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## **Policy Statement**

We recognise that the physical environment can contribute to children's wellbeing, happiness and creativity. We aim to provide a physical environment, both indoors and outdoors, that provide children with the flexibility to have access to a variety of programmed and free play activities, as well as the option to participate in individual activities or group experiences.

## **Considerations**

- ✓ The Education and Care Services National Law 2010
- ✓ The Education and Care Services National Regulation (2018 version)
- ✓ Education and Care Services National Quality Standards (2018 version)
- ✓ My Time Our Place
- ✓ Work Cover Act 8(1)(2)
- ✓ ACI Policies and Procedures

## **Procedures**

- The Physical environment will be a tobacco, drug and alcohol free environment, see ACI Smoking, Drugs and Alcohol Policy.
- Staff equally value both the indoor and outdoor environments that support children's learning, creativity, and social engagement.
- The physical environment should provide opportunities for children to learn through play, enabling access to materials that stimulate investigation and reflection.
- The physical environment should be welcoming and accessible for all children and families and take into consideration cultural diversity, interests, learning styles, social and physical inclusion.
- The physical environment will be set up with adequate materials and resources for the amount of children enrolled in the care environment at all times, to provide new learning opportunities that extend and challenge children's learning and development.
- The play spaces provide children with the opportunity to explore and experience the natural environment.
- The physical environment should offer children opportunities to be active, messy, and noisy and play on a large scale, or be quiet, relaxed, and play in solitude.
- Staff are to ensure that areas in the environment do not become 'overcrowded', and that there is adequate space for children to play.
- Entrances and exits to various areas within the physical environment, both indoor and outdoor, should be free of clutter and hazards, to allow children, staff, families and visitors to all areas of the physical environment.
- Areas will be made available for children to play independently or in groups of varying size.

## **Outdoor Environment**

- The outdoor area shall be easily accessible to Educators and children and will be inspected daily for any obstacles or dangerous items. These items shall be disposed of in a safe and careful manner prior to the children playing in the area.
- Wherever possible, outdoor learning experiences should be set up that complement and extend on indoor learning experiences and activities.
- Wherever possible, children should be encouraged to play in and with natural environments and resources, including gardens etc.
- Designated areas for play will enable adequate supervision to be maintained.
- Clear boundaries shall be set and enforced to maintain a safe and happy environment for all children.
- Shaded areas will be provided wherever possible when setting up activities.

- Shoes must be worn by Educators and children whilst outdoors at all times unless engaging in programmed activities where shoes are not required. (i.e. foot painting, or at Girraween shoes may be removed to play in the sand pit)
- Use of other outdoor venues will be considered where:
  - Access to the area is safe.
  - Adequate supervision can be maintained.
  - The area is considered of value to the children's physical development and personal comfort.
  - Where adequate staff/child ratios can be maintained both indoors and outdoors.
- At Toongabbie West Activity Centre children will be taken to Ambrose Park and Bungaree Community Garden as part of the programmed activities, both the park and the community garden adjoin the school.
- During Vacation Care at Girraween Activity Centre children may be taken to Keene Park as part of programmed activities, Keene Park is located in Targo Road behind the units opposite the centre.

## **Indoor Environment**

- The indoor area shall be easily accessible to the Educators and children and will be inspected daily for any obstacles or dangerous items. These items shall be disposed of in a safe and careful manner prior to the children playing in the area.
- Where children are indoors for long periods due to weather conditions, special activities will be planned and other areas sought to disperse the group such as other available places within the School and /or undercover areas and verandas.
- The indoor area will be well ventilated and have adequate natural light.
- The indoor environment should be maintained at a temperature that ensures wellbeing of the children and Educators.
- Easy access to areas shall be maintained by making clear, easily identified passageways and walkways through the building.
- All items obstructing areas are to be removed and placed in the correct storage areas.
- Areas must be set up to ensure that proper supervision can be maintained at all times.
- The indoor area is to be set up to allow children to participate in a variety of activities with easy access to equipment.
- Wherever possible, design indoor environments that are enriched by natural resources and opportunities to engage with nature.
- Where possible separate areas in the indoor environment will be provided for:
  - Parents to sign their children in/out of the Centre
  - Staff to collect fees, answer phones and maintain daily records
  - Staff and parents to talk in confidence.
  - Storage of equipment, food, dangerous materials and family records
  - Preparation of food and drinks
  - Kitchen and disposal of refuse
  - Cleaning of equipment
  - Hand washing and hand drying facilities.
  - Craft and other creative activities.
  - Large and small group activities.
  - Display of children's activities and work.
  - Quiet space for children to retreat to, or to do homework or lie down if unwell.

## **Checklist for Staff**

- Staff are to check the physical environment for any hazards before children play.
- Staff are to set up the physical environment so children can freely play independently or as part of the group
- The physical environment should be welcoming and set up to reflect the interests, cultural background and developmental needs of the children.
- The physical environment should provide space for children to play in groups or individually, to be noisy or quiet, and to be physical or stationary.
- The physical environment should not become overcrowded, Staff are to ensure that experiences are spread out appropriately.



# Physical Environment Policy

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- Staff should encourage children to pack up after themselves and return equipment to its correct place.
  - Staff should encourage children to play respectfully with the equipment to avoid loss or breakage.
  - Staff should ensure that the indoor area is kept clean and tidy to avoid injury

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Policy is only endorsed if initialled by 2 members of the management committee

**Endorsed by the Management Committee on the 01<sup>ST</sup> May 2018**

Physical Environment Policy is to be reviewed by the 20<sup>th</sup> May 2022