



The Australian, State and Territory Education Ministers have agreed to changes for approved providers of centre-based education and care services that offer, or arrange, regular transportation of children as part of the education and care service.

This information sheet explains the new requirements for approved providers and their centre-based services.

Existing regular transportation requirements for policies and procedures, risk assessments, written authorisations and record keeping continue to apply to approved providers of family day care and centre-based education and care services.

CHANGES TO REGULAR TRANSPORTATION OF CHILDREN COMMENCING 1 MARCH 2023



WHEN DO THE NEW SAFE TRANSPORTATION OF CHILDREN REQUIREMENTS START?

New requirements under the Education and Care Services National Law will commence on 1 March 2023 relating to regular transportation.

WHERE CAN I GET FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK (NQF) REVIEW?

Visit nqfreview.com.au

Children can be transported by, or be on transport arranged by, children's education and care services. Service providers, nominated supervisors, educators and drivers need to take specific steps to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of all children during their transportation on vehicles and movement to and from a vehicle and the service or other premises.

Transportation may present additional risks to children depending on how it occurs and how movement between a vehicle and an education and care service premises or other location is managed. These risks apply equally to single trips or during periods of regular transportation.

WHY ARE THE REQUIREMENTS CHANGING?

The [2019 National Quality Framework \(NQF\) Review](#) identified that, despite educator-to-child ratios applying during periods of transportation and the requirement to conduct a risk assessment, transportation can still present heightened risks to the safety of children (particularly very young children), often during the period of movement between a vehicle and an education and care service premises or other location.

Serious incidents have occurred when children get on or off vehicles and are checked into or out of the service. Most notably, when a child has been left alone inside a parked vehicle, or a child did not arrive at the service as expected and staff were unsure if the child had ever been in the vehicle.

WHAT ARE THE CHANGES?

These changes only apply to centre-based services and relate to:

- approved provider, nominated supervisor, staff and driver responsibilities
- a staff member or nominated supervisor (other than the driver) being present at the service to account for all children as they embark and disembark **at the service premises** and keep a record of how each child was accounted for
- a check of the interior of the vehicle to ensure there are no children left behind
- mandatory notification to the regulatory authority when regular transportation starts being provided or arranged by the service, or ceases.

Updated staff responsibilities for regular transportation conducted by centre-based services include:

- A nominated supervisor or a staff member (**other than the driver**) must:
 - » be present when children embark and disembark a vehicle at the service premises
 - » account for each child when they embark and disembark a vehicle at the service premises
 - » complete a check of the interior of the vehicle after all children have disembarked at the service premises to ensure there are no children left on the vehicle.
- A \$2000 penalty applies for failing to meet these requirements.

Note: Services must ensure that the number of educators or other responsible adults involved in the transportation of children, including when children are embarking or disembarking the vehicle, is adequate, effective and ensures active supervision.

Updated record keeping and accounting for children during regular transportation includes:

- The approved provider and nominated supervisor must ensure that records are kept for regular transportation that:
 - » confirm each child was accounted for when embarking and disembarking the vehicle at the service premises
 - » state how each child was accounted for at the service premises
 - » state that the interior of vehicle was checked after all children have disembarked at the service premises.
- The records must be made immediately and include the time, date, full name and signature of the person/s responsible for:
 - » accounting for the children during embarking and disembarking of the vehicle
 - » conducting the vehicle check after children have disembarked.
- A \$2000 penalty applies for failing to meet these requirements.

Updated mandatory notifications include:

From 1 March 2023, it will be **mandatory** to notify the regulatory authority that your service provides or arranges regular transportation. The notification is to be lodged through the [NQAIT System](#).

- The approved provider must notify the regulatory authority in a service approval application, or if the service is already approved, within seven (7) days of regular transportation being provided or arranged by the service.
- The approved provider must notify the regulatory authority within seven (7) days if the service starts or stops providing or arranging regular transportation.

Updated policies and procedures for regular transportation

From 1 March 2023, approved providers will need to comply with the new requirements relating to regular transportation. Services are encouraged to review and update their transport policies and procedures to ensure the new requirements are addressed and the service's procedures comply with the regulations.

EXISTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION OF CHILDREN FOR ALL SERVICES

For services that provide or arrange transportation of children, other than as part of an excursion, the approved provider must ensure the service has policies and procedures for transportation (regulation 168(2)(ga)) including:

- procedures that address requirements for risk assessments (regulations 102B and 102C) and
- written authorisations (regulation 102D)
- record keeping requirements (102E and 102F).
- For more information see ACECQA Information sheet [Safe transportation of children](#).

It is good practice for every approved provider, nominated supervisor, family day care coordinator and educator to apply the new safety requirements for regular transportation to all periods of transportation including single trips.

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

For additional information download the [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#).

Visit the ACECQA website at www.acecqa.gov.au to download: [National Law and National Regulations](#)

Information sheet- [QA2 Active supervision: Ensuring safety and promoting learning](#)

Information sheet- [QA2 Minimising the risk of children being mistakenly locked in or out of service premises](#)

Information sheet- [Safe transportation of children](#).