

Animal & Pet Policy



Policy Relevant to:	All educators, Team members and families
Last Reviewed:	September 2023
Next Review:	September 2026
NQF	168, 170
NQS	2.1.2, 2.2, 2.2.1, 3.1.2, 3.2.3

Rationale

Having a relationship with a pet and/or animal can help children develop a caring disposition and skills such as nurturing, responsibility, empathy and improved communication.

Having a pet in an early childhood environment enables children who are not otherwise exposed to animals learn these skills. The pet will become part of the daily educational program and lead to activities and learning about other animals. The safety of children, however, is always our first priority. Adventure Patch will ensure that no animal poses a health or safety risk to children, educators, team members or visitors of our services.

Purpose

Having a pet at Adventure Patch services can be a valuable part of children's education, enriching their learning about nature, ecology and relationships. Adventure Patch services aim to provide a safe, hygienic and humane environment for all animals and pets that visit or reside at services, educating children in the proper care of animals.

Implementation

The National Quality Standard encourages educators to understand and appreciate the natural environment and the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land. Pets help children from a young age learn to care for other living things. They can teach a sense of responsibility, caring and tolerance.

They can offer many opportunities for developing observational skills and provide basic natural science experiences. If educators wish to have a pet in Adventure Patch services, they must discuss this educational experience in consultation with centre leader / manager and families.

Whilst there are several benefits to keeping animals within Adventure Patch services, there are also a range of concerns which educators need to consider when maintaining the safety and wellbeing of both the children and the animals.

Encouraging direct contact and developing bonds with animals can help children to develop empathy. Providing children with access to animals within our services will help them learn about life cycles and relationships and improve communication skills. We feel role modelling of appropriate behaviours with animals and guidance in caring for the needs of animals are beneficial for children.

Assessing and managing risks

Whilst there are many benefits to providing children with access to animals and keeping pets at the Service, there are issues that Approved Providers and educators need to consider for the safety and wellbeing of both the children and the animals concerned prior to choosing a pet or having an animal visit the Service.

A comprehensive risk assessment should therefore be conducted when deciding the type of animal and the way the children engage with it.

Potential risks may include:

- diseases- from birds (Parrot fever -psittacosis) and other animals;
- injury due to biting, kicking or pushing a child over (e.g., farm animals);
- scratching (e.g., chickens, rabbits, guinea pigs);
- pests and vermin (snakes, rats, mice);
- allergies (e.g., bees, wasps, ants).

Related Policies

Administration of First Aid Policy
Animal and Pet Procedure
First Aid Policy
Handwashing Policy
Supervision Policy
Work Health and Safety Policy


Sources

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Review History

Policy Reviewed By:	Scott Norris	DCEO	September 2023
POLICY REVIEWED	September 2023	NEXT REVIEW DATE	November 2026
Modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policy maintenance • hyperlinks checked and repaired as required 		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS		NEXT REVIEW DATE
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Signed

CEO:	
Manager:	S. Norris