be stored with organic materials, fertilisers or swimming pool chemicals.
- Ensure storage containers used for chemicals are not reused and are properly discarded when empty.
- Ensure that if any of the above substances need to be refrigerated, they are stored in a locked/secure, labelled, child proof container.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for use, storage and first aid. In an emergency, ensure all information relating to the substances is accessible to Family Day Care staff and/or other involved stakeholders.
- Seek medical advice immediately if poisoning or potentially hazardous ingestion, inhalation, skin or eye exposure has occurred, or call the **Poisons Information Line on 131126**, or call an ambulance, on 000.
- In the case of any educator or child being injured by a chemical, substance or equipment, the educator is to initiate the emergency, medical and first aid procedures, and notify the child's parent and the Clarence Family Day Care staff as soon as possible.
- In any emergency involving a hazardous chemical or equipment, a hazardous gas or a fire or explosion hazard, call the emergency services on 000, and notify the Clarence Family Day Care scheme co-ordination unit as soon as it is safe to do so.
- There are many items of household equipment that have sharp or jagged edges, which can be considered a hazard, for example, knives, scissors and screwdrivers. Educators should ensure that these pieces of equipment are securely stored whenever not in use. Hazardous equipment should be at least inaccessible to children when not safely stored.

Relevant Legislation:

Education and Care Services National Regulation 2011;
Work Health and Safety Act 2011;
Pesticide Act 1999 (NSW);
Australian Standards for storage and handling of hazardous chemicals and materials.

Key Resources: *The Toxic Playground*, Immig, J, 2000;
Managing the Risks in Children's Services, Caton, S. Roche D., 1999;
Handling Pesticide Wastes - EPA: www.epa.nsw.gov.au;
Managing OHS in Children's Services, Arrant. S., 2002.
Health & Safety In Family Day Care Model Policies & Practices – 2nd Edition