



2.06 WATER SAFETY

Purpose Statement

To ensure the safety and supervision of children in and around water. Safe practices around water will be implemented at all times (detailed herein), including adequate supervision and compliance with State and National Regulations.

Scope

This policy applies to all salaried full time and part time staff (including casuals), Educators and contractors.

Policy Statement

According to Kidsafe, drowning is one of the leading causes of unintentional death for Australian children. Every year a number of children are killed and hundreds more rescued from near drowning situations. Non-fatal drowning incidents are also of great concern as they can have potential long-term effects, including brain damage and permanent disability.

The most common factor in childhood drowning is lack of supervision. A child can drown in as little as a few centimetres of water. Toddlers are at particular risk as they are naturally inquisitive and attracted to water, however they have little fear and no understanding of the dangers involved. They are also often top heavy, meaning that they can easily overbalance and fall into bodies of water.

WFDC acknowledges the importance of safe environments. The provision of safe practices and adequate supervision is essential to ensure the safety of children in and around water and includes conducting risk assessments and/or monitoring water play, water hazards in the FDC environment, excursions near water, hot water and hygiene practices involving water within the Service.

Definitions

Water hazards: The National Regulations refer to '*water hazards*' however the term is not expressly defined. In this policy, a water hazard is defined as anything that can hold 5cm, or more, of water and can fit a child's nose and mouth. A 'water hazard' may include:

- large bodies of water such as dams, lakes, creeks, rivers, beaches or bays, swimming pools, including relocatable and paddling pools, spas, jetted bathtubs
- smaller bodies of water such as fishponds, bird baths, fountains, wishing wells and other water features
- baths, sinks, basins and buckets
- animal/pets' water/food bowls or containers
- containers or troughs for water play



2.06 WATER SAFETY

Procedures

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, an approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for managing water safety, including during any water-based activities, and must take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed. All water-based activities will be adequately supervised and no child will be left unattended when in proximity to water. The health, safety and wellbeing of children is our number one priority.

The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor/ Responsible Person will:

1. Adhere to all obligations under the *Education and Care National Law and Regulations*.
2. Conduct an initial safety check of the proposed FDC residence and property, prior to the commencement of any new contracted WFDC Educator, to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children. If the safety check identifies any water hazards, a detailed risk assessment will be completed and then reviewed annually. The Educator's allocated EPC will also conduct a water hazard safety inspection and complete a 'Monthly Report' (excluding if the educator is on leave for the entire month):
 - Identifying any safety issues or hazards that may pose a risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of children;
 - If a safety issue is identified during the inspection, the 'Monthly Report' must be emailed to the Team Leader and Manager of ECECS within 24 hours. If an issue cannot be rectified immediately, the approved provider should consider if access to care is still appropriate and ensure that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children, being educated and cared for by the service, from harm and hazard likely to cause injury.
 - If no risk is identified during the inspection, the 'Monthly Report' will be saved in the educator's electronic file, accessible to the Approved Provider, and a copy provided to the educator within 7 days.
 - Inspections may be conducted remotely when required, however, no more than 6 remote inspections will be conducted in any given calendar year, or if the previous 2 inspections were conducted remotely.
 - Monitoring, to ensure monthly inspections are carried out will be conducted by the Team Leader ECECS.
3. Provide direction and education to Educators on the importance of children's safety and supervision in and around water.
4. Ensure FDC residences, that provide access to or are adjacent to, any large water hazards (e.g., dams, lakes, creeks, rivers, beaches or bays) are isolated from children by use of a child resistant barrier/safety gate or fence.
5. Ensure at least one educator who holds current approved first aid qualifications, including emergency life support and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), is in attendance at the FDC service at all times.



2.06 WATER SAFETY

6. Ensure the regulatory authority is notified within 24 hours of becoming aware of a serious incident.

Educators will:

1. Complete and display the Emergency Evacuation Diagram & Procedures of the FDC property, within their residence, which depicts the areas of the residence approved for the provision of education and care and includes the existence and location of any water hazards which hold large or smaller bodies of water, at or near the residence.
2. Complete and display an 'Educator Water Safety Checklist' if there is a water hazard in the FDC residence or on the property. The 'Educator Water Safety Checklist' must be updated if there any changes to the water hazard in the FDC residence or on the property.
3. Fill in a 'Daily Safety Audit', each day care is provided, of the FDC residence and property to ensure that all hazards are known and minimised. If a hazard or potential hazard is detected, educators will inform the co-ordination unit and review or complete a new risk assessment to address any concerns and children will be excluded from the area until the hazard has been rectified.
4. Provide adequate supervision when children are participating in water activities including:
 - Direct and constant monitoring of children near water at all times.
 - Ensuring no child is left unattended when in proximity to water.
 - Observing play and anticipating behaviour.
 - Scanning and moving around the environment.
5. In the event of a serious incident, contact the co-ordination unit by phone, as soon as possible, but within 12 hours of the incident and follow up in writing as soon as practicable.
6. Maintain safety while bathing children (if required) by:
 - Directly supervising at all times.
 - Being within an arm's reach of the child at all times.
 - Emptying water immediately after use.
7. Ensure all hot water is maintained at a temperature below 50.C°, or made inaccessible to children, including hot drinks.
8. Ensure there are no items near fencing that children could climb up onto to gain access to a water hazard (pot plants, boxes, chairs).
9. Ensure smaller bodies of water and water features that are not able to be adequately supervised at all times and/or pose an unacceptable risk to children are either removed, inaccessible or completely covered by a solid material which is secured in position and can support the weight of an adult.
10. Incorporate water safety awareness and utilise water activities, in appropriate weather, in the planned educational program.
11. Safely cover, or make inaccessible to children, all water containers, buckets, or troughs when not in use. Ensure health and safety practices incorporate approaches to safe storage of water and water play.



2.06 WATER SAFETY

12. Ensure water play containers or troughs are filled to a safe level (5cm or less of water), used on a table or with a stand, to keep them off the ground and ensure children remain standing whilst accessing them.
13. If a small wading pool is being used, ensure it is filled to a safe level (5cm or less of water), stand immediately beside it, within arm's length of the child, empty it immediately after every use and store it to prevent the collection of water, e.g., upright.
14. Discourage children from drinking from these water activities (as above).
15. Check for and empty any water that has collected in holes or containers after rainfall or watering gardens.
16. Monitor all taps on the premises that children have access to and ensure they are turned off securely when not in use.
17. Complete a risk assessment in accordance with Regulation 101 prior to taking children on an excursion. Consider any water hazards and any risks associated with water-based activities before an excursion is approved.
18. Display a cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) guide near any swimming pool or spa.

Operational Safety

Pools and Spas:

FDC residences and properties with a swimming pool, spa or other water hazard may still operate an education and care service, with additional safeguards and by complying with the following strict rules, regulations and compliance requirements:

1. Pools and spas must be registered with the educator's local council. Any pool or spa that is capable of being filled with water to a depth of 30cms or more is required to be surrounded by a Pool Safety Barrier. Pool Safety Barriers are required to be inspected by a Registered Building Surveyor or Registered Building Inspector every 4 years to obtain a current Certificate of Pool and Spa Barrier Compliance. Barriers must comply with Australian Standard (AS 1926.1-2007), or the Building Code of Australia where applicable, so long as it complies with the minimum requirements of the standard or code.
2. No child, whilst in the care of an Educator as part of the Education and Care service, is to swim in or enter an enclosed pool or spa area at the Educators' home at any time while the service is being provided.
3. Pool Safety Barriers are required to be at least 1.2m high and without foot holds that would allow a young child to climb over.
4. If an external door allows access to a pool or spa, ensure that it has a self-closing, child resistant lock.
5. Windows with direct access to a pool or spa must not open more than 100mm.
6. Objects that could help a child to climb over a fence or open a gate, door or window, including furniture and climbable plants/shrubs growing on the pool fence must be removed.
7. Remove the ladder from above-ground pools and store safely when not in use.
8. A permanent notice within the pool area detailing CPR procedures must be displayed.



2.06 WATER SAFETY

9. Pool filters must be inaccessible to children.
10. FDC Educators' own family members (aged 13 years and over) can have access to a swimming pool/spa, whilst the education and care service is in operation, if the children in care are both indoors and supervised. Whilst children accessing education and care services are engaged in outdoor activities, pools and spas are to remain 'off limits' to family members and all visitors.
11. Educators are not to take children in care to a public swimming pool or another person's pool for any reason.

Ponds, Bird Baths, Fountains, Wishing Wells & other Water Features:

Ponds, bird baths, fountains, wishing wells and other water features are considered a water hazard. Where such water hazards are accessible and not enclosed by a barrier, such as a fence, wall, gate or door they must be:

1. secured in position; and
2. securely covered; or
3. designed so as to prevent a child putting his/her face into the water e.g. installing large rocks/boulders that will significantly reduce the depth of water.

Relevant Legislation/Standards

- National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care Services including:
 - Education and Care Services National Law 2011 (Amended 2023)
 - Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (Amended 2023)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014)
- ACECQA. (2023). Policy and procedure guidelines- Water Safety Guidelines
- Australian Standard 1926.1-2007
- Australian Standard 3498

Related Policies/Procedures & Links

- WFDC Policies/Procedures:
 - 1.02 Excursions and Outings



2.06 WATER SAFETY

- 2.18 Bathing
 - 3.02 Safety Check
 - 4.07 First Aid Requirements
 - 4.08 Supervision
 - 7.03 Incident Reporting
 - 7.12 Assessment, Approval and Reassessment of Approved FDC Residences/Venues
-
- Kidsafe Family Day Care Safety Guidelines 7th Edition - March 2021: **[FINAL-FDC-Safety-Guidelines 7thEd MAR2 2021.pdf \(kidsafe.com.au\)](#)**
 - Monthly Report: **[EPC FORM MonthlyWaterHazardSafetyInspectionReport&Checklist.pdf](#)**
 - Emergency Evacuation Diagram & Procedures: **[Emergency Evacuation Diagram Procedures V2.pdf](#)**
 - Educator Water Safety Checklist: **[EDUCATOR WATER SAFETY CHECK LIST.pdf](#)**