

EMERGENCY AND EVACUATION POLICY

Under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, an approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for emergency and evacuation and take reasonable steps to ensure policies and procedures are followed. (ACECQA, 2021).

Emergency and evacuation situations in early education and care services may arise for a variety of reasons, often suddenly and unexpectedly. It is vital that if an emergency situation arises educators are confident to manage the situation effectively and efficiently, maintaining the safety and wellbeing of children, families and visitors.

Ensuring that educators and children know what to do in an emergency situation requires vigilant planning and practice. Regularly practicing the drills for emergency situations also provides an opportunity to help support and build on children's coping mechanisms and resilience.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.
QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP		
7.1.2	Management Systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.
7.1.3	Roles and responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision-making and operation of the service.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND REGULATIONS	
Sec 174(2)(a)	Serious incident - Any emergency for which emergency services attended
Sec 174(2)(c)	Any incident that requires the approved provider to close, or reduce the number of children attending the service for a period
Sec 174(2)(c)	Any circumstance at the service that poses a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child attending the service
4	Definitions “multi-storey building” and “storey”
12(d)	Meaning of a serious incident- any emergency for which emergency services attended
97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
98	Telephone or other communication equipment
99	Children leaving the education and care service premises
136	First aid qualifications
168	Education and Care Services must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures are to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
175	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority
176A	Prescribed information to be notified to approved provider by family day care educator

RELATED POLICIES

Acceptance and Refusal Authorisation Policy Administration of First Aid Policy Bush Fire Policy Child Safe Environment Policy Delivery of Children to, and collection from Education and Care Service Premises Enrolment Policy	Family Communication Policy Health and Safety Policy Incident, Illness, Injury and Trauma Policy Lockdown Policy Record Keeping and Retention Policy Sun Safety Policy Supervision Policy
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PURPOSE

Our Family Day Care (FDC) Service has a duty of care to maintain the safety and wellbeing of each child, the educator, and all persons residing or visiting the FDC residence during an emergency or evacuation situation. We are committed to identifying risks and potential hazards of emergency and evacuation situations by conducting thorough risk assessments



on an annual basis and continually planning for further risk minimisation and improvement to our policy and procedures.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, nominated supervisor, coordinator, educators, educator assistants, children, families, students, volunteers and visitors of the FDC Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

We define an emergency as an unplanned, sudden or unexpected event or situation that requires immediate action to prevent harm, injury, or illness to persons, or damage to the FDC Service's premises. Emergency situations may pose a risk to an individual's health and safety. It is important that FDC Services identify potential emergencies that may be specific to their location and environment. Severe heat or heatwaves, also pose an immediate risk to babies and young children and require risk mitigation strategies to be implemented. [See: *Sun Safety Policy*]

An emergency is any event, situation or event where there is an imminent or severe risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of children at the service. (Guide to the NQF)

Circumstances under which an emergency evacuation will occur may include:

- Fire within the residence/building or surrounding garden/backyard
- Fire in the surrounding area where the residence or venue may be in danger
- Flood
- Cyclone, severe storm or dust storm or other natural weather event
- dangerous animal, insect or reptile
- Terrorist threat
- Other circumstances may include:
 - gas explosion, traffic accident, or any event which could render the building unsafe (eg: earthquake).

[Our Bushfire Policy contains specific information about Bushfire Risk Management Plans and evacuation plans for Bush Fires.]



The approved provider, in conjunction with educators of the FDC Service, will conduct a comprehensive risk assessment in order to identify any risk/s or hazards associated with potential emergencies that may affect the safe evacuation of children from the FDC residence or approved venue.

The risk assessment will be reviewed at least annually or after being aware of an incident or circumstance that may affect the safe evacuation of children. All risk assessments will be regularly assessed and evaluated as to facilitate continuous improvement in our FDC Service. If a risk concerning the safe evacuation of a child is identified during the risk assessment, the approved provider must update the *Emergency and Evacuation Policy* and procedure as soon as possible. The risk assessment is to be stored safely and securely and kept for a period of 3 years.

THE AUSTRALIAN WARNING SYSTEM (AWS)

The Australian Warning System (AWS) is a nationally consistent, three-tiered approach designed to make warnings clearer and lead people to take action during emergencies like bushfire, flood, storm, extreme heat and severe weather. The warning system comprises of levels, action statements, hazard icons, colours and shapes.

<https://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/about-us/our-warnings/>

The three warning levels are:

Advice (Yellow): An incident has started. There is no immediate danger. Stay up to date in case the situation changes. Monitor conditions.

Watch and Act (Orange): There is a heightened level of threat. Conditions are changing and you need to start taking action now. Prepare to leave/evacuate. Do not enter flood water.

Emergency Warning (Red) : An Emergency Warning is the highest level of warning. You need to take action immediately. Leave/evacuate (immediately by am/pm/hazard timing).



When there is an Emergency Warning, educators need to prepare for possible emergency evacuation and implement the procedures effectively to ensure the safety of all children, staff, families and visitors in the FDC Service.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/ NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/ COORDINATOR WILL ENSURE:

- obligations under the *Education and Care National Law and Regulations* are met and understood by all FDC educators
- the nominated supervisor, management, staff, educators and educator assistants comply with this policy
- emergency and evacuation policies and procedures are available for inspection at the FDC residence/venue at all times
- the approved provider and FDC educator conduct a risk assessment to identify potential emergencies that are relevant to the approved residence/venue annually
- the approved provider will review the risk assessment after becoming aware of any circumstance that may affect the safe evacuation of children from the FDC Service
- an Emergency Management Plan (EMP) is developed and updated
- all staff and FDC educators have a thorough understanding of the [Australian Warning System \(AWS\)](#)
- the [Bureau of Meteorology \(BOM\)](#) will be checked regularly to monitor emergency situations and warnings relevant to our Service location
- FDC educators are assisted to develop evacuation plans and procedures and to identify a safe area in the residence or venue in case of a situation that would require a 'lockdown emergency'
- relevant stakeholders/authorities are consulted for advice and guidance to improve risk mitigation strategies as part of our emergency and evacuation plan (police, fire, parents/families)
- consideration is made to evacuate infant/s and non-ambulant children evacuating the premises resulting in enhanced ratios
- additional consideration is made for FDC Services operating in multi-storey residence or buildings (assembly areas, stairwells, non-ambulant children, supervision) [Reg. 97(1)(b)]



- emergency evacuation plans are displayed in prominent positions near each exit and in rooms occupied by the children
- the plan includes a floor plan for ease of reference with clearly defined assembly points and clearly marked exit routes in case of an emergency
- the emergency and evacuation procedures include instructions for what must be done in the event of an emergency
- emergency evacuation rehearsals (drills) will be practiced and reviewed every three months by the FDC educator, educator assistant, students, volunteers, and children present on the day
- FDC educators, educator assistants, coordinators and volunteers are aware of emergency evacuation procedures and regulatory requirements
- FDC educator and educator assistants are aware of their responsibilities and roles in the event of an emergency situation- including evacuation and lock downs
- there is an induction process in place to inform educators, educator assistants, coordinators, students and volunteers of the emergency and evacuation policy and procedure
- each drill is documented, and records kept at both the FDC residence and principal office
- in the case of Bush Fire emergency, the FDC principal office maintains a current data base of all residences and their locations living in bushfire prone areas (see *Bush Fire Policy*)
- a risk assessment is conducted following any emergency evacuation to ensure the FDC residence is safe to continue to provide education and care to children
- an emergency telephone list (located next to the telephone) includes the numbers for:
 - Police
 - Local fire station
 - Rural Fire Service
 - State Emergency Services (SES)
- in the event of a telephone service not operating or no other means of communication with FDC educators, management may consider closure of the FDC Service (See *Closure of Service* below)



- ensure educators provide notification to the approved provider of any circumstances which may affect or pose a risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of children, including infectious diseases or natural disasters (bushfire, flooding) (reg 176A)
- ensure the regulatory authority is notified within 24 hours via the [National Quality Agenda IT System \(NQAITS\)](#) if the FDC residence/approved venue is required to close for a period of time as a result of a local emergency (Reg.175 (2)(b))
- ensure the Department of Education is notified within 24 hours if the FDC Service is temporarily closed via CCS Software or PEP
- submit a serious incident notification to the regulatory authority within 24 hours when there has been an emergency that has posed a risk to the safety and wellbeing of the children.

EDUCATORS WILL:

- ensure notification has been made to the approved provider of any circumstances which may affect or pose a risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of children, including infectious diseases or nature disasters (bush fire, flooding) (reg 176A)
- maintain an up-to-date register of emergency telephone numbers for all children and provide a copy to be kept at the principal office
- ensure a copy of the register of emergency telephone numbers is kept in an *Emergency Evacuation Bag* along with a portable first aid kit, copy of the emergency procedure
- ensure they are contactable whilst children are in attendance by emergency services (i.e.: have a mobile phone charged and accessible)
- display emergency telephone numbers prominently in the kitchen, office and each room that is occupied by children in the residence/or venue
- ensure medical management plans for children are able to be accessed easily
- rehearse, document and evaluate emergency evacuation procedures every 3 months. **To ensure best practice we will conduct emergency evacuation drills in a weekly block every 3 months so that all children experience an evacuation on a regular basis**
- ensure spontaneous rehearsals also take place during the year to assist in refining risk management procedures and evacuation procedures
- time the planned or spontaneous emergency evacuation drill and document in the *Emergency Evacuation Rehearsal Record*



- after reflection, notes on any areas that need improving or revising are to be documented in the *Emergency Evacuation Rehearsal Record*. Educators will discuss with the approved provider/nominated supervisor and implement strategies to make continuous improvement to procedures which will be documented in the Service's Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).
- consider how to safely evacuate infant/s and children with any disabilities (include in your procedure)
- keep children calm during evacuation drills
- ensure there are no obstructions in hallways, stairways prevent access to exits
- ensure the sign-in book is completed daily to be used as an attendance roll
- keep a written record of all visitors to the FDC residence
- ensure all children, family members and any visitors are accounted for during the day
- communicate with families when evacuation drills have taken place to discuss with children
- ensure assembly area is clearly identified and checked regularly (update plan if an alternative location may be required- depending on the reason for evacuation)
- ensure all fire extinguishers, fire blankets, fire hoses, and other emergency equipment located throughout the residence are inspected and tested at six monthly intervals by an authorised company as per the Australian Safety Standard AS 1851-2012: *Maintenance of Fire Protection Systems and Equipment*.
- ensure extinguishers are emptied, pressure tested, and refilled every five years
- ensure all tests performed on emergency equipment and the date on which it was tested is recorded on a label or metal tag attached to the unit. Certificates to verify testing will be filed and provided to the principal office of the FDC service
- ensure smoke detectors are regularly tested and batteries replaced annually
- ensure educator assistants and visitors to the FDC Service are familiar with the *Emergency Evacuation Policy* and procedure

Once an emergency situation is over, the educator will collaborate with the approved provider to conduct a thorough evaluation of the emergency procedure, actions and communication implemented to determine if any changes need to be made.



EMERGENCY AND EVACUATION PROCEDURE GUIDELINES

In the event of an emergency, the FDC educator will make the decision to evacuate. The FDC educator may be notified of the need to evacuate by: Emergency Services if an emergency situation is announced (bush fire, flood, damaging winds/storm).

As per regulation 97, the emergency and evacuation procedures must set out-

- a) instructions for what must be done in the event of an emergency; and
- b) an emergency and evacuation floor plan; and
- c) if the education and care service premises is located within a multi-storey building shared with other occupants and on a storey with no direct egress to an assembly area—
 - I. all possible evacuation routes from each storey on which the premises is located; and
 - II. the evacuation routes that are proposed to be used in an evacuation; and
 - III. how all children will be safely evacuated from the premises, including non-ambulatory children; and
 - IV. the stages in which an evacuation will be carried out; and
 - V. the identity of the person in charge of an evacuation; and
 - VI. the roles and responsibilities of staff members during an evacuation; and
 - VII. the arrangements made with the other occupants of the multi-storey building in relation to the evacuation of the multi-storey building.

THE EDUCATOR WILL:

- calmly inform children and visitors and other residents of the FDC residence to evacuate
- move all children to evacuation assembly location taking emergency evacuation bag (ensure sign in book/record, gather medication, visitor sign in sheets)
- request assistance to move infants or children with disabilities from other adults in the home/ educator assistant or emergency services if unable to complete the evacuation on their own
- check that all children and adults registered in attendance book are accounted for
- once children are safely evacuated, administer first aid if required
- call 000 and provide their name, address and nearest cross street, reason for emergency, mobile phone contact number, number of children evacuating



- notify the approved provider/nominated supervisor of the evacuation (only if children's safety is not compromised)
- if the identified evacuation assembly area is not accessible, identify an alternative area where children and other adults will be safe. Communicate with emergency services to confirm your assembly area
- remain calm and reassure children
- once emergency services arrive, request assistance with supervision and contact parents/emergency contacts
- notify FDC approved provider/coordinator of the evacuation
- once area is confirmed to be safe by emergency services, return to the residence with children and visitors
- ensure attendance is checked against register
- In the event of a fire within the FDC residence/approved venue resulting in damaged phone lines, the educator may evacuate the children and seek assistance from neighbouring residents and / or use the mobile phone as per the Emergency Evacuation Plan
- Following the emergency evacuation, or an incident that poses a risk to the health and safety of children attending the service, the educator will complete an *Emergency Evacuation Incident Report* and an *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record*.

FAMILIES WILL:

- ensure contact details are kept up to date
- provide emergency contact details on their child's enrolment form and advise the FDC educator and principal office of any change of name or phone number
- ensure the attendance record for their child is completed each day
- ensure they are aware of the service's *Emergency and Evacuation Policy* and procedures
- follow the directions of the FDC educator or coordination the event of an emergency or evacuation



CLOSURE OF THE SERVICE:

There may be times where the normal operation of the FDC Service is disrupted, and a FDC residence or approved venue is required to close temporarily during a planned or unplanned emergency occurrence. Situations that affect the normal operation include a local emergency which poses a risk to the health and safety of children attending the service, or where the service is inaccessible or is unsafe for children or staff or the emergency services/authority have directed the service to close.

Situations where the FDC Service may consider closure of a FDC residences/approved venues may include:

- A period of local emergency, or emergency event
 - Flooding
 - Health emergency (i.e., pandemic)
 - Bushfire
 - Cyclone
 - Unexpected absence of staff where ratios are unable to be met
 - Severe outbreak of illness or disease
 - Lack of access to operating phone/communication means
 - Damage or vandalism to the service
 - Chemical hazard
 - Earthquake
- The approved provider or nominated supervisor will consult with emergency services/ local authorities regarding the closure of the service
- Our FDC Service will ensure families are informed of emergency closures as soon as practicable to ensure immediate collection of children
- In the event of a planned closure, management will advise families as reasonably practicable through SMS/social media/phone calls/email to provide details of the planned closure including the period of closure
- Our FDC Service will notify the regulatory authority of the service closure within 24 hours of an incident
- Our FDC Service will notify the Department of Education through CCS Software or PEP of the service closure within 24 hours.



DEALING WITH TRAUMA

Emergencies and natural disasters are extremely stressful, and it is normal for children and adults to feel overwhelmed and distressed. People cope with trauma in many different ways. Children look to adults for reassurance, care and opportunities to share their feelings. It is important for FDC educators to understand the impact of disasters and seek help when needed.

The approved provider/nominated supervisor will support educators to provide information to parents and families following any emergency or natural disaster including:

- will the service be open in the days and weeks ahead?
- how to find alternative care and education
- how to contact services for support with dealing with trauma

Several organisations offer support for educators in these situations:

[Emerging Minds](#)

BeYou- [Trauma informed practice](#)

PREPARING FOR AN EMERGENCY

Australian Government Department of Education - [Help in an emergency](#)

[Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology](#)

JURISDICTION SPECIFIC WEBSITE DETAILS FOR EACH STATE

NEW SOUTH WALES (NSW)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NSW Police: www.police.nsw.gov.au• NSW Rural Fire Service: www.rfs.nsw.gov.au• NSW State Emergency Services: www.ses.nsw.gov.au



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

The *Emergency and Evacuation Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis in conjunction with children, families, staff, educators and management.

CHILDCARE CENTRE DESKTOP RESOURCES

Emergency Bag Audit	Emergency Support Services Template
Emergency Evacuation Incident Report	EMP evacuation diagrams-images
Emergency Evacuation Procedure	Extreme Weather Procedure
Emergency Evacuation Rehearsal Record	Multi-Storey Building Emergency and Evacuation Procedure
Emergency Management Plan (EMP)	Multi-Storey Building Risk Assessment

SOURCES

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). Policy and procedure guidelines- [Emergency and evacuation guidelines](#).

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#).

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). [Multi Storey Buildings: Evacuations and Approvals](#)

Australian Government Department of Education. (2023). [Help in an emergency](#)

Australian Government Department of Home Affairs. [Emergency Management](#)

Australian Government. National Emergency Management Agency. Australian Warning System. <https://www.australianwarningsystem.com.au>

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016). [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (Amended 2023).

Fire Protection Association Australia: www.fpaa.com.au/

Fire System Services: <http://www.firesys.com.au/Fire-Extinguisher-Service-and-Maintenance-pg14686.html>

NSW Department of Education. (2023). [Emergency Planning, Management, Response and Recovery](#)

NSW Rural Fire Service: www.rfs.com.au

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

Work Health and Safety Act 2011.

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Katie Griffiths	Nominated Supervisor	January 2024
POLICY REVIEWED	JANUARY 2024/ SEPTEMBER 2023	NEXT REVIEW DATE	JANUARY 2025
VERSION NUMBER	V13.01.24		
MODIFICATIONS	<p>JANUARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> annual review of policy additional information added re: closure of a service due to an emergency or evacuation situation <p>SEPTEMBER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> review of policy to include additional considerations for multi-storey buildings (NQF review) new resources from CCD added sources updated 		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE	
JANUARY 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> annual policy maintenance additional information Australian Warning System (AWS) broken links repaired where required continuous improvement/reflection section added link to Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations added in 'Sources' update of DESE to Department of Education 	JANUARY 2024	
NOVEMBER 2021/JANUARY 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy reviewed and included suggested guidelines from ACECQA <i>Emergency and Evacuation Policy Guidelines</i> (June 2021) Additional legislative requirements added Additional related policies Additional section added- <i>Families will</i> Reviewed as part of annual review cycle 	JANUARY 2023	

JANUARY 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minor editing • additional regulations and related policies added • definition of emergency section moved to beginning of policy 	JANUARY 2022
SEPTEMBER 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • additional sections added to assist FDC educators in planning, rehearsing and conducting an emergency evacuation -Procedures for Evacuation and Lock Down -Dealing with Trauma -resources to assist with trauma added 	JANUARY 2021
JANUARY 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional information added to introduction • Purpose modified • Additional information added to content • Sources checked for currency- small edits highlighted 	JANUARY 2021
JANUARY 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places to insert emergency phone numbers deleted & point added to ensure these numbers are on the emergency phone list by the phone • Rearranged the order of some points for better flow. • Points added (highlighted). • Sources/references corrected, updated, and alphabetised. • Sources/references alphabetised. • Minor formatting (line spacing & paragraph spacing) for consistency throughout policy. 	JANUARY 2020
JANUARY 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor adjustment in Education and Care Services National Regulations section • Added related policy section • Adjustment on page two in respect of revised NQS 	JANUARY 2019
OCTOBER 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated the references to comply with revised National Quality Standard 	JANUARY 2018
JANUARY 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • updated and included Emergency Evacuation requirements outlined in the National Regulations 	JANUARY 2018
AUGUST 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated to meet the National Law and/or National Regulations in respect of a serious incidents and notification purposes. 	