

Introduction

Learning to relax the body and mind is an important life skill and vital for children's growth and development. The quality and quantity of a child's sleep impacts learning and behaviour. To create a healthy, safe and supportive sleep environment, teachers/educators are required to consistently implement *Rednose Safe Sleeping Guidelines* and respond to individual needs and rhythms rather than working to a strict timetable.

Create a responsive and safe sleep, rest and relaxation environment

All children

S	Sleep need Identify and respond to each child's need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect each child's sleep rhythm and pace; slow down, adjust and respond to individual needs. Embed rituals e.g. singing, story time, meditation etc. Carefully observe and respond to children's individual cues to determine appropriate timing and strategies. When possible, a child's 'key educator' will be responsible for a child's sleep, rest and relaxation needs.
L	Learning and Growth Use sleep, rest and relaxation as opportunities for learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk with children about the importance of sleep, rest and relaxation for their growing bodies. Model and assist children to identify body cues that indicate the need to sleep, rest and relax.
E	Environments Provide a safe, predictable and supporting environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently implement this procedure and <i>Rednose Safe Sleeping Guidelines</i>. Devise regular, consistent and relaxing rituals. Consider and plan for transitions that prepare children for sleep, rest or relaxation. Create a peaceful and comfortable sleep environment e.g. reducing light, temperature, noise and activity level. A sleep environment can be created outdoors when a risk minimisation plan is developed, documented and implemented e.g. consider temperature, sun safety, manual handling and compliance with this procedure. Consider the positioning of educators to ensure effective supervision. Dress children appropriately to support sleep, rest or relaxation. Place cots, beds, mats and stretchers away from electrical cords and power points. Cover beds, mats or stretchers with linen when children are resting/sleeping. Ensure bed linen, cots, beds, mats and stretchers are well maintained, cleaned 'between' use of different children and stored in a hygienic manner. As a team, regularly reflect upon and discuss children's sleep, rest and relaxation routines. Outline this procedure and <i>Red nose safe sleeping guidelines</i> when inducting new permanent and casual staff. Develop and implement a <i>Risk Minimising Plan - Baby Sleep Routines</i> reflective of individual needs of children. Ensure all teachers/educators understand and follow their responsibilities as detailed in this procedure and risk minimisation plan. Teachers /educators to complete the acknowledgment table whenever the risk minimisation plan is reviewed. Display and refer to the <i>Infant Sleep Routines Poster</i> in all baby sleep environments.
E	Expectations Be flexible in your expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide places within the indoor and outdoor environment where children can retreat from the busyness of the day. When required, enable opportunities for individual children to sleep, rest or relax at different times and in different ways e.g. older children may prefer to rest on cushions or relax by participating in quiet experiences such as puzzles or drawing.
P	Partnerships Build partnerships to support sleep regularity and routine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upon and throughout enrolment, regularly discuss with parents/guardians, children's sleep, rest and relaxation needs and routines. Centres are encouraged to share links to two sleep and rest routine videos developed by the Department of Education which outline safe sleep practices at early childhood education centres. Outline this procedure and explain to parents/guardians that <i>Rednose Safe Sleeping Guidelines</i> must be consistently implemented. Educators are unable to implement parent/guardian requests that contradict <i>Rednose Safe Sleeping Guidelines</i> unless a child has a medical condition AND the child's medical practitioner has provided written authorisation to implement a specific practice. In this case, additional risk minimisation strategies must be documented and implemented. Involve children in decisions regarding their sleep, rest and relaxation. Provide parents/guardians with information regarding their child's daily sleep, rest and relaxation routines. Provide a written sleep record for children under two years.

Children under 2 years

Consistently implement *Rednose Safe Sleeping Guidelines*:

1. Sleep babies on their back, not on their tummy or side

- Place baby on their back to sleep but allow them to find their own sleeping position if they have been observed repeatedly rolling from back to front and back again on their own (usually by 5-6 months). Otherwise, re-position onto their back.

2. Sleep babies with their head and face uncovered

- Position feet at the bottom of the cot.
- Tuck linen and blanket securely under mattress up until the child's chest/ cannot cover their head.
- Remove head coverings and jewellery.
- Do not use doonas, loose fabric, pillows, lamb's wool or bumpers in cots/beds.
- Do not place soft toys in cots/beds for babies under 7 months. Refer to the [Rednose Website](#) for further direction.
- Discontinue the practice of wrapping/swaddling when child shows signs of rolling. Refer to the [Rednose Website](#) for further direction.
- Do not provide a bottle or drink whilst a child is laying down for sleep or as a sleep aid.
- Only offer a dummy if requested by a parent/guardian. Do not re-insert dummy if it falls out during sleep.

3. Provide a smoke free environment.

- Consistently implement [Tobacco, Drugs and Alcohol Policy](#).

4. Provide a safe sleeping environment

- Only use cots that meet the *Australian Standard for Cots (AS 2172/AS/NZS 2195)*. Bassinets, hammocks and prams/strollers do not carry safety codes for sleep and cannot be used for settling or sleep routines.
- Ensure cots and mattresses are well maintained. Mattresses must be the right size for the cot. Do not tilt or elevate. Ensure there is no more than a 25mm gap between the mattress and sides of cot.
- Pull up cot sides after a baby is placed in a cot.
- Never use a pillow, cushion or beanbag as a mattress.
- Place cots/beds away from curtain cords, electrical cords and decorative mobiles.
- Place cots/beds away from heaters, electrical appliances and power points.
- Dress babies appropriately for room temperature.

5. Supervise baby while sleeping

- Complete a **physical visual safety check** of the sleep room every 5-10 minutes whenever child(ren) are resting/sleeping in the sleep room. Teachers/educators are required to:
 - Physically enter the sleep room. Looking through sleep room window is NOT a physical visual safety check.
 - Check (and make any adjustments if required) compliance with this procedure and *Rednose Safe Sleeping Guidelines*.
 - Undertake a visual check of all children in the sleep room i.e. breathing and skin colour.
 - Document check via the [Sleep room record](#).
- Keep sleep room viewing windows unobstructed e.g. no curtains, no posters or displays.
- When a teacher/educator is not physically in a sleep room, a monitor must be in used.

Acknowledgements and references

- Department of Education - [Parent information on children's sleep and rest](#)
- Sleep in Early Childhood Research Group - ['Sleep Learning for Early Education Professional'](#)
- Rednose - [Safe sleeping](#)
- ACECQA - [Safe sleep and rest practices](#)
- Care for Kids - [Successful Sleep Strategies in Child Care](#)