

Safe Transportation

Policy/Procedure Number: **QA2 - 15**

Policy/Procedure Requirement: National Quality Standards 2, 6 & 7; Regulations 4, 99, 100-102, 102AA, 102AAB & 168

Policy Statement

This policy outlines the safe transportation of children by the Service in line with the **Education and Care Services National Regulations Division 7 of Part 4.2 of Chapter 4**. Children must not be transported by, or on transportation arranged by, the Service unless **written authorisation** has been provided in accordance with Regulation 102A. All transportation will follow Service procedures, ACECQA guidelines, and ACT compliance expectations to ensure children's health, safety, and wellbeing.

Rationale

Transportation presents unique risks requiring careful planning, authorisation, supervision, and emergency preparedness. This policy ensures that no child is transported without proper authorisation, all legal requirements are met, and best practices for safety and accountability are implemented, and the safe arrival of all children.

Definitions

The policy applies to **transportation that may or may not be part of an excursion** where transportation is provided by an FDC Educator, an approved Educator Assistant.

An **excursion** means **an outing** organised by an FDC Educator and means a walk, drive or trip to and from a destination **as part of its educational program**. Examples of an excursion are as follows:

- To a specific destination, for example the library, museum or park
- As part of the educational program, for example playgroup, music

Examples of transportation that is not part of an excursion are:

- Transport to and from school or preschool, or another location from/to the FDC residence
- Transport to and from children's homes to the FDC residence (in rare circumstances)
- Under school age children accompany the Educator when school age children are transported from/ to the FDC residence to/from school
- Multiple stops on the journey, where different school age children are dropped at multiple different schools
- Children are transported on public transport with FDC Educator to school

Regular transportation means the transportation by an FDC Educator of a child being in care, where the circumstances relevant to a risk assessment are substantially the same for each occasion on which the child is transported.

Strategies and Practices

Risk Assessment (Regulation 102B, 102C)

- A comprehensive transport specific risk assessment is required to identify and assess risks that transporting a child may pose to the child's safety, health or wellbeing.
- The risk assessment will specify:
 - how the identified risks will be managed by eliminating or minimising the impact using control measures
 - evaluate the current risk or potential harm after implementing control measures
 - review and monitor the risk or potential harm to ensure it continues to be managed as a low risk
- The risk assessment must be completed before parent authorisation is sought for the provision of transport (Reg 102B).
- The risk assessment must include:
 - Proposed route and duration of the transportation
 - Proposed pick-up location and destination
 - Means/ mode of transport
 - Any requirements for seatbelts or safety restraints (as per the law of ACT/ NSW)
 - Any water hazards
 - Number of adults and children involved in the excursion
 - Given the risks posed by transportation, the number of educators or other responsible adults to provide supervision and whether any adults with specialised skills are required
 - Proposed items to be taken (mobile phone, fire extinguisher, first aid kit, medications, medical plans, food, water, list of emergency contact numbers)
 - Process for entering and exiting:
 - Educator's FDC residence
 - Pick-up location or destination (as required)
 - Procedures for embarking and disembarking the means of transport, including how each child is to be accounted for on embarking and disembarking
- This must identify and address
 - The proposed route and destination
 - Seatbelts, child restraints, and seating arrangements
 - Number of children and adults involved
 - Supervision strategies during entry, exit, and transit
 - Communication methods during transit
 - Emergency management procedures (breakdowns, accidents, missing child)
 - Strategies to ensure children are not mistakenly left in vehicles
- Educators must use Service-approved risk assessment templates (aligned with **ACECQA transportation risk assessment templates**)

Authorisations (Regulation 102D)

A child must not be transported by, or on transportation arranged by, the Service without **written authorisation** from a parent or authorised nominee. The policies and procedures for transporting children are published on the Service website and also available at the Service.

The authorisation must state:

- Child's name
- Reason the child to be transported
 - For regular outing - a description of when the child is to be taken on the regular outings
 - For non-regular transportation – the date the child is to be transported
- Description of the pick-up location and destination
- Means/ mode of transport
- Period during which the child is to be transported
- Expected number of children to be transported
- Expected number of staff members and any other adults who will accompany and supervise the children during the transportation
- Any requirements for seatbelts or safety restraints (as per the law of ACT/ NSW)
- A risk assessment has been prepared and is available with the Educator/ Service
- Written confirmation that the parent/guardian understands and agrees to the transportation

Regular transportation requires written authorisation **once every 12 months**, unless circumstances change.

Private Arrangements

- Private transport arrangements between Educators' family members and parents are **not approved** by the Service. Only the Educator or a Service-approved driver (e.g., Coordinator) may transport children

Responsibilities of the Educators:

FDC Educators are responsible for ensuring that all children are adequately supervised at all times, and all reasonable precautions are taken to protect children from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury.

Children may be transported by FDC Educators as part of an excursion or for other purposes (e.g. school drop off), and the respective FDC Educators have responsibility for the children during that period of transportation.

- Children aged from **4 years old but under 7 years old cannot travel in the front seat** of a vehicle that has two or more rows of seats, unless all other back seats are occupied by children younger than 7 years in an approved child restraint or booster seat. In this case, the oldest or largest child should sit in the front seat and they must use a booster seat and a seatbelt. **Written consent of parents/ guardians** required prior to placing any child under 7 years old in the front seat
- Children aged from 7 years old but under 16 years old who are too small to be restrained by a seat belt properly adjusted and fastened should use an approved booster seat

- Children in booster seats must be restrained by a suitable lap and sash type approved seat belt that is properly adjusted and fastened, or by a suitable approved child safety harness that is properly adjusted and fastened

Children are not to travel in any vehicle other than that driven by the Educator or a driver approved by the Service.

Educators will:

- Ensure that **every child in care is digitally (ESI) signed in and out** through online platform Hubhello **at the time of arrival** and **on departure** by the parent or authorised nominee
- If the **ESI is not working** or the **parent forgot to sign in/out** or has not saved the times, get the parent to **manually** sign in the attendance record with the correct date and drop off/ pick up times
- Ensure **no child is ever signed in** at the FDC residence or other location **before they actually arrive** at the location and are sighted as being there
- Ensure that no child is transported in a vehicle without being **accompanied by the Educator**
- Ensure vehicles are kept locked and are not accessible to children when not in use

Before the Journey

- Plan ahead to minimise risks and avoid accidents and injuries during transportation
- Ensure the **child restraint check certificate** is current
- Ensure they hold a full Australian Drivers Licence
- Ensure the vehicle has comprehensive motor vehicle insurance to cover FDC children
- Ensure the vehicle registration is current
- Ensure **transportation risk assessments** or **excursion risk assessments** have been completed as appropriate, and parent authorisation received for each child transported
- Ensure that only the right number of children that can be safely transported in the car are transported
- Conduct a head count and roll call as the children enter the vehicle
- Check the FDC residence prior to departure to ensure that no children are left behind
- Ensure all children are secured into their seats with child restraints, booster seats or seatbelts as appropriate
- Ensure that the child safety restraints/ seat belts are properly adjusted and fastened
- Ensure that any goods carried in the vehicle (especially if it is a hatch back or station wagon) are stored safely below the level of the rear seat
- Ensure no articles are placed on the rear parcel shelf or front dashboard
- Give children clear guidelines in regard to expected behaviour during the journey, including the need to stay in the group and follow instructions at all times
- Commence the journey after confirming that all children are secured and it is safe to leave

While on an Excursion or Regular Outing to a specific destination (e.g. park, library)

- Follow the steps outlined under 'Before the Journey' when using transport to attend an excursion or regular outing to a specific destination
- Park the vehicle in a safe location close to the entry of the excursion site/ destination
- Conduct a head count and roll call when **exiting** the vehicle at the destination
- Conduct a visual check of the vehicle after removing all children
- Secure the children into their seats prior to departing
- Conduct a head count and roll call as the children **enter** the vehicle
- If a child is unaccounted for, the FDC Educator must immediately make all necessary enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts including physical searches of the vehicle and destination and, if necessary, contact the child's family and/or the police

Drop off to or Collection from Home (Only in Special Circumstances)

- Park the vehicle safely and turn off the vehicle's ignition
- Must not leave the vicinity of the vehicle (children must not be left unsupervised at any time) when collecting or dropping off a child at home
 - There should be a process arranged with the parent for Educator to collect/ drop the child without the need to leave other children unsupervised in the vehicle
- Ensure the parent/guardian sign the child onto or off the vehicle in the ESI
- Ensure the child is secured into their seat. If a parent secures their own child on the vehicle, the Educator must check to confirm prior to recommence the journey
- Repeat the above process for each subsequent stop

Duration of the excursion and on return to FDC residence

- Upon reaching the FDC residence:
 - Park the vehicle in a safe location close to the entry of the FDC residence and switch off the ignition
 - Remove the children from the vehicle and escorts them inside the residence
 - Conduct a head count and roll call once inside
- Conduct a thorough search of the vehicle once the children have been removed from the vehicle

Vehicle safety/crash or transport related injury

- Ensure vehicle/s are suitably maintained, roadworthy, safe for children, registered and adequately insured
- Adhere to national and state/territory laws and safety standards regarding motor vehicle safety
- Ensure appropriate procedures are followed in the event of a vehicle crash or transport related injury involving FDC Educator or children (refer to **Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy**)
- Ensure that emergency procedures are followed in the event of a vehicle crash or transport-related injury involving any children

- Ensure that any child restraint or seat that is involved in a crash will not be used for transporting children and will be disposed of

Responsibilities of the Service/ Coordinators:

The Service and Coordinators are responsible for:

- Establish and disseminate this policy, and risk assessment and authorisation templates to FDC Educators
- Provide/ facilitate as appropriate, information and support for Educators on road safety topics, including vehicle and driveway safety, current legislation and regulations

Resources and Further Readings

- ACECQA (2023) Guide to the National Quality Framework
- ACECQA (2023) Policies and procedures guidelines: *Safe transportation of children policy and procedure guidelines*
- ACECQA (2023) Information Sheets
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Amended 2023)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (Amended 2023)

Related FDC Policies, Procedures & Documents

- Delivery and Collection of Children (QA2-13)
- Excursions and Regular Outings Policy (QA2-14)
- Transportation Risk Assessment & Authorisations
- Child ID Cards
- Medical Management Plans

Last Reviewed: October 2025

Next Review: October 2026