

Physical Environment

Animal and Barnyard Policy.

Our Vision.

To give every child **the best start in life.**

Our Mission.

To deliver high quality childcare and exciting learning opportunities for every child, giving them a head start as they prepare for school.

Our Values.

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|----------------|--|
| Care | We take care of the children entrusted to us and our dedicated staff. All are appreciated and diversity is valued. |
| Quality | We maintain the highest standards in care and safety and provide exceptional early years education. |
| Service | We provide exceptional service and are integral to supporting parents bringing up children. |
| Value | We provide outstanding value for our families. |



Animal and Barnyard Policy

When children engage with animals as part of their everyday experiences, it ignites their inquisitiveness and provides precious chances to develop an appreciation for the world around them. Busy Bees Early Learning Australia will encourage all children within our Services to witness and engage with animals as it offers a valuable aspect for every child's educational journey, enhancing their knowledge and understanding.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 1 - Educational Program and Practice	
1.1 - Program	1.1.2 - Child-Centred
1.2 - Practice	1.2.1 - Intentional Teaching
QUALITY AREA 2 - Children's Health and Safety	
2.1 - Health	2.1.2 - Health Practices and Procedures
2.2 - Safety	2.2.1 - Supervision
QUALITY AREA 3 - Physical Environment	
3.2 - Use	3.2.3 - Environmentally Responsible

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND REGULATIONS

Part 6	Operating an Education and Care Service (Law - 167)
Part 4.7	Governance and Leadership (Reg - 168, 170, 171, 172)

RELATED POLICIES

Child Safe Environment Policy	Supervision Policy
Health and Hygiene Policy	Sun Protection Policy
Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy	Work Health and Safety Policy

PURPOSE

Busy Bees Early Learning Australia believe that having a pet in the Service is a valuable part of children's education, enriching their learning about nature, ecology, and relationships. We aim to provide safe, hygienic, and humane environments for all animals and pets that visit or reside at the Service, which will educate children in the proper care of animals.

Having a relationship with an animal can help children develop a caring approach and skills such as nurturing, responsibility, empathy, and improved communication. Having a pet in an early childhood environment enables children who are not otherwise exposed to animals learn these skills. The pet will become part of the daily educational program and lead to activities and learning about other animals.

SCOPE

This policy applies to Children, Families, Employees, Management, Visitors and Contractors of the Service.

POLICY

The National Quality Standards encourages educators to understand and appreciate the natural environment and the independence between people, plants, animals, and the land. Pets help children from a young age learn to care for other living things. They can teach a sense of responsibility, caring and tolerance. They can offer many opportunities for developing observational skills and basic natural science experiences. If the educators wish to have a pet in the Service, they must make all the decisions in consultation with Management and Families.

Whilst there are several benefits to keeping animals within the Service, there are also a range of concerns which employees need to consider when maintaining the safety and wellbeing of both the children and the animals. Encouraging direct contact and developing bonds with animals can help children to develop empathy. Providing children with access to animals within our Service will help them learn about life cycles and relationships and improve communication. We feel role modelling of appropriate behaviours with animals and guidance in caring for the needs of animals are beneficial for children.

Assessing and Managing Risks

Whilst there are many benefits to providing children with access to animals and keeping pets at the Service, there are issues that Approved Providers and educators need to consider for the safety and wellbeing of both the children and the animals concerned prior to choosing a pet or having an animal visit the Service.

A comprehensive risk assessment should therefore be conducted when deciding the type of animal and the way the children engage with it.

Potential risks may include:

- diseases- from birds (Parrot fever -psittacosis) and other animals
- injury due to biting, kicking or pushing a child over (e.g. farm animals)
- scratching (e.g. chickens, rabbits, guinea pigs)
- pests and vermin (snakes, rats, mice)
- allergies (e.g. bees, wasps, ants)

Other things to consider include:

Some animals, such as lizards, turtles, snakes, spiders and tropical fish may not be an appropriate choice. Check with a veterinarian if you are unsure whether an animal is suitable for children and check with the local health department for regulations and advice regarding animals in the Service. Some states and territories require a license for keeping certain animals.

Animals that may be more likely to be suitable for the Service may include goldfish, hermit crabs, stick insects, mice or rats. All these animals are relatively low maintenance and can be left safely over a weekend if they are provided with enough food and water.

Disease

As animals can spread disease, access to animals at the Service requires special consideration to prevent this. Health authorities identify that germs can be present on the skin, hair, feathers and scales, and in the faeces, urine and saliva of animals. While these germs may not cause disease in the animal, they may cause disease in humans.

Effective Hand Washing and Cleaning

Children and adults will employ effective hand washing after touching or feeding animals, or cleaning their bedding, tanks, cages or enclosures. However, it is important to engage children with these tasks as they learn responsibility through 'hands on' learning experiences.

Appropriate Supervision and Clothing

Children will be appropriately supervised when they have contact with animals to avoid potential injury or harm to the child or the animal.

Ensure children wear appropriate clothing and footwear when handling animals and pets. Be aware of children who may have allergies to insects such as bees, wasps and ants that may be more apparent when animals are kept in the Service.

Care, Enclosures and Safety

Children and adults will employ effective hand washing after touching or feeding animals, and cleaning their bedding, tanks, cages, or enclosures. It is important to engage children with the cleaning of animal bedding, tanks, cages, or enclosures, as they learn responsibility through 'hands on' learning experiences.

Employees are responsible for assessing any situation in the Service where animals are involved to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children, Families, and animals. Children will be appropriately supervised when they have contact with animals to avoid potential injury or harm to the child or the animal.

All pets and their enclosures will be kept clean and hygienic with appropriate bedding, ventilation, food, and water supplies. Food will be made available for all pets and animals, at all times. During warmer weather ensure pets have adequate shade and water. Any animal or pet kept at the Service will be regularly fed, cleaned, vaccinated, and checked for fleas, diseases and wormed.

To ensure continual care over weekends and public holidays, a care schedule will be prepared to ensure responsible persons are identified who will maintain enclosure cleanliness and essential supplies as required. An employee may nominate to take pets home over these periods providing they are able to provide appropriate care and have safe, secure, and suitable environments.

Busy Bees learning programs will include how to properly care for animals and how to treat them appropriately. Children will be prepared for pets and animal visits by gathering perception into how the children may react and discussions on what to expect. Additionally, employees will ensure children, Families and other employees have considered the rationale for having a pet and the long-term implications of such a decision prior to getting the pet.

Animals including pets will only be allowed in certain parts of play areas with the prior approval of Management. No animal or pet will be taken into the food preparation area, nor will they be allowed near the eating or sleeping areas. Pets will not have access to children's bedding, toys, food, eating surfaces and utensils. Animals including pets will not be allowed in the sand pit at any time.

To maintain safety of children, employees and the animals, regular checklists will be conducted.

Personal Pet Visits

Employees and children's personal pets will only be allowed in the Service when Management has granted permission. It is important for the Service to complete a risk assessment with the employee and family prior to animals being brought to the Service. Families should also be advised that pets visiting the Service that are not confined (for example, in a fishbowl or bird/mouse cage) must not be left at the Service and be taken with the family member at the conclusion of their visit.

Unexpected Animal Visit

There are situations that may spontaneously occur, involving animals. For example, there may be a situation where an animal or bird has made its way into the Service. Depending on the type of animal, employees may use this as a spontaneous learning experience for the children. However, they will always ensure that the highest priority is the safety and wellbeing of the children.

If an animal or bird is potentially dangerous, such as a snake or spider, employees will contact an appropriate authority for assistance.

National Parks and Wildlife Service - 1300 361 967 or 13 000 WIRES - 13 00 094 737.

A professional should monitor the animal's movements to ensure a speedy and efficient capture, but priority is to be given to all employees, children, and Families safety. At no time is the potentially dangerous animal, insect, or bird to be approached or touched by employees, children, or Families.

Pests & Vermin

Regular pest inspections will be carried out by an accredited pest control company. Employees will monitor any occurrences of pests and vermin in the Service to determine the success of control measures and advise management of any evidence located. If the remains of an animal, or animal faeces has been found, the remains will be disposed of according to the local Council guidelines and the area where the evidence or remains were found will be thoroughly disinfected.

Where appropriate, employees will discuss safety issues relating to dangerous products, plants, vermin, and objects with the children.

Employees are responsible for assessing any situation where animals are involved to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children, families and animals

The main benefits of having pets and barnyard animals are:

1. **Responsibility:** Children learn about the requirements of a living being such as food, water, and exercise
2. **Childhood Development:** Pets help children develop nurturing and social skills. Developing positive feelings about pets can aid self-esteem and help children develop compassion and verbal communication skills
3. **Pets are friends:** Children turn to pets when they need a friend, confidante, or protector. Children often refer to pets as their 'best friend' as pets do not judge children
4. **Pets teach life lessons:** Pets are often the first experience a child has with death and grieving
5. **Pets are Fun:** Pets provide unconditional love and affection. Children can participate in safe games with their pets

Barnyard and Farm Guidelines:

Supervision	
An employee ONLY will open and close the gates to the barn yard area and the animal enclosures. Children will visit the barn yard maintaining correct educator/child ratios. Administration employees will be available to assist educators. All employees are to abide by the risk management plan.	
Hand Washing	
Employees and children will wash their hands immediately prior to and post visiting the barn yard. This will be in accordance with our hand washing procedure.	
Interaction with the Animals	
Collecting eggs * Note any present Allergies	This can be extended through the program to include cooking / chicken hatching etc. Note: For Health and Safety reasons eggs collected at the Service are not to be used for consumption.
Feeding	The animals will be fed daily by employees, but children may offer additional 'treats' such as diced fruit and vegetables etc.
Patting and Holding	Employees will model appropriate techniques when handling animals and will engage children in discussions about the animal's needs, likes, dislikes etc. This will be extended into the classroom through all areas.
Cleaning / Feeding	
Routine Cleaning of the Barn Yard will be conducted daily.	
Checklists and Records	
Complete relevant checklists and keep records.	

Animal and Barnyard Policy.

SOURCES

[ACECQA](#)

[National Quality Standard](#)

[Education and Care services National Regulations](#)

[Education and Care Service National Law Act 2010](#)

[Early Childhood Australia](#)

[Kidsafe](#)

[Staying Healthy 5th Edition-Preventing Infectious Diseases in early childhood education and care service](#)

VERSION CONTROL

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years and/or in line with legislation and organisation requirements.

Version	Date	Owner	Responsibility	Change Description
1	01/10/2023	Chief Pedagogy & Safeguarding Officer	Policy Development Officer	Replace all previous versions

This document is uncontrolled when printed and may be varied, replaced, or terminated without notice.