

Keeping children safe when they arrive and leave your service



Starting Out Safely

Educators must ensure that “every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury”¹. Furthermore, educators are responsible for children while they are in care from the time that children are signed into the service or the Family Day Care (FDC) premises until the time they are signed out.

Do educators have any responsibilities to protect children before they are signed in and after they are signed out?

The times when children are delivered to and collected from services or FDC premises can be challenging for all staff members, particularly where there could be a large number of children coming and going at the same time. On some occasions, parents may be talking to each other or they may be on their mobile phone and not supervising their children. Children have been observed running to the car whilst parents are distracted. Educators have a duty of care to monitor the arrival and departure of children and ensure their safety while they are on the premises. This includes the car park, driveway and surrounds.

Is your Road Safety Education and Safe Transport Policy up to date? Remember to review it annually. If you need help with your policy contact ELAA rse@elaa.org.au

Children left in cars during collection and delivery of children

Occasionally children are left in the car whilst parents or the authorised nominee is picking up or dropping off other children at the service. In Victoria it can be an offence for a child to be left unattended in a car. The penalties for leaving a child unattended in a car in Victoria include a fine (currently \$4,030) and/or a maximum of 6 months imprisonment (Children, Youth and Families Act (2005)).



In Victoria it can be an offence for a child to be left unattended in a car.

What should educators do if they are worried about the person collecting a child?

Educators must also be aware that a duty of care exists when a child is released into the care of another person who may pose a risk to their safety, health or wellbeing. This person may be an authorised nominee on the enrolment form, however their behaviour may be cause for concern. Examples include a person who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol².

Educators must never put themselves in danger and cannot prevent the parent or authorised nominee from taking the child, however, they should encourage the person to use an alternate form of transport or contact another authorised person to collect the child. However, they should encourage the person to use an alternate form of transport or contact another authorised person to collect the child. If educators are concerned that the child may not be safe in the care of the parent or authorised nominee, notifying the police may be required after the child has left the service.

Policies and procedures required:

- Services must have policies and procedures for delivery and collection of children to the service/premises³.
- Children may only leave the service/premise if the child is given into the care of their parent or an authorised nominee named in the child's enrolment record⁴.
- An approved provider can restrict a nominated person from collecting a child, for example if the service's policy does not allow children to be collected by a person under the age of 16⁵.
- Child enrolment details must include any person who is an authorised nominee (a person who has been given permission by a parent or family member to collect the child from the education and care service or the family day care educator).⁶



Ensure services have policies and procedures on collection and delivery of children.



Educator's role in embedding Road Safety Education in the curriculum

Embedding *Road Safety Education* into the curriculum may include taking the children to the entrance and carpark of the service or the driveway of the FDC home and talking about safe ways to walk to the car. (Remember to fill in a risk assessment).

It is important to talk with children about safety issues and where appropriate, involving children in setting safety rules⁷.

When educators discuss safety issues with children, this information is often transferred to the parent. This could include talking with children about:

- holding the parent's hand,
- reminding the parent not to be on the mobile phone,
- walking the safe route to the car,
- getting into the car via the safe side (the curb side),
- bike helmets when cycling to and from the service.

TOP TEN TIPS

1. Ensure services have policies and procedures on collection and delivery of children.
2. Include authorised nominees in the child's enrolment form.
3. Ensure there is active supervision during pick up and drop off times.
4. Conduct a risk assessment of the car park and FDC driveway surrounding the service.
5. Take the children out to the car park and demonstrate the safe way to walk to the car or bike.
6. Remind children to hold their parents' hand whilst walking to the car or bike.
7. Remind parents to never leave their child in the car.
8. Display signs in the foyer about points 6 and 7.
9. Include in the orientation process and newsletters the importance of safe arrivals and departures of children.
10. Contact ELAA to book a free Road Safety Education PD Session. Email: rse@elaa.org.au

REFERENCES

1. (Nat Law Sec 167, 2012, NQS, 2.3.2, 2018).
2. (Nat Law, Sec.171).
3. (Regulation 168 f, 2012)
4. (Regulation 99, 2012)
5. (NQS 2.1.2, 2018)
6. (Nat Law 170(5), Reg 160 3b, 2012).
7. (NQS 2.2.1, 2018).

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) (2018) Guide to the National Quality Framework.

Department of Education, Employment, and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) (2009). The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. Canberra, ACT; DEEWR.

Early Learning Association Australia (ELAA) (2018) Early Childhood Services Safe Transport and Road Safety Education Policy.

Article written by Louise Dorrat, Consultant and presenter of the Starting Out Safely professional development.