

GUIDELINES

MANAGING WATER HAZARDS IN PRESCHOOL

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Target Audience:	Principals, preschool teachers and educators, parents, pre-service teachers, students and volunteers	

This document should be read in conjunction with the [School swimming, water safety programs and aquatic activities policy](#).

1. INTRODUCTION

Water play is a popular activity that many children enjoy. It provides children with opportunities to develop language, motor skills and maths concepts, such as measuring, as well as exposing children to the natural environment. Playing with water can encourage children's active exploration and discovery of their world.

Knowledge of potential hazards associated with water and water play will assist preschools to provide a safe and stimulating environment for children. These guidelines have been developed to promote safe participation in water play while minimising any associated risks.

The [Education and Care Services \(National Uniform Legislation\) Act](#) (the Act) and [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#) (the Regulations) aim to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending an education and care service is maintained at all times.

2. DEFINITIONS

Adequate supervision, for the purpose of these guidelines, is maintaining sight and hearing of all children at all times children are playing with water and being in a position to respond to individual needs and to intervene immediately when necessary.

Potential hazard, for the purpose of these guidelines, refers to risks associated with water, such as swimming pools, baths, water storage containers, including vessels used for water play activities, ponds and containers with poor drainage that allow water to pool.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Principal is responsible for identifying, assessing and responding to potential water and water play hazards.

Preschool teacher and educators are responsible for:

- ensuring procedures for managing potential water hazards are developed and reviewed regularly to ensure their continued effectiveness; and
- communicating the preschools' approach to managing potential water hazards to educators, children enrolled at the service, pre-service teachers, volunteers, parents and guardians.

4. GUIDELINES

It is important that preschools develop and implement procedures for managing potential water hazards when planning activities and programs that include water play. These should be developed through a consultative process involving the principal, preschool teacher, educators and parents. They should be reviewed annually or earlier where required to ensure their continued effectiveness.

When developing or reviewing procedures for managing potential water hazards, the following matters should be taken into consideration (but are not limited to):

- adequate supervision is maintained at all times;
- water containers are safely covered or inaccessible to children when not in use;
- managing or storing wet clothing or linen;
- emptying wading/paddling pools or water play containers after each use and implementing measures to prevent water collecting or pooling when not in use;
- fish/frog ponds and water features do not pose an unacceptable risk to children; and
- effective barriers are in place to prevent access by any child to an onsite or neighbouring pool.

Preschools with existing procedures for managing water hazards should review their procedures in line with these guidelines to ensure they are adequate and effective.