



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY POLICY

Rationale:

The National Quality Framework requires childcare centres to implement a balance of activities including outdoor physical play experiences which stimulate and develop physical and recreational skills. Current research into the area of physical activity among children suggests that children are not engaging in enough physical activity and are engaged in more sedentary experiences such as computer use or television viewing. At our Service, we endeavour to provide enough daily physical activity which is recommended for children aged 0-12 years. Children under five years should participate in at least one hour of structured physical activity and a minimum of one hour and up to several hours of free-play physical activity each day. Physical activity is important to develop children's gross motor skills, build resilience, build social skills and also acts to promote a healthy lifestyle. As children can spend a lot of their time in childcare centres and outside school hours care, it is important that services develop programmes to encourage physical activity, through play.

What is physical activity?

Any moderate to vigorous gross motor movement that increases the heart rate above the normal resting heart rate of an individual; produces perspiration; causes the individual to be out of breath and for children it is usually in the form of play.

Aims:

- For children to engage in half of the recommended daily amount of physical activity while at our Service.
- To provide an environment that is conducive to physical activity.
- To ensure staff are trained appropriately to implement physical activity experiences with the children.
- To decrease sedentary behaviours among children.
- To limit the use of electronic devices e.g. TV, mobiles, iPads.
- To use our local community to enhance physical activity levels.

Strategies/Practices/Procedures:

The Physical Environment

The physical environment of our Service has been established to promote high physical activity levels. Research has found that how environments are set up, impact significantly on active play. At our Service we will provide:

- A range of surfaces will be available for children to engage in various physical activities such as hard surfaces – concrete, compacted soil and paths which promote ball games, skipping rope, wheeled toys and bike riding.
- A range of equipment. Limited fixed equipment and increased portable equipment which the children can move around such as tyres, boxes and large blocks will be available at all times.
- Trees, shrubbery and paths, that will be maintained regularly to allow for active exploratory play.
- An aesthetically pleasing outdoor environment to the children, to encourage outdoor active play.
- Large open spaces to encourage running games and other group activities.
- A separation between age groups for the majority of the day. This will ensure that older children have the space to engage in physical activity without having to worry about accidentally hurting younger children, and younger children will be able to engage in active play without fear or withdrawal.

Note. Undercover areas and verandahs across the centre are shared areas for both indoor and outdoor play. Outdoor areas which are deemed as ‘indoor space’ shall not be used for outdoor physical play. To resemble Queensland outdoor living these areas are set up permanently with indoor activities as an extension of the indoors.

Staff

Research suggests that in order for appropriate physical activity levels to occur within education and care settings, staff must be adequately trained about the benefits of physical activity and have the knowledge to implement these experiences.

- Staff will be appropriately trained in the benefits of physical activity for children.
- Staff training will include games to play with children to increase their physical activity levels.
- Staff will implement structured physical activity daily e.g. ball games, dancing.
- Staff will act as role models for the children, and participate in physical activity regularly.
- Staff will implement an indoor/outdoor programme where children can make decisions about where they would like to play. Children who are more active will have ample opportunity to engage in active experiences.

Electronic Devices

We recognise that some forms of electronic media such as computers, iPads or televisions can be beneficial to children’s development. However, research has suggested that excessive TV viewing and computer use is linked to obesity and sedentary lifestyles, therefore its use will be limited at St Andrew’s Little Saints and OSHC.

The use of ICT will be minimal and each experience which contains an electronic device will be monitored by the Director and Educational Leader.

TV viewing and computer use will only occur as an educational tool.

The Local Community

Being a part of the College community, provides our Service with extra facilities that can be used every day. The grounds of the College are large enough for exploration of different facilities and resources. Research has found that natural environments provide the best opportunity for active physical play. Our physical activity programme within the College grounds will consist of:

- Regular excursions to various parts of the College.
- The ovals will be used to play active group games such as soccer and running races.
- Children will participate in College sporting events suitable to their age.
- The natural environment will be used to promote physical activity e.g. tree climbing.
- Use of sporting equipment e.g. bat and ball games

Measuring Tools:

Educational records will be regularly assessed by the Director and/or the Educational Leader.

Links to Other Policies:

Sun Protection Policy

Curriculum and Child Progress Policy

References and Further Reading:

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