

Unexpected Death of a Child at a Service Policy

The unexpected death of a child at a Service is a traumatic event and the impact on Educators, children and families can cause emotional turmoil, which can overwhelm usual coping skills. A policy providing comprehensive procedures and principles is therefore crucial to ensure a coordinated response and notification to the regulatory authorities.

Due to the suddenness of such an event, well-trained and experienced staff can experience strong emotions and traumatic stress responses as a result of the event. The role of our Service is to help restore a sense of safety for children, Educators and families as soon as possible following a traumatic event.

National Quality Standard (NQS)

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety		
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law NSW	
12	Meaning of serious incident
85	Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
176	Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the Service.

PURPOSE

Our Service will ensure that Management and Educators follow the procedures and principles within this policy and that immediate and appropriate action is taken to notify relevant authorities in the event of the death of a child whilst at the Service. There are a number of legal requirements to adhere to in the tragic event of the death of a child at a Service as outlined below.

SERIOUS INCIDENTS

Regulation 12 prescribes the following serious incident-

Unexpected Death of a Child Policy/Australian International Islamic College Kindergarten/ Quality Area 2

(a) The death of a child- while that child is being educated and cared for by an education and care service or following an incident occurring while that child was being educated and cared for by an education and care service;

NOTIFICATION OF A SERIOUS INCIDENT

Under the National Law and Regulations, the approved provider must notify the regulatory authorities within 24 hours of any serious incidents through the online NQA IT System. *Section 174(2) (a) and Regulation 176 (2) (a)* Download the template here: [incident, injury, trauma and illness record template to record any supporting evidence.](#)

KEEPING CHILDREN'S RECORDS

In the event of the death of a child whilst being cared for at the Service, records need to be kept for 7 years from the child's death.

INITIAL ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

Management and Educators will ensure that immediate and appropriate action is taken in the event of the death of a child whilst at the Service by following and implementing the following procedure:

1. Assess the situation as per service procedures for any immediate danger to other children or staff
2. Attempt CPR in accordance with current First Aid requirements
3. Call an Ambulance immediately
4. Management will call the parents/guardian of the child and arrange to meet at the hospital
5. Medical Staff will advise families
6. Notify Regulatory Authorities including Policy Department and Family and Community Services
7. Complete Illness, Incident, Accident, Trauma Form
8. Contact Insurance Company
9. Log incident onto NQA TI System, attaching incident form and evidence

Management will also ensure that parents, families, children and educators will receive the following post incident support:

Unexpected Death of a Child Policy/Australian International Islamic College Kindergarten/ Quality Area 2

- Demonstrate sensitivity, open mindedness and a balanced approach
- Recognition of cultural needs
- Preservation of evidence
- Accurate and detailed record keeping
- Management to contact legal representative for support and direction
- Protocols established for staff and Educators to discuss the traumatic event through media including social media
- Professional communication with families of the Service
- Engage the services of health care professionals (counseling & support for staff)
- Ongoing cooperation with inter-agencies involved in investigation

CARING FOR THE WELLBEING OF EDUCATORS, CHILDREN'S AND FAMILIES

Our Service will engage health professionals who may include child and family counselors and psychologists to support our Educators to be sensitive and mindful of the impact such an event has had on all stakeholders. With professional guidance and support, we will encourage children to express their emotions and feelings and implement strategies to assist and guide children's process of grieving and re-engage children in learning.

Our Service will seek advice and support from health professionals to provide appropriate materials to send home to families to assist in understanding the effects of trauma on children and possible changes in behaviour following the unexpected death of a child in our Service.

Source

- The Business of Childcare, Karen Kearns 2004
- Education and Care Services National Regulation 2015
- Education and Care Services National Amendment Regulations 2017
- National Quality Standards
- Family and Community Services
- Occupational Health and Safety Act
- Work Health and Safety Act

- Australian Child & Adolescent Trauma, Loss & Grief Network
http://earlytraumagrief.anu.edu.au/files/ACATLGN_grief_and_loss.pdf
- What Do We Tell The Children When Someone Dies?
http://www.adac.org.au/siteF/resources/l_children_gt.pdf
- Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement <http://www.grief.org.au>

Review

Date Reviewed	Modifications	Next Policy Review Date
October 2018	New policy Updated the references to comply with the revised National Quality Standard	October 2019