

Policy Title:	The Indoor and Outdoor Environment
Effective Date:	March 2014
Review Date:	As necessary by the Policy and Procedure Development Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

The physical environment can contribute to children's wellbeing, happiness, creativity and developing independence. It can contribute to and express the quality of children's learning and experiences. The choices made in an education and care service about resources, materials, spaces, layout, air and light quality and access to a range of experiences indoor and outdoor, have a direct impact on the quality of learning opportunities available to children.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

This policy has been implemented based on the recommendations of Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) 2011.

This policy was reviewed by the families and educators in February 2014.

SCOPE AND PURPOSE

Inner City Care educators will ensure the environment is safe, clean and well maintained. Children's awareness of the environment and sustainable practice will be supported through daily practices, resources and interactions. The physical environment, both indoor and outdoor will support children's learning, safety, levels of engagement and access to positive experiences and inclusive relationships.

POLICY DETAIL/ BUSINESS RULES

Inner City Care will:

- Ensure sufficient furniture, materials and developmentally appropriate equipment are provided and maintained in the Centre in order to support all children to engage and access the program and develop their developing skills and independence.
- Ensure the laundry does not pose any risks to children.
- Ensure adequate space requirements are maintained in both the indoor and outdoor environments.
- Ensure the toilet, washing and drying facilities are developmentally and age appropriate and are located and designed in a way that support safe use and convenient access to children.
- Ensure the nappy change areas support safe access and hygienic nappy change routines and that educators and children have ready access to hand washing facilities.
- Ensure the Centre environments are well ventilated and have adequate natural light.
- Ensure indoor temperatures are maintained at levels that support children's safety and wellbeing.
- Ensure the play spaces in the Centre provide children with opportunities to explore and experience the natural environment.
- Ensure the outdoor environment has adequate shaded areas to protect from ultraviolet radiation from the sun.
- Ensure the environment seeks to support convenient access to both indoor and outdoor play activities and to toilet and nappy change facilities according to supervision requirements, children's independence and developmental needs.

- Ensure where possible the gardens reflect the local natural habitat and encourage native wildlife into the Centre.
- Ensure that plants are selected to minimise the risks to children. No poisonous or dangerous plants will be included in the Centre environment. See fact sheet on Poisonous Plants – www.gtp.com.au/kidsafeqld/inewsfiles/inews.5250.1.pdf
- Collaborate with educators to carefully select and provide adequate numbers of resources in order to contribute to children's sense of belonging and to provide new learning opportunities that extend and challenge children's learning and development.

The Educational Leader will collaborate with educators to:

- Equally value both the indoor and outdoor learning environments as places that support children's learning, creativity, social engagement and sense of belonging.
- Seek to develop learning areas and environments that are secure and predictable and that support children to take increasing responsibility for their health, hygiene and personal care.
- Design learning environments that are welcoming and accessible for all children and families, considering cultural diversity, social and physical inclusion.
- Design environments that reflect children's different cultures, interests, abilities and learning styles.
- Design environments that support small group work in ways that minimise the risk of injury, minimise disruption between activities, minimise conflict between children and reduce prolonged exposure to excess internal and external noise.
- Design outdoor learning experiences that complement and extend the indoor activities and learning experiences.
- Ensure the outdoor environments provide opportunities to learn through play, enabling access to materials that stimulate investigation and reflection, and enriched with natural resources and opportunities to connect with nature.
- Design indoor environments that are enriched by natural resources and opportunities to engage with nature.
- Offer children opportunities to be active, messy and noisy and play on a large scale.
- Encourage and nurture children's interest in the world around them. By providing children with materials, resources and information, educators can help children to appreciate and respect the beauty of their natural and built environments.
- Select resources and design learning environments that foster children's connections with the natural environment.
- Select natural materials and fibres if possible, when purchasing new equipment and resources. These include items such as wooden shelving and natural materials. Such resources enhance the look and feel of nature within the environment.
- Natural and flexible play materials such as sand, leaves and water will be available for children.
- Encourage children and families to collect and bring recycled equipment and natural resources into the environment.
- Encourage children to care for plants by growing plants from seeds.
- Design areas for appreciation of nature, where educators and children can observe the natural play environment and reflect on nature. This will include the introduction of indoor plants into the indoor area. Educators and children will be responsible for care of these plants ensuring they have enough sunlight and water. As in the outdoor garden, plants will be selected to minimise the risks to children.

AUTHORITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES

The Centre Director is responsible for ensuring all ICC educators and staff have training in this policy.

All ICC educators and staff are accountable for the implementation of this policy.

Education and Care Services National Regulations
 Guide to the National Quality Standard (3) ACECQA (2011)
 Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

SOURCES

- Community Childcare Co-operative sample policies
- Kidsafe NSW Inc – www.kidsafensw.org

OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION

Child Protection Policy
 Interactions with Children Policy
 Environmental Sustainability Policy
 Sun Protection Policy
 Cleaning and Maintaining the Environment Policy

Approved by Management Committee	
Signature:	Date:
Title:	
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