



Preschool age children attending Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) Services

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The Education and Care Services National Law (South Australia) (the National Law) and the Education and Care Services National Regulations (the National Regulations) make provision for Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) services that primarily provide education and care for children over preschool age, to educate and care for a small number of children aged 36 months to preschool age. Regulations vary according to the age of the children attending; therefore regulations relevant to preschool age children apply.

Approved providers should conduct risk assessments with particular diligence when preschool age children attend the service as they are more vulnerable and the likelihood of potential harm is greater.

Facilities

The majority of OSHC services operate on primary school sites where the facilities are designed for primary school age children. Approved providers should consider the suitability of and access to facilities by younger children prior to enrolment and develop a range of strategies that ensure they can meet the individual needs of each child.

The approved provider of an education and care service must ensure that:

- adequate, developmentally and age-appropriate toilet, hand washing and drying facilities are provided and the location and design of these facilities enable safe use and convenient access by the children
- the furniture and resources are age appropriate
- the use, size and appropriateness of school facilities such as the gymnasium, oval and school equipment are risk assessed and risk managed
- the appropriateness of the outdoor environment and the size of play equipment is suitable for younger children
- young children will not leave the premises unless under written authorisation.

Planning for preschool age children

When planning for preschool age children approved providers should consider the following factors.

Orientation visits

Educators can gather valuable observations and knowledge about individual children during orientation visits. Orientation visits allow the child to become familiar with educators, other children and the environment. Approved providers should ensure:

- they have policies and procedures that actively promote and encourage orientation visits for children and their families
- strategies are in place to gather information about the child's current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests during these visits.

Educator to child ratios

When preschool age children attend an OSHC service the approved provider must ensure that the minimum ratio for preschool age children of 1 educator to 10 children is maintained. Meeting minimum educator to child ratios alone may not always be sufficient to provide adequate supervision in an OSHC service. It is recommended approved providers ensure the number and skill level of educators can meet the individual supervision needs of preschool aged children.

Supervision

The approved provider and nominated supervisor of an education and care service must ensure that all children being educated and cared for by the service are adequately supervised at all times that the children are in the care of that service. Adequate supervision means that educators know the whereabouts of each child and can easily respond, particularly when a child is distressed or if circumstances arise where children could be potentially harmed. Policies and procedures should clarify educator responsibilities to ensure children are within sight and/or hearing at all times

whilst maintaining the rights, dignity and privacy of the child.

Transitions

A transition is any time a child or children arrive, leave or move from one place to another place. This includes movement both within and outside of the OSHC premises. Each transition has the potential to increase the nature and degree of risk to children. The approved provider and nominated supervisor have responsibility to ensure that each child's safety, health and wellbeing is protected. Approved providers must ensure that:

- risk assessments and risk minimisation plans are developed for transitions
- young children are appropriately supervised by educators when walking or being transported to or from the service including excursions involving accessing public transport and public venues.

Educational program and practice

It is important to consider the unique needs of preschool age children within a recreational program. Some preschool children may primarily need a program that supports their social and emotional wellbeing and, when planning, services should:

- utilise the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) to develop a program to meet each child's developmental needs, interests, experiences and participation in the program
- critically assess the venues for excursions and the activities both on or off site offered are suitable for the ages, stages, health conditions and abilities of children
- ensure resources are available and age appropriate for young children
- consider the need for sleep and rest of the younger children
- critically reflect and plan children's activities based on the age mix, skills and size of the group.

Further information

Education Standards Board fact sheets:

[Risk assessments](#)

[OSHC ratios](#)

[Preschool ratios](#)

[Vacation care services](#)

Contact details

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