

Policy Development In Early Childhood Settings

From: Aussie Childcare Network

Policies are an important part of an early childhood setting. They are a legal requirement that identifies and minimise risks of various tasks and responsibilities demonstrated by Educators and provide information for families of how situations are handled.



Meeting Legal Requirements

ACECQA outlines the minimum policies required by Early Childhood Services to comply with legislation and to meet the requirements of each quality areas of the National Quality Framework. Services may have more or fewer policies and procedures based on the community, needs of the families and children and the context of the service.

Minimum Policies Required

NQS Quality Area: (Standards and elements)	Link to National Regulations
2.1.1, 2.1.3, 2.1.4, 2.2.1, 2.3	Regulation 168 – Education and Care Services must have policies and Procedures
2.1.3, 2.2.1, 2.3	Regulation 168 (2) (a) - Policies and Procedures are required in relation to health and safety, including matters relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements; and ii. Sun protection; and iii. Water safety, including safety during any water based activities; and iv. The administration of first aid
2.1.4, 2.3.3	Regulation 168 (2) (b) - Policies and procedures are required in relation to incident, injury, trauma and illness procedures complying with regulation 85
2.1.4	Regulation 168 (2) (c) - Policies and procedures are required in relation to dealing with infectious diseases, including procedures complying with regulation 88
2.1.1, 2.3.3	Regulation 168 (2) (d) - Policies and procedures are required in relation to dealing with medical conditions in children, including the matters set out in regulation 90
2.3.3	Regulation 168 (2) (e) Policies and procedures are required in relation to emergency and evacuation, including the matters set out in regulation 97
2.3.2	Regulation 168 (2) (g) - Policies and procedures are required in relation to excursions, including procedures complying with regulations 100 -102
2.3	Regulation 168 (2) (h) - Policies and procedures are required in relation to providing a child-safe environment

Developing Policies

When developing Policies, there are many considerations that need to be considered including:

- Legal Requirments - under the national quality framework
- Service Philosophy
- Stakeholder involvement - including Educators, Directors, families, children, community members etc.
- Equity and inclusion
- Current research and contemporary best practices

Policies should include:

- Policy title
- Policy statement or statement of intent. It could also include policy objective and aim.
- Policy (procedures, how policy is implemented etc).
- Links to the regulation.
- Sources (websites, books, journal articles, used as references when developing the policy- should be cited).
- Version - date endorsed e.g. the date the policy was approved, the date for review etc.

Note:

- Use recommended sources to develop and review policies. Ensure that you have a clear understanding of the National Regulations and Law, NQS requirements for your service etc.
- Keep up to date with best practice through the latest research, attending professional developmental workshops, understanding current trends etc.
- When developing policies, it's also important to include Parents and Stakeholders. Have conversations, send out feedback and suggestion forms, have an interactive information parent board up in the foyer, include information in parent emails, newsletters and information sessions.

Implementing Effective Policies

Once you have developed your policy, you need to implement it to test that it is effective such as:

- Choose 2 or 3 draft policies
- Apply the policy to a practical scenario and see if the procedures are realistic within the environment.
- Reflect on the usefulness of the policy.
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the policy.
- Consider risk management and protocols.
- Assess who will implement the policy and if it is understood by them.
- Change or update the policy when necessary.

When the policy is implemented effectively, it's important for Educators to know and understand the services policies and procedures, put them into practice and effectively communicate with families.

Policies should be available for both Parents and Educators and readily accessible through the Parent Handbook and Staff Handbook.

For more information on What is a Policy, What is a Procedure, Why they are Important, Required Policies and more, please read the following: [Regulations On Policies and Procedures In Early Childhood \(/articles/childcare-articles/regulations-on-policies-and-procedures-in-early-childhood\)](#)

References:

- Policies and Procedures, Good Start Early Learning
- Policies and Procedures, Early Childhood Education and Care, QLD Government
- Policies and Procedures, University Of Canberra.
- How To Develop and Update Policies, Professional Support Co-Ordinator, Australian Government, December 2012

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