

Policy title	3.1 Physical Environment
Policy type	Management
Group	Family and Children

Rationale

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* (Regulation 168 (2)(h)) requires an approved Responsible Person of an education and care service to provide a safe environment for children. Approved Responsible Persons must also ensure their premise meets relevant physical environment requirements outlined within Regulations 103–117 of the National Regulations including provisions for:

- premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
- fencing and security
- furniture materials and equipment
- toilet, laundry and hygiene facilities
- space requirements — indoor and outdoor
- ventilation and natural light

Additional requirements apply to centre-based services:

- administrative space
- nappy change facilities
- outdoor space — shade and natural environment
- the premises must be designed to facilitate supervision

Regulation 117 sets glazing requirements for family day care (FDC) services.

The safety of buildings, playgrounds and equipment is paramount to ensuring the health and wellbeing of all staff, children, families, students and visitors within these facilities.

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Family and Children's Services	Michele Leonard	3.1 Physical Environment Procedure	17/150838	August 2017	August 2019

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure Moonee Valley City Council meets the requirements of the *Children's Services Regulations 2009* to provide a child with a safe environment at all times.

Policy statement

Moonee Valley City Council is committed to the creation and maintenance of built environments that keep all persons safe when they are accessing services.

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Procedure	3.1 Physical Environment Procedure
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Action	Approved Provider	Responsible Person or Primary Nominee	Educator/contractor	Families	Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011	Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010	Children's Services Regulations 2009 & Children's Services Act 1996
Ensure our buildings, outdoor play areas and equipment allow children to play safely, and enable staff to safely supervise and interact with them.	✓	✓	✓		r.103	s.167 s.175	s.26
Encourage the active participation of staff, students, volunteers and families in building and maintaining a secure environment for all children.		✓	✓		r.103 r.170	s.167	s.26
Develop strategies to ensure all service users are safe during building works and renovations.	✓	✓			r.103 r.170	s.167	s.26
In planning service centre buildings and outdoor play areas, consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the provision of sufficient space for the number of children who will be accessing that space environments that are welcoming, well ventilated with adequate natural light and temperature control, and conducive to learning design of fences to enclose the outdoor space accessible to children, and to prevent children climbing over, under or through it 	✓	✓			r.104 r.107-108 r.110 r.113-114	s.167	r.96-99

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the provision of adequate shade in the outdoor environment to prevent over-exposure to ultraviolet rays while providing opportunities for children to connect with the natural world 	✓	✓					
Ensure all new and current equipment meets Australian Safety Standards.	✓	✓	✓		r.103 r.105	s.167	r.93
Any glazed area of a family day care residence or venue, approved before 1 June 2014, which is accessible to children 0.5 metres or less above floor level must be glazed with safety glass or in any other case treated with a product that prevents glass from shattering if broken, or guarded by barriers that prevent a child from striking or falling against the glass.	✓	✓	✓		r.117	s.167	s.26
A service Risk Management Plan is developed, in consultation with the approved Responsible Person, which includes strategies to minimise/eliminate identified risks for buildings, grounds, equipment, furniture, and the storage and use of any dangerous products.	✓	✓	✓		r.103	s.167	s.26
Contractors are to sign in to the visitor's log book when they enter the building to carry out any maintenance. This visitor's log book is to be located in the service's foyers/family day care contractors' residence.	✓	✓	✓		r.165-166	s.167 s.170-171 s.175	s.26
Conduct regular safety audits of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency equipment: Check that all new and current equipment meets Australian Safety Standards. 	✓	✓	✓		r.84 r.97 r.98 r.103 r.104	s.167	r.76r.77 r.84-85 r.93

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playgrounds and equipment: via education and care service staff and Council's gardening contractor. • All cleaning services: including contract cleaners and sanitary napkin disposal contractors. • Horticultural maintenance: Scheduled checks to be conducted by Council contractors. • Pest control: Ensure regular pest check and control services are completed. • Cupboards and doors: All cupboards/rooms that contain chemicals are to be labelled accordingly, cupboards containing first aid kits must be identified, and childproof locks must be installed on doors and cupboards containing contents that may be harmful. • Electrical items: Power points are to be covered by secure, protective caps. All electrical cords must be out of reach of children and double adaptors are not to be used in areas accessible to children. All equipment must be tested and tagged. • The design and condition of fences: Ensure the fence provides a barrier that prohibits children from climbing over, under or through it. 	✓	✓	✓		r.105		
Conduct a daily check of the service's outdoor and indoor areas and playgrounds to ensure there are no foreign objects present; eg, bottles and syringes prior to		✓	✓		r.103	s.167	s.26

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children entering the outdoor area. Maintain vigilance throughout the day. Sign off on the daily safety checklist as it is completed. These are then filed for audit checks.							
Conduct quarterly Occupational Health and Safety checks.		✓	✓		r.103	s.167	s.26
Equipment will be checked each time it is put out for children's use to ensure it is safe to use.		✓	✓		r.103	s.167	s.26
Climbing equipment, swings or large pieces of furniture must be securely anchored and have safe and stable bases.	✓	✓	✓		r.103	s.167	s.26
All toys are assessed for their suitability prior to being added to the program.		✓	✓		r.103	s.167	s.26
If any equipment or area of a centre or premises is deemed unsafe, either isolate the equipment or the area. The approved responsible persons must be notified of this immediately.		✓	✓		r.103	s.167	s.26
All items in education and care services that require maintenance are to be repaired using a Request for Service (RFS) Form. This includes air conditioners, lighting, flooring, broken fences/furniture, shade equipment, tree pruning, alarms, doors, windows.	✓	✓	✓		r.103	s.167	s.26
All equipment is to be cleaned and disinfected regularly to avoid cross-infection.		✓	✓		r.103	s.167	s.26
Where children of different ages have access to the same equipment/materials, be alert to children mouthing and sharing toys, as outlined in the Hygiene and Infection Control Procedures.		✓	✓		r.103	s.167	s.26

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Clear and clean tables throughout the day, sweep floors after meals, and remove tripping/slipping hazards as soon as these become apparent.			✓		r.103	s.167	s.26
At the end of each day, staff/educators/contractors are to conduct a check of the building, ensuring all children are signed out of the service, doors and windows are closed and locked, and appliances are switched off. Ensure the Lock Up Checklist is signed by a closing staff member/educator/contractor and filed for reference.		✓	✓		r.103	s.167	s.26

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Link to Council policies

Risk management aims to eliminate, isolate or minimise the extent of risk and potential loss to the Council, its employees, contractors and the general community. Council recognises that risk management is an integral part of good business practice as per the key performance indicator within Council's Enterprise Agreement 2013–2017.

Refer to Council's [Risk Management Policy](#) and [Risk Management Strategy](#) to know how to identify and manage risks in a service area.

Resources and useful websites

<http://acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/the-national-quality-standard>

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