

TITLE:**PET MANAGEMENT**

Regulation/s/ Standards	National Regulations 2011 Clause 116 (2) e. NQS: 2.1.2, 2.2, 2.2.1 EYLF: Learning outcome 1.4, 2
Related documentation Policy/policies	Excursions Policy Work Health and Safety (Educators)
Other procedures	NCAC Quality Practices Guide, 2 nd ed 2004
References:	Keeping Pets and Animals in Education and Care Services ACECQA The Safety Centre Royal Children's Hospital Vic www.rch.org.au/emplibrary/safetycentre/ChildSafetyHandbook
Date effective	July 2017
Date for review	July 2019
Purpose	To ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children, parents, staff, non-residents and pets.
Responsibility	Educators, Educator Assistants, Relief Care Educators and staff

Key information:

- *Pets are a valued part of many families and access to pets in any Educators home can provide children in care with many positive learning experiences.*
- *Through helping to care for them children can learn about being responsible and treating animals humanely.*
- *It is important to recognise that pets, in particular dogs, can pose significant risks to young children.*
- *Children may not have prior knowledge about "safe behaviour" with pets and they may be too young to regulate their behaviour around pets.*
- *Pets may lack familiarity with young children and the bustle of a normal family day care home may frighten, upset or over stimulate them. Pets in these circumstances may be prone to unpredictable behaviour posing a potential risk to children.*
- *The Educator must advise new families about their pets and discuss how the animals are integrated in the Family Day Care environment in line with the Scheme policy.*
- *No animal may travel in a motor vehicle with children unless the animal is restrained by a fixed barrier, a harness / lead or cage.*

Pet Housing and Maintenance Procedure

- The Educator must ensure that every domestic pet, farm animal or potentially dangerous animal living at their home is kept in an area separate to and apart from areas used by children in care.
- Animal yards, enclosures, cages and hutches should be made inaccessible and preferably finger proof to prevent fingers being bitten.
- All animals and birds must be kept in a clean, healthy condition (e.g. vaccinated regularly wormed, checked for parasites such as fleas, lice etc.).
- Animal bedding, food bowls or water bowls, litter trays and pet toys must be kept out of children's play areas.
- If pets have been indoors, furniture and floors are to be vacuumed and cleaned before children arrive into care.
- Play areas are to be kept clear of pet droppings, dog bones and food scraps at all times.
- A risk matrix in regards to each pet must be developed and submitted to the Co-ordination unit.

Direct Contact with animal Procedure

- Specific, activities directly supervised by the Educator could include brushing a dog or cat, bathing a dog, bottle feeding a lamb, providing water or food for birds ,chickens, rabbits or guinea pigs, collecting eggs, patting or observing a pet or domestic animal.
- Educators should use the opportunity of any supervised contact with a pet or farm animal to demonstrate gentle handling and appropriate behaviour. (For more information visit <http://www.rch.org.au/emplibrary/safetycentre/ChildSafetyHandbook.pdf>)
- Children who have a fear of animals should be treated with special care. A gentle, slow introduction for the child and the pet is needed and the needs of the child must be considered first.
- Educators must ensure that animals kept at their premises do not constitute a health or safety risk to the children in care (e.g. by causing an allergic reaction or infection).
- Children and Educators are to wash their hands thoroughly after touching pets.