

2.19 LOST OR MISSING CHILDREN

Purpose Statement

A child's safety and wellbeing is of utmost importance whilst accessing Family Day Care.

Staff and educators are committed to ensuring that the physical environment in which the care takes place is secure and supportive of a child's needs and safeguards against the possibility of children getting lost or going missing.

Scope

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

Definitions

Direct supervision: requires immediate and personal supervision but does not require constant physical presence.

Policy Statement

TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM GETTING LOST OR GOING MISSING, BY IMPLEMENTING ROBUST RISK MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND EDUCATING CHILDREN ON KEEPING SAFE.

Procedures

General

1. Educators have a duty of care to provide direct supervision to all children in their care. Consequently, they must be fully aware of each child's whereabouts at all times.
2. Educators will support parents in educating children to 'stay safe'. Safety tips and stranger danger messages will be shared with children as deemed appropriate. Refer to www.safety4kids.com.au for more information on helping kids to make better decisions about their personal safety.
3. Independent play, within an approved safe area, is to be within the sight and/or ear shot of an educator.
4. Outdoor play areas must be approved as 'safe areas' (refer to *Assessment, Approval and Re-Assessment of FDC Residences/Venues* procedure). Outdoor safe areas are considered to be fenced or gated, preventing children from escaping or going missing.
5. All doors to an approved Family Day Care residence are to be kept shut at all times, preventing children from exiting without the knowledge of an educator.
6. A Risk Assessment must be carried out before engaging in regular outings or excursions, to identify and assess risks that the excursion may pose to children (i.e. getting lost). Strategies must be detailed for minimising and managing these risks. Refer to *Excursions/Outings* procedure for more information.



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7. Where a child appears to be lost or missing, or cannot be accounted for, the educator should immediately:
 - a. Contact the police on 000 advising them of the situation
 - b. Notify the co-ordination unit
 - c. Contact the child's parents/guardian or the emergency contact (if parents/guardians uncontactable).

NOTE: an incident report must also be submitted to the Coordination Unit within 12hrs and a notification made to the regulatory authority. Refer to the *Incident Reporting* procedure for further information.

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 & Safety Act 2004

Related Policies & Links

- *Enrolment Procedure*
- *Incident Management & Reporting Procedure*
- *Assessment, Approval and Re-Assessment of Approved FDC Residences/Venues Procedure*