

<Service name>

## Clothing and Comfort Policy

**Policy Number** <number>

**Link to CCQA Principles** *Family Day Care Quality Assurance (FDCQA) Quality Practices Guide (2004) – Principle 4.5 / Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance (OSHCQA) Quality practices Guide (2003) – Principle 7.2 / Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) Quality Practices Guide (2005) – Principle 6.5*

### Policy statement

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- Effective clothing and comfort strategies, including sun protection clothing, are important factors in ensuring a child feels secure and safe in a child care service environment.
- The service endeavours to consult with families about their child's<sup>1</sup> individual needs and to be aware of the different values and parenting beliefs, cultural or otherwise that are associated with clothing and footwear.
- The service defines 'comfort' as a state of reassurance, satisfaction, ease, and free from anxiety or pain.  
*A definition of 'comfort' can assist the service to develop strategies and procedures surrounding clothing and footwear. For example, children are more at ease, reassured, satisfied and less anxious when they are: dressed for warmth during winter or not over-dressed during summer, or wearing safe footwear when climbing outdoor play equipment.*
- In this service the term 'clothing and footwear' encompasses:
  - safe sleepwear;
  - sun protective clothing, including hats *and swimwear*;
  - clothing for messy play, *including art and craft aprons*;
  - appropriate clothing for changing weather conditions and temperature of play environments;
  - clothing to facilitate self-help, *including role play props and clothing*;
  - and
  - safe footwear for play experiences such as climbing and running.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this policy, child/children is defined as a person or group of persons aged from birth to 18 years who access the service for care reasons. (UNICEF)

- It is understood by **staff/carers**, children and families that there is a shared responsibility between the service and other stakeholders that the Clothing and Comfort Policy and procedures are accepted as a high priority.
- In meeting the service's duty of care, it is a requirement that management and staff implement and adhere to the service's Clothing and Comfort Policy.

## Rationale

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**The rationale represents a statement of reasons that detail why the policy and/or procedures have been developed and are important to the service.**

- The service may decide to refer to Cancer Council's position statements on sun protection clothing and practices.
- The service may decide to refer to SIDS & Kids' position statement on safe sleepwear.

## Strategies and practices

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**These are examples. Services are encouraged to develop and adapt the following strategies and practices as required to meet their individual circumstances and daily best practices.**

### Clothing and footwear

#### *Sleepwear*

The service may decide to link this subheading to its Rest Policy.

The following is a list of suggestions:

- Staff/carers monitor the temperature of the rest environment and address children's clothing needs.
- Children's sleepwear meets Australian Standards.
- Children resting in jumpers with hoods and cords are at higher risk of choking and should not be encouraged to wear these garments when resting.
- Sleepwear should take into consideration the:
  - child's age;
  - safe resting practices established by the service;
  - temperature of the rest environment;
  - bed linen used for resting; and
  - individual needs.

#### *Sun safe clothing, including hats and swimwear*

- Please refer to the service's Sun Protection Policy.

#### *Clothing for messy play, including art and craft aprons*

- The service can identify when protective clothing for messy play is required. For example, aprons are worn during:
  - painting and collage experiences;
  - clay or water play; or
  - cooking.

- The service may decide to discuss how it communicates to families about the importance of appropriate clothing choices that promote and do not inhibit play experiences.

#### *Clothing and the indoor/outdoor environmental conditions/temperatures*

- Brief and concise detail of the service's strategy.
- The service can identify the types of clothing and footwear suitable for different weather conditions, or at different times of the year (for example, summer and winter).

#### *Clothing to facilitate self-help, including role play clothing*

- Brief and concise detail of the service's strategy.

#### *Safe footwear for play experiences such as climbing and running*

- The service may identify:
  - footwear that is appropriate for children in care, such as sandals, shoes, sneakers;
  - the types of footwear the service identifies as being appropriate;
  - the age children should begin to wear footwear while in care;
  - appropriate footwear for infants and babies;
  - the condition of the outdoor environment where footwear is necessary;
  - footwear that assists in self-help skills and meets individual needs; and
  - footwear requirements on an excursion.

#### *Clothing and footwear not permitted in the service*

- The service may identify clothing and footwear that is not recommended by the service because it:
  - poses a potential health and safety risk. For example, hooded jumpers with cords increase the risk of choking, or wearing thongs to climb outdoor equipment;
  - restricts movement, the child's ability to play or inhibits the development of self-help skills. For example, overalls are often difficult items of clothing for children to remove when they are toilet training;
  - is too revealing and may potentially place a child at risk. For example, some styles of swimwear, midriff tops;
  - contravenes the sun protection policy. For example, strapless tops or singlets; or
  - offends others. For example shirts or baseball caps with slogans, images or language that may potentially provoke a negative response or offend a particular cultural group.

### **Protective behaviours and practices**

#### *Children undressing and dressing*

- The service can identify in the policy how it maintains safe environments for children and staff/carers when children are dressing and undressing. This can be linked to the service's Child Protection Policy.
- The service can identify in which situations do children need to be supervised when dressing and undressing, depending upon age, abilities and the service setting. For example, children aged 2-3 years of age generally require assistance when undressing and dressing especially when toilet training.

However, it is not considered appropriate practice in outside school hours care for staff to supervise school age children undressing or dressing.

- Staff/carers should be aware of when and where children are dressing or undressing and understand that children have a right to privacy.

#### *Staff/carers, students and volunteers as role models*

- Brief and concise detail of the service's strategy.
- Children learn through example and role modelling is an important strategy in children's services to maintain quality standards.
- The service may decide to identify the appropriate clothing and footwear guidelines that staff/carers, students and volunteers comply with and adhere to when caring for children.

## **Communicating with different stakeholders**

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### **Children**

- Brief and concise detail of the service's strategy.
- The service can describe the appropriate caregiving strategies when a child is non-compliant to the Clothing and Comfort Policy; this can include information about how staff/carers communicate with the child about why the strategies are important, and the ramifications of non-compliance. For example,
  - A child refusing to wear a hat when playing outdoors. How will the service ensure that the child is protected from UV radiation? Are there spare hats available? Is there a covered area that the child can play under? Is the child required to stay indoors with staff/carers? What happens if there is a planned outdoor excursion and there are no spare hats?
  - A child refusing to wear appropriate clothing, such as a sweater, when playing outdoors in cold weather conditions. How do staff/carers negotiate with the child to wear items of clothing? The service can describe a caregiving strategy that can assist staff/carers in this situation. Does the child have to stay indoors and how will they be supervised? How does the service respect the child's individual choice and meet the service's policy and practices?
- The service can describe how it provides clothing and comfort requirements for children while they are in care. How does the service ensure it can meet a child's clothing requirements? Do staff/carers provide spare clothing for children which supports their play, learning and safety needs? This can include when children are wearing clothing that does not complement:
  - weather conditions, such as a child arriving to care without warm clothing on a cold day; or
  - art, craft and messy play, such as a child arriving to care and the parent expressing that clothes are to be kept 'clean and dry'.

It may be clothing that:

- restricts play and movement, such as footwear that is cumbersome and inhibits children from walking and running. For example, gumboots;
- discourages self-help skills and causes frustration; such as children wearing buckled overalls while toilet training; or

- does not meet the service's safety requirements and is considered a high risk, such as children wearing hooded jumper with cords or sleepwear that does not meet the best practice recommendations from SIDS & Kids.

### **Families**

- Brief and concise detail of the service's strategy
- Clothing and Comfort strategies and practices are outlined in the Family Handbook, enrolment forms, newsletters and excursion permission forms.
- The service may identify if families are required to reflect the service's clothing and comfort practices. For example, an older sibling of a child in care and the child's parent must also wear sun protective clothing if they are volunteering on an excursion.
- The service can describe the appropriate caregiving strategies when a family is non-compliant to the Clothing and Comfort Policy; this can include information about how staff/carers communicate with the child's family about why the strategies are important, and the ramifications of non-compliance.

### **Staff/Carers**

- Brief and concise detail of the service's strategy.

### **Management/Coordination unit staff**

- Brief and concise detail of the service's strategy.

### **Experiences**

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- Brief and concise detail of the service's strategy.
- For example: the service can describe how it will protect children's home clothing during art and craft experiences, or how clothing used in role play can assist in developing self-help skills.

### **Excursions**

- Brief and concise detail of the service's strategy.
- For example: the service can describe how it will bring extra clothing on excursion to accommodate those children who may have a toileting 'accident'.

### **Policy review**

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- The service will review the Clothing and Comfort Policy and procedures, and related documents, including behaviours and practices every <timeframe>.
- Families are encouraged to collaborate with the service to review the policy and procedures.
- **Staff/carers** are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be encouraged to be actively involved.

## Procedures

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The following are examples of procedures that a service may employ as part of its daily practices.

Examples:

- Laundering items of clothing.
- Employee induction procedure.
- Policy development and review procedure.
- Procedure for non-compliance of Clothing and Comfort Policy and procedures by:
  - child;
  - staff/carer; or
  - student/volunteer.
- Student and volunteer induction procedure.

## Measuring tools

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The service may further specify tools that assist in measuring the effectiveness of the policy.

## Links to other policies

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The following are a list of examples:

- Child protection
- Enrolment of new children and families to the service
- Excursions
- Meeting children's individual and group needs
- Occupational health and safety
- Sun protection
- Staff/Carers as role models

## Sources and further reading

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- SIDS & Kids. (2006). *Sudden Unexpected Death in Infants (SUDI) frequently asked questions: SIDS & Kids: Safe sleeping in child care kit*. NSW: Author.
- The Cancer Council NSW. (2006). *SunSmart childcare: A policy guide for service providers*. Sydney: Author.
- UNICEF (n.d.). *Fact sheet: A summary of the rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Retrieved January 18, 2007, from [http://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights\\_overview.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights_overview.pdf)

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