

SAFE TRANSPORTATION POLICY

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations the approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place in relation to the safe transportation of children (regulation 168) and take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed (regulation 170). [ACECQA 2021.]

Educators working within our Family Day Care (FDC) Service often provide transportation of children as part of our education and care service. This may include transporting children between the Family Day Care residence or venue and other locations to participate in regular outings such as play groups, library visits, walks in the park or collecting children from homes or schools.

Compliance with the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations is mandatory to ensure the safety of children at all times and new provisions and amendments to these regulations are reflected in our procedures and policy for transportation and the safe handover of children.

We acknowledge our ensuring duty of care obligations by adhering to relevant legislation providing adequate supervision of children at all times, maintaining correct educator to child ratios, maintaining accurate attendance records and providing appropriate child restraints for children under our care.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
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, practiced and implemented.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS AND LAW	
4 (1)	Definition regular transportation
85	Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
89	First Aid Kits
98	Telephone or other communication equipment
99	Children leaving the education and care service premises
100	Risk assessment must be conducted before excursion
101	Conduct a risk assessment for excursion
102A	Transportation of children other than as part of an excursion

102B	Transport risk assessment must be conducted before service transports child
102C	Conduct of risk assessment for transporting of children by the education and care service
102D	Authorisation for service to transport children
122	Educators must be working directly with children to be included in ratios
124	Number of children who can be educated and cared for- family day care educator
136	First aid qualifications
159	Children's attendance record to be kept by family day care educator
161	Authorisations to be kept in enrolment record
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
168(2)(ga)	Education and care service must have policies and procedures (transportation)
169	Additional policies and procedures- family day care service
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
183	Storage of records and other documents
s165	Failure to adequately supervise children
s167	Failure to take reasonable precautions to protect children from harm and hazards

Victorian Child Safe Standards	
Standard 1	Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued
Standard 2	Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
Standard 3	Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
Standard 4	Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing
Standard 5	Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
Standard 6	People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice
Standard 7	Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused
Standard 8	Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training

Standard 9	Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed
Standard 10	Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved
Standard 11	Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved

RELATED POLICIES

Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy Administration of First Aid Policy Behaviour Guidance Policy Child Protection Policy Child Safe Environment Policy Delivery of children to, and collection from Education and Care Service Premises Emergency and Evacuation Policy Enrolment Policy	Excursion and Incursion Policy Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy Medical Conditions Policy Record Keeping and Retention Policy Responsible Persons Policy Safe Arrival of Children Policy Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy Work Health and Safety Policy
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PURPOSE

We aim to ensure that all children being educated and cared for by our educators within our FDC Service are adequately supervised at all times. This includes ensuring educator to child ratios are met whenever and wherever education and care is provided to children and including providing transportation as part of our service activity.

We are committed to complying with all relevant regulations to support the safe travel of children as part of our Service, including excursions, single trips and regular transportation. This includes ensuring the safe use of digital technologies and online environments during transport, in line with our policies to protect children's privacy, safety and wellbeing.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, coordinator, nominated supervisor, educators, educator assistants, children, families, and visitors of the Family Day Care Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

The safety of children enrolled at our FDC Service is paramount. Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury. Appropriate safety measures have been implemented through our comprehensive risk assessment process to ensure supervision is adequate at all times including transportation. Educator to child ratios is adhered to in addition to ensuring the maximum numbers on the service approval are not breached at any time. Adequate supervision is therefore not static as it is dependent upon a range of considerations documented in risk assessments. (e.g., when FDC educators travel together in a larger vehicle for an excursion).

DEFINITIONS

Regular outing: in relation to an education and care service, means a walk, drive or trip to and from a destination

- (a) that the service visits regularly as part of its educational program; and

- (b) where the circumstances relevant to the risk assessment are the same on each outing

Transportation (that is part of the education and care service): Transportation forms part of an education and care service if the service remains responsible for children during the period of transportation. The responsibility for, and duty of care owed to, children applied in scenarios where services are transporting children, or have arranged for the transportation of children, including between an education and care service premises and another location, for example their home, school or a place of excursion.

Transition: In relation to the day-to-day process of moving between the service and a range of different education and care settings or from the education and care setting to a school setting.

Regular transportation: in relation to an education and care service, means the transportation by the service or arranged by the service (other than as part of an excursion) of a child being educated and cared for by the service, where the circumstances relevant to a risk assessment are *substantially* the same for each occasion on which the child is transported.

Written authorisation: authorisation given by a parent or other person named in the child's enrolment record as having authority to authorise the child being transported by the service or on transportation arranged by the service. If the transportation is regular transportation, the authorisation is only required to be obtained once in a 12-month period.

When there is a change in circumstances relevant to the risk assessment for regular transportation, updated written authorisation must be obtained from families before transportation resumes. The Service will notify families of the change in circumstances and provide an updated authorisation form for families to complete, which must be returned prior to the next scheduled transportation.

The authorisation must state:

- a) the child's name; and
- b) the reason the child is to be transported; and
- c) if the authorisation is for a regular outing, a description of when the child is to be taken on the regular outings; and
- d) if the authorisation is **not** for a regular transportation, the date the child is to be transported; and
- e) a description of the proposed pick-up location and destination; and
- f) the means of transport; and
- g) the period of time during which the child is to be transported; and
- h) the anticipated number of children likely to be transported; and
- i) the anticipated number of staff members and any other adults who will accompany and supervise the children during the transportation; and
- j) any requirements for seatbelts or safety restraints under a law of each jurisdiction in which the children are being transported; and
- k) that a risk assessment has been prepared and is available at the education and care service; and
- l) that written policies and procedures for transporting children are available at the education and care service.

TRANSPORT SPECIFIC RISK ASSESSMENT

As per the Education and Care Services National Law, our FDC Service will '*ensure that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children...from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury*' (Section 167).

Our FDC educators will conduct comprehensive transport specific risk assessments to minimize and manage all potential risks for transporting children before authorisation is sought to transport a child from the Approved Provider. [Reg. 102B, 102D (4)].

A risk assessment will be undertaken at least annually for '*regular transportation*' of children. Each time a FDC educator transports, or arranges, the transport of children as part of an excursion, a new risk assessment will be conducted. All risk assessments will be regularly assessed and evaluated as to facilitate continuous improvement in our service.

Our risk assessment process is guided by the following process:

- **identify** any hazards or potential hazards that transporting the child may pose to the safety, health and wellbeing of the child
- **assess** the risk of harm or potential harm using a risk matrix
- **specify how the identified risks will be managed** by eliminating or minimising the impact using control measures
- **evaluate** the current risk or potential harm by implementing control measures
- **review** and monitor the risk or potential harm to ensure it continues to be managed as a low risk

source: Risk assessment and management ACECQA (2020)

Our risk assessment will consider:

- a) the proposed route and duration of the transportation; and
- b) the proposed pick-up location and destination; and
- c) the means of transport; and
- d) any requirements for seatbelts or safety restraints (as per the law of our jurisdiction); and
- e) any water hazards; and
- f) the number of adults and children involved in the transportation; and
- g) given the risks posed by transportation, the number of educators or other responsible adults to provide supervision and whether any adults with specialized skills are required; and
- h) whether any items should be readily available during transportation (mobile phone, list of emergency contact numbers) and;
- i) the process for entering and exiting-
 - i. the education and care service premises; and
 - ii. the pick-up location or destination (as required); and
- j) procedures for embarking and disembarking the means of transport, including how each child is to be accounted for on embarking and disembarking.

Additional considerations may include:

- the experience of the driver and licensing conditions for the vehicle
- the age, ability, needs and skills of children being transported (non-ambulant, infants)
- the experience of adults involved in transportation and their capacity for supervising children
- movement of children between the vehicle and venues
- traffic conditions
- extreme weather conditions or natural disasters
- environmental hazards such as temperature extremes, smoke
- communication to/from the vehicle- mobile phone reception
- health needs of all children and adults
- first aid provision and management of illness, injuries and emergencies
- child safe practices.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/ NOMINATED SUPERVISOR AND COORDINATORS WILL ENSURE:

- all FDC educators, staff, volunteers and students follow the *Safe Transportation Policy* and procedure
- every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and hazards likely to cause injury
- all educators and educator assistants are inducted in the *Safe Transportation Policy* and procedure and have completed practical training relating to safe transportation of children
- a copy of any training undertaken by staff/educators is kept at the FDC Service principal office
- risk assessments are carried out prior to seeking authorisation for transporting children, including excursions where transport is arranged by the FDC Service
- risk assessments for 'regular transportation' are
 - evaluated regularly or whenever a change of circumstances warrants a new assessment- e.g.: route change of vehicle due to roadworks, additional pick-up points or new provider of transport, to ensure potential risks are identified and managed
 - reviewed at least annually
- information related to the safe transportation of children is shared with all FDC educators regularly to assist management fulfill their roles responsibly
- any updates to policies and procedures and risk assessments are clearly communicated with FDC educators and educator assistants
- clear and consistent procedures are established to ensure no children are left in vehicles when the FDC educator or educator assistant is transporting children (NQF review 2019)
- relevant criminal history requirements and Working with Children Checks are made for any person transporting children. WWCC is recorded in staff records.
- any allegation of misconduct of the educator or other adult will be reported immediately as per the Reportable Conduct Scheme detailed in our *Child Protection Policy* and/or *Child Safe Environment Policy* and *Code of Conduct Policy*
- FDC educators and educator assistants accompanying children during transportation hold:
 - an approved first aid qualification and
 - a current approved anaphylaxis management training qualification and
 - an approved emergency asthma management training qualification.
- risk assessments are carried out prior to seeking authorisation for transporting children
- risk assessments for 'regular transportation' are evaluated regularly (at least annually) or whenever a change of circumstances warrants a new assessment- e.g.: route change of vehicle due to roadworks, additional pick-up points or new provider of transport, to ensure potential risks are identified and managed
- details of the safest route for travel, type of vehicle and required restraints are included in the risk assessment
- the FDC educator or person driving the vehicle/bus holds a current Australian driver's licence
- education on road safety for children is included in the FDC Service's programming (for example Kids and Traffic, Vic Roads Primary School roads information)
- ensure the FDC educator keeps accurate attendance records documenting the time and date children arrive or depart the FDC Service, including when children are transported
- the maximum number of children approved for a FDC service is adhered to no matter where the children are located, including when they are being transported by the Service [S. 51(4A)]
- messages from families regarding attendance changes to pick up or drop offs are communicated to FDC educators
- families are encouraged to communicate changes to attendance as soon as possible via email or phone
- messages from families regarding attendance changes to pick up or drop offs are communicated to FDC educators
- a review of practices is conducted following any incident involving transportation provided by the FDC Service, including an assessment of areas for improvement ensure the regulatory authority is

notified within 24 hours if a child is involved in a serious incident, including while being transported, at the Service.

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FDC COORDINATORS/ FDC EDUCATORS/ EDUCATOR ASSISTANTS WILL ENSURE:

- they adhere to the *Safe Transportation Policy* and participate in practical training relating to the safe transportation of children
- every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and hazards likely to cause injury
- effective and adequate supervision is provided when children are being transported. Consideration must include:
 - the number, age and developmental ability of children
 - the requirements of individual children
 - visibility and accessibility
 - physical positioning of educators
 - risks related to the mode of transportation (including travel on foot)
 - risks in the environment, location and while travelling
 - the experience, knowledge and skill of each educator
- parents/guardians complete a written authorisation for regular transportation of their child and a copy of this is filed in the child's enrolment record
- educator to child ratio requirements is maintained at all times
- children are never left unattended in the vehicle
- annual checks are made for all restraints/car seats by a registered restraint fitter (Best practice)
- the FDC educator or person driving the vehicle/bus holds a current Australian driver's licence and are licenced to carry the required number of passengers for the purpose
- educators adhere to the road rules and regulations mandated by law within each state/territory
- children wear approved seatbelts/restraints whilst the vehicle is in motion in accordance to **Victoria** Road Rules and Road Transport Act
- children remain seated and secured in child restraints and do not behave in a dangerous or inappropriate manner
- rehearsals for transportation of children are conducted throughout the year as 'best practice'
- flow charts for procedures of what to do in case of an emergency (missing or unaccounted child)
- where digital devices are used during transportation, they must be used in accordance with the *Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy*
- are clearly communicated with all stakeholders regularly, including implementation of the *Missing Child During Regular Transportation Procedure*
- a working mobile phone or other similar means of communication to communicate with the principal office, coordinator, parents/carers is carried in case of emergency
- a list of emergency contact numbers for the children being transported is available at all times
- the *Administration of First Aid Policy* is implemented in the event of a serious incident, injury, trauma or medical emergency, including contacting emergency services (in the first instance) and notifying parents/guardians as soon as practical and the regulatory authority within 24 hours
- compliance with first aid requirements of Regulation 136 is met at all times
- an easily recognised and suitably equipped first aid kit is easily accessible during transportation
- medication, health plans and risk assessments for individual children are taken when transporting children
- children are instructed on processes for entering and exiting the FDC residence or approved venue
- children's attendance is checked against an accurate attendance record showing when children are within the care of the FDC service/ FDC educator
- children's attendance is checked by the FDC educator before departure from the designated pick-up location and marked as present as they disembark from the vehicle

- procedures for the safe handover of children between the FDC Service and other educational site is documented correctly (if applicable) and clearly communicated with all stakeholders
- children exit the vehicle using the 'safety door'
- safety rules are developed with children to ensure a clear understanding of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- educators are aware of appropriate procedures to be followed in the event of a vehicle crash involving children from the service
- every effort will be made to notify parents/carers of delays returning to the FDC residence or venue if applicable

PICKING UP CHILDREN AND DURING TRANSPORTATION

- the vehicle is parked in a safe location close to the entry of the FDC residence or venue
- all children accompany the FDC educator or educator assistant when leaving the residence
- a 'head count' and check of the children's attendance record is checked by the educator as children assemble in a predetermined location at the residence or venue prior to embarking the vehicle
- children are signed into the service attendance record upon collection, noting the time children enter the vehicle
- if both the FDC educator and educator assistant are travelling in the vehicle, a check of the home must be conducted prior to departure to ensure no children are left behind
- children are safely secured into their seats/restraints
- children are continuously supervised during transportation by the educator, ensuring they have clear vision of all children
- children are to remain seated and secured in appropriate child restraints until the vehicle/bus has completely stopped
- the designated driver of the vehicle/bus complies with all appropriate road, safety and transport regulations
- under no circumstances will the driver of the vehicle/bus supervising the children use handheld mobile phones unless safely parked
- under no circumstances will the driver and/or FDC educator supervising children be under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- the designated driver of the vehicle has the right, *if required* to stop in a safe place until the children conform to the safety guidelines. Parents will be notified if their child continues to be challenging and/or behaving in a dangerous manner.

DROPPING OFF CHILDREN

- at each stop, the FDC educator and/or educator assistant must park the vehicle and turn off the ignition at a safe and secure location
- children are to remain seated until the vehicle/bus has completely stopped
- if the child is being collected or dropped off to a school or a venue that requires the FDC educator to escort the child to that location, the vehicle must be parked, and all children accompany the FDC educator
- children must never be left unsupervised in the vehicle
- if an educator assistant is travelling with the FDC educator, one of these adults may remain in the vehicle to supervise children whilst a child/ren is delivered safely to their venue/location and signed in
- the FDC educator/educator assistant will assist children to safely disembark the vehicle/bus
- children will exit the vehicle/bus using the 'safety door' or door located near the kerb
- the FDC educator/educator assistant will ensure the child/ren are safely delivered to their location and into the care of a specific person (OSHC educator, kindergarten teacher, preschool educator) as authorised by the parent/carers

- children are signed out of the service attendance record upon drop off, noting the time children exit the vehicle.

RETURNING TO THE FDC RESIDENCE/VENUE

- the FDC educator will park the vehicle in a safe location close to the entry of the FDC residence or venue
- children will be removed from their restraints and escorted inside the residence
- a 'head count' of children against the attendance record will be checked by the FDC educator once inside the residence
- a signed copy of the roll/attendance record should be kept as a record for inspection by the Regulatory Authority (best practice)
- once the children have been removed from the vehicle the FDC educator and/or educator assistant will conduct a final thorough sweep of the vehicle/bus, checking on and under seats to ensure there are no children or belongings left behind
- checks should be marked as completed and signed by the FDC educator and/or educator assistant and kept on record as best practice
- any child is unaccounted for, the FDC educator must follow the *Missing Child During Regular Transportation Procedure*. This will include:
 - physical search of the vehicle (including under the vehicle)
 - contacting other relevant locations- school, park, library and request an immediate search
 - contact the police and child's parents/carers
 - contact FDC scheme Coordinator/Nominated Supervisor
 - notify regulatory authority of a serious incident within 24 hours with the support of the approved provider.

SAFE MAINTENANCE OF TRANSPORTATION VEHICLE

The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Coordinator and FDC educator will ensure:

- the transportation vehicle is fitted with the required seat belts and child restraints, approved by the Roads and Traffic Authorities (see Rule 266 of the Australian Road Rules)
- there are sufficient seat belts installed for all passengers in accordance with current Australian Safety Standards- (AS/NZS 1754)
- the vehicle has enough fuel to transport the children each day as in accordance with schedule
- the vehicle is registered, roadworthy and insured (general legal requirements and best practice standards are adhered to)
- any repairs are completed as soon as possible by a qualified mechanic
- checks of the vehicle should be recorded, signed by the relevant person and kept for inspection by the Regulatory Authority
- all drivers hold a current Australian driver's licence, licenced to carry the required number of passengers for the vehicle
- in the event of any mechanical or other breakdown, children will be kept safe, comfortable and occupied with suitable activities
- educators/drivers wear/have access to a high visibility vest
- every effort will be made to notify parents/carers of delays returning to the FDC Service if applicable.

FAMILIES WILL:

- adhere to the Service's Delivery of children to, and collection from Education and Care Service Premises *Policy* and *Safe Transportation Policy*

- communicate any change in transportation requirements for their child with their FDC educator as soon as they are aware (for example: no transport is required on a particular day as the child has returned home from school due to illness)
- notify the Service and FDC educator if their child is going to be absent on a particular day and not require transport
- ensure written authorisation/permission for transportation of their child by the FDC educator/and service is granted by either the parent or authorised nominee named in the child's enrolment record
- provide emergency contact details and phone numbers upon enrolment and update emergency contact details and phone numbers regularly
- sign attendance record upon delivery or collection of child to the service in accordance with the *Delivery of Children to, and Collection from Education and Care Service Premises Policy*

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Safe Transportation Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis in consultation with children, families, staff, educators and management.

SUPPORTED RESOURCES

Employee Induction Checklist Missing Child during Regular Transportation Procedure Regular Transportation Authorisation Safe Transportation of Children Module	Transport Pick Up/Drop Off Checklist Transporting Children Risk Assessment Template Vehicle/Bus Transportation Procedure
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Kids and Traffic- Early Childhood Road and Safety Education Program

- Transporting children safely- Guidance on Understanding safe transport and travel requirements for education and care service providers (2020).
- Safe Travel and Transport- Advice for working with children, families, schools and communities (2020).

SOURCE

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 Kids and Traffic Early Childhood Road Safety Education Program (NSW)
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 Road Transport (Safety & Traffic Management) Act 1999.
 Vic Roads- Primary school road safety education resources