

Water Safety Procedure

Important

Children can drown in as little as a few centimetres of water, therefore it is essential that access is restricted by safety barriers, and that they are constantly supervised around water. Toddler pools, backyard ponds, bathtubs, the washing machine, buckets of water and even pet drinking bowls must be recognised as potential drowning hazards. Drowning is the second leading cause of death for children aged 0-14 years in Victoria. Infants and toddlers are the group most at risk of drowning.

ECMS believes water play is an essential sensory experience and an important learning activity that promotes many domains of development, aids understanding of safety and awareness of different elements.

Procedure

In providing children with access to water play and activities involving water, including bathing, washing, watering the garden or cleaning up, the Educator will:

- Actively supervise children whenever water is in their environment
- Safely cover and/or make inaccessible to children all water containers such as ponds, spas, nappy buckets, and bathtubs
- Empty baths, basins, sinks, buckets, wading pools and troughs immediately after use and ensure they are not accessible to children while in use, or children are actively supervised by the Educator maintaining constant visual contact and always being within an arms' reach of the child/ren
- Ensure that empty containers accessible children do not collect rainwater
- Not take children in care to public pools for recreational or other purposes at any time during the hours of care
- In assessing the risks of any excursion, consider potential water hazards such as the beach/ seaside, channels, rivers, dams, ponds and other water course or still water

Document Name: Water Safety Procedure	Next Review Date: January 2020	Dates reviewed: Sept 15, Sept 16, Feb 18, January 2019
Document Owner: Director ECE	File Location: Inside Play Resources Policy and Procedure	Release date: July 2014 Page 1 of 2

- When on an excursion, ensure that the risks associated with children entering any water are controlled
- Educate families and children about how to be safe around water. For example learn to swim programs via Water Safety Victoria, and water safety messages, such as emptying buckets.

ECMS recognises that children will benefit from playing with water and will provide opportunities for children to engage in safe water play (for example water in the sandpit, water tray activities) and water use (for example watering the garden, washing equipment).

Educators will:

- Develop a venue specific work instruction (Attachment 1: Risk Assessment and Management Plan Template) by undertaking an assessment of potential risks associated with proposed water play activities at the venue including:
 - Identifying potential hazards and harms
 - Assessing the likelihood and consequence of each
 - Identifying appropriate risk controls
 - The risk assessment and subsequent controls will take into account the age, ability, interests and experiences of children likely to be involved in the experience or activity.
- Water play will be permitted when the controls are implemented and children are most likely to be safe
- Make sure water play is well-shaded
- Use low allergy detergents
- Ensure effective hygiene practices are implemented
- Use water play to teach children about safety around water and respect for others, for example, not to splash others if they don't like it, to avoid eyes when splashing and to walk carefully on wet, slippery surfaces
- Consider water sustainability in planning and implementing water based activities.

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