Callington Kindergarten water safety procedures

Overview

Drowning is one of the most common causes of unintentional death in Australia in children aged 4 years and younger. Children, especially toddlers seem to be drawn to water whether it is in the bath, the toilet, buckets, swimming pools, puddles, or other vessel.

The most common factor in childhood drowning is a lack of supervision. A child can die silently by drowning in as little as 3 cm of water in less than 2 minutes[1].

The supervision and safety of children with and around water is of paramount importance.

Callington Kindergarten is committed to ensuring children are kept safe when in and around water including when engaging in water -based activities as part of the learning environment, and when managing water hazard risks in and away from the service.

Callington Kindergarten water safety procedures must be read alongside the department water safety policy. Together, these address the requirements in regulation 168 of the National Regulations for education and care services to have policies and procedures in place for managing water safety, including safety during any water-based experiences.

A copy of this procedure and the department policy will be kept in the Callington Kindy Teams Page and in Policy and Procedure folder.

Values

At Callington Kindergarten we believe in the importance of:

- *Providing opportunities for children to explore their natural environment including through water play*
- *Ensuring that children are protected from the risks associated with water so that they can safely engage in the learning environment, free from harm and hazard.*
- *Ensuring that curriculum planning incorporates water safety awareness.*
- *Providing information to educators, staff, parents, carers, volunteers, and others at the service about water safety.*

Procedures

Active Supervision

National Regulations to address in this section include:

- 165 – offence to inadequately supervise children
- 167 – offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards

It is imperative that educators remain vigilant in their supervision of children in and around water and are alert to potential risks in everyday practice in the environment.

To ensure water hazards and water play experiences are actively supervised at all times educators will follow the 6 steps for active supervision as follows:

1. Set up the environment
2. Position educators
3. Scan and count
4. Listen
5. Anticipate behaviour
6. Engage and redirect

For further guidance on the above 6 steps, refer to https://www.acecqa.gov.au/active-supervision-6-steps

[1] Water Safety | Kidsafe SA

- Children will be actively supervised at all times when water play, water-based experiences or water hazards are present. When children are near water, educators will position themselves so they can directly see, hear and respond to children. Where a water hazard is present, supervision will be close and active.
- Water play will not be left set up and unsupervised during transitions, toileting support, arrival, departure, pack-up or staff breaks. If active supervision cannot be maintained, the activity will stop and the water will be emptied immediately.
- Educators will use scanning, counting and positioning to monitor all children and will anticipate children's natural curiosity around water. Children will be redirected away from unsafe water sources, including puddles, drains, buckets, rainwater, stormwater, troughs or other containers that may hold water.

Managing water hazards

National Regulations to address in this section include:
- 165 - offence to inadequately supervise children
- 167 - offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
- 101 - Conduct of risk assessment for excursion

A water hazard is identified as anything that can hold 3cm of water and fit a child's nose and mouth.

Unsafe water environments children may be exposed to in and around the learning environment include the following:

- Sinks, basins, fish tanks, fishbowls, baths
- Swimming pools, portable pools, spas
- Water courses, ponds, sandpits, clam shells
- Water troughs, containers and buckets used for play, animal drinking containers
- Drains, pooling water

To ensure children are protected from harm that may be caused by water hazards we:

- Assess any potential water hazards as part of our daily visual inspection of the outdoor environment including ensuring gates are locked and fences are secure and monitor areas where there may be poor drainage.
- Ensure that any barriers that are restricting access to water hazards such as gates, fences, doors sandpit covers are locked/shut, maintained regularly and in good working order.
- Ensure risk assessments are comprehensive, up to date and followed by all staff including staff such as cleaners, maintenance staff and volunteers.
- Ensure that water is emptied immediately after use and stored in a manner that prevents any vessel from filling when not in use, taking care to ensure water drains effectively.
- Ensure that the design of the environment facilitates adequate drainage of water to prevent pooling.
- Report any water hazards of concern through the department incident management system. The site leader is responsible for ensuring hazards are reported, followed up and monitored until resolved

At Callington Kindergarten,

- *water hazards are checked as part of the daily indoor and outdoor safety inspection, particularly after rain, storms, irrigation or water play. Educators will check for pooling water in drains, sandpit areas, outdoor equipment, buckets, containers, troughs, pot saucers, loose parts, shade cloth or sandpit covers, and low-lying areas.*
- *Any water that has pooled will be emptied, swept away, drained or isolated before children access the area. If the hazard cannot be removed immediately, the area will be made inaccessible to children and reported to the site leader.*
- *Buckets, tubs, troughs, tyres, watering cans, containers and other water receptacles will be emptied immediately after use and stored upside down, where possible, so they cannot refill with rainwater. Cleaning buckets, mop buckets and other cleaning items will not be left accessible to children.*
- *Water play will only be set up when there is a clear learning purpose, adequate supervision and safe drainage. Water play will be located where educators can closely supervise children and where spills*

will not create additional hazards. Water will be emptied immediately when the experience has finished.

- *Children will be informed not to drink from unsafe water sources, including water troughs, buckets, puddles, outdoor taps, rainwater, stormwater or water used during play experiences.*
- *The sandpit and shade-cloth cover will be checked after rain to ensure water has not pooled on, under or around the cover. The cover will be stored or positioned so it does not collect water or create a hidden water hazard. If pooling occurs, children will not access the sandpit area until the water has been removed and the area is safe.*
- *Portable pools, inflatable pools, paddling pools, clam shells, or deep water containers will not be used unless a specific risk assessment has been completed and approved by the site leader.*
- *After heavy rain, storms or local flooding, educators will reassess outdoor areas and planned local walks before children access those spaces. Areas with pooling water, slippery surfaces, blocked drains or unsafe access will be isolated until made safe.*

Risk Assessment

At Callington Kindergarten risk assessments are completed prior to children's exposure to potential water hazards either in and around the learning environment or when planning for excursions and regular outings.

Risk assessments cover the following matters:

- Active supervision and the additional supervision required to undertake the proposed activity.
- Elimination of water hazards
- Restricting access to water hazards
- Education strategies for prevention

When assessing risk, we make sure:

- The proposed activity will not go ahead if we can not implement sufficient controls to ensure children's safety in and around water.
- When choosing locations for regular outings and excursions, consideration will be given to the purpose of the activity and avoid unnecessary exposure to water hazards where possible.
- Children are involved in assessing the risk to support their understanding of potential hazards and how to keep themselves safe.

When implementing risk assessments, we make sure

- All educators, staff and volunteers clearly understand their roles and responsibilities in order to effectively implement risk management strategies.
- The risk assessment is available at the service and can be easily accessed.
- Risk assessments are reviewed on a yearly basis or when circumstances change.

Site leaders will ensure that, as soon as practicable after a risk assessment is completed, any necessary updates to this procedure will be made.

A copy of all completed risk assessments are kept by the service.

Roles and responsibilities

Site Leaders

- Ensure that there is adequate supervision provided given the ages and development needs of children undertaking water activities (including ratios.)
- Inform families about water safety practices at the service
- Ensure first aid and CPR qualifications and requirements are met at all times.
- Undertake risk assessments for all water hazards including water-based experiences in and away from the service

- Take reasonable steps to ensure that the policy and procedures and risk assessments are current, reviewed regularly and communicated to all stakeholders including as part of staff induction processes.
- Ensure water safety procedures are included in staff induction, relief staff information and volunteer guidance where relevant.
- Ensure identified water hazards are removed, isolated or reported for maintenance as required.
- Ensure families are informed about water safety practices where relevant, including water play, local walks, regular outings and excursions.
- Ensure water safety risk assessments are reviewed annually, after an incident or near miss, or when circumstances change.

Educators

- Inspecting indoor and outdoor environments for potential water hazards, particularly during and after wet weather, rain, storms, irrigation or water play.
- Undertake risk assessments for all water hazards including water-based experiences in and away from the service
- Promote water safety messages to children as part of the teaching and learning program.
- Ensure hazards are managed as outlined in this procedure.
- Actively supervise children during water play and when water hazards are present, including positioning themselves close enough to respond immediately.
- Empty water from buckets, troughs, containers and other receptacles immediately after use and store them safely.
- Redirect children away from unsafe water sources and reinforce water safety messages through everyday teaching and learning.
- Report any water hazard that cannot be immediately removed to the site leader.

Procedure creation and revision record

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