

4.8 PETS / LIVESTOCK

Policy No: 4.8

Policy Adopted: April 2013

Version No: 2 under Education and Care Services National Regulations under the Education and Care Services National Law

Review Date: September 2014

PURPOSE To ensure that children are protected from potential harm from pets

POLICY Family day care educators will minimise health risks such as injuries, infections and allergies, related to child contact with pets and animals (including livestock) or domesticated birds which enters or is kept on the premises by ensuring all animal/child contact is directly supervised

PROCEDURES

1. family day care educators must inform parents at initial interview if
 - 1.1 animals reside at the family day care residence
 - 1.2 if a new pet is going to be residing at the residence or,
 - 1.3 if any child or parent will be accompanied by a pet that is constituted as a 'Pet as Therapy companion' e.g. seeing eye dog / child requiring a Pet for Therapy purposes
 - 1.3.1 If a child attending care is required to have a Pet with them due to therapy reasons the parent will provide information to the service upon registering their child. The service will inform the educator who will provide the education and care service and, the educator will inform all families using the service that a child will have A Pet as companion whilst in care
 - 1.3.2 If a parent requires A Pet as Companion the parent will inform the service upon enrolment, the service will inform the educator, and the educator will inform all families
2. if an educator has pets at the residence the parent will be requested upon enrolment and if any new pets are acquired to complete a educator pet management plan. The educator will keep a copy of the pet management plan in family file and have them maintained and available upon request
3. domestic pets such as dogs, cats and birds may transmit diseases such as round worm, ring worm, toxoplasmosis, cat scratch disease and psittacosis, therefore family day care educators must ensure all animals and pets kept on the premises are in a clean and healthy condition; pets should be vaccinated, de-wormed and free of fleas or infections, any ill pet should be isolated from children and receive immediate veterinary attention
4. as any part of the animal or its surrounds can be contaminated with its urine, faeces or germs, ensure children and adults wash their hands after handling or patting animals or birds, their enclosures, food containers or after they have been licked by animals

5. sand pits are covered when not in use to prevent animals soiling the sand
6. any child accessible indoor and outdoor area used by pets at other times must be free from holes, food scraps/bones, pet bowls, kitty litter, pet toys. Areas soiled with faeces or urine requires cleaning before children have access (Refer to Hygiene policy)
7. family day care educators ensure animals are kept away from areas used for sleeping; nappy changing, food preparation, eating surfaces and utensils; direct contact activities are not to occur when children are eating; dogs will require an area available that is separate to and apart from areas used by children eg. Separate fenced area
8. as domestic pets such as dogs are unpredictable and can seriously cause injury to a young child, all pets should be made inaccessible to children unless involved in a specific activity that is directly supervised by the family day care educator or other adult eg. brushing the dog, feeding the rabbit or chickens etc; do not allow children to put their faces close to animals; animals must be separated from children if transported in a car
9. on an excursion with a pet, the family day care educator must allocate a specific person to supervise the dog
10. to minimise unsupervised contact between children and animals it is recommended that animals do not reside inside the home during the hours children are in care
11. family day care educators who have indoor pets ensure daily vacuuming of pet hair/fur; pets such as birds, mice, rabbits, guinea pigs, rats & reptiles must be caged
12. avoid contact with potentially dangerous animals, including livestock / farm animals. All livestock and farm animals must be fenced safely to avoid contact with children
13. obtain the informed consent of parent or guardian prior to children visiting petting farms or zoos; keep children away from unknown animals on outings
14. Parents may choose to terminate care without penalty if a pet is a health risk for their child eg allergy

Source:

- Education and Care Services National Regulation Clause 116
- Staying Healthy in Child Care Third edition, 2001
- Parenting and Child Health—Children, Youth and Woman’s Health Service—South Australia 2004
- Dogs and Children—Raising Children Network—www.raisingchildren.net.au accessed 8.7.2010

Forms:

- Pet Management Plan