

EARTHQUAKE MANAGEMENT POLICY

Earthquakes are a unique encounter in Australia. They are unpredictable and transpire without warning. Australia is located away from tectonic plate boundaries where large earthquakes occur more frequently. However, Australia can still experience potentially damaging earthquakes, which are caused by the sudden release of stress that slowly builds up across the plate as it moves northeast. To ensure the safety of children, educators, staff and families, education and care services should be prepared for earthquakes, minimising risks and implementing explicit management strategies if required.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.
QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP		
7.1.2	Management Systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service
7.1.3	Roles and responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision-making and operation of the service.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
S.174(2)(a)	Serious incident - Any emergency for which emergency services attended
S.174(2)(c)	Any incident that requires the approved provider to close, or reduce the number of children attending the service for a period
S.174(2)(c)	Any circumstance at the service that poses a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child attending the service
4	Definitions "multi-storey building" and "storey"
12(d)	Meaning of a serious incident- any emergency for which emergency services attended
97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
98	Telephone or other communication equipment

99	Children leaving the education and care service premises
136	First aid qualifications
168	Education and Care Services must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures are to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
175	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority

RELATED POLICIES

Acceptance and Refusal Authorisation Policy Delivery of Children to and Collection from Education and Care Services Premises Emergency and Evacuation Policy Family Communication Policy	Health and Safety Policy Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy Lockdown Policy Record Keeping and Retention Policy Supervision Policy
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DEFINITION

An earthquake is a shaking of the surface of the Earth's crust. They strike without warning and can vary in severity. Earthquakes are the result of a sudden release of stored energy in the Earth's crust that creates seismic waves. The severity of an earthquake is measured using the Richter Scale. Over the last 80 years, there has been 17 earthquakes registering 6 or more on the Richter Scale.

PURPOSE

Preparing for an earthquake requires our Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) Service to learn what should be done before, during and after an earthquake in order to minimise the risk of children, and staff being injured.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, educators, approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, volunteers and visitors of the OSHC Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Management will ensure that the OSHC Service is as 'earthquake safe' as possible by having clear strategies and procedures in place for implementation before, during and after the earthquake. This policy reminds educators, staff, volunteers and students of the procedure to follow in the event of an earthquake emergency.

BEFORE AN EARTHQUAKE

Preparing for an earthquake will help reduce damages to the OSHC Service's structure and prevent injuries to children, families, educators and staff.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/MANAGEMENT AND EDUCATORS WILL:

- ensure obligations under the *Education and Care National Law and Regulations* are met and understood by all educators and staff
- ensure all educators, including casual/relief educators and staff members, are familiar with our *Earthquake Management Policy*, procedures and regulatory requirements
- ensure new educators, staff, volunteers and students are provided with information and training about our *Earthquake Management Policy* and procedures during induction
- ensure emergency and evacuation policies and procedures are available for inspection at the OSHC Service's premises at all times
- conduct earthquake drills in accordance with the *Emergency Evacuation Calendar*. The drills will be conducted on different days over the week, ensuring that all children participate in the drill
- earthquake drills will be recorded using the *Emergency Evacuation-Record* and discussed at team meetings to ensure continuous improvement
- emergency evacuation rehearsals (drills) will be practiced *every three months*, including identifying safe places within the Service to go with the children in case of an earthquake
- ensure families are informed when an emergency evacuation rehearsal or drill has occurred
- ensure each room or area has an *Emergency Evacuation Kit* located in a prominent position
- regularly audit and restock *Emergency Evacuation Kit*
- ensure emergency evacuation plans are displayed in prominent positions near each exit and in the indoor and outdoor learning environments
- ensure all educators, including casual/relief educators and staff members, are familiar with our *Earthquake Management Policy*, procedures and regulatory requirements
- practice **DROP, COVER** and **HOLD** or **DROP AND BE TURTLE SAFE** –with children
- Drop, Cover and Hold or Drop & be a Turtle safe involves children learning to:
 - Drop on your hands and knees, cover your head and neck with your arms, crawl only as far as needed to reach cover from falling objects.
 - Hold onto any durable furniture until the shaking stops and you are told it is safe to come out by an adult.
- identify safe places within the OSHC Service to go with the children when an earthquake strikes

- a) this may be a strong table that you can hold on to the table legs to keep it from moving away and assist in protecting the children and yourselves
 - b) next to an interior wall, away from windows that can shatter cause injury
 - c) ensure it is a place that is away from tall furniture that can fall
- check the OSHC Service insurance policy to ensure earthquake inclusion
- seek qualified advice to ensure the OSHC Service building is compliant
- ensure shelving is secured to the wall and open shelving has 'lips' to prevent equipment sliding off during an earthquake
- ensure equipment is stored securely and safely
- conduct annual risk assessments to identify, monitor and eliminate any hazards that may occur during an earthquake
- refer to the *Emergency and Evacuation Policy* for steps to be followed when the Service needs to close in response to an emergency
- ensure the regulatory authority is notified within 24 hours via the [National Quality Agenda IT System \(NQAITS\)](#) if the Service is required to close for a period of time as a result of a local emergency [Reg.175 (2)(b)]
- ensure the Department of Education is notified within 24 hours if the Service is temporarily closed via CCS Software or Provider Entry Point (PEP)
- submit a serious incident notification to the regulatory authority within 24 hours when there has been an emergency that has posed a risk to the safety and wellbeing of the children.

DURING AN EARTHQUAKE

When an earthquake begins it will happen suddenly with rapid shaking. Management, staff, educators and children are to immediately apply what they have practiced during the drills.

MANAGEMENT AND EDUCATORS WILL

- Call 'EARTHQUAKE – DROP, COVER & HOLD or DROP AND BE A TURTLE'
- Assist children to get into the correct position

If inside – move away from windows, heavy objects or shelves.

- Drop Cover and Hold preferably under a sturdy table
- keep clear of windows and overhead fittings

If outside – move away from trees, powerlines, building and then Drop, Cover and Hold

- Drop to the ground

- Cover your head and neck with arms and hands
- Hold on until the shaking stops
- Protect babies with your body or mattresses if available
- Once the shaking stops and management has confirmed it is safe, educators and children will be given the 'ALL CLEAR'

AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE

Once the shaking has ceased, management and educators need to begin implementing a recovery plan as you prepare for the chance of any aftershocks occurring.

MANAGEMENT AND EDUCATORS WILL:

- stay calm and reassure children
- evaluate the need to evacuate if there are fires, gas leaks or other structural damage that requires immediate evacuation
- call 000 for Emergency Services and seek and follow advice
- implement *Emergency Evacuation Procedures*
- if evacuation is required, move to a safe location and be aware of hazards
- check attendance list for children, staff and visitors
- contact parents if evacuation is required
- turn off electricity, gas and water. Check water, gas and electric lines for damages. If any damages are present, turn off the water and electricity
- assess any injuries that may have occurred and provide first aid
- do not run outside, unless evacuation of the building is needed due to damage
- report any damages to Emergency Services
- turn on the radio and listen as Emergency Services will broadcast the most appropriate advice for the OSHC Service
- stay out of the OSHC Service building if it is damaged and unsafe
- following the emergency evacuation, an *Emergency Evacuation Record* and an *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record* will be completed
- the approved provider will make a notification of a serious incident to a regulatory authority (within 24 hours) through the [NQA IT System](#) when emergency services have attended an education and care service in response to an emergency, rather than as a precaution or for any other reason

DEALING WITH TRAUMA

Emergencies and natural disasters are extremely stressful, and it is normal for children and adults to feel overwhelmed and distressed. People cope with trauma in many different ways. Children look to adults for reassurance, care and opportunities to share their feelings. It is important for educators to understand the impact of disasters and seek help when needed.

The approved provider/nominated supervisor will support educators to provide information to parents and families following any emergency or natural disaster including:

- will the OSHC Service be open in the days and weeks ahead?
- how to find alternative care and education
- how to contact services for support with dealing with trauma

Several organisations offer support for educators in these situations:

[Emerging Minds](#)

BeYou- [Trauma informed practice](#)

[BeYou Educator Wellbeing after a natural disaster](#)

PREPARING FOR AN EMERGENCY

Australian Government Department of Education. [Help in an Emergency](#)

[Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology](#)

[Queensland Fire and emergency services](#)

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

The *Earthquake Management Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis in conjunction with children, families, staff, educators and management.

CHILDCARE CENTRE DESKTOP RESOURCES

Emergency Evacuation Kit Checklist	Emergency Evacuation Rehearsal Procedure
Emergency Evacuation Procedure	Emergency Support Services Record
Emergency Evacuation Record	Emergency Management Plan (EMP)
Emergency Evacuation Rehearsal Calendar	Potential Emergencies - Risk Assessment
Emergency Evacuation Rehearsal Evaluation	Action Plan

SOURCES

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2025). [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#)

Australian Government Department of Education (2020). Help in an emergency

Australian Government –Department of Home Affairs. [Emergency management](#)

Australian Government – Geoscience Australia

<http://www.ga.gov.au/news-events/news/latest-news/australian-earthquakes-explained>

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (amended 2023).

New Zealand Government Get Ready ShakeOut

<https://www.shakeout.govt.nz/how/schools/>

Queensland Government Emergency services and safety <https://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/dealing-disasters/disaster-types/earthquakes>

[Western Australian Legislation Education and Care Services National Law \(WA\) Act 2012](#)

[Western Australian Legislation Education and Care Services National Regulations \(WA\) Act 2012](#)

Work Health and Safety Act 2011 <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2017C00305>

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Toni Vescio	Business Manager	18/03/2025
POLICY REVIEWED	MARCH 2025	NEXT REVIEW DATE	MARCH 2026
VERSION NUMBER	V4.03.25		
MODIFICATIONS	• annual policy maintenance • Childcare Centre Desktop resource section added • sources checked for currency and repaired as required		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS		NEXT REVIEW DATE
JANUARY 2024	• annual policy maintenance • regulation re: notification to regulatory authority added • sources checked for currency and repaired as required		JANUARY 2025