



Australian Children's  
Education & Care  
Quality Authority

## QUALITY AREA 2

# TOILETING AND NAPPY CHANGING PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

Safe and hygienic practices ensure children experience toileting and nappy changing that supports their health and well-being. Appropriate, respectful procedures and practices can promote learning and capacity building.

“Children’s developing resilience and their ability to take increasing responsibility for self-help and basic health routines promote a sense of independence and confidence.”

(Early Years Learning Framework, p.30 / Framework for School Age Care, p.30)



## LINKS TO THE NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK

Toileting and nappy changing policies and procedures in education and care services should be reflective of health, hygiene and safety guidelines from recognised authorities.

They should also be guided by the principles, practices and outcomes of the approved learning frameworks and the National Quality Standard.

Ensuring toileting and nappy change routines are conducted in ways that maintain hygiene standards, with interactions that are warm and responsive and support children’s learning links back to many quality areas. More directly under Quality Area 1, Quality Area 2 and Quality Area 5 of the NQS in particular:

**Element 1.1.3:** All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child.

**Standard 2.1** Each child’s health and physical activity is supported and promoted.

**Element 5.1.1** Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.

**Element 5.1.2** The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.

In outside school hours care (OSHC) services, educators also need to be mindful to ensure appropriate facilities and procedures are in place for all children including children with additional needs.

Consideration needs to be given to:

- privacy (for older children)
- health and hygiene
- convenient access.

## NAPPY CHANGING AND TOILETING ROUTINES

In addition to meeting children’s physical needs, nappy changing and toilet training is an important time to:

- support children’s agency to develop an understanding and control of their own bodily functions
- give children your full attention and build respectful, trusting and caring relationships
- interact with children using verbal and nonverbal communication
- build children’s understanding of what is happening now and promote their ability to predict what will happen next in the routine
- help children to develop and extend their self-help skills.

## PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

### Health and hygiene

Supporting children's health and safety by ensuring that practices at your service are hygienic is essential. You can find information on best practices for minimising the spread of infectious diseases in *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* at [www.nhmrc.gov.au](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au).

### Safety

Children should feel safe and comfortable and be appropriately supervised. We also need to consider how the environment is designed and set up to be inclusive and promote competence, while maintaining a safe and hygienic environment.

In OSHC services, children's toilets may often be located away from the main premises of the service. While you need to be aware of children's safety, it does not necessarily mean accompanying every child. Educators need to make decisions based on their knowledge of individual children and their abilities.

Educators are encouraged to undertake a risk assessment and identify appropriate risks while balancing children's privacy. Consideration should also be given to the safe storage of cleaning products and ensure suitable access to all of the resources needed for nappy changing and/ or toileting.

## SUPPORTIVE PRACTICES

There are a range of practical strategies to support children's positive nappy changing and toileting experiences. These include:

- allowing children to take their time, avoiding pressuring them
- responding to children's cues and allowing them to be active participants in the process
- where possible, using the correct terms for going to the toilet - ask families what words they use at home, as consistent language between home and care will help children to understand and learn more easily
- being sensitive to individual children's needs and styles, and tailoring individual nappy change and toileting procedures to each child
- prompting children by asking or reminding them about using the toilet
- taking full advantage of every opportunity for a focused, positive interaction with children during toileting and nappy change times, however brief these might be
- always being positive about toilet training so that your encouragement is reinforced in your language and actions
- being respectful and sensitive to children's dignity and rights to privacy (r 155 Education and Care Services National Regulations).

## COLLABORATING WITH FAMILIES

It is important to remember that to build supportive respectful relationships with families we need to support their parenting role and respect their values and beliefs.

### Consistency

Maintaining consistency between home and a service has the potential to make the process of toilet training easier for children.

It is important there is consistency in practice and communication between and with all educators.

### Communication

Working with families to pick up on readiness cues will maximise children's chances for success. This is an opportunity to discuss cultural practices and beliefs and how they align with service policies and procedures.

Educators might encourage families to provide children with clothes that assist them to toilet independently, for example, elastic waisted pants that are easy to pull up and down.

### Documentation

Consider effective ways to record information about nappy changing and toileting that is tailored to what sort of information families are seeking. An important consideration is how educators are documenting and planning for children's learning and development around routines.

## EFFECTIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Effective, written policies that reflect recommended hygiene, safety and infection control practices should underpin the service's procedures.

To ensure that all stakeholders' voices are acknowledged, policies and procedures need to be developed and reviewed in consultation with children, families, management and educators. They should also reflect ways the service aims to support and include children with additional needs.

While your service should respect the practices used at home, the hygiene and safety practices used in the service should be consistent with recommendations from recognised authorities.

The procedures should also clearly set the expectations for the interactions which can occur between children and educators during nappy changing and toileting times. Displaying nappy changing and toileting procedures in the toileting and/ or nappy changing areas will help to ensure a consistent approach.

## Consider the following questions when developing or reviewing your service's nappy change and toileting procedures.

Do the procedures:

- identify the role of the adult?
- explain how children are supervised?
- reflect recommended hygiene and safety practices?
- promote children's self-help skills and independence?
- meet children's individual needs?
- ensure children's privacy and dignity?
- explain how to manage a toileting accident?
- outline the process of disposing of, storing and laundering of wet/soiled materials?
- incorporate children's home toileting language and/or practices?
- explain how to clean nappy change and toileting areas?
- outline the child's role, for example, flushing the toilet, and independently undressing/ dressing and hand washing.

## WHAT TO CONSIDER FOR ASSESSMENT AND RATING

Authorised officers may look for and discuss a range of different interactions and situations which demonstrate that educators are supporting children's wellbeing while maintaining hygienic practices. They might also look for how this is reinforced through the service's policies and the educational program.

Observing:

- educators and children implementing appropriate hygiene practices in relation to hand washing, toileting, nappy changing and cleaning of equipment
- relaxed, positive nappy-changing and toileting routines that are adapted to suit individual needs
- children being supported sensitively and positively when they are learning to use the toilet.

Discussing with educators about:

- how educators work with families to support children's toilet learning
- how services access information on current practice.

Sighting:

- nappy change and toileting procedures displayed
- information about correct hand-washing procedures.

## REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics at [www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au)

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child at [www.unicef.org.au](http://www.unicef.org.au)

Staying Healthy Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services at [www.nhmrc.gov.au](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au)

Guide to the National Quality Framework at [acecqa.gov.au](http://acecqa.gov.au)

More information is available on the ACECQA website [acecqa.gov.au](http://acecqa.gov.au)

The information in this publication was adapted from a National Childcare Accreditation Council resource.