**CLOTHING POLICY**

**POLICY STATEMENT**

Educators will consult with families in regard to their child’s clothing needs for play experiences both indoors and outdoors and will ensure each child’s individual needs a re met. Educators will consider children’s comfort and safety at all times. The sun protection policy should be read in conjunction with this policy.

**RATIONALE**

Annie Dennis Children’s Centre (ADCC) understands it has a duty of care to ensure that children are provided with an environment that provides for children’s need for comfort. Children need to be supported to feel a sense of belonging and comfort within ADCC. Experiences that promote awareness of care and safety for themselves and others will assist children to become competent and independent and develop valuable life skills.

**STRATEGIES**

***Dressing for play and weather conditions***

Educators will discuss appropriate dress with children in relation to:

* current weather conditions
* indoor/outdoor play, and
* different experiences.

All children should be able to play freely and engage in all activities without being restricted by clothing that is inappropriate or dangerous for play.

Educators will ensure that young children and babies are appropriately dressed for their age, mobility and experiences.

Children will be encouraged to communicate their needs for comfort and assistance and develop independence and competence in their own personal care and safety.

Parents/Guardians will be encouraged to dress children in clothing that allows children to explore various art mediums and forms of exploration e.g. paint, water, mud, sand etc. ADCC will provide protective smocks, pants and aprons for the children to wear. If children are not comfortable wearing ADCC’s protective clothing, they are encouraged to provide their own.

It is important that the design and fit of clothes and accessories, including those for dressing up play, are safe e.g. long hems can put children at risk of tripping, and items such as capes, scarves,

necklaces, long drawstrings and ribbons also present strangulation or tripping hazards. Educators will ensure that children engaging in dress up play are carefully supervised to monitor any clothing hazards. The younger the child, the more carefully clothing safety hazards will be considered.

***Dressing for safe sleeping***

During rest/sleep time restrictive clothing and footwear will be removed.

Educators will ensure that:

* the room temperature is satisfactory for a comfortable rest
* children do not rest near heaters
* children are dressed warmly for rest/sleep time and checked regularly to see that they are covered
* sleeping babies will wear clothes to keep them comfortably warm, but not hot, and
* educators will ensure sleeping babies heads and faces are uncovered to prevent the baby from overheating in line with SIDS recommendations.

For further information about safe sleeping practices refer to the Safe Sleeping Policy.

***Dressing for independence***

Educators will encourage children’s independence in dressing and undressing and allow time for children to practice and master these skills within the daily routines at ADCC.

Parents /Guardians will be encouraged to dress their child in clothing that allows them to practice and develop their self help skills e.g.:

* elasticised waist pants or skirts
* velcro strap shoes, and
* no overalls, zips or belts.

***Footwear***

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to dress their child in well fitting, safe, comfortable footwear which allows freedom to run, jump, climb and ride bikes e.g. footwear with heel support (no thongs or slip on shoes). Shoes must provide support as well as protection for the feet. Shoes that give little

protection or support or that have raised heels or soles can cause accidents.

In warmer weather, children should preferably wear closed toe sandals with a broad heel base for increased stability.

In colder weather children should wear closed footwear such as boots or sneakers. Leather shoes are preferable because they are durable and can breathe.

The children may remove their shoes for indoor/outdoor play; educators will use their discretion in determining the value of doing this and will always consider the children’s level of independence, competence and safety.

Things to consider when choosing footwear:

* a broad toe box - if the shoe is too shallow this can cause pressure on the toes
* footwear should fit the longer of the two feet and there should be approximately
* 8-10mm of room beyond the longest toe
* the heel counter should be firm and feel snug as this helps to keep the heel and the foot stable, and
* a shock absorbing sole - to minimise jarring through the foot, leg and spine.

***Dirty/Soiled/Wet Clothing***

Dirty/Soiled/Wet clothing will not be washed or rinsed at the Centre as this can spread germs. Soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag and returned to the family when they arrive to collect their child.

ADCC will provide some spare clothing to ensure children are kept comfortable and dry at all times.

***Respect for children and families***

Educators will convey respect for children and an appreciation of their individuality by building in opportunities for them to make choices in relation to getting dressed, and the clothing they wear. However, issues relating to health, safety and the child’s play and learning are the most important.

Educators will be aware of individual children’s and families attitudes towards privacy and modesty when children are having their clothes changed or are dressing themselves. Older children will have access to safe comfortable and private spaces for dressing and changing. Educators will work with children and families to ensure that individual needs and preferences are understood and catered for.

Families and children will be consulted about individual clothing needs, preferences and cultural requirements and will make every effort to address these issues within the Centre’s requirements for children’s health and safety.

**KEY RESPONSIBILITIES AND AUTHORITIES**

Parents/guardians will:

* ensure their child is dressed to promote health, safety and comfort and freedom to play and learn
* label their child’s clothing and shoes to avoid loss or mix up of items
* communicate with their child’s educators any specific requirements in relation to their child’s needs
* provide adequate changes of clothing for their child (at least one change for older children and more for younger children), and
* support policy implementation.

Educators will:

* support the individual needs of the children to ensure clothing/dressing practices maximise each child’s experiences and development while at ADCC
* consult with families about the individual needs of their child
* ensure each child’s individual needs are met
* consider children’s comfort and safety at all times
* encourage children to develop their independence and competence in mastering self help skills
* role model appropriate dress standards at all times e.g. wear sunhats and sun safe clothing while outside, wear clothing and shoes that are safe and allow them to comfortably and easily interact with and care for the children
* read and understand this policy, and
* support policy implementation.

ADCC will:

* ensure that all educators are aware and understand this policy
* ensure educators have the resources and materials to implement this policy, and
* be responsible for implementing and evaluating this policy.

**LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES**

Sun Protection

Supervision

Occupational Health Safety and Wellbeing

Building, Environment, Equipment and Safety Checks

Safe Sleeping

**LEGISLATION**

Education and care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic)- Section 3 (2)(a);165, 167

Education and Care Services National Regulations-81, 176,168

**LINK TO NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS**

**Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety-**This quality area of the National Quality Standard focuses on safeguarding and promoting children’s health and safety.

Standard 2.1 Element 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3,

Standard 2.3 Element 2.3.1, 2.3.2

**Quality Area 3: Physical Environment-** This quality area of the National Quality Standards focuses on the physical environment and ensuring that it is safe, suitable and provides a rich and diverse range of experiences that promote children’s learning and development.

Standard 3.1 Element 3.1.1, 3.1.2

**KEY SOURCE DOCUMENTS**

Sids and Kids- Safe Sleeping <http://www.sidsandkids.org/safe-sleeping/>

Children’s Clothing in Childcare <http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/educatorresources/factsheets/qias_factsheet_15_children's_clothing%20.pdf>

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