

Delivery, collection and transportation of children in preschool - procedure

Department of Education and Training

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Read this document with the preschool specific policy, preschool risk assessment template and the department's excursion policy.

1. Policy

The National Law will require all people involved in the operation and delivery of an education and care service, including approved providers, persons with management or control, nominated supervisors, educators, staff, and volunteers and students to ensure that the safety, rights and best interests of children is the paramount consideration in all their decisions and actions. The *Education and Care Services National Law* (NT) (National Law) and *Education and Care Services National Regulations* (National Regulations) require preschools to manage risks associated with the delivery, collection and transportation of preschool children. The relevant legislation is listed under section 8.1 of this procedure.

The National Law and the National Regulations require preschools to ensure:

- parents collect their child or arrange with the preschool for an authorised nominee or educator from another child-related service to do so
- the safe arrival of children who travel to or from child-related services
- all preschool staff have a clear understanding of who holds the duty of care when children arrive at and depart from the preschool.

Parents and preschool children must be informed of delivery and collection processes during the enrolment and orientation process, and as required when relevant circumstances change.

Preschools that provide or arrange transport for preschool children must manage all associated and foreseeable risks. Transport is part of a preschool's service when the child is being transported while recorded as attending 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, guidelines and procedures and supporting documents must be followed.

2. Delivery and collection of children

2.1. Authorised nominees

A person is 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 separate written authorisation that is 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 can decide if a person under the age of 18 is suitable, such as a sibling, to be an authorised nominee.

The principal must consider the needs of the child's family and the safety, health and wellbeing of the preschool child when deciding if a person under the age of 18 should be an authorised nominee.

2.2. Delivery of children

Parents, authorised nominees or educators from other child-related service where the child is also enrolled, should take 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, authorised nominee or educator from another child-related service leaving the preschool premises or pre-arranged location, they must:

- make the child's presence known to the preschool teacher and educators
- complete a sign-in sheet to record their child's arrival time at preschool including the name of the person who has delivered the child.

2.3. Collection of children

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, an authorised nominee or educators from another child-related service where the child is also enrolled
- taken on an excursion – preschools must follow the department's excursions policy, guidelines and procedures and supporting documents
- 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, authorised nominee or educator from another child-related service 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 including the name of the person who has collected the child.

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.

2.4. Uncollected children

If a child has not been collected when the preschool closes, an educator must remain with the child at the preschool premises and contact the parents and authorised nominees to arrange collection of the child. If the educator is unable to stay with the child at the preschool premises, and the preschool is located on a school premises, the child may be taken to the school reception or front office and cared for there by a school staff member until they are collected.

If efforts to arrange for the parents or an authorised nominee to collect the child are unsuccessful, the preschool will notify the principal who will monitor the situation and report the situation to the Senior Director School Operations and the NT Police where appropriate.

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.

2.5. Missing or unaccounted for children

If a child is missing or unaccounted for, the preschool will thoroughly search the preschool premises or

contact the other child-related service where the child is also enrolled to locate the child. If the child remains unaccounted for the preschool must inform the principal and expand the search across the whole of school premises and across the child-related services if the child is scheduled to attend on the given day.

The principal must 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, an authorised nominee or educators from another child-related service where the child is also enrolled, and cannot be located, the principal must notify the NT Police and the Senior Director School Operations for additional support and response advice.

Quality Education and Care NT (QECNT) must be notified within 24 hours of any incidents of missing or unaccounted for children. 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 (NQA ITS).

3. Safe arrival of preschool children between child-related services

3.1. Risk assessment

The National Regulations require preschools to carry out a risk assessment to ensure reasonable steps are taken to manage risks and maintain the safety of children at all times whilst they move between the preschool and other child-related services on any given day.

Regulation 102AAC of the National Regulations outlines the minimum matters that must be considered when conducting a risk assessment. The department's Preschool procedures risk assessment template, available in the department's policy and advisory library, must be used to guide and document the risk assessment process.

The preschool must conduct a risk assessment at least every twelve months or as soon as practicable when becoming aware of any circumstances that may affect the safe arrival of children travelling between the preschool and other child-related services.

A copy of the current risk assessment must always be available for review by the regulatory authority to support discussions with parents and other education and care services that the child attends. An electronic copy of the risk assessment is permitted. It is also recommended that previous years' risk assessments are kept on file, to demonstrate that previous risks have been addressed.

3.2. Communications

It is important that families are consulted with prior to children being transferred between child-related services to ensure the specific needs of children will be met.

Preschool staff must ensure that information about each child's transfer is clearly communicated between services, parents, families and carers. This is to ensure that each person involved in a child's transfer has the same understanding of:

- which service the child is leaving from and which service they will be entering, for example, from preschool to a long day care or outside of hours care service
- who the nominated supervisor is of each service, where the child is transferring from one education and care service to another

- important information relating to the child to ensure their continued safety, health and wellbeing upon transfer to the other child-related service
- who holds the duty of care when children travel between the preschool and other child-related services.

4. Transportation of preschool children

Preschools may choose to provide transport to deliver or collect children from the preschool to meet community or family needs. Under these arrangements, the preschool is responsible for the children until they are received by a parent, authorised nominee, educators from another child-related service where the child is also enrolled or emergency contact.

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

The preschool must notify QECNT when a preschool starts or stops providing or arranging regular transportation of children using the NQA ITS.

4.1. Transport risk assessment

The preschool teacher must undertake a risk assessment to identify and assess risks that the transportation may pose to the safety, health or wellbeing of the child and specify how to manage and minimise these risks. 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 regular, and the circumstances relevant to the risk assessment are mostly the same for each occasion, the risk assessment is only required every 12 months.

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

It is recommended that preschools use the ACECQA Risk assessment and management – transporting children template which includes all the prescribed requirements.

4.1.1. 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. 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. have completed Mandatory child protection and child safety training and have been added to the National early childhood worker register in accordance with National Law.

Additionally, at least one staff member must accompany the children that holds an approved:

- first aid qualification
- anaphylaxis management training
- asthma management training.

4.1.2. Process for accounting for children

The preschool teacher and principal must ensure processes are in place to ensure all children are accounted for while exiting and entering the preschool premises and embarking and disembarking the means of transport. This will include a record of children who are scheduled to be on the transport.

4.1.3. Process for children embarking and disembarking a means of transport provided or arranged by the preschool

The National Regulations require that a staff member or nominated supervisor of the service, who is not the driver, is present when the children embark and disembark the means of transport at the education and care service premises.

The preschool teacher, staff member or nominated supervisor is responsible for ensuring that each child embarking and disembarking the means of transport at the preschool premises is accounted for. They must also examine the interior of the means of transport to confirm no children remain on board.

Immediately after all the children have embarked the means of transport at the preschool premises a record is made that:

- confirms each child scheduled to be on the means of transport has been accounted for
- states how each child has been accounted for
- states the date and time the record is made
- states the name of, and is signed by, the person accounting for the children.

The preschool teacher, staff member or nominated supervisor must complete these same requirements when children disembark the means of transport, as well as make a record that states an examination of the transportation has been carried out and confirm how all children have been accounted for.

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

4.1.4. Communication protocols

The preschool teacher must 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:

- delay with the transport arriving at the child's destination, for example means of transport breaking down
- or
- parent or authorised nominee not being at the child's destination when the transport arrives.

4.1.5. 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.

Seatbelts and safety restraints are required in vehicles that are designed to carry 12 or less people including the driver, for example a standard vehicle, troop carrier or minibus. Where a vehicle that carries 12 or less people is being used to transport children, preschool staff and the driver must ensure all passengers are wearing seatbelts and where required, children are secured in an appropriate child restraint.

4.1.5.1. Child restraint laws in the NT

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

Age of child	Use this restraint
Six months to under four 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
Four years to under seven 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 that carries more than 12 people, including the driver, to transport children, wherever possible, a bus with seatbelts will be used and appropriate child restraints will be used for children. Parents may be asked by the preschool to supply appropriate child restraint for their child.

4.2. 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 template must be completed by the preschool teacher and 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 arrangements.

5. Notification requirements in the National Quality Agenda IT System

The NQA ITS is an online tool that provides a secure and direct way for making required notifications to QECNT. Each preschool has an established login.

Where the principal or preschool teacher in charge does not have a current record of the login details, they should contact the NQA ITS Helpdesk by email at nqaits@acecqa.gov.au or by contacting ACECQA with the number provided on their website.

The NQA ITS webpage also contains guides and information.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1. Early Childhood

The departments Early Childhood branch must develop, review and maintain department policies relating to early childhood education and care to ensure the ongoing compliance of preschools with the National Law and National Regulations.

6.2. Senior Directors Education

Senior Directors Education must ensure that all preschools within their regional areas comply with the requirements of the National Law, National Regulations and departmental policies.

6.3. Principals

Principals must:

- ensure their preschool complies with the National Law, National Regulations and departmental policies and implements processes to manage the delivery, collection and transportation of preschool children
- support 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
- decide if a person under the age of 18 is suitable to be an authorised nominee, where this is requested
- approve the preschool's risk assessments, to be conducted at least annually or when circumstances change, to ensure compliance with the requirements of these procedures and ensure risk mitigation strategies are understood and implemented
- support families whose children have specific needs regarding their transfer between services, and ensure these needs are managed and catered for
- ensure the preschool has practices in place to ensure a clear understanding of who holds the duty of care when children travel between the preschool and other child-related services
- where transportation is provided, approve the transport consent form prior to being provided to parents.

6.4. Preschool teachers and educators

Preschool teachers and educators must:

- ensure the preschool complies with the National Law and National Regulations and implements processes for managing the delivery, collection and transportation of preschool children, including the safe arrival of children between the preschool and other child-related services
- where transport is provided or arranged by the preschool, ensure a staff member other than the driver:
 - accounts for children as they get in or out of a vehicle
 - records that children are accounted for when getting in or out of a vehicle, including the child's name and date and time each child embarks and disembarks the vehicle

- checks the inside of the vehicle is empty
- states their name and signs the record at each of the following stages, including the date and time confirming that all children:
 - i. have embarked the vehicle
 - ii. disembarked the vehicle
 - iii. the vehicle has been checked and confirm how all children have been accounted for.
- notify the regulatory authority when regular transport starts or finishes being provided or arranged by the preschool in the NQA ITS
- communicate the preschool's approach regarding the delivery and collection of children to all the families of enrolled children, educators, other child-related services that children transfer between and the school community
- undertake and review risk assessments at least annually or as soon as practical when circumstances change, relating to the safe arrival of children that travel between the preschool and other child-related services and the transportation of children
- develop processes 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
- exercise a duty of care to ensure all children are provided with a high level of safety when transferring between services, and every reasonable precaution is taken to protect them from harm and hazard, and clear communication is maintained between services, parents and authorised nominees
- consult with families about their child's individual requirements regarding transfer between the preschool and other child-related services, and ensure these needs are managed and catered for
- develop and implement 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
- ensure each child's arrival and departure times are recorded in an attendance sign-in and sign-out sheet.

6.5. Parents and authorised nominees

Parents and authorised nominees must:

- provide written authorisation to the preschool for any person they wish to be an authorised nominee
- record their child's arrival and departure times in the attendance sign-in and sign-out sheet
- contact the preschool where there may be a delay in delivery or collection of their child
- contact the preschool to advise if their child will be absent for one or more days.

7. Definitions

Term	Definition
Approved provider	A person or legal entity who holds a provider approval under the National Quality Framework (NQF). This approval is a prerequisite for a provider before commencing to operate an approved education and care service. The Department of Education and Training (department) is the approved provider of all Northern Territory (NT) Government preschools. Responsibility for this role has been delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive Schools.
Authorised nominee	A person who has permission from a parent or family member of the child to collect the child from the preschool.
Bus	A motor vehicle designed to carry over 12 passengers including the driver.
Child related service	Includes education and care services, schools and other children's or early childhood services.
Department	The Department of Education and Training.
Educator	A person involved in planning or instruction of an education and care program.
NQA ITS	Refers to the National Quality Agenda IT System managed by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority.
Nominated supervisor	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	A child's father, mother or any other person who has parental responsibility for that child, including a person who is regarded as a parent of the child under Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander customary law or tradition. The definition of a parent does not include a person standing in place of the parent on a temporary basis
Quality Education and Care NT (QECNT)	The regulatory authority for early childhood education and care in the Northern Territory.
Regular transportation	The transportation of a child by the preschool, other than as part of an excursion, where: - the circumstances relevant to a risk assessment are mostly the same for each occasion on which the child is transported - the child is recorded as attending for the duration of the regular transportation.
Transport	For the purpose of these procedures, transport is by any means other than walking.

8. Related legislation, policy, resources and templates

8.1. Legislation

Education and Care Services (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011 -

<https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/EDUCATION-AND-CARE-SERVICES-NATIONAL-UNIFORM-LEGISLATION-ACT-2011>

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic) - <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/education-and-care-services-national-law-act-2010>

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (NSW) - <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2011-0653>

8.2. Policy

Excursions policy - <https://elearn.ntschoools.net/policies/4262>

Preschool specific policies - <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/early-childhood-education-and-care/preschool-specific-policy>

Working with children clearance notice – Ochre card policy page - <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/child-safety#working-with-children-clearance--ochre-cards->

8.3. Resources

- ACECQA form and template library - <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/applications/sample-forms-and-templates>
- ACECQA info sheet - <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/latest-news/new-information-sheet-safe-transportation-children>
- ACECQA risk assessment and management – transporting children template - <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/media/29841>
- Preschool children risk assessment template - <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/early-childhood-education-and-care/preschool-specific-policy>
- Transport consent form template - <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/early-childhood-education-and-care/preschool-specific-policy>

8.4. National Quality Standard

- Quality Area 2 – Children’s Health and Safety - <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard/quality-area-2-childrens-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 - <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard/quality-area-6-collaborative-partnership-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 - <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard/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.

Acronyms	Full form
ACECQA	Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority
DLI	Department of Logistics and Infrastructure
NQA	National Quality Agenda
NQA ITS	National Quality Agenda IT System
NQF	National Quality Framework
NT	Northern Territory
QECNT	Quality Education and Care Northern Territory (Regulatory Authority)

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3.1	30 January 2020	Operational Policy Coordination Unit	Minor update to terminology and template
3.2	21 April 2020	Operational Policy Coordination Unit	Minor update to layout, readability, accessibility and publishing standards
3.3	August 2020	Early Childhood Education and Care	Incorporate regulatory amendments regarding transportation (Education and Care Service National Amendment Regulations 2020 PCC-552). Include clarifying information regarding authorised nominees and minimum age and missing and unaccounted children
3.4	January 2022	Early childhood Education and Care	Updates relating to uncollected children
3.5	November 2022	Teaching and Learning: Early Years and Primary	Incorporate regulatory amendments regarding transportation (Education and Care Services National Amendments Regulations 2022) commencing 1 March 2023
3.6	September 2023	Early Years	Incorporate regulatory amendments regarding the safe arrival of children between the preschool and other child-related services

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3.7	September 2025	Early Childhood	Minor amendments, updated template.
3.8	July 2026	Operational Policy Unit	A full review of this procedure has been conducted. The content has been updated to reflect recent legislatively changes around paramount consideration. Document updates also included a current template and minor administrative amendments.