

WODEN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE

REST/SLEEP TIME POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT:

Woden Early Childhood Centre maintains children's individual needs, dignity, comfort and safety at all times when children are resting/sleeping.

This policy supports inclusive practices at Woden Early Childhood Centre. Please refer to the Inclusion Policy.

RATIONALE:

Rest/sleep routines are relaxed and pleasant experiences for children and are managed appropriately to ensure the child's safety.

SCOPE: This policy applies to all staff within the Centre.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION:

Children's Services Regulation 2004 [Part 3, Div 1 s36; Div 3 s47 (i)]

QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM:

Quality Improvement & Accreditation System – Quality Practices Guide, 2005 (P6.5)

LOCATION OF INFORMATION

This information is located in the Staff Handbook.

Source Documents -

SIDS and Kids (2005) Safe Sleeping www.sidsandkids.org Retrieved 9 Mar 2007

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) retrieved from www.parasolemt.com.au on 8.12.08

LINKING POLICY

first aid Accident and Emergency
Inclusion
Policy Review

POLICY REVIEW

This policy is reviewed on a biannual basis both by the centres staff and then by families. Once the Policy has been reviewed and changes are made it goes to the management committee for ratification. Please refer to the Policy development and review policy.

Date endorsed by Committee: 24.3.09

Date to be reviewed: 24.3.10

INTRODUCTION

Children are active throughout the day and require time/s to relax, to be calm, to stop and to recharge. Therefore, routines such as rest/sleep are important for children's health and well being. These routines can be a comforting and re-assuring time or a time of some distress for some children. Providing children with relaxed and unhurried routines, complementary to their home routines, minimises stress and maximises the benefits to children.

All routines provide opportunities for further one-to-one interactions, while soothing songs and music also make rest/sleep routines a pleasant experience. While the Centre caters to a wide age range of children, ensuring individualised needs are met is important.

1. General

When planning for routines, staff will:

- i) discuss rest/sleep routines with families to maximise continuity for children between their home and the Centre
- ii) acknowledge that children's sleeping habits and preferences are diverse as different children/families may prefer a particular (cultural) style of bedding or way/s of getting to sleep which their child is accustomed
- iii) individualise these routines, especially for young babies
- iv) use familiar gestures or 'rituals' used by the family to settle a young baby or a new baby or child in the Centre
- v) look for signs in children that rest/sleep is needed, prior to the usual routine times
- vi) support children to move into rest/sleep routines individually or in small groups
- vii) encourage children to make choices such as choosing to rest or sleep, selecting quiet stories, games or music and assisting with setting up the rest area or the quiet activities areas for children who don't sleep
- viii) discuss with families the need for clean bed clothing and bedding materials to suit the climate
- ix) understand the family perspective and work with the family when there is concern about these routines eg when a child shows signs of needing to sleep but the family do not want the child to sleep during the day
- x) provide a range of means to provide information to families about their child's day including rest/sleep routines - either verbally on request, or in your child's communication book

2. Safe sleeping practices

Babies can be at risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) SIDS occurs in infants usually in the one to twelve month age group. (Parasolemt 2008). SIDS is the sudden, unexpected death of a baby during sleep. The Centre follows the practices advised by SIDS and Kids Australia and consistently implements the following practices that reduce the risk of SIDS by:

- placing the baby only on their back to sleep
- ensuring a baby's face and head stay uncovered during sleep
- ensuring a baby's feet are placed at the bottom of the cot and bedclothes are tucked in securely
- removing all quilts, doonas, pillows, toys and cot bumpers in the cot
- not using electric blankets, hot water bottles or wheat bags for babies and young children
- providing a cot that meets the Australian standard for cots
- providing a firm, clean mattress that fits snugly in the cot
- ensuring the area used for sleep is smoke free and not too hot

Staff also ensure:

- i) a baby does not fall asleep while playing on their tummy
- ii) baby sleep areas are always monitored, including staff visually accessing the area on a regular basis

Other considerations

In addition, staff also consider:

- i) how to ensure children who are resting/sleeping are supervised throughout this period and how children who may need to rest/sleep outside of general routines can be monitored
- ii) wrapping infants in a supine (on the back) position as this is a safe and often effective strategy to help babies to settle and sleep (SIDS and Kids, 2005). Staff will discuss this with families before using the wrapping method. When wrapping infants, staff ensure that the baby is not wrapped too tightly in a lightweight wrap from below the neck to avoid covering the face
- iii) how they can help relax children for rest/sleep – using quiet, soothing voices, slightly darkening the area, relaxation techniques that are supported by the family or calming music can be provided
- iv) use of comfort toys, especially when children are new to the Centre
- v) wherever possible, allowing children to wake at their own pace as some children may need a gradual reintroduction to the brightness and activity of the room

3. Other safety practices

To maximise children's safety, staff also:

- iii) place cots away from curtains /blind cords and away from heaters, fans and power points
- iv) do not have mobiles or toys with stretch elastic cords near the cot
- v) securely lock side rails and check these before placing a child in the cot
- vi) press down on the cot base to check for sagging before each use
- vii) move children to another type of bedding once they are able to start climbing out of their cot
- viii) arrange cots and bedding so that the risk of cross infection between children is minimised
- ix) ensure bedding is clean and changed at least weekly when used by the same child and not shared with another child unless it has been washed
- x) ensure children do not share the same bed or cot at the same time
- xi) purchase or provide advice to families about suitable bedding items that are made of fire-resistant materials
- xii) consider how culturally appropriate bedding can be provided to support children's transition from home to the centre and to reflect cultural diversity
- xi) older children are always supervised during rest and sleep

4. Selection of cots, beds and bedding

When selecting furniture and equipment for children in care, staff will ensure:

- i) only cots and beds that meet Australia/New Zealand safety standards (AS/NZS 2172:1995) are used
- ii) cots/beds made of metal are not bent or rusty, the joints are close-fitting and securely and cleanly welded
- iii) timber cots/beds have no dowels, nails and screws that are exposed above the surface, and have no large knots, insect damage, cracks or splinters
- iv) cots/beds have no sharp edges or points that could cause a cut or head injury and have no gaps where children can trap their limbs or head
- v) the mattress corresponds to the cot manufacturer's size recommendations so it will fit snugly with no gaps

5. **Alternatives to Rest/Sleep**

While all children need to relax and wind down during a long day at the Centre, not all children require sleep during the day. Often even young children such as toddlers may not sleep during the day. Some children may only require a quiet seat or couch or other comfortable floor covering to relax and rest.

Children are never forced to rest/sleep and are never restrained on their bedding. However, there is an expectation that these routines mean that the area is quiet, that soft and low voices are used at all times and that only quiet activities such as drawing, games/puzzles or quiet taped stories or music are listened to or are available.

When there is appropriate staffing for supervision, children who only require a short rest or sleep period can move to another area for more active play.

However, staff do not:

- ever use rest or sleep routines as a punishment for children or as a staff convenience
- use candles or strong incense or oil burners in the children's rooms or sleep areas