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| Children's Education and Care Assurance Alert |
| February 2020  *The Children’s Education and Care Assurance Update links professionals, providers and educators with news, resources and information that supports quality outcomes for children in ACT education and care services***Children’s health and wellbeing** The National Quality Framework reinforces children’s right to experience quality education and care in an environment that provides for their safety, health and wellbeing. The approved provider, nominated supervisors, co-ordinators and educators all have responsibility for supporting the health, protection, safety and wellbeing of all children. In exercising their responsibilities, they must take reasonable care to protect children from foreseeable risk of harm, injury and infection. (Guide to the National Quality Standard, 2020).**Health, hygiene and safe food practices** To minimise risks to children, services need to implement adequate health and hygiene practices and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food. See regulations [77](https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653/chap4/part4.2/div1/reg77) and [168](https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653/chap4/part4.7/div2/reg168). Approved providers nominated supervisors and educators should regularly reflect on how they use information from recognised authorities about current health, hygiene and safety guidelines are accessed and used to inform policies, procedures and practices.[Food Standards Australia New Zealand](https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx) (FSANZ) can provide information and guidance materials on [food Labelling](https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/industry/labelling/Pages/default.aspx), [food storage](https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/foodsafety/standards/Documents/Storing%20food%20safely_Final.pdf), [food recalls](https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/industry/foodrecalls/Pages/default.aspx), [food safety standards](https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/foodsafety/standards/Pages/Foodsafetystandards.aspx), [imported foods](https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/industry/labelling/Pages/default.aspx), [nutrition](https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/industry/npc/Pages/Nutrition-Panel-Calculator-introduction.aspx) and [food safety programs](https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/industry/safetystandards/service/Pages/default.aspx) to organisations. Services may choose to contact [ACT Health Protection Services](https://health.act.gov.au/businesses/food-safety-regulation) who are responsible for food safety in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). They promote food safety, regulate food businesses and provide advice and information to the ACT community. **Maintaining the physical environment** The physical environment plays a critical role in promoting children’s learning, development, safety and health. Section of [167](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/LTObject_Store/ltobjst10.nsf/DDE300B846EED9C7CA257616000A3571/D38DBD79C4A26CCECA2582270002C054/%24FILE/10-69aa012%20authorised.pdf) of the National Law identifies that approved providers, nominated supervisors and family day care educators must ensure that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury. Reasonable precautions might include:* regular safety checks of the environment and equipment
* secure storage of hazardous products including chemicals
* maintenance and cleaning schedules
* risk assessments, including for excursions and
* purchasing products that meet Australian Standards— for example, cots, playground equipment and furniture.

This list is not exhaustive, and services should conduct regular risk assessments to identify potential hazards relevant to their own service, and strategies to protect children from harm. The [Early Childhood Resource Hub](https://www.ecrh.edu.au/national-quality-standard/quality-area-2-childrens-health-and-safety#/quality-area/discussion/risk-and-hazard/explore) and [Kids Safe](https://kidsafe.com.au/) have extensive resources and information to assist services in promoting children’s safety, health and wellbeing. The National Law does not require services to eliminate all risk and challenge from children’s play or environments. Children benefit from opportunities to extend themselves in a safe environment. Educators need to consider children's health and safety as well as giving them genuine opportunities to explore, experiment, predict consequences and take managed risks. **Safe sleep and rest** Approved providers nominated supervisors and family day care educators must take reasonable steps to ensure children’s needs for sleep and rest are met. See regulations [81](https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653/chap4/part4.2/div1/reg81)and [168](https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653/chap4/part4.7/div2/reg168). Services must have policies and procedures in place in relation to sleep and rest practices for children and infants, based on current recommended evidence-based guidelines. [Rednose](https://rednose.org.au/section/education) provides free safe sleeping resources, low cost training and assessment packages for education and care services, who care for babies, helping them to help meet the national safe sleep standards and demonstrate a best practice to sleep safety. To download free education materials, click this link <http://bit.ly/rednoseresources> **Child protection obligations in the ACT** The approved provider of an education and care service must ensure that nominated supervisors and all staff members understand their responsibilities under the relevant child protection law the existence and application of the current child protection law and any obligations that they may have under that law. See regulation [84](https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653/chap4/part4.2/div1/reg84). Service policies and procedures must also reflect current are in place in relation to providing a child safe environment. **Children and Young People Act 2008**In line with [Children and Young People Act 2008](https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2008-19/) individuals working in education and care services have a legal obligations to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. The[Keeping Children and Young People Safe](https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/1132080/Keeping-children-and-young-people-safe.pdf)document is a guide on reporting concerns of child abuse or neglect that occurs within a family to child and reporting avenues to Youth Protection Services (CYPS). All staff working in education and care are encouraged to complete the Community Services Directorate’s free Keeping Children and Young People Safe [Online Training](https://csdpubliclearning.articulate-online.com/p/1683794862/story_html5.html).**Reportable Conduct Scheme 2017**The [Reportable Conduct Scheme](https://www.ombudsman.act.gov.au/improving-the-act/reportable-conduct)aims to improve child protection within organisations in the ACT. Reportable conduct covers allegations or convictions of child abuse or misconduct toward children. Organisations must report allegations of reportable conduct by an employee or volunteer. This includes including ill-treatment of a child (such as emotional abuse or use of force), neglect, psychological harm, misconduct of a sexual nature, sexual or physical offences and convictions where a child is a victim or is present and inappropriate discipline or not protecting children from harm. Organisations must have policies and procedures to prevent and respond to child abuse. The ACT Ombudsman provides support and practice [guidelines](https://www.ombudsman.act.gov.au/improving-the-act/reportable-conduct/reportable-conduct-resource-kit) to help organisations do this. If organisations suspect criminal conduct, they must also report to the police. More information about the reportable Conduct Scheme can be found on the [ACT Ombudsman’s website.](https://www.ombudsman.act.gov.au/improving-the-act/reportable-conduct) For enquires in relation to this notification please call CECA on (02) 6207 1114 or email CECA@act.gov.auThis email has been authorised by the ACT Regulatory Authority (CECA). CECA are responsible for administering the National Quality Framework within the ACT |

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