



3.01 VEHICLES

Purpose Statement

Road trauma is one of the leading causes of death among infants and children in Australia. Young children are at risk as passengers in motor vehicles, as pedestrians and as cyclists. They are particularly vulnerable because of their small size and the fact that their cognitive and perceptual skills are still developing.

Windermere is committed to protecting children while travelling in motor vehicles as part of their Family Day Care (FDC) service. Educators will ensure that children are adequately supervised at all times and kept safe while travelling as passengers.

Scope

This policy applies to educators, contractors, children and families.

Definitions

Child Restraint: a device used in conjunction with an adult seatbelt or ISOFIX-compatible lower attachment connectors, to restrain a child passenger of a motor vehicle in the event of a vehicle impact and thus minimise the risk of bodily injury.

Booster Seat: a device used for raising the child's position in the motor vehicle and adapting an adult lap-sash seatbelt to make it suitable for a child. A booster seat has a back above the seating plane and may have a top tether strap.

Policy Statement

THAT CHILDREN HAVE A RIGHT TO TRAVEL SAFELY AS PASSENGERS WHILST ACTIVELY ENGAGING IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES.

Procedures

Educator Responsibilities

1. Educators must hold a current full Victorian Drivers Licence.
2. All vehicles are to be currently registered, adequately insured and kept in a clean, roadworthy condition.
3. All vehicles (new and used) require a restraint check prior to carrying children and every twelve months thereafter. Educators must complete the vehicle restraint check form (see attached) and have it signed and dated by an approved and qualified restraint fitter.
4. Restraints should be checked regularly by educators to ensure they fit snugly, particularly in the case of the restraint being used multiple times per week.
5. Children are not to travel in any vehicle other than a restraint checked vehicle that is driven by a registered educator. It is understood that in an emergency a child may need to be transported by ambulance, police or an authorised member of FDC staff.



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6. The Coordination Unit must be notified if the educator changes the vehicle after commencing with the Service.
7. The Coordination Unit must be notified of any changes to licence details, including any driving offences.
8. Educators are encouraged to purchase fuel when they do not have children in care as under no circumstances are children to be left in unsupervised in cars (including at petrol stations when cars are being refuelled).
9. If a car accident occurs when transporting FDC children, the Coordination Unit must be notified immediately (and an incident report submitted within 12 hours).
10. Parked vehicles are to be kept locked and inaccessible to children.

Passenger Safety

1. Ensure all vehicles have child restraints and/or seatbelts that are appropriate for the age and weight of each child, that conform to Australian Standards (Standards Australia AS/NZS 1754), and are professionally installed by an authorised restraint fitter (i.e. Vic Roads).

Restraints must comply with the following guidelines:

- a. **children aged less than six months** must use an approved, properly fastened and adjusted, rear facing child restraint.
 - b. **children aged between six months to under four years** must use an approved, properly fastened and adjusted, rear facing child restraint OR a forward facing child restraint with an in-built harness.
 - c. **children aged between four to under seven years** must use an approved, properly fastened and adjusted, forward facing child restraint with an in-built harness OR an approved booster seat which is properly positioned and fastened.
2. All restraints that are being used to transport children need to be replaced 10 years after the manufacture date.
 3. Always buckle up children's seatbelts. Children must be restrained at all times whilst travelling in a motor vehicle.
 4. Children under the age of 12 yrs are not permitted to travel in the front seat of a vehicle, due to the increased risk of injury to child passengers in the event of a crash. If all rear seats are being used by children aged under 7 years, children aged 4 years to under 7 years are permitted to travel in the front seat, provided they use a booster seat. (If the car has frontal air bags, the seat should be moved back as far as possible.)
 5. Under no circumstances are children/adults to share a seatbelt.
 6. Under no circumstances are children to be left unsupervised in cars.
 7. Keep children occupied when travelling in vehicles to help prevent children unbuckling their seatbelt e.g. sing songs, play simple games and talk about the journey.



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8. Ensure as far as practicable child passengers enter and exit the car by the 'safety door', which is the rear, left hand side door of the car.
9. Ensure there are no loose or sharp objects inside the car that could cause injury if an accident occurs. (i.e. the rear parcel shelf, dashboard and car interior are to be free from loose objects).
10. Cigarette lighters are to be made inaccessible to children.
11. Pets must not travel in vehicle with children, unless restrained and inaccessible.

Outings and Excursions

1. Permission for routine and non-routine outings needs to be completed by parent/guardian for all children in care and needs to be up-dated regularly. (See *Excursions/Outings* procedure for more information). Outings or excursions that involve vehicle travel must include details of the child's restraint needs. Parent/guardians have the right to refuse permission for travel.

Relevant Standards/Legislation

- National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care Services including:
 - Education and Care Services National Law 2011
 - Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Victorian Road Safety Act 1986

Related Policies & Links

- *Incident Management* procedure
- *Outings and Excursions* procedure
- *Vehicle Restraint Check* form

Early Childhood Education and Care Services

Vehicle Restraint Check



Educator Name: _____

Vehicle Registration No: _____ **Date check completed:** / /

To be completed by restraint fitter

Type of seat:	Make of seat: (i.e. Baby love, Mothers Choice)	Date Manufactured
1. <input type="checkbox"/> Child Seat <input type="checkbox"/> Booster Seat		/ /
2. <input type="checkbox"/> Child Seat <input type="checkbox"/> Booster Seat		/ /
3. <input type="checkbox"/> Child Seat <input type="checkbox"/> Booster Seat		/ /
4. <input type="checkbox"/> Child Seat <input type="checkbox"/> Booster Seat		/ /
5. <input type="checkbox"/> Child Seat <input type="checkbox"/> Booster Seat		/ /

Are the seatbelts in roadworthy conditions? Yes No

Are there any requirements or adjustments needed for compliance? Yes No

If so, please specify

Recommendations / suggestions / comments:

Authorisation

* Vehicle checked/authorised by: (Please print name) : _____

Signature of person conducting check: _____

Business Name: _____

* Authorisation must be completed by a qualified restraint fitter