DEVELOPMENT AND COLLECTION OF CHILDREN POLICY

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Montessori Stepping Stones™

“A home for learning and development, a pre-school for life.”

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1. PURPOSE
Montessori Stepping Stones (MSS) aims to ensure that the attendance of all children enrolled is accurately recorded in accordance with regulatory and government guidelines. Families are required to personally deliver and collect their children, or arrange with the service for an authorised person to do so. MSS’s quality practices for delivery and collection must be followed in every instance, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children at all times.
MSS will ensure the protection of children not collected by closing time. Families are expected to abide by our opening and closing hours, except in an extreme emergency. MSS is unable to provide care to children after hours on a regular basis.

2. SCOPE
All people involved in the delivery and collection of children at MSS relating to the education and care of children at Montessori Stepping Stones – as well as children, families, educators and staff who assist in the continuous improvement and implementation of quality practices.

3. DESCRIPTION/GENERAL
All children have the right to experience quality care and education in an environment and provisions for their health and safety. The Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012 requires that approved provider/nominated supervisor/coordinators take reasonable care to protect children from foreseeable risk of harm. Ensuring that children are only released to authorised persons is a key aspect of children’s safety.

LEGISLATION AND GOVERNMENT REQUIREMENTS
Laws relating to protection of privacy and confidentiality; duty of confidentiality arising from contract with parent; to whom and when information must be disclosed;

- Western Australia laws relating to child protection;
- Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act (2012);
- Education and Care Services National (WA) Regulations (2012)
NATIONAL LAW AND REGULATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>165</td>
<td>Offence to inadequately supervise children</td>
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<td>189</td>
<td>Emergency removal of children</td>
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Regulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regulation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>Children leaving the education and care service premises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>158</td>
<td>Children’s attendance record to be kept by approved provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>168 (2)(f)</td>
<td>Education and care service must have policies and procedures: delivery of children to, and collection of children from education and care service premises, including procedures complying with — (ii) for Western Australia — section 165A of the Law as applying in Western Australia;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>176</td>
<td>Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority</td>
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NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Area</th>
<th>Standard/Element</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Each child is protected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.3.1</td>
<td>Children are adequately supervised at all times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.</td>
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4. DEFINITIONS/PRINCIPLES/STRATEGIES FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Children's needs

Arrival and departure routines to be relaxed and happy and transitions from home to MSS and vice versa protect the child’s wellbeing.

Families' needs

Delivery and collection of their child to be stress free and provide reassurance that their child will be safe and not be released to unauthorised people, further clear late pick up procedures and MSS' understanding if they are unavoidably delayed.

Educator/Staff needs

Time to discuss matters with families at the beginning and end of the day with clear guidelines to follow in the event that a child is not collected and what is expected in order not to compromise their own commitments after normal work hours, which may include overtime pay by ongoing late arriving families.

Management needs

Families to take responsibility for their child and not to misuse the MSS commitment to the wellbeing of the children in their care as well as dependable and understanding staff who can rely on support from relevant agencies and departments when in need.
Arrival at the service
On arrival at the service families/children must report directly to the educator to signal their arrival at the centre.

Educators will welcome families and children on arrival and seek to engage the day’s planned activities.

Any personal items must be put inside the child's bag, which should be hung up in the nominated area, unless it is medication. Medication needs to be handed to the educator/teacher.

Any medications must be given directly to the teacher/educator who will check the family has completed an Authority to Administer or Self Administer Medication Form and then store the medication in the appropriate place. Medication Forms must be filled in by the educator together with the parent and signed by the educator and parent/guardian.

Fruit will be placed in the fruit bowl in the child’s room.

Educators and families or children may need to exchange information at this time in preparation for arriving at or departing from the service. If this exchange impacts on the supervision of other children then supervision will take priority and the exchange may need to be documented in the daily diary, emailed or communicated via telephone later. If this exchange of information involves discussions about private or personal details, the discussion will take place in a private area in accordance with the MSS’ Confidentiality and Privacy policy.

Attendance record
Accurate attendance records will be kept and checked each day.

The enrolling parent/guardian or authorised person who brings or collects the child to our centre must sign/initial and document the child's times of arrival and departure.

When a child arrives at the centre unaccompanied by the parent (i.e. where a child is collected after attending school) educators/staff will note the time of arrival or departure. The parent/guardian or authorised person (not service educators/staff) will later note and sign/initial the child’s times of arrival and departure.

If a child does not attend for any reason the child’s educator will enter the type of absence on the attendance record. The parent/guardian must verify the absence by signing/initialling the weekly attendance role, which is kept with the educator and providing the necessary documentation (i.e. medical certificate) at a later date.

Note: Families who do not complete the attendance records will not be eligible to claim Child Care Benefit (http://deewr.gov.au/).

Authorisation for collecting children
The names and contact numbers of all persons authorised to collect children from MSS (including emergency contacts) must be included on the Enrolment Form. Any changes to these authorities must be advised in writing to MSS by the enrolling parent/guardian as soon as possible.

If the enrolling parent/guardian arranges for an authorised person to collect their child from the service, they must contact MSS in writing (email) to advise of this arrangement and confirm who will collect the child. The parent/guardian arranged authorised person must provide identification to staff/educator prior to collecting the child.

If MSS has not been notified and someone other than the enrolling parent/guardian arrives to collect the child the nominated supervisor/educator will contact the enrolling parent/guardian to obtain their authorisation, which will be in writing (Email, SMS) wherever possible. (continued on next page)
The child will not be released until the enrolling parent/guardian's authorisation has been obtained. If the authorised person is not known to the service, the enrolling parent/guardian will be asked to provide a description of the person concerned, who will also be required to provide proof of their identity.

**Late collection**
Montessori Stepping Stones (MSS) hours of opening are clearly displayed at the entry to the service. Parents/guardians who are unavoidably detained and are unable to collect their child at the negotiated collection time must Email, SMS, telephone MSS to advise of their lateness and expected time of arrival. If a parent/guardian is unable to collect their child prior to closing time they should arrange for another authorised adult to collect the child and advise MSS of this arrangement. This advice should be in writing if at all possible.

Special circumstances i.e. traffic accident or vehicle breakdown, will be given consideration in relation to the administration of late collection fees.

If the parent/guardian has not contacted MSS and the child has not been collected 10 minutes after the negotiated collection time, the service will attempt to telephone the parent/guardian or if this is not possible telephone the emergency contact people listed on the child's enrolment form to arrange for the child's immediate collection.

If no-one can be contacted and the child has not been collected 30 minutes after the service's normal closing time educators will follow MSS' Quality Practice for Late Collection.

When a parent/guardian is continually and regularly late arriving at our centre to collect their child, the nominated supervisor/coordinator/educator will discuss other child care options with the family, which is in the interest of the child's wellbeing.

**Procedure for late collection**
If a child has not been collected 30 minutes after closing time, and the parents/guardians of the child, nor other emergency contact person has been able to be contacted, the senior educator/staff member present will contact:

- the approved provider (or nominated supervisor/scheme coordinator), and
- relevant child protection agency and/or regulatory authority (as part of the MSS' Quality Practise for Late Collection plan of action),
- to advise them of the situation and consult on what action to take.

MSS’ Quality Practise for Late Collection action plan include:

- Time lines and triggers for ongoing communication between MSS and the certified supervisor, child protection agency/regulatory authority, i.e. after an agreed period of time, or when something happens to change the situation (i.e. parent/guardian arrives).
- Whether MSS’ should contact the police.
- What actions the approved provider/scheme coordinator/child protection agency/regulatory authority will take.
- MSS’ availability to continue to care for the child, i.e. the length of time educators are available to stay at the service, concerns regarding the security of the premises after hours etc.
- Who else the certified supervisor/educators need to contact in regard to the situation.
In the interests of protecting educators from allegations of abuse, where possible two adults will remain at the centre with the child. The decision on whether two staff need to be present will depend on some or all of the following considerations:

- Security in the area in which the service is located
- The cost of having two educators present
- The experience of the educators
- The child and his/her specific needs

If it is decided that only one educator can stay with the late child, it is important to ensure someone else is on hand to provide assistance if necessary.

If the educators present are unable to remain at the service to care for the child, the nominated supervisor/certified supervisor will follow MSS’ agreed action plan in the Quality Practise for Late Collection, that will ensure the wellbeing of the child. This could include any of the following:

- Educators who have agreed to make themselves available will be contacted and asked to relieve present educator as soon as they are able.
- The nominated supervisor or approved provider will send a representative to relieve one of the present educators as soon as possible (whilst ensuring educator requirements are maintained).

The child protection agency/regulatory authority will be contacted as agreed in the Quality Practise for Late Collection, to provide on-going updates of the situation as it evolves.

MSS may decide to contact the police to find out if the parent has been involved in an accident, or to ask the police to take action to try to locate the parent/guardian.

Educators will care for the child’s needs (i.e. provide a snack or evening meal) and reassure the child if he/she is anxious, provide the child with some fun games or activities and, if appropriate, settle the child down to sleep (young children).

When the parent/guardian or emergency contact person arrives to collect the child they will be required to complete and sign a Late Collection Form, which indicates the time of collection and confirms their understanding that a late fee will be charged.

Educators will advise the child protection agency/regulatory authority/police (if contacted), and the nominated supervisor or approved provider that the child has been collected.

**Ongoing strategies**

The policy on delivery and collection of children will be highlighted to parents at the time of enrolment, and provided in writing on request.

Montessori Stepping Stones will ask families to update their own, and their emergency contact numbers as they change. A system of regular reminders will be implemented through newsletters, emails, on the fee invoice statement or other means.

Families will be encouraged to name additional emergency contacts, who they expect would be available and able to assist in an emergency. This could include trusted neighbours, if the family does not have relatives or friends on hand to assist.

Families are required to plan their day in order to ensure they are at the centre prior to closing time.
Our educators may need time to give parents/guardians information about their child's day. Our staff and educators also have evening commitments they wish to fulfil and families who are waiting for them to come home.

Our policy will be reviewed regularly with educators, and agreement reached as to how the staffing of late collections will be managed. Management understands that an educator's personal situation may limit their ability to remain at the service after hours, and will not impose pressure on educators to unwillingly take on these extra duties. Any extra hours worked by employees will be paid as overtime.

Where families are continually late to collect children, the following process will be followed to address continuing issues:

- The nominated supervisor/educator will speak with the parent to alert them to the grievance process, and to discuss any difficulties the parent is experiencing in collecting their child by closing time. Strategies for the parent to adhere to service hours will be discussed, and the parent will be asked to give a commitment to implementing these strategies.

- On the next late collection (MSS will need to decide on the time frame for this i.e. within 2 weeks, 1 month, or more), a letter will be sent to the parent advising them that another late collection of their child may result in cancellation of their place at the service.

- If there is a further late collection (within MSS' decided time frame) the family's enrolment will be cancelled.

- Where a number of families are continually late the service may consider surveying parents to see if there is sufficient need to consider extending the hours of opening. This will increase the cost of the service provide and would lead to an increase in fees.

5. RESPONSIBILITY (IES)

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<td>SUP, EDL, ED, AED, SFR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review/Evaluation</td>
<td>SUP, EDL, ED, AED, SFR, CO, PFC, 3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendment</td>
<td>MGT, SUP, SFR</td>
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Legend:  MGT= Management, SUP=Supervisors, EDL= Educational Leaders , ED= Educator, AED = Assistant Educator, SFR = Safety Rep., CO = Cook, PFC = Parent/Custodian, 3rd = 3rd Party,

6. REVIEW, EVALUATION & AMENDMENT

The Delivery and Collection of Children Policy, Process, Procedure and/or associated Tasks/Forms are to be reviewed as required or immediately if deficiencies are identified (at least once a year from last publishing).

7. QUALITY PRACTICES (PROCEDURES, ROUTINES AND TASKS)

Useful tools in the implementation of this policy. List our precise steps for achieving each action. Ask yourself when, how, where and who is responsible for what actions.

- Confidentiality Statement
- Attendance record Form
- Authority to Administer or Self Administer Medication Form,
- Enrolment Form; ...........................................................................................................(continued on next page)
Suggestions, Grievance and Complaint Form;
Late Collection (Action Plan);
Late Collection Form;
Orientation checklists;

8. RELATED POLICIES

- Accidents, Emergencies and First Aid;
- Confidentiality and Privacy;
- Enrolment and Orientation;
- Equal Opportunity;
- Establishing a Protective Environment;
- Excursions and Transport;
- Suggestions, Grievances and Complaints;
- Health, Hygiene and Infection Control;
- Illness;
- Medications and Medical Conditions;
- Partnerships and Communication with Families;
- Payment of Fees;
- Records Management;
- Supervision

READINGS/SOURCES/WEBSITES

DEEWR Child Care Service Handbook 2011-2012; Section 4.6 - Recording attendance
Section 4.7 - Who is responsible for ensuring that attendance records are kept?
Section 4.8 - Absences from care
Section 5.5 - Key obligations imposed on approved child care services under family assistance law
Section 6.5 - What are my services responsibilities to parents?
Section 10 - Reporting attendance information Section 13 - Absences from child care

Shaw, M - Developing and implementing your service's child protection policy - extract from Putting Children First, the Newsletter of the National Childcare Accreditation Council - Issue 36, December 2010
Tansey, S - Supervision in children’s services - extract from Putting Children First, the Newsletter of the National Childcare Accreditation Council - Issue 15, September 2005

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Position: Managing Director
Signature: [Signature]

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