

# WATER SAFETY POLICY

The safety and supervision of children is paramount when in or around water. This policy relates to water play, excursions near water, hot water, drinking water and hygiene practices with water at approved residences and venues. Children will be supervised at all times during water play experiences to help keep children safe in and around water and support children's learning in a safe environment.

## **PURPOSE**

To ensure the safety and supervision of children in and around water. This includes water play, excursions near water hazards, hot water, drinking water and hygiene practices with water in the Family Day Care Service environment.

## **SCOPE**

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Coordinator, Staff, Educators, Educator Assistants, children, families, and visitors (including contractors) of the Clarence Family Day Care Service.

## **WATER HAZARDS**

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

- large bodies of water such as dams, creeks, river or pooling water, swimming pool, portable pools and spas, jetted bathtubs (or Jacuzzis)
- fishponds
- smaller bodies of water such as baths, nappy/mop buckets
- sinks, basins
- water features, such as a wishing well
- containers for feeding animals
- water troughs, containers
- beach

## **DROWNING**

Drowning is one of the major causes of unintentional death for children 0-4 years. According to the Life Saving Society of Australia an annual average of 30 drowning deaths of children aged 0-4 years occur in swimming pools and 5 drowning deaths of children 0-4 years in bathtubs/spa baths. (Kidsafe, 2020).

Although home swimming pools are the most common site for drowning, children can drown in just a few centimetres of water. Adult supervision of young children is therefore critical when any child is in or around water.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

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 take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed.

Legal requirements for pools, spas, paddling pools and other water troughs vary across each state and territory. Family Day Care Service Providers must ensure they adhere to Regulations, Council requirements and national safety standards when approving an educator and assessing the residence before providing care approval.

### **Family Day Care Approved Provider/ Coordinator will:**

- conduct annual assessments of the approved FDC residence and or venue
- conduct and record monthly inspections of swimming pools, water features and spas for FDC service residence and approved venues
- ensure detailed risk assessments are completed for any identified water hazards and water-based activities

- ensure educators are aware that boundary barriers around pools and spas comply with Australian Standards including
  - self-locking gates
  - making spas inaccessible with locked pool cover and isolation barriers at least 1.2m high
  - ensure pool barriers are at least 1.8m high
  - ensuring any doors that form part of the pool barrier have a self-closing mechanism and child resistant lock
  - making pool filters inaccessible to children
- provide direction and education to educators, educator assistants and families on the importance of children's safety and supervision in and around water
- ensure health and safety practices are incorporated to ensure safe storage of water and water play
- ensure premises adjacent to or providing access to any water hazards that are not able to be adequately supervised at all times (e.g. dams, swimming pool) are to be isolated from children by a child resistant barrier or fence
- ensure that each FDC educator and educator assistant hold current first aid certificates, including CPR at all times (Regulation 136)
- ensure all swimming pools at the family day care educator's residence and/or venue comply with the Australian Standards and State regulations for pool fencing and gates
- ensure any items around the perimeter of the pool (for example, tables, chairs, pot plants etc.) are not able to be used as a climbing aid for children
- ensure a Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) chart is displayed near any water
- ensure any containers that hold or collect water, such as nappy buckets, ponds, spas must be safely covered or made inaccessible to children

### **Family Day Care Educators/ Educator Assistants will:**

- complete risk assessments that identify and assess risks associated with any water hazards and water-based activities
- ensure all water hazards have Australian Standard barriers- fencing; self-closing mechanism and child-resistant locks
- complete and assist in record keeping of daily inspections of swimming pools, spas and water features
- investigate and consider that their pools or spas have a safety device has been installed to alert or deter a child from entering the water
- have a communication device is available at all times, located in a permanent location in FDC residence or approved venue
- ensure they hold a certified safety certification and final council approval for pool fencing
- advise new families of the water hazards at their residence prior to care beginning- pool, spa, fishpond, dam, water tanks
- ensure water hazards and water play are always highly supervised including:
  - supervising children near water at all times
  - never leave children alone near any water
  - direct and constant monitoring of children
  - scanning and moving around the environment
  - observing play and anticipating behaviour
- conduct a risk assessment in accordance with the regulatory requirements (regulation 101) prior to taking children on an excursion, clearly identifying any water hazard and indicating how this is assessed and managed
  - seek approval by the Approved Provider before any outing/excursion is conducted
  - ensure all emergency procedures are adhered to whilst on any excursion as per *Excursion Policy*
- gain prior written authorisation from parents, indicating any water hazard and educator to child ratios that will be applied to ensure supervision requirements are met, prior to any excursion.
  - Suggested ratio maybe
    - for children who are less than 3 years- 1 adult to each child
    - for children who are at least 3 years but not yet 6 years- 1 adult to 2 children
    - for children 6 years and over- 1 adult to 4 children
- ensure children in a bath (if required) are
  - directly supervised at all times
  - remain within arm's reach of children

- empty water immediately after use
- ensure fish / frog ponds and water features that are not able to be adequately supervised at all times and/or pose an unacceptable risk to children are guarded or effective barriers are in place
- complete a daily Safety Inspection of premises to ensure that all hazards are known and minimised (including items close to a pool fence that could provide climbing access). When a hazard or potential hazard is detected, the educator will complete a risk assessment to address any concerns and children will be excluded from the area until the hazard has been rectified.
- utilise water activities in appropriate weather as part of the planned program
- allow the children the opportunity to experiment with water, sand, and mixing materials
- incorporate water safety awareness into the educational program
- monitor all taps on the premises that children have access to and ensure they are turned off securely when not in use
- safely cover or make inaccessible to children all water containers, e.g. mop buckets.
- empty wading pools immediately after every use and store to prevent the collection of water, e.g. upright
- check for and empty any water that has collected in holes or containers after rainfall or watering gardens
- ensure water troughs are not used without a stand to keep it off the ground.
- ensure children remain standing on the ground whilst using the water trough
- ensure buckets of water for soaking toys or clothing are inaccessible to children
- ensure water troughs or containers for water play are filled to a safe level and emptied into the garden areas after **each** use
- discourage children from drinking from these water activities (as above)
- ensure laundry, storerooms have signage to remind the educator/adults to close doors behind them
- teach children about staying safe in and around water
- ensure wading pools are hygienically cleaned, disinfected and chlorinated appropriately:
  - on a daily basis remove leaves and debris, hose away surface dirt and scrub inside with disinfectant
  - wash away disinfectant before filling pool
  - add Chlorine to pool before children used the pool
  - check chlorine levels frequently
  - children with diarrhoea, upset stomach, open sores or nasal infections should not use the pool
  - all children should wear appropriate swimwear / bathers, go to the toilet before entering the pool, and follow correct toilet hygiene practices while in the pool.
  - remove all children immediately, empty and disinfect the pool should a child pass a bowel motion whilst in the pool.

## **OPERATIONAL SAFETY**

- Water tanks will be labelled with “Do Not Drink” signage and the children will be supervised in this area to make sure they are not accessing this water for drinking
- The educator will discuss with the children the use of water tank water and how it differs from drinking water
- Hot water accessible to children should be maintained at the temperature of 45.C° which will be tested annually (AS 3498)
- Water for pets at the FDC residence must be changed daily and only be accessible to children when the educator or educator assistant is supervising.

**IMPORTANT: Parents will be notified as soon as practicable but within 24 hours if their child is involved in an incident/accident at the FDC Service or while under Service care. Details of the incident/accident will be recorded on an *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record*. If the incident/accident, situation or event presents imminent or severe risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of the child or if an ambulance was called in response to the emergency (not as a precaution) the regulatory authority will be notified within 24 hours by the Approved Provider. Educators will follow emergency procedures and contact emergency services if a child appears to be missing or unaccounted for or is involved in a serious incident or accident.**

## **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

Our *Water Safety Policy* will be updated and reviewed regularly.

## RESOURCES

- [KidSafe Family Day Care Safety Guidelines 2020 \(7th edition\)](#)
- Royal Life Saving Society Australia Toddler drowning prevention <https://www.royallifesaving.com.au/families/at-home/toddler-drowning-prevention>
- The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne Safety: Swimming Pools [https://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact\\_sheets/Safety\\_Swimming\\_pools/](https://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact_sheets/Safety_Swimming_pools/)
- SPASA Australia: *Australian Pool Fencing Rules* <https://www.spasa.com.au/consumer-info/fencing-laws/>
- The Children's Hospital at Westmead *kids health* Burns and scalds

## SOURCE

- ACECQA. (2021). Policy and procedure Guidelines. *Water Safety*
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010.
- [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (2011)
- Kidsafe Family Day Care Safety Guidelines 7<sup>th</sup> Edition (2020).
- National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC): [www.nhmrc.gov.au](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au)
- NSW Department of Health: [www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au)

## NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.

## EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS

Sec. 165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
Sec. 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
26(1)(l)	Application for service approval- family day care-swimming pool
101	Conduct of risk assessment for excursions
115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
116	Assessments of family day care residences and approved family day care venues
116 (2) (d)	The existence of any water hazards, water features or swimming pool at or near the residence or venue
136	First aid qualifications
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
169	Additional policies and procedures- family day care service
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
274	Swimming pools (NSW)

I acknowledge I have received a copy of the Water Safety policy, v 2.0, effective 1 October 2023. I have read and been informed about the content, requirements, and expectations of the Water Safety policy at Clarence Family Day Care. I have received a copy of the policy and agree to abide by the policy as a condition of my engagement with Clarence Family Day Care.

I understand that if I have questions, at any time, regarding the Water Safety policy, I will re-read the policy, consult with the Nominated Supervisor/Director or the Manager.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_