



Children travelling between an education and care service and any other education or early childhood service requires careful planning to ensure that children's safety, health and wellbeing are maintained. It is important that services plan for the safe arrival of children carefully using risk assessments to identify the specific risks that may occur and how the service will mitigate these risks.

From 1 October 2023 to minimise the risk to children who travel between an education and care service and any other education or early childhood service, services must have safe arrival of children policies and procedures in place and have conducted a risk assessment for the purpose of preparing the policies and procedures.

SAFE ARRIVAL OF CHILDREN

New legislative requirements for the safe arrival of children who travel between an education and care service and any other education or early childhood service.



New legislative requirements will commence from 1 October 2023 relating to safe arrival of children for centre-based and family day care (FDC) services. These changes will require an approved provider to:

- ensure the service has policies and procedures in place for the safe arrival of children who travel between an education and care service and any other education or early childhood service.
- conduct a risk assessment at least once every 12 months, and as soon as practicable after becoming aware of any circumstance that may affect the safe arrival of children travelling between an education and care service and any other education or early childhood service. Offence penalties apply.

If a risk relating to a child's travel is identified in the risk assessment, approved providers must make any necessary updates to the safe arrival of children policies and procedures as soon as practicable and keep a record of each risk assessment conducted.

An education or early childhood service is:

- a school
- an education and care service premises, or

- a children's service; or
- any other service which provides education or care to children.

SAFE ARRIVAL OF CHILDREN

The risk that these new requirements address around safe arrival of children relate to the times when children move to, from and in between an education and care service, a school or any other education or early childhood service.

Examples include a child traveling between:

- an outside school hours care (OSHC) service and school
- a family day care (FDC) residence or venue and preschool/kindergarten
- a long day care centre offering school age care and school
- an OSHC and preschool/ kindergarten or long day care centre
- an OSHC and FDC residence or venue.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Policies and procedures

Approved providers must ensure their education and care service has policies and procedures covering a range of areas set out in regulations 168 and 169 of the National Regulations.

A safe arrival of children policy and procedure must set out the procedures to be followed by an education and care service to ensure the safe arrival of children who travel between an education and care service and any other education or early childhood service (regulation 102AAB).

Children's travel can include between school and OSHC, OSHC and preschool/kindergarten, FDC residence or venue and OSHC or FDC and school. The policies and procedures should clearly specify who holds the duty of care for children during these periods of travel. Services should ensure this information is clearly communicated to and understood by families, all educators and school-based staff.

The adequate supervision of children during their travel is important. There is a heightened risk to the safety and wellbeing of children during these times.

When preparing the safe arrival of children policies and procedures, the service must consult their staff, parents and (if applicable) children at the service to ensure that the risk to children's safety, health and wellbeing is managed and minimised.

Approved providers must also conduct a risk assessment to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children. See below for more information.

The ACECQA policy and procedure guidelines – [Safe arrival of children](#), is a helpful resource to assist you to develop your service-specific policy and procedure for safe arrival of children.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk assessment

The approved provider of an education and care service must conduct a risk assessment for the purposes of preparing the safe arrival of children policies and procedures (regulation 102AAC).

The risk assessment must be conducted at least once every 12 months, and as soon as practicable after becoming aware of any circumstance that may affect the safe arrival of children travelling between an education and care service and any other education or early childhood service.

A risk assessment must consider the matters set out below:

- a. the age, developmental stage and individual needs of the child;
- b. the role and responsibilities of the following persons (if applicable)—
 - i. in the case of a child who leaves the service premises to travel to an education and care service premises of another education and care service, the nominated supervisor of each service;
 - ii. the child's parent;
 - iii. an authorised nominee named in the child's enrolment record;

- iv. a person authorised by—
 - A. the child's parent; or
 - B. an authorised nominee named in the child's enrolment record;
- c. the role and responsibilities of the service the care of which the child is entering or leaving;
- d. the communication arrangements between the service the child is leaving and the service the child is entering including any communication arrangements if the child is missing or cannot be accounted for during the child's travel;
- e. the procedure to be followed by the service if the service has identified that the child is missing or cannot be accounted for during the child's travel;
- f. given the risks posed by the child's travel, the number of educators or other responsible adults that are appropriate to provide supervision;
- g. the proposed route and destination, including any proximity to harm and hazards;
- h. the process for entering and exiting—
 - i. the service premises; and
 - ii. the pick-up location or destination (as required);
 - iii. the procedure to be followed by the service to ensure the child leaves the service premises in accordance with regulation 99(4)(b).

The *Education and Care Services National Law* requires services to ensure that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury (Section 167). Taking precautions involves carrying out risk assessments within the service to assess the risks and plan how to manage them. The risk assessment process will help ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children as well as families, staff and community members within your service.

Consider opportunities to collaborate with staff, children, their families and the school or other education and care services when making and implementing decisions about risk assessment and management during children's travel. This will:

- enable staff, children, families, and community members' perspectives to be considered when developing and implementing policies, procedures and practices
- build the child, family and community members' understanding of the service's policies and procedures and risk management practices
- promote processes that are embedded in practice, easily understood, and ensure children's safety, health and wellbeing.

Roles and responsibilities

As previously mentioned, the risk assessment must consider the roles and responsibilities of prescribed persons and the service of which the child is entering or leaving.

Clearly defined roles and responsibilities support the effective decision-making and operation of the service and provide clarity to educators and service leaders. In addition to the prescribed persons from 1 October 2023, an approved provider should develop and define the roles and responsibilities of each staff member involved during children's travel between education and care services and any other education or early childhood service.

It is recommended this information be included in an individual staff member's position description and discussed as part of the service induction program.

The service policies and procedures should also include the role and responsibilities of families, educators, staff, school staff and FDC coordinators. It may also be beneficial to consider other stakeholders such as an extra-curricular tutor or sports coach, that may be involved during children's travel between education and care services and any other education or early childhood service.

When identifying and articulating the roles and responsibilities, it is important to consider:

- the context of the service (for example, ages and compositions of groups of children, the premises, location, environmental factors)
- links with the service philosophy
- strategies to seek and include the views of educators, staff, families and the school or other education or early childhood service.

The roles and responsibilities of a nominated supervisor or responsible person could include ensuring:

- all supervision requirements are met during delivery of children to, and collection from, the service premises
- risk assessments are completed, and authorisations are regularly reviewed to ensure their currency.

The responsibilities of children's parents or carer may include:

- providing up to date information to service staff about their child's extra-curricular activities or absences
- developing an understanding of the policies and procedures for safe arrival of children and their and the service's duty of care for their child during their travel.

Approved providers and service leaders should also consider additional contextual risks to their process and environment. This **may** include:

- what to do if there is a last minute or unplanned change to staffing arrangements. For example, if the regular FDC educator or regular staff member is not available due to illness
- how will each child be accounted for before, during and after the travel period

- how is children's non-attendance communicated between the service and the school. For example, between the school to the OSHC service or FDC educator.

For further details see the [Risk Assessment and Management Tool](#) on the ACECQA website.

FAMILY DAY CARE CONSIDERATIONS

Approved providers, coordinators, nominated supervisors, educators and staff of FDC services have additional considerations when minimising risk during children's travel between an education and care service and any other education or early childhood service.

There may be instances where children who attend FDC also travel to or from other service types (for example preschool or OSHC) before or after their FDC care is scheduled.

To minimise risk, it is important to consider the ways in which:

- FDC educators, educator assistants and families share information about children's activities, planned and unplanned absences and how this is used to inform practices to ensure safe arrival of children.
- FDC coordinators support educators and educator assistants to facilitate the safe arrival of children when they travel between the FDC residence or venue and any other education or early childhood service.

Additionally, from 1 October 2023, regulation 144 of the National Regulations will change to include that an FDC educator assistant may transport and escort (by walking) a child between an FDC residence or venue and a school or another education and care service or the child's family home.

TRANSPORTATION

Approved providers, nominated supervisors, family day care coordinators, educators and drivers need to take specific steps to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of all children during their transportation to and from an education and care service or other early childhood setting (such as a school or another education and care service).

For more information on transporting children safely download the ACECQA Information Sheet – [Safe transportation of children](#).

Changes were introduced on 1 March 2023 for providers that offer, or arrange, regular transportation of children as part of a centre-based education and care service.

These include:

- service, staff and driver responsibilities
- record keeping and accounting for children
- a vehicle check
- mandatory reporting when regular transportation is provided or arranged by the service, or ceases.

NOTE: These changes apply to centre-based services only.

Visit ACECQA to download the Information sheet – [Changes to regular transportation of children commencing 1 March 2023](#). See below for more resources.

PARTNERSHIPS

Collaborative partnerships with families

When developing policies and procedures guidance for safe arrival of children consider:

- How do families participate in decision-making about their child's travel?
- How are families included in the process of identifying risks to their children?
- How do educators develop and maintain respectful relationships with families?
- How do you enable families to inform you about planned or unexpected absences of their children from school?
- When and how are families informed about your policies and procedures about safe arrival of children?

For more information on collaborative partnerships please see [QA6 Building partnerships with families](#) information sheet relating to this topic.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS

Policies and procedures should outline where the duty of care lies for educators and school-based staff within the process. These policies and procedures should be created in collaboration with staff from the school so that all individuals clearly understand their roles and responsibilities. This collaborative approach will ensure the safe arrival of children and minimise risks to children's safety, health and wellbeing.

Consider the following to guide the development and implementation of your policies and procedures:

- How will we work with schools (or any other service that provides education or care to children) to develop the policies and procedures for the safe arrival of children who travel to and from the service?
- Do our policies and procedures include the delivery of children to, and the collection of children from, schools (or any other service that provides education or care to children) and our service?
- When will we work with schools (or any other service that provides education or care to children) to undertake risk assessments for the safe arrival of children?
- How do we communicate with other educators and school-based staff to ensure a common understanding of who holds the duty of care for children?
- How will we share the process with children to build their understanding of risk and their process of travel between the service and school or other location?

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

For additional information download the [Guide to the NQE](#).

Visit the [ACECQA website](#) to download:

- Policy and procedure guidelines – [Safe arrival of children](#)
- Policy and procedure guidelines – [Delivery of children to, and collection from, education and care service premises](#)
- Information sheet – [Active Supervision](#)
- Information sheet – [QA6 Building partnerships with families](#)
- Information sheet – [Changes to regular transportation of children commencing 1 March 2023](#)
- Information sheet – [Minimising the risk of children left in vehicles](#)
- Information sheet – [Guidance for adequate supervision during transportation](#)
- [Safe Transportation of Children Safety Checklist and regular transportation record form](#)

Connect with other useful resources:

- Commission for Children and Young People: [A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation](#)
- [Lady Gowrie Tasmania: Risk assessment and risk management in Family Day Care](#)

Acknowledgment: The information in this publication is accurate pending the Australian, state and territory education ministers' agreement of the amended law and regulations.