



Excursions

Excursions are valuable experiences for children, families and staff of education and care settings. These activities are designed to establish wider links with the world outside the preschool setting. Such excursions are less important for pre schoolers attending a few days per week, than they are for children who are enrolled for extended days in long day care settings. Our focus, therefore is on those excursion experiences that have direct relevance to our curriculum, and are practical and achievable from a safety point of view. Excursions require appropriate planning and risk management to ensure the best experience and enjoyment for all. When planning excursions, Kangaroo Valley Pre School is committed to providing experiences that are well considered and planned, provide meaningful experiences and ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children at all times. Transport dependant excursions are minimised due to the geography of the preschool's location and the issues of transporting children with suitable child restraints. The preschool prefers to be proactive in inviting people to come to us at the preschool. These activities are planned more often than excursions at Kangaroo Valley Preschool, as even the youngest of our children can experience new and interesting activities in a comfortable, familiar environment.

Aims

- To make excursions and visiting events part of the program of education and care;
- Plan these activities with careful consideration for the safety of children and adults;
- Carry out excursions only where full documentation and permissions have been completed and obtained;
- Undertake full risk assessments, consideration of value of educational excursions, and plan for first aid requirements.

Strategies:

Planning and Preparations

All excursions and events will be planned in advance to:

- maximise both children's developmental experiences and their safety;
- reflect the age, capacity and interests of the children;
- ensure they are properly supervised and conducted in a safe manner; and
- excursions are conducted with fully informed written parental permission.

All excursions will be thoroughly researched to ensure:

- supervision is adequate so children cannot be separated from the group;
- access to hazardous equipment and environments are minimised;



- there is adequate access to food, drink and other facilities (toilets, hand washing etc);
- consideration is given to the mobility and supervision requirements of children with additional needs;
- that adequate sun and shade protection is available

When planning for an excursion staff will:

- Assess the requirements for the excursion;
- Conduct a risk assessment;
- Book transport venues;
- Make alternative arrangements for adverse weather conditions;
- Inform families of the details of the excursion including destination, objectives and outcomes, and what the child should bring;
- Provide parents or legal guardians with an excursion permission form to complete to authorise their child to participate on the excursion;
- Collect completed permission forms for each child attending the excursion;
- Request additional adult participation on the excursion where required;
- Arrange for a suitably equipped first aid kit (including EpiPen) and mobile phone to be taken on the excursion.
- Educators must make alternate arrangements for any children who are not attending the excursion, and ensure that any dialogue or pre-planning for the excursion does not alienate such children from social networks.
- Additional factors need to be considered in the planning of excursions for children with additional needs. Where possible, our service will uphold the right for all children to access all excursions and engage in meaningful ways while on excursions.

Risk Assessment

The Nominated Supervisor will:

Ensure a risk assessment is conducted prior to any excursion to identify and assess the risk the excursion may pose to the safety, health and wellbeing of any child whilst on the excursion, and will specify how the service will manage any risks identified.

The risk assessment conducted will consider:

- destination and duration of the excursion;
- potential water hazards or any hazard associated with water based activities;
- transport to and from destination;



- number of educators, responsible persons, and children involved;
- proposed activities; and
- items to be taken on the excursion eg: mobile phone, emergency contact numbers etc.

If the excursion is a regular occurrence a risk assessment will only be carried out once, provided the circumstances around the excursion have not changed in any way since the initial risk assessment was conducted.

The Nominated Supervisor will also:

- appoint a Certified Supervisor to be in charge of the excursion.

Authorisation for Excursions

The Nominated Supervisor will ensure that:

For all excursions parents or legal guardians will be given an excursion permission form with full details of the excursion including:

- date, description, duration and destination of proposed excursion;
- method of transport to be used;
- reason for the excursion , and proposed activities to be conducted on the excursion;
- the anticipated adult: child ratio – outlining number of educators and staff and other adults attending;
- a statement that a risk assessment has been prepared and is available at the service for parents to view.
- If the excursion is a regular outing, authorisation is required once in a 12 month period. All parents or legal guardians will be asked to sign permission forms for regular excursions on enrolment and at the beginning of each subsequent year.

No child will be taken on an excursion unless written permission from parents or legal guardian has been received.

Families and Volunteers

Families will be encouraged to participate in excursions to assist in maintaining suitable child/staff ratios. If the parent needs to bring their child's sibling because they cannot find suitable care, the siblings must be included in ratios.

If additional adults are required volunteers will be invited. Volunteers will be mature, responsible people who are aware of the hazards and responsibilities of taking a group of children out the service.



Family members/volunteers will not to be left in sole charge of children and must be supervised by an educator at all times.

All volunteers/family members' details will be entered into the appropriate staff record for that day.

Transport and Traffic

Safety of children will be considered in the choice of route and mode of transport. Our service will follow all applicable NSW road rules as well as the Kids and Traffic best practice recommendations for transporting young children safely in buses. Every reasonable precaution will be taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.

Educators will ensure children obey road rules and cross roads at a crossing or lights where available. Educators will remain vigilant to ensure no child runs ahead or lags behind the group.

Supervision

Supervision on excursions will ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children for the duration of the excursion, taking into account ratios and all risks and hazards likely to be encountered.

The venue will be assessed as safe for all children and adults on the excursion and will be easily supervised and accessible.

Water Hazards

No excursions will be conducted to a swimming pool or other water related activity. Where there are significant water hazards (such as rivers, lakes or beaches), risk management strategies will be identified and implemented.

Conducting the Excursion

All educators, volunteers and children attending will be informed of excursion timetable / itinerary, special requirements, safety procedures, grouping of children and responsibilities.

A list of children on the excursion will be left at the service and a copy carried by the delegated Certified Supervisor.

Before leaving on the excursion, a notice will be prominently displayed at the service which includes:

- itinerary and timetable; and
- mobile contact phone number.

Items to be taken on excursions include:

- a suitable stocked first-aid kit including EpiPen;
- a mobile phone;



- children's emergency contact numbers;
- children's medication, if required; and
- other items as required e.g. sunscreen, drinking cups, jackets etc.

If a child is lost on an excursion, we will always leave a staff member behind to look, while the other group leaders escort the children back. The child's parents will be contacted if the child is not found within a reasonable time frame.

Evaluation

All excursions are conducted in a safe manner and evaluated. Any improvements identified in the risk assessment prior to conducting the excursion or the evaluation of the excursion are addressed and actioned to ensure children's safety.

References:

Community Child Care Co operative: Excursion Policy

Kangaroo Valley Preschool Excursion Policy 2005

Statutory Legislation & Considerations

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

NSW Occupational Health & Safety Act 2000

Occupational Health & Safety Regulations 2001

Sources

Guide to the National Quality Standard October 2011

Kidsafe NSW www.kidsafensw.org.au Accessed 1 Nov. 2011

Kids and Traffic www.kidsandtraffic.mq.edu.au Accessed 1 Nov. 2011

Sutherland, K. (2007) "Out There" Rattler, Issue 8