



# MSS & WAABINY OSHC SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN POLICY



## PURPOSE

Montessori Stepping Stones (MSS) will ensure educator supervision of children is appropriate to the activities children are engaged in, the characteristics and developmental level of the children, the setting in which the activities are taking place, the potential risks to children's safety, and the experience, knowledge and skill level of educators.

Educators will engage in active supervision of children by actively watching and monitoring the learning and leisure environment, observing children's play and anticipating potential dangers.

## SCOPE

All people involved in supervising children at MSS – including children, families, educators and employees who assist in the continuous improvement and implementation of relating quality practices.

## DESCRIPTION/GENERAL

MSS has a duty of care to ensure that children are provided with a safe, secure education and care environment that is effectively supervised. Educators have a duty of care to ensure that all areas accessible to children are safe, free from hazards, and adequately supervised by sufficient numbers of educators. The type of supervision required is dependent on the type of activities that children are participating in, the specific environment and its possible hazards, and the age, needs and propensities of the individual children.

It is a requirement under the Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012 that all children being educated and cared for by MSS are adequately supervised at all times that the children are in our service, and that children must be protected from harm and hazards.

Our supervision policy is committed to:

- complying with the Education and Care Services National Regulations (WA) 2012 educator/child ratios
- ensuring that children are supervised at all times
- considering the design and arrangement of children's environments to support active supervision
- using supervision skills to reduce or prevent injury or incident to children and adults
- guiding educators to make decisions about when children's play needs to be interrupted and redirected
- providing consistent supervision strategies when the service requires relief educators
- acknowledging and understanding when supervision is required for high risk experiences and/or the ratio of adults to children need to be increased

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## 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;

- Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act
- Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996
- Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012
- Education and Care Services National Regulations

## CHILDREN'S NEEDS

To be able to learn and grow in an environment that ensures potential risks are recognised and appropriate supervision provided to allow children to explore and push the boundaries of their abilities.

## FAMILIES' NEEDS

To feel confident that their child is in a safe secure environment and adequately supervised by qualified educators at all times.

## EDUCATOR/EMPLOYEE NEEDS

Sufficient educator to child ratios to ensure adequate supervision at all times. Well-designed play space that maximises supervision. An understanding of duty of care responsibilities towards children with training in supervisory skills.

## MANAGEMENT NEEDS

To feel confident that supervision of children is maintained by all educators/employees at all times; all educators/employees undertake their duty of care responsibilities to children diligently and consistently.

## INDUCTION AND STRATEGIES (DIRECT AND ACTIVE SUPERVISION)

Educators/employees are inducted in their duty of care responsibilities to children and understand how this duty impacts on the supervision of children.

When educators are on duty they are responsible for the direct supervision of children. This requires that each child will be within sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times. Educators will arrange play areas to ensure children can be effectively supervised, and will communicate effectively with each other about the supervision of children i.e. inform each other before leaving the room ('tag system').

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Educators/employees will adopt the following strategies to ensure children's adequate supervision:

- **be in close proximity** to children to supervise activities that involve some risk i.e. wood work activities; cooking; playing on high play equipment etc..
- **always face the children** and **position themselves to allow maximum observation** of the area in which children are playing
- **vigilantly observe** large groups of children by scanning and regularly looking around the area; – being alert to sounds that may indicate a problem or need for intervention or assistance
- **anticipating** what may happen next when watching children's play, and **being prepared to intervene** where there is a potential danger
- **planning activities** and arranging the environment **to ensure there are sufficient educators** to attend to children's needs
- **regularly inspecting the environment** to check for hazards or potential dangers
- **being vigilant during children's departure** from the service and **being aware of the people who have authority to collect the child**
- **regular head counts during the day** to ensure all children that are signed in, are present and accounted for

Educators/employees will be alert to and aware of potential hazards and risk of injury to children and will use their knowledge of each child to ensure children are adequately supervised at all times.

## LEVELS OF SUPERVISION

Levels of supervision will be adapted in relation to:

- size of the group
- number of educators/employees supervising
- experience of educators/employees and their personal knowledge of the children
- individual characteristics, developmental level, and age range of the group of children
- types of activities taking place
- children's previous experience of the activity
- size of, and potential hazards within the play area
- transitions from one activity to another i.e. are children hyped up, excited, tired, just awakening from sleep etc..

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Educators/employees will foster children's independence and competence by supporting children to undertake some activities that involve 'Controlled risk taking'. However, educators will always intervene to prevent harm, whenever this is necessary.

MSS will identify circumstances in which increases to the adult ratios above regulatory requirements are needed to improve children's safety. This can include during excursions, when children are playing near large volumes of water (swimming pools or fishponds), or when children are unwell.

Educators/employees are aware that at times older children require privacy and the space to be independent. Educators will develop supervision strategies that monitor these areas and allow older children to self-manage their play and limit setting (i.e. in our Waabiny OSHC group).

Educator/employee arrangements should allow flexibility within daily routines and supervision of individuals or small groups of children during meal times, sleep or rest times etc..

MSS will roster experienced educators that are familiar with the service's facilities, building and procedures, and know most of the children and families, to open and close the service.

When educators/employees are leaving for the day they will ensure their colleagues who are closing the service know which children are still in care, any information to be shared with families, or any changes to the person authorised to collect the child that day. This will be achieved through the use of our daily communications via the Xplor platform, as well as verbal communications.

Educators/employees should regularly evaluate supervisory practices, and especially after accidents or incidents, excursions, or the introduction of new activities.

### STAFFING PLAN

MSS will establish a Staffing Plan to ensure appropriate levels of supervision are maintained at all times and in accordance with the Education and Care Services National (WA) Regulations 2012. This plan will include:

- Name of the nominated supervisor
- Names of those responsible persons that have agreed to take the role of acting nominated supervisor when the nominated supervisor is not on duty
- Documented educators/employees holding a current approved first aid qualification
- Documented educators/employees that have undertaken anaphylaxis management training
- Documented educators/employees that have undertaken emergency asthma management training
- Procedures for ensuring maintenance of records and updates to educator's clearances and qualifications
- Procedure for ensuring educator/employees time sheets are maintained and retained

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- List of educators for each age grouping within the service
- Educator meal and rest break arrangements
- Supervision for special activities i.e. excursions, transport, water play, trampolines, play equipment etc..
- Supervision of children who are ill, injured, displaying unacceptable behaviour etc..
- Induction procedures for new educators/employees

## NOMINATED SUPERVISOR

MSS will appoint the most appropriately experienced and qualified certified supervisor as nominated supervisor, and will ensure this person has adequate resources and support to achieve their responsibilities for the day to day supervision and control of the service.

MSS will also seek the consent of a number of appropriately experienced and qualified responsible persons to be available to act in place of the nominated supervisor when the nominated supervisor is not on duty.

## ABSENT/INDISPOSED EDUCATORS

Educators/employees must inform the nominated supervisor, or responsible person acting in place of the nominated supervisor, as early in the day as possible if they are unable to report to work, so that relief educators can be arranged – if already clear that the educator/employee will be sick for the following day- inform the nominated supervisor, or responsible person prior to the start of the next day. Should an educator fail to report for duty the following procedures will apply:

- The most senior educator present will contact the nominated supervisor or management directly to arrange for someone to report to work as soon as possible
- Once the maximum educator to child ratio has been reached, families who arrive to drop off their children will be asked to wait with their children at the service until an additional educator arrives

Should an educator become ill or injured, or otherwise be required to leave the service at short notice:

- The nominated supervisor will contact an 'off-duty educator'/employee to work, or arrange for someone to report to work to replace the indisposed educator as soon as possible.
- The indisposed educator will whenever possible remain at the service, until a replacement educator has arrived
- In the event that the educator cannot be replaced, the nominated supervisor may be required to reduce the number of children in care by contacting families of lower priority children (Priority of Access Guidelines) to advise them of the situation and ask them to collect their children from care.

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## RELIEF EDUCATORS/EMPLOYEES

A Relief Educator/employee list will be maintained on our HR platform – Employment Hero – and is accessible by the nominated supervisor and all responsible persons. The Relief Educator/Employee List will identify each person's qualifications and relevant certifications with expiry dates.

MSS will when required advertise for new relief educators, to ensure experienced and qualified persons are available.

New relief educators will be oriented to the service and invited to spend some time at the service to confirm their suitability. Whenever possible new relief educators will be placed with regular educators and closely supervised.

Experienced educators will support and oversee relief educators to ensure the maintenance of continuity in the service's practices and standards.

## ENSURING CORRECT EDUCATOR TO CHILD RATIOS

The nominated supervisor will ensure that appropriate educator to child ratios are maintained for each age grouping of children in accordance with the Education and Care Services National (WA) Regulations 2012.

The nominated supervisor will encourage families to keep to agreed starting and finishing times so that the service can maximise the use of educators and ensure appropriate educator to child ratios are maintained in each age grouping at all times.

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