

Delivery, collection and transportation of children in preschool

Procedures

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Acronyms	Full form
Department	Department of Education
NT	Northern Territory
NTG	Northern Territory Government
NQF	National Quality Framework
QECNT	Quality Education and Care Northern Territory (Regulatory Authority)

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1. Introduction

This document outlines the processes that preschools will undertake in order to manage risks associated with the delivery, collection and transportation of preschool children, and maintain compliance with the [Education and Care Services National Law \(NT\) \(National Law\)](#)¹ and [Education and Care Services National Regulations \(National Regulations\)](#)². The relevant legislative requirements are outlined under section 7.1 of these procedures.

The National Law and National Regulations require preschools to ensure that parents either personally collect their child or arrange with the preschool for an authorised nominee to do so. As a part of each preschool's enrolment and orientation processes, the delivery and collection processes must be clearly communicated to parents and preschool children.

Additionally, preschools that provide or arrange for the transportation of preschool children must ensure they manage all foreseeable risks associated with the transportation. Transport forms part of a preschool's service when the child is being transported while recorded as in attendance and in the care of the preschool. This includes if the preschool or school provides a home pick-up and drop off service.

If the transport is part of an excursion, the department's [Excursions policy, procedures and supporting documents](#)³ must be followed.

2. Definitions

Authorised nominee means a person who has been given permission by a parent or family member of the child to collect the child from the education and care service.

Bus is defined as a motor vehicle designed to carry over 12 passengers (including the driver).

Educator is a person who is involved in the planning and/or instruction of an education and care program.

Nominated supervisor is a person nominated by the approved provider responsible for the day-to-day management of an education and care service. In a NT Government preschool, this is the school principal.

Parent for the purpose of this procedure, is a child's father, mother or any other person who has parental responsibility for the child, including a person who is regarded as a parent of the child under Aboriginal and Torres Strait customary law or tradition.

Quality Education and Care NT (QECNT) is the regulatory authority for early childhood education and care in the Northern Territory.

Regular transportation, in relation to an education and care service, means the transportation of a child by the service (other than as part of an excursion), where the circumstances relevant to a risk assessment are substantially the same for each occasion on which the child is transported, and where the child is recorded as being in attendance for the duration of the regular transportation.

Transport for the purpose of these guidelines is transport by any means other than walking.

¹ <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/education-and-care-services-national-law-act-2010/012>

² <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653>

³ <http://ed.ntschoools.net/documentcentre/Pages/home.aspx?category=Teaching%20and%20learning&subcategory=Excursions%20and%20work%20experience>

3. Roles and responsibilities

Early Childhood Education and Care is responsible for:

- developing, reviewing and maintaining department policies relating to early childhood education and care to ensure the ongoing compliance of preschools with the National Law and National Regulations.

Executive Directors School Improvement and Leadership:

- hold the responsibilities of the approved provider and are responsible for all preschools within their regional areas comply with the requirements of the National Law and National Regulations.

Principal is responsible for:

- ensuring their preschool operates in accordance with the National Law, National Regulations and departmental policies, including these procedures and implements processes for managing the delivery, collection and transportation of preschool children
- supporting the preschool to ensure a child is not collected by a person who is not an authorised nominee or a parent who is prohibited by a court order from having contact with the child
- determining if a person under the age of 18 is suitable to be an authorised nominee (where this is requested)
- where transportation is provided, approving the:
 - transport risk assessment, ensuring it complies with the requirements of these procedures and that the mitigation strategies are understood and implemented
 - transport consent form prior to being provided to parents.

Preschool teacher and educators are responsible for:

- ensuring the preschool complies with the National Law and National Regulations and implements processes for managing the delivery and collection of children
- communicating the preschools approach regarding the delivery and collection of children to all the families of enrolled children, educators and the school community
- developing processes in consultation with families and the school principal to ensure a child is not collected by a person who is not an authorised nominee or a parent who is prohibited by a court order from having contact with the child
- developing and implementing processes and procedures to ensure the risks to a child's health, safety and wellbeing while being transported by the preschool service are managed and minimised
- ensuring each child's arrival and departure times are recorded in an attendance sign-in / sign-out sheet.

Parents and authorised nominees are responsible for:

- providing written authorisation to the preschool for any person they wish to be an authorised nominee
- ensuring that they record their child's arrival and departure times in the attendance sign-in / sign-out sheet
- communicating with the preschool in any event where there may be a delay in delivery or collection of their child.

4. Delivery and collection of children

4.1. Authorised nominees

A person is only an authorised nominee for a child where the parent or family member has nominated that person in writing, on the child's enrolment form or in a separate written authorisation that must also be kept on the child's student file.

The National Law and National Regulations do not specify a minimum age limit for an authorised nominee. The principal has the discretion to determine if a person under the age of 18 is suitable, such as a sibling, to be an authorised nominee.

The principal will need to consider the needs of the child's family and the safety, health and wellbeing of the preschool child when determining if a person under the age of 18 is suitable to be an authorised nominee.

4.2. Delivery of children

Parents and authorised nominees should take their children to the preschool or another pre-arranged location, either as part of the preschool program, transportation or a planned excursion, at the time specified by the preschool.

Prior to the parent or authorised nominee leaving the preschool premises or pre-arranged location, they must:

- make their child's presence known to the preschool teacher and educators.
- complete a sign-in sheet to record their child's arrival time at preschool.

4.3. Collection of children

Regulation 99 of the National Regulations prescribe that a child may only leave the preschool premises or another location arranged as part of the preschool program, transportation or a planned excursion if the child is:

- given into the care of a parent or an authorised nominee
- taken on an excursion (preschools must follow the departments Excursions policy, procedures and supporting documents⁴)
- given into the care of a person or taken outside the premises because the child requires medical treatment or because of another emergency.

Prior to the parent or authorised nominee taking the child from the preschool premises or pre-arranged location they must:

- make their child's departure known to the preschool teacher and educators
- complete a sign-out sheet to record their child's departure time from the preschool.

⁴<http://ed.ntschoools.net/documentcentre/Pages/home.aspx?category=Teaching%20and%20learning&subcategory=Excursions%20and%20work%20experience>

The preschool cannot intervene to prevent a parent from having contact with their child unless the service has received a copy of a formal notification that a court order is in place.

4.4. Uncollected children

If a child has not been collected when the preschool closes, at least one educator must remain with the child at the preschool premises and continue efforts to contact the parents and authorised nominees to arrange collection of the child.

If efforts to arrange for the parents or an authorised nominee to collect the child continue to be unsuccessful, the preschool will notify the principal who will monitor the situation, and where deemed appropriate to do so, report the situation to their Director, Quality School Systems and Support and, if necessary, the NT Police.

Under no circumstance, are educators:

- to release the child into the custody of an adult without the appropriate authorisation
- take the child out of the school premises without the appropriate authorisation do so.

4.5. Missing or unaccounted for children

In the event that a child is missing or unaccounted for, the preschool will thoroughly search the preschool premises to locate the child. If the child continues to be unaccounted for the preschool will inform the principal and expand the search across the whole of school premises.

The principal will contact the child's parents to see if they have collected the child from the preschool. If the child has not been collected by the parents or an authorised nominee, and cannot be located on the school grounds, the principal will notify the NT Police and their Director, Quality School Systems and Support for additional support and response advice.

QECNT must also be notified of any incidents of missing or unaccounted for children within 24 hours of the incident. This includes, if a child is mistakenly locked in or locked out of the premises or any part of the premises or if the child has been taken or removed from the preschool premises in a way that breaches the National Regulations. To notify QECNT, complete the I01 Notification of incident form located on the [National Quality Agenda IT System](#)⁵.

5. Transportation of preschool children

To meet community or family needs, preschools may choose to provide transport to deliver and collect children from the preschool. Under these arrangements, the preschool retains responsibility for the children until they are received by a parent, authorised nominee or emergency contact.

The Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (DIPL) school bus network does not cater for preschool aged children. Refer to the [DIPL Code of Conduct for School Bus Travel: Guide for Parents and Carers](#)⁶ for further information.

5.1. Transport risk assessment

The preschool teacher must undertake a risk assessment that identifies and assesses the risks that the transportation may pose to the safety, health or wellbeing of the child and specify how the identified risks

⁵ <https://public.nqaits.acecqa.gov.au/Pages/Landing.aspx>

⁶ <https://nt.gov.au/driving/public-transport-cycling/public-school-buses/rules-for-catching-a-school-bus>

will be managed and minimised. The risk assessment must be approved by the school principal, as the nominated supervisor of the preschool.

A risk assessment must be undertaken for each transport event. Where the transportation is a regular occurrence, and the circumstances relevant to the risk assessment are substantially the same for each occasion, the risk assessment is only required to be undertaken every 12 months.

Regulation 102C of the National Regulations prescribes the minimum considerations that must be addressed within the risk assessment.

Preschools will use the [ACECQA Transportation risk assessment template](#)⁷ which includes all the prescribed requirements.

5.1.1. Supervision and qualification requirements

The National Regulations do not specify an educator to child ratio for transportation, however the department requires that where the form of transportation is a bus or minibus, an educator must always be seated in the back with the children. A thorough risk assessment should determine whether this minimum requirement is sufficient to provide adequate supervision while being transported.

As required by the National Law and National Regulations, all persons involved in the transportation of children must have a current Working with Children Clearance notice as per the department's [Working with Children Clearance Notice Policy](#)⁸. Additionally, at least one staff member that holds an approved (i) first aid qualification, (ii) anaphylaxis management training and (iii) asthma management training must accompany the students

5.1.2. Processes for accounting for children

The preschool teacher and principal must ensure that processes are in place for ensuring all children are accounted for while exiting and entering the preschool premises and embarking and disembarking the means of transport.

This will include a register of children who are scheduled to be on the transport. The register is to be used to cross check that all children are accounted for as they exit and enter the preschool premises and embark and disembark from the transport. A visual check of the vehicle must also be conducted to ensure that no children remain on the vehicle.

Additional processes are also to be developed and implemented as required to mitigate any risks identified with the specific transport event.

5.1.3. Communication protocols

The preschool teacher will establish communication protocols between the parents, themselves and the supervising educator on the transportation to ensure that contact can be made during transit to account for unforeseen circumstances that may impact the planned transportation, such as;

- a delay with the transport arriving at the child's destination (e.g. means of transport breaking down)
- a parent or authorised nominee not being at the child's destination when the transport arrives.

⁷ <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/applications/sample-forms-and-templates>

⁸ <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/working-with-children-clearance-notices-ochre-cards>

5.1.4. Seatbelt and safety restraint requirements

The supervising educator is responsible for ensuring that each child is appropriately secured and restrained when being transported. Seatbelt and safety restraint requirements in the NT are dependent on the type of vehicle being used.

A bus is a motor vehicle designed to carry over 12 passengers (including the driver). If a vehicle is designed to carry 12 adults or fewer (including the driver) it is not a bus and the driver must ensure all passengers are wearing seatbelts and/or are secured in an appropriate child restraint.ⁱ

Child restraint laws in the NT depend on the age of the child as outlined below:

Age of child	Use this restraint
6 months to under 4 years	Rear-facing or forward-facing restraint. This must not be in the front row of a vehicle with two or more rows of seats.
4 years to under 7 years	Forward-facing restraint or booster seat. This can only sit in the front seat of a vehicle with two or more rows when all other seats are occupied by younger children in an approved child restraint.

If a preschool is utilising a bus to transport children, wherever possible, a bus with seatbelts will be used and children and appropriate child restraints will be used for children. Parents may be asked by the preschool to supply appropriate child restraint for their child.

5.2. Authorisation to transport a child

Transportation must not be provided to a child without parental authorisation. Regulation 102D of the National Regulations prescribes the information that must be included within the authorisation.

The [Transport consent form - template²](#) has been developed to ensure all of the prescribed requirements of the authorisation are met. The preschool teacher is to fill in the transportation details section, and have this approved by the school principal with the transportation risk assessment.

To ensure that both the child's parents and the preschool staff have the same understanding of the transportation arrangements, the preschool teacher is encouraged to speak with the parents when establishing the transportation arrangement/s.

6. Supporting documents

[ACECQA Transportation risk assessment template¹⁰](#)

[Transport consent form - template¹¹](#)

⁹ <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/preschool-specific-policy>

¹⁰ <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/applications/sample-forms-and-templates>

¹¹ <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/preschool-specific-policy>

7. Related legislation, policy and procedures

7.1. Legislation

[Education and Care Services \(National Uniform Legislation\) Act 2011 \(NT\)](#)¹² is the legislation that adopts the National Law in the NT.

[The Schedule to the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 \(Vic\)](#)¹³ sets out the National Law.

- Section 165 – Offence to inadequately supervise children
- Section 167 – Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
- Section 174 – Offence to fail to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority
- Section 175 – Offence relating to requirement to keep enrolment and other documents

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)¹⁴

- Regulation 12 Meaning of serious incident
- Regulation 99 Children leaving the education and care service premises
- Regulation 168 Education and care services must have policies and procedures
 - (2)(f) delivery of children to and the collection of children from, education and care service premises, including procedures complying with regulation 99
 - (2)(ga) if the service transports or arranges transportation of children other than as part of excursions, including procedures complying with Division 7 of Part 4.2 of Chapter 4
- Division 7 of Part 4.2 of Chapter 4 Transportation of children other than as part of an excursion (regulations 102A, 102B, 102C and 102D)
- Regulation 170 – Policies and procedures to be followed
- Regulation 174 – Time to notify certain circumstances to Regulatory Authority
- Regulation 176 Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority

7.2. Department of Education policy, guidelines and procedures

Go to <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies> to access the following policies.

- [Preschool specific policy](#)¹⁵
- [Excursions policy, procedures and supporting documents](#)¹⁶
- [Working with Children Clearance Notice Policy](#)¹⁷

¹² <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/education-and-care-services-national-law-act-2010/012>

¹³ <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/education-and-care-services-national-law-act-2010/012>

¹⁴ <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653>

¹⁵ <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/preschool-specific-policy>

¹⁶ <http://ed.ntschoools.net/documentcentre/Pages/home.aspx?category=Teaching%20and%20learning&subcategory=Excursions%20and%20work%20experience>

¹⁷ <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/working-with-children-clearance-notices-ochre-cards>

7.3. National Quality Standard

Quality Area 2 – Children’s Health and Safety.

- Element 2.2.1 - At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
- Element 2.2.2 - Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.

Quality Area 6 – Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

- Element 6.2.1 Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing information and clarifying responsibilities.

Quality Area 7 – Governance and leadership

- Element 7.1.2 – Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.

ⁱ NT Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics. Child Car Restrain Frequently Asked Questions page 7 https://roadsafety.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/485364/Child-Car-Restrains-FAQ.pdf