

Safe sleep and rest practices in the Caroline Chisholm School – Preschool

Regulations 81 and 168

At CCS preschool, we support children to grow and become self-regulating, this is supported through safe sleep and rest practices.

The educators consult with families throughout the year regarding their child's individual needs and is sensitive to different values and parenting beliefs, cultural or otherwise associated with sleep and rest.

Relaxation, mindfulness, and yoga are times to give our bodies and minds a break to be present, centered and grounded ready to continue to learn through play. We use strategies from the Berry Street Education Model (BSEM) to teach the children how to take some quiet time out and regather themselves and rest, this supports children to regulate their bodies and emotions.

Resources at the Preschool

- Families are invited to supply basic sleeping equipment for their child, including a pillow and blanket. Sleeping equipment is sent home at the end of each week for cleaning.
- Each preschool environment (indoor and outdoor) contains a designated 'quiet space' which children may access throughout the day. Children are encouraged to develop agency and self-regulation of their wellbeing by accessing the space when required. Children have the choice of sitting, lying, quietly looking at picture books or using sensory tools.
- Preschool classes regularly engage in relaxation, mindfulness, or yoga and meditation practices which are designed to support children in being calm, mindful, and comfortable in the environment.

Children of all ages

- Children should sleep and rest with their face uncovered.
- A quiet place should be designated for rest and sleep, away from interactive groups. If designated for rest, the space should allow for a calm play experience.
- Children's sleep and rest environments should be free from cigarette or tobacco smoke. (NB in all ACT public schools it is an offence to use cigarette and tobacco smoke.)
- Sleep and rest environments and equipment should be safe and free from hazards.
- Supervision planning and the placement of educators across a service should ensure educators are able to adequately supervise sleeping and resting children.
- Educators should closely monitor sleeping and resting children and the sleep and rest environments. This involves checking/inspecting sleeping children at regular intervals, and ensuring they are always within sight and hearing distance of sleeping and resting children so that they can assess a child's breathing and the colour of their skin.

- Service providers should consider the risk for each individual child, and tailor a Sleep and Rest Policies and Procedures (including the frequency of checks/inspections of children) to reflect the levels of risk identified for children at the service. Factors to be considered include the age of the child, medical conditions, individual needs and history of health and/or sleep issues.

Individual children

- Ensure that children who do not wish to sleep are provided with alternative quiet activities and experiences, while those children who do wish to sleep are allowed to do so, without being disrupted. If a child requests a rest, or if they are showing clear signs of tiredness, regardless of the time of day, there should be a comfortable, safe area available for them to rest (if required).
- It is important that opportunities for rest and relaxation, as well as sleep, are provided.
- Consider that there are a range of strategies that can be used to meet children's individual sleep and rest needs.
- Look for and respond to children's cues for sleep (e.g. yawning, rubbing eyes, disengagement from activities, crying, decreased ability to regulate behaviour and seeking comfort from adults).
- Avoid using settling and rest practices as a behaviour guidance strategy because children can begin to relate the sleep and rest environment, which should be calm and secure, as a disciplinary setting.
- Minimise any distress or discomfort.
- Acknowledge children's emotions, feelings, and fears.
- Ensure that the physical environment is safe and conducive to sleep. This means providing quiet, well-ventilated, and comfortable sleeping spaces. Wherever viewing windows are used, all children should be visible to supervising educators.