

SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN POLICY

1. Objective

Annie Dennis Children's Centre ("ADCC") strives at all times to maintain hazard free environments which are effectively supervised by staff so that children are safe and have opportunities to interact positively with their carers and peers. ADCC has a duty of care to supervise the children at all times whether they are indoors, outdoors, sleeping, using the toilets or on excursions. Every child at the Centre will be supervised constantly, actively, positively and diligently.

2. Regulatory framework and current literature on effective supervision of children

ADCC is governed by the Victorian *Children Services Act 1996*. Section 26 of that Act provides that the proprietor of a children's service must ensure that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children being cared for or educated by the service from any hazard likely to cause injury. Section 27 of this Act provides that the proprietor of a children's service must ensure that all children being cared for or educated by the service are adequately supervised at all times that the children are on the premises where the service operates or in the care of that service. Staff members also have a duty to supervise children in their care.

'Supervision by an adult is a key factor in playground safety... In supervising play the carer should make sure that the child uses equipment which is appropriate for his/her age/size' (The Royal Children's Hospital Safety Centre, Melbourne, 2005).

3. Active supervision

"Active supervision" is more than observing and supervising individual and groups of children. It involves positive interaction with children. This ensures children's play is enjoyable and their learning opportunities are promoted. Through careful observation, ADCC staff will identify opportunities for supporting and extending children's play and recognise when children wish to play independently of adult involvement.

Effective supervision will only be achieved when staff are aware of the children and their environment. This will be achieved through the use of various levels of active supervision.

Staff will:

- conduct daily safety checks of indoor and outdoor environments to monitor, report and remove any hazards
 - arrange the environment to enable easy monitoring of children's play e.g. in open plan areas to create sight lines
 - position themselves and move around to allow for maximum supervision of the play areas and scan or look around the area to observe all the children in the vicinity
 - avoid standing with their backs to children and consider any obstacles to seeing or hearing e.g. trees and climbing equipment
 - use direct and constant monitoring when actively supervising activities that involve some risk e.g. wood work, cooking and children's play that is in or near water
 - stay close enough to the children to enable prompt intervention to prevent injuries e.g. on climbing equipment
 - listen closely to supervise areas that may not be in direct line of sight e.g. when children are playing in corners, behind trees or play equipment
 - observe the children's play and any behaviours which are inappropriate. The staff will intervene when necessary to manage any inappropriate behaviours in order to safeguard the children from psychological or physical harm
- For further information refer to the Centre's Behaviour Management Policy
- ensure that there is a balance of activities to allow for appropriate supervision and to ensure that staff resources are not stretched
 - learn about each child and the level of supervision they need
 - regularly account for each child especially at the end of staff shifts, after a break, when moving indoors from outdoors and moving from one room to another e.g. from Kinder to the Rainbow Room.
 - ensure children are accompanied by an adult at all times
 - thoroughly check all outdoor play areas to ensure that no child is left unsupervised e.g. in blind spots or in cubby houses
 - regularly check sign in/out books, and
 - be aware of the people who have the authority to collect children and will only ever release children into the care of authorised people.

3.1 Supervision near water play

Any activity where children play with or in water poses a high safety risk.

ADCC staff will:

- provide direct and constant supervision at all times when children are near water
- inform each other before they move away from the area or are replaced by another staff member, and
- under no circumstances leave a child unattended in or near water.

3.2 Excursions

Extra attention is required to ensure children are closely supervised during excursions. ADCC will ensure that advance careful planning of destinations, transport, meals and toilet breaks will assist to identify potential hazards and determine the level of supervision required.

The Director will consult with the staff to determine the appropriate number of adults required. The child-to-staff ratio and first aid training requirements that normally apply within ADCC will be regarded as the absolute minimum for a group of children on an excursion. In most cases ADCC will ensure that there are more staff members than required by clause 24 of the *Children Services Regulations 1998*, i.e. 1 staff member for every 5 children under the age of 3, and 1 staff member for every 15 children aged 3 or over. Parents will also be invited to accompany staff and children. They will be briefed before the excursion about their responsibilities, in particular, not leaving children unattended.

4. Staff Communication

Open and supportive communication between staff is important when supervising children. ADCC staff will:

- inform each other before they leave an area they are supervising and inform each other when they return
- seek support and advice from each other when supervising the children
- remind each other of service practices
- evaluate supervision practices regularly, and
- document supervision practices which are working well, as well as suggested improvements.

5. Staffing rosters

The ADCC staff roster and routines are designed to maximise the consistency of supervision of children by ensuring that:

- Child/staff ratios are maintained at all times
- Staff are available to greet and farewell children and families

- Supervision standards are maintained during breaks
- Programs and experiences are well supported by active supervision by ADCC staff, agency staff and casuals
- Children are well supervised during:
 - toileting
 - nappy changing
 - eating and drinking
 - sleep/rest periods – whether or not the child is asleep in the room or separate room, and
 - solitary play in a room.

Dated 31 January 2007

Next reviewed July 2008

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References:

- Tansey, S (2005). 'Supervision in Children's Services', *Putting Children First*, Issue 15. National Childcare Accreditation Council:NSW
- The Royal Children's Hospital Safety Centre, Melbourne (2005)
- *The Royal Children's Hospital Child Safety Handbook*, Second Edition, The Royal Children's Hospital Safety Centre, Victoria.
- Department of Human Services (1998), *Children's Services Licensing Operational Guide*, Victoria.