



Sleep, Rest & Relaxation Policy

Background

Children have different sleep, rest and relaxation needs. Each child's comfort must be provided for and there must be appropriate opportunities to meet each child's individual needs. Children can have different sleep patterns which Beaconsfield Neighbourhood Centre (BNC) needs to consider.

Effective sleep and rest strategies are important factors in ensuring a child feels secure and is safe in the Children's Room. BNC has a duty of care to ensure children are provided with a high level of safety when sleeping and resting and every reasonable precaution is taken to protect them from harm and hazard.

Purpose

The aims of this policy are:

- To ensure each child's safety and comfort is provided for and there are appropriate opportunities to meet each child's individual need for sleep, rest and relaxation in accordance with safe sleeping practices.
- To give clear guidance to staff, emergency cover staff and volunteers as well as to parents and to implement what is in best practice guidelines.
- To meet the legislative requirements to have policies and procedures in place for children's sleep and rest at our service.

Policy Statements

BNC defines 'rest' as a period of inactivity, solitude, calmness or tranquillity, and can include a child being in a state of sleep. Considering the busy and energetic nature of a child's day, it is important for children to participate in a quiet period during long sessions in the Children's Room to rest, relax and recharge their bodies.

All sessions of Occasional Care at BNC over 4 hours of duration will include a scheduled quiet, resting time. This will usually take place after lunch with children encouraged to rest for a minimum of 30 minutes. However, the opportunity for rest and relaxation is available at any time during a session as required.

Children attending our service are over 18 months of age and so additional precautions for sleeping babies are not applicable.

Rest Time

A quiet place in the Children's Room will be designated for rest and sleep, away from interactive groups. Sleeping mats with a sheet set are available on the floor for every child as required. The separate space for other children will offer activities that enable a calm play experience for those children choosing to not lie down to rest.

When considering children's sleep and rest, the number, ages and development stages of children being educated and cared for in every session is taken into account as well as specific health care needs, cultural preferences, requests from families and the rest needs of individual children.

Educators will consider a vast range of strategies to meet children's individual sleep and rest needs including the following:

- Encourage children to dress appropriately for the room temperature when resting or sleeping. Lighter clothing is preferable, with children encouraged to remove shoes, jumpers, jackets and bulky clothing.
- Ensure children rest/sleep head to toe and mats are spread out to minimise the risk of cross infection.
- Monitor the room temperature to ensure maximum comfort for the children.
- Dim lights and play quiet, relaxing music.
- A listening story or meditation session may be played.
- Ensure that children who do not wish to sleep or who have finished resting are provided with alternative quiet activities and experiences, whilst those children who do wish to sleep are allowed to do so, without being disrupted.
- Respond to children's individual cues for sleep (yawning, rubbing eyes, disengagement from activities, crying etc.). If a child requests a rest, or if they are showing clear signs of tiredness, regardless of the time of day, there should be a comfortable, safe area available for them to rest if required.
- Acknowledge children's emotions, feelings and fears and provide comfort.
- Children will neither be forced to sleep nor prevented from sleeping.
- Develop positive relationships with children to assist in settling children confidently when sleeping and resting.
- BNC will consult with families about their child's individual needs and be sensitive to different values and parenting beliefs, cultural or otherwise, associated with sleep and rest.

Safety

BNC policies and procedures are based on current research and recommended, evidence-based principles and guidelines. Red Nose (formerly SIDS and Kids) is considered the recognised national authority on safe sleeping practices for infants and children.

The Children's Room Coordinator and educators will receive information and training to fulfil their roles effectively, including being made aware of Centre policies, their responsibilities in implementing these, and any changes that are made over time.

To ensure the safety of children during sleep and rest, it has been legislated from 1 October 2023, that the approved provider must conduct a sleep and rest risk assessment at least once every 12 months, and as soon as practicable after becoming aware of any circumstance that may affect the safety, health and wellbeing of children during sleep and rest. Any necessary updates to the sleep and rest policies and procedures are made as soon as practicable after conducting the sleep and rest risk assessment and a record is kept of each sleep and rest risk assessment conducted.

The Children's Room Coordinator should consider the risk for each individual child, and tailor Sleep and Rest Policies and Procedures (including the frequency of checks/inspections of children) to reflect the levels of risk identified for children at the service. Factors to be considered include the age of the child, medical conditions, individual needs and history of health and/or sleep issues. The annual sleep and rest risk assessment is scheduled for Term 1 each year.

Supervision planning and the physical placement of educators in the Children's Room should ensure that sleeping and resting children are adequately supervised. Adequate supervision means educators closely monitor sleeping and resting children and the sleep and rest environments and can respond immediately, particularly when a child is distressed or in a hazardous situation. Educators must check/inspect sleeping children at regular intervals, and ensure they are always within sight and hearing distance of sleeping and resting children so that they can visually check the child's

sleeping position, breathing and the colour of the child's lips and skin, body temperature, head position, airway and the child's head and face, ensuring they remain uncovered.

It is recommended that dummies should be phased out by the end of children's first year, however, the use of dummies or other items of comfort will be informed by parental choices. Items that are a choking hazard will be removed. Nothing should be around the neck of a sleeping child (including amber teething necklaces).

Sleep and rest environments and equipment should be safe and free from hazards. Hazards posing a risk of suffocation, choking, crushing or strangulation to children must be removed from the sleep and rest environment. The Children's Room and its furniture and equipment are to be safe, clean and in good repair. Mats are wiped down and sheet sets are washed after every use.

If a family's beliefs and requests conflict with current recommended evidence-based guidelines, the Children's Room Coordinator will need to determine if there are exceptional circumstances that allow for alternate practices. Our Service will only approve an alternate practice if we are provided with written advice and contact details of a registered Medical Practitioner accompanied by a risk assessment and risk minimisation plan for individual children.

Roles and Responsibilities

Committee of Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure there are adequate numbers of resting mats available for children being educated and cared for by the Centre.• Areas for sleep and rest are well ventilated and have natural lighting.• Regularly review and update policies and procedures to ensure they are maintained in line with best practice principles and guidelines and reflecting risk assessments.
Children's Room Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct a sleep and rest risk assessment at least once every 12 months, and as soon as practicable after becoming aware of any circumstance that may affect the safety, health and wellbeing of children during sleep and rest.• Take reasonable steps to ensure that the needs for sleep and rest of children being educated and cared for by the Service are met, having regard to the ages, developmental stages and individual needs of each child.• Ensure staff roster meets appropriate supervision requirements for resting children.• Identify and undertake training as required.
Staff/Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure sleep and rest environments are clean, safe and free from hazards.• Diligently supervise sleeping and resting children, monitor and report risks and hazards.
Parents/Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consult with educators regarding sleep and rest routines and practices to reach agreement on how these occur for each child in the Children's Room. (Educators are not expected to endorse practices requested by a family if they are different policy guidelines.)

Associated Documents

Children's Services Regulations 2020: Including but not limited to *Regulations 50, 51, 59, 72 & 104*
Risk Management Policy
Sleep and Rest Risk Assessment Template
Medical Conditions Policy

Document History

Version	Title	Author	Authorised	Date	Changes to Previous
1	Sleep, Rest & Relaxation Policy	Centre Coordinator	COM	Aug 2021	Original
2	Sleep, Rest & Relaxation Policy	Centre Coordinator	COM	Sep 2024	Review and update