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Safe Transportation in  
Family Day Care

## What is safe transportation?

When Family Day Care services provide or arrange the transportation of children, it is crucial to ensure compliance with all regulatory requirements, and to have policies, procedures, and practices in place that ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of the children.

As Family Day Care educators, you may be responsible for transporting children as part of your service. This may include driving them from one location to another, walking children to school and back, or catching public transport.

It is important to know that transportation may present additional risks to children, depending on how it occurs and how transitions between a vehicle and an education and care service premises or other location are managed. These risks apply equally to single trips, such as excursions, or during periods of regular transportation, such as the daily school drop-off.

To manage these risks, national law and regulations are in place to strengthen the arrangements for transport that occurs when children are under the care of an education and care service.

New requirements introduced in March 2023, although not applicable to Family Day Care services, offer an opportunity to ensure transportation arrangements at your service are in line with best practice guidelines and keep the children in your care safe.







## Regulatory requirements for transporting children

A good starting point is to review the compliance that is required when transporting children. The National Laws and Regulations should always lay the foundations for your practice, service management, and personal conduct as a Family Day Care educator.

The National Law states under:

- ▶ **Section 167 (3) of the Law – offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards:** A Family Day Care educator must ensure that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect a child being educated and cared for as part of a Family Day Care service from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury.
- ▶ **Section 165 of the Law – offence to inadequately supervise children:** The Approved Provider of an education and care service must ensure that all children being educated and cared for by the service are adequately supervised at all times that the children are in the care of that service.

These two laws are the most relevant when it comes to ensuring compliance with transporting children safely and correctly.

The requirements of the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations apply whenever a service is operating. Excursions and transportation are sometimes provided as part of an education and care service and require a range of considerations by the Service Provider to ensure compliance with the National Law and Regulations. These requirements also apply to services regulated under the *Supplementary Provisions Act*.

For excursions and transportation that are part of an education and care service, staff must consider:

- ▶ **Children leaving the education and care service premises** – Regulation 99(4)
- ▶ **Child enrolment records to be kept by Approved Provider and family day care educator** – Regulation 160(3)(b)

- ▶ **Authorisations to be kept on enrolment record** – Regulation 161(1) and 161(2)
- ▶ **Transport risk assessment must be conducted before service transports child** – Regulation 102B
- ▶ **Conduct of risk assessment for transporting of children by the education and care service** – Regulation 102C
- ▶ **Authorisation for service to transport children** – Regulation 102D
- ▶ **Education and care service must have policies and procedures (transportation)** – Regulation 168(2)(ga).

Unfortunately, the recent death of a three-year-old child who was left on a service's minibus, and the case of a 14-month-old child left behind on another service's bus, illustrate that tragic mistakes can happen when children are being transported by their service.

No parent, caregiver or educator wants to see young lives being placed in danger in this way, and to better manage transportation risks and reduce the chances of these incidents from occurring, the Education Council introduced new requirements under the *Education and Care Services*



*National Regulations* on 1 October 2020, to strengthen arrangements when children are being transported under the care of their service.

These requirements for safe transportation of children apply to providers of education and care services that offer, or arrange, transportation of children as part of their service. The requirements cover journeys between home, care and other locations (whether on a regular or one-off basis), and they mean that services must:

- ▶ Conduct transport-specific risk assessments
- ▶ Obtain written authorisations from parents or other authorised people and
- ▶ Have transport-specific policies and procedures in place.

The Regulations include:

- ▶ An amended definition of regular transportation – Regulation 4(1)
- ▶ A requirement that a transport risk assessment must be conducted before service transports a child – Regulation 102B

- ▶ A requirement that education and care services must have policies and procedures (transportation) – Regulation 168(2)(ga)
- ▶ Conducting risk assessments for transporting of children by the education and care service – Regulation 102C
- ▶ Authorisations for the service to transport children – Regulation 102D.

As of 1 March 2023, there are specific new requirements for periods of regular transportation for centre-based services (Regulations 102E, 102F, 175 and 177).

However, it is good practice for **all** Approved Providers, Nominated Supervisors, Family Day Care co-ordinators and educators to apply the requirements for regular transportation to **all** periods of transportation, including single trips.



## What does the National Quality Framework say?

It is also important to be aware of the links to the *National Quality Framework*. The safe transportation of children falls under Quality Area 2 of the National Quality Standard: Children's Health and Safety – specifically, **Standard 2.2** contains two elements that are relevant to the safe transportation of children:

- ▶ **Element 2.2.1 – Supervision:** At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensures children are protected from harm and hazard, and
- ▶ **Element 2.2.2 – Incident and emergency management:** Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.

When reviewing your services current practices, there are excellent reflective questions in the *Guide to the National Quality Framework* relating to Standard 2.2 and are designed

to provoke critical thinking around your current practices. Some of the questions that relate to safe transportation include:

- ▶ How do we discuss and manage transport arrangements, including supervision and safety considerations (for example, child safety in educators' vehicles and safe fitting of car seats)?
- ▶ How do we ensure children are alerted to safety issues and encouraged to develop the skills to assess and manage risks to their own safety?
- ▶ How do we conduct risk assessments for potential excursions and plan for children's safety during excursions?

## Family Day Care policies and procedures

Family Day Care providers must ensure policies and procedures are in place for the following:

- ▶ Safe transportation of children
- ▶ Illness, injury and trauma
- ▶ Authorisation to transport children
- ▶ Excursions
- ▶ Transport risk assessment
- ▶ Transporting children management plan
- ▶ Supervision
- ▶ Administration of first aid
- ▶ Child protection.



## What equipment do we need for the safe transportation of children?

While Family Day Care educators need to have a solid understanding of the compliance with transportation requirements, it's also essential to understand safety equipment requirements. Safety equipment may include:

- ▶ Car seats
- ▶ Boosters
- ▶ Prams
- ▶ Hi-vis vests
- ▶ Pram platform attachments
- ▶ Helmets
- ▶ First aid kit – a well-stocked first aid kit should be available in case of any injuries or emergencies during transportation
- ▶ Mobile phone and emergency contact list – a mobile phone should be readily available in case of an emergency,

and a list of emergency contact numbers for the children being transported should be on hand.

### Car seats

An age-appropriate car seat is the most critical piece of equipment needed to transport a child in a car. By law, every child car seat sold in Australia must meet strict requirements set out in Australian Standard (AS 1754). A standard is a published document which sets out specifications and procedures designed to ensure that a material, product, method or service is fit for its purpose and consistently performs in the way it was intended.

**It is illegal to use child car seats obtained from overseas** as they do not meet the Australian Standard. This is why it is essential for Family Day Care educators to purchase items that meet the Australian Standard to ensure the provision of high quality and safe equipment.

### Australian Standards:

For further information, see Section Three of these Safety Guidelines.

Australian Standard		
Reference	Title	Area covered
AS/NZS 1754*	<i>Child restraint systems for use in motor vehicles</i>	Seatbelts and child care seat
AS/NZS 4370	<i>Restraint of children with disabilities</i>	Seatbelts and child care seat
AS/NZS 8005	<i>Accessories for child restraints for use in motor vehicles</i>	Child car seat accessories
Other Regulatory Documents		
Australian Road Rules		
*Mandatory Australian Standard		

Family Day Care operators will also need to be aware of other equipment that is subject to the Australian Standard, such as:

- ▶ Standard for helmets
- ▶ Safety standard and requirements for prams and strollers.

State and Commonwealth governments often refer to Australian Standards (AS) or joint Australian/New Zealand Standards (AS/NZS) in their legislation. In these cases,

standards are mandatory. It is mandatory for all child car seats used, bought, or sold in Australia to meet Australian/ New Zealand Standard **AS/NZS 1754**. This Standard label will be on the packaging of new car seats and on the car seat itself.

Road trauma is one of the leading causes of injury and death for children and young people. A contributing factor to these incidents is children being placed in the wrong type of child car seat for their age and size, or the seat is incorrectly used or fitted. Research has shown that approved and properly fitted child car seats may reduce the risk of death or serious injury by up to 70 per cent. [Road Safety NSW](#) has a website to help you check your local area for qualified, authorised child car seat installers. They will:

- ▶ Inspect and adjust child car seats to make sure they are installed correctly
- ▶ Fit child car seats that require vehicle modifications
- ▶ Install more anchorage points
- ▶ Retrofit lap and lap-sash seatbelt
- ▶ Show you the correct way to use a child car seat, so that you can be confident the children in your care are safe.



Up to 6 months

Approved rear facing child car seat



6 months to 4 years

Approved rear or forward facing child car seat



4+ years

Approved forward facing child car seat or booster seat



145cm or taller

Suggested minimum height to use adult lap-sash seatbelt

Many local councils offer free child car restraint checks and installations at different times of the year.

The above visual indicates car seat requirements according to the national child restraint laws:

- Children up to the age of six months must be secured in an approved rearward facing restraint
- Children aged from six months old but under four years old, must be secured in either a rearward or forward-facing approved child restraint with an in-built harness

- Children under four years old cannot travel in the front seat of a vehicle with two or more rows
- Children aged from four years old but under seven years old, must be secured in a forward-facing approved child restraint with an in-built harness or an approved booster seat
- Children aged from four years old but under seven years old, cannot travel in the front seat of a vehicle with two or more rows, unless all other back seats are occupied by

children younger than seven years in an approved child restraint or booster seat

- Children aged from seven years old but under 16 years old who are too small to be restrained by a seatbelt properly adjusted and fastened, are strongly recommended to use either a forward-facing seat with an in-built harness for older children, an approved booster seat, or an approved child safety harness in conjunction with the vehicle's seatbelt.
- Children in booster seats must be restrained by a suitable lap and sash type approved seatbelt that is properly adjusted and fastened, or by a suitable approved child safety harness that is properly adjusted and fastened.

If a child is too small for the child restraint specified for their age, they should be kept in their current child restraint until it is safe for them to move to the next level.

If a child is too large for the child restraint specified for their age, they may move to the next level of child restraint.

In Australia, child restraints and boosters are typically assigned an expiry date, which is usually between six to ten years from their manufacture. Although this is not legally enforced,

you will need to replace these seats once they expire. This is because the materials in the seat can degrade over time, which increases the risk of failure and reduces the seat's effectiveness in protecting a child.

If you are considering second-hand child car restraints, there are several key points to consider before purchase:

- Does the restraint meet the Australian Standard AS/NZS 1754?
- Are you aware of the history of the restraint? Restraints that have been involved in a car accident should not be used. The damage may not be visible; however, it may fail if placed under the stress of another accident.
- Is the restraint supplied with all parts, including the instruction booklet?
- Is the restraint less than six years old (from the date of manufacture)? The manufacture and/or expiry date can be found on the underside of the car seat or at the bottom of the base.
- Is the restraint in good condition with no splits, cracks, or stress marks on the restraint shell and no frayed, worn, or damaged straps?



Even if your child restraint has not expired but was involved in a car accident, the safest choice is to always replace the child restraint.

### **Prams and strollers**

It's very likely that many Family Day Care educators are using prams or strollers when transporting children. The terms 'pram' and 'stroller' tend to be used loosely and can be used for the same product. Generally speaking, a pram is used for newborns, and strollers are used for children who are older and can sit upright.

To keep children safe, it's important to follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully every time you set up your pram or stroller. Check that the folding mechanisms are securely locked into place to ensure your pram or stroller can't collapse.

The following tips can help you reduce the risk of a child falling out of the pram or stroller:

- ▶ Always use the five-point safety harness to securely strap in a child – and also let the child know that you won't move off until they're strapped in

- ▶ As children grow and becomes more mobile, it's important to teach them not to stand up or lean out of the pram or stroller
- ▶ Strollers designed for more than one child must meet this requirement for all seating positions.

Reduce the risk of the pram or stroller tipping over and injuring a child by:

- ▶ Placing bags in the basket underneath the pram – don't hang them over the handles
- ▶ Not exceeding the pram or stroller's specified carriage weight limits. Exceeding weight limits can cause instability and it might also break the pram.
- ▶ Watching for older children trying to climb on the pram or stroller. Teach older children that only one child can fit into a pram or stroller.

Reduce the risk of strangulation and suffocation by:

- ▶ Always securing the harness buckle after you take a child out of the pram or stroller
- ▶ Not placing pillows or blankets in prams or strollers.





## Risk assessment and risk management

Under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* (Regulations 102B and 102C), risk assessments must be carried out to identify and assess risks to children's safety, health and wellbeing associated with transportation. Decisions need to be made about how best to manage these risks and plans that have been put in place to ensure control measures are implemented.

The key risk factors when transporting children include:

- ▶ The experience of the driver and licensing conditions for the vehicle being used
- ▶ The age, ability, needs and skills of children being transported
- ▶ The experience of adults involved in transportation and their capacity for supervising children
- ▶ Movement of children between the vehicle and venues
- ▶ Traffic environments and road conditions

- ▶ Communication to and from the vehicle, including mobile phone reception
- ▶ Medical conditions of children, such as asthma, allergies and anaphylaxis
- ▶ First aid provision and management of illness, injuries and emergencies
- ▶ External events such as traffic incidents, crashes, extreme weather or natural disasters
- ▶ Environmental hazards such as temperature extremes, pollution or smoke
- ▶ Child safe practices, taking into account that children are being exposed to different people when they are out in public.

Risk assessments are to be carried out before authorisation of any transportation is requested. The risk assessment will identify and assess risks that transportation may pose to the safety, health and wellbeing of children, as well as outline the

steps required to manage and minimise risks. There are many factors that must be considered prior to transportation to ensure regulatory requirements are met.

These can be addressed by using a risk assessment template. [ACECQA has many useful templates](#) that can be used, and contextualised to be more appropriate for your Family Day Care service, and personalised for the children in your care.

The template should include:

1. Pick-up location and destination(s)
2. Estimated time of travel between different locations
3. Proposed routine and means of transport
4. Any requirements for seatbelts and safety restraints under NSW road regulations
5. Any water hazards
6. The number of adults and children involved in transportation

7. After identifying the risks posed by transportation, a suitable number of educators or other responsible adults that are required to provide supervision, including any adults with specialised skills
8. Whether any items should be readily available during transportation (for example, a mobile phone and list of emergency contact numbers for the children being transported)
9. The process for entering and exiting your service and the pickup location or destination (as required)
10. Procedures for embarking and disembarking the means of transport, including how each child is to be accounted for on embarking and disembarking.
11. Procedures for checking the interior of the vehicle to ensure and confirm no children remain.

Approved Providers, Nominated Supervisors, Family Day Care co-ordinators and educators need to take specific steps to

minimise risk and ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children during periods of transportation.

One way to support this is by using a set of procedures for daily risk identification and management. This can help you to identify, assess and manage the risk of harm, including minimising the risk of children being left in vehicles after being transported.

A safety checklist is another document that is important in managing risks for transport. Safety checklists and regular transportation record forms are not exhaustive but can be used as a starting point and should be adapted to meet the individual needs of your service. These are 'living' documents, to be amended as circumstances change and new risks arise. Therefore, it is important to schedule regular reviews of these documents to ensure that risks during transportation of children are identified and managed before they can cause harm.



## Authorisations for transportation

One important item in most checklists is “current authorisation allowing child to be transported”, where a parent (or another person authorised in the child’s enrolment record) must provide written authorisation for the child to be transported.

Written authorisations for transport and excursions are important as they:

- ▶ Clarify expectations and processes for all parties
- ▶ Contain necessary details to allow families to provide informed authorisation
- ▶ Provide formal authorisation from families to transport children outside of the service premises.

Examples of transportation other than as part of an excursion are:

- ▶ Transport runs to drop off or pick up children from schools
- ▶ Transport runs to drop off or pick up children from their homes

- ▶ A Family Day Care educator drives three children in her care to school each afternoon to pick up her own two children
- ▶ A Family Day Care educator provides education and care to school age children and younger children. The educator does school drop-off/pick-up for the school children using her car, and the younger children accompany the educator on these school runs. In this scenario, the educator must consider both the school children and younger children in the transportation risk assessment and obtain authorisations for both the school children and younger children for this transport.

Written authorisation must include:

- ▶ The child’s name
- ▶ The reason they’re being transported
- ▶ A description of when the child will be transported (for regular transportation) or the date they’ll be transported (for other transportation)





- ▶ A description of the proposed pick-up location and destination
- ▶ The means of transport
- ▶ The period of time when the child will be transported
- ▶ The expected number of children likely to be transported, plus the anticipated number of staff and any other adults who will be accompanying and supervising them during the trip
- ▶ Any legal requirements for seatbelts or safety restraints
- ▶ Confirmation that a risk assessment has been prepared and is available at the service
- ▶ Confirmation that written policies and procedures for transporting children are also available at the service.

Every time a Family Day Care educator takes children outside the Family Day Care residence or approved Family Day Care venue, they will need to consider whether the excursion is a regular outing. Written authorisation must be obtained prior to an excursion from a parent, or other person with authority to authorise taking the child outside the Family Day Care residence or approved venue.

A scenario involving both an excursion and transportation other than as part of an excursion, could be an educator providing education and care to school age children and younger children. For example, on Tuesday mornings, the educator drives to school to drop off the school children, then continues to a local library with the younger children.

This scenario involves transportation that is not part of an excursion (the transportation of the older children to school) and an excursion (the taking of the younger children to the library).

Two sets of documentation are required: risk assessment and authorisations complying with Regulations 102B–102D for the school children, and risk assessment and authorisations complying with Regulations 100–102 for the younger children.

It is important to note that the route for the younger children would need to include the school drop-off.



## Your roles and responsibilities

One important way to clearly define the roles, responsibilities and expectations for the people who hold different positions within your service would be through documentation. One of the most common occasions we see the transportation of children in Family Day Care services is during excursions. The clear and detailed procedures for excursions should be documented in your excursion policies and procedures guidelines, which will need to align with the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*.

All educators should receive a practical induction and regular, practical training relating to the transportation of children. It is important that these processes and procedures are rehearsed regularly. It is every Approved Provider and educator's responsibility to ensure children in their care are not left unattended in vehicles and are accounted for at all times.

It is important to note that it is the legal responsibility of Approved Providers to ensure systems are in place to

minimise risk and ensure health and safety procedures are implemented by the responsible people in services, including in Family Day Care environments. The Approved Provider has ultimate responsibility for ensuring services are meeting the requirements of *Education and Care Services National Law*.

### The role and responsibilities of the Approved Provider

- ▶ Ensure that obligations under the *Education and Care Services National Law* and *National Regulations* are met
- ▶ Ensure the appropriate risk assessments are completed and all relevant actions are undertaken prior to the excursion
- ▶ Ensure all children have written authorisation from families to leave the service on an excursion
- ▶ Ensure educator-to-child ratios are maintained during the excursion and address the risks identified (if applicable)





- ▶ Ensure family members and volunteers attending the excursion are not left alone with any child or group of children
- ▶ Take reasonable steps to ensure that Nominated Supervisors, educators, staff and volunteers follow the policy and procedures
- ▶ Ensure copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to Nominated Supervisors, educators, staff, volunteers and families, and are available for inspection
- ▶ Notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will:
  - affect the fees charged or the way they are collected, or
  - significantly impact the service’s education and care of children, or
  - significantly impact the family’s ability to utilise the service.

### The role and responsibilities of the Nominated Supervisor

- ▶ Conduct a risk assessment for an excursion, ensuring any risks are managed
- ▶ Ensure a new risk assessment is completed when circumstances change for regular outings
- ▶ Ensure all children attending the excursion have written authorisation from families to attend prior to the excursion commencing
- ▶ Ensure volunteers understand the details of the excursion, the expectations, and their supervision responsibilities
- ▶ Verify that all the required equipment and/or items are taken on the excursion (for example, a first aid kit, personal medication, medical management plans, mobile phone, emergency contact lists).

### The role and responsibilities of the Family Day Care educator

- ▶ Ensure the excursion is carried out according to the excursion policy and procedures
- ▶ Ensure all children attending the excursion have written authorisation from families to attend, prior to the excursion
- ▶ Conduct a risk assessment for an excursion, ensuring any risks are managed (prior to obtaining written authorisation from families)
- ▶ Ensure a new risk assessment is completed when circumstances change for regular outings
- ▶ Ensure the required educator-to-child ratios are in place and children are always supervised
- ▶ Undertake regular attendance checks to account for all children
- ▶ Ensure family members and volunteers attending the excursion understand your expectations and are not left alone with any child or group of children
- ▶ Ensure all children’s health and medical needs are taken on the excursion (for example, a first aid kit, personal

medication, medical managements plans, mobile phone, emergency contact lists).

- ▶ Double check the interior of the vehicle to ensure no children are remaining. Check all areas including under seats and storage compartments.

### The role and responsibilities of the families

- ▶ Sign the authorisation forms for their child to attend the excursion and ensure all information required is up to date
- ▶ Provide written authorisation for their child to leave the service premises on regular outings
- ▶ Be aware of all the information about the excursion and ask questions as needed
- ▶ If volunteering on excursions, understand the details of the excursion and the expectations and supervision responsibilities
- ▶ Ensure required medication for their child is in date and available to take on an excursion.

## Guidelines for safe transport and travel

When transporting children, educators have a duty of care to keep them safe and protect them from harm. All elements of the journey need to be planned. Consideration should be given to the risks associated with children walking to and from the vehicle, as well as when in the vehicle. Before travelling, educators should talk with children about how they can keep safe when they are walking, when they are in the vehicle, and when embarking and disembarking from the vehicle.

Family Day Care educators should follow the following guidelines when walking to and from the vehicle, embarking and disembarking (sourced from Kids and Traffic resource, *Transporting Children Safely*):

- ▶ **Hold children's hands and supervise them** – children need the supervision and support from adults to keep them safe as pedestrians. They are still developing the skills and understandings they need to be independent pedestrians. Hold their hands until they're at least eight years old and continue to actively supervise older children to ensure they are recognising and reacting to risks appropriately.
- ▶ **Avoid walking near other vehicles** – park your vehicle as close as possible to the venue/location. Use paths and walkways that are away from other vehicles, driveways and car parks where possible. Young children are at increased risk of low-speed vehicle runovers, particularly when vehicles are reversing.
- ▶ **Use marked crossings** – always try to park the vehicle on the same side of the road as the service or other venue. If it's necessary to cross a road, always use pedestrian crossings, such as pedestrian traffic lights or marked pedestrian crossings, where available. When crossings aren't available, choose a place with good visibility and low traffic volumes. Avoid crossing between parked cars or at the front or back of buses and large vehicles, and at intersections where vehicles could be turning.
- ▶ **Position yourself to assist** – getting in and out of the vehicle can be challenging for young children. Be there to help children get up and down any steps safely. Ensure children who are more mobile enter the vehicle first and

exit last, as they are safer when being supervised in the stationary vehicle than waiting outside it. When waiting to embark or after disembarking, children should stand with a supervising adult, away from the kerb.

- ▶ **Talk traffic with children** – talk with children about all the things you are doing together to keep safe, such as holding hands or staying close to an adult, looking and listening for vehicles, and using safe places to cross driveways and roads. The complex skills and judgements we use to keep safe around vehicles are invisible to children, unless we “talk traffic” with them.
- ▶ **Check all children have left the vehicle** – have procedures in place to ensure children are never left unattended in the vehicle. Check children's names on the roll when getting in and out of the vehicle and conduct headcounts, recording the date and time. Always check under seats and in storage areas. Although this can seem very procedural for a Family Day Care educator who may only be transporting three or four children, it is an additional safety check to ensure no one is forgotten.





Prior to transporting children in a vehicle (sourced from Kids and Traffic resource, *Transporting Children Safely*):

- ▶ **Ensure child restraints and booster seats are fitted to the vehicle correctly and seatbelts are in good working order** – an authorised restraint fitter is the best person to install child restraints, as they will know how best to position and fit the different types of seats into the vehicle. Educators can also undertake child car restraint training. This may be useful if seats are regularly moved in and out of the vehicle. Children with additional needs might require specific types of seats. Check with the child’s family and specialists for further advice.
- ▶ **Know the history of the child restraints and boosters being used** – all seats must be Australian Standards (AS/NZS 1754) approved and should be less than 10 years old – check the date of manufacture that is stamped on the seat. Ideally, new restraints should be used but if you have obtained second-hand restraints, ensure they are in good working order, have all the original parts included, such as accessories and the instruction booklet, and have not been involved in a crash.

- ▶ **Conduct a driver and vehicle check** – anyone driving a vehicle to transport children must have and carry a valid, current driver license which is applicable for the vehicle class. The driver must be alcohol and drug free before and while driving the vehicle. Vehicle condition should also be periodically checked, with attention given to tyre pressure, brakes, lights, indicators, windscreen wipers and air conditioning.



## Pedestrian safety

The best way to keep young children safe from traffic injuries is to hold their hand or hold them close. By holding onto children, you can stop them running into dangerous situations. Even though children may complain about holding hands, by making rules about safe walking, explaining these rules and reinforcing safe behaviour, you will help children learn how to become safer pedestrians. When children are young, the responsibility falls on educators to keep children safe around roads and vehicles, and engaging children in conversation about road safety is an essential part of developing their own road safety skills.

This simple saying of “stop”, “look”, “listen” and “think” has been used across the world to teach young children the importance of road safety.

Before you cross the street, you should:

- ▶ **STOP** at least one step back from the kerb
- ▶ Make sure you continuously **LOOK** both ways

- ▶ **LISTEN** for the sounds of approaching vehicles
- ▶ **THINK** whether it is safe to cross.

Then – and only then – should you cross the road.

There are many ways we can practice pedestrian safety with children. When you walk with the children in your care, talk about safe behaviours, and always demonstrate correct pedestrian behaviour. The best way you can help your child to be a safe pedestrian is to:

- ▶ Talk with and teach the children about being alert in a road environment
- ▶ Always hold the children’s hands
- ▶ Explain why the place you have chosen is the safest place to cross the road
- ▶ Point out dangers, such as vehicles coming out of driveways
- ▶ Use pedestrian crossings and traffic lights correctly

- ▶ Teach children to keep turning their head in both directions to look and listen for traffic as they cross the road
- ▶ Talk with children about everything they need to think about to keep safe when walking
- ▶ Explain why they should look and listen before crossing a driveway, road or carpark.



## Children in cars

### Never leave children alone in cars

Sadly, children are sometimes left behind in cars – either intentionally or unintentionally – and the main risk for children left unattended in cars is heat exhaustion. Children can suffer life-threatening heatstroke, rapid dehydration, suffocation and death, due to cars becoming very hot and very quickly, when they are parked in the sun.

On a typical Australian summer day, the temperature inside a parked car can be as much as 30–40°C higher than the outside temperature – for example, on a day where the external temperature is 30°C, the temperature inside the car could be as high as 70°C.

When cars are parked, it takes less than five minutes for them to reach temperatures that can cause dangerous and fatal levels of harm and injury to children, even on cool or overcast days or if parked in shaded areas.

The younger the children are, the more sensitive they are to heatstroke and the faster they become dehydrated.

Sometimes, children are accidentally left in cars when parents or carers forget that a child is in the back seat. The best way to reduce and prevent this risk is by making a safe routine for car trips.

Sometimes, children are left in cars because they've been accidentally locked in. The best ways to prevent this from happening are:

- ▶ Don't let children play with your keys. Make sure keys are kept out of reach
- ▶ Always keep keys with you to prevent them from being locked inside the car. Think about an easy way to carry your keys, such as a lanyard
- ▶ Newer cars often have self-locking features. Wind the windows down before putting children in the car, in case the car automatically locks
- ▶ Talk to children about not playing with the buttons inside the car



- ▶ Always keep your car locked when you're not in the car so children in your care can't enter on their own
- ▶ If you can't find a child, always check the car, in case the child is hiding inside.

Leaving children in your car can be dangerous for other reasons too. For example, your child could:

- ▶ Release themselves from their seat, leave the car and get onto the road
- ▶ Disengage the car's handbrake, causing it to roll forwards or backwards
- ▶ Choke on food, a toy or other object within their reach
- ▶ Play with the windows and get their limbs or neck caught
- ▶ Be involved in a car crash
- ▶ Be a victim of a break-in
- ▶ Accidentally lock you out of the car.

## Safety Door

Another initiative is the introduction of the "Safety Door" sticker, which is designed to be placed on the inside of the rear passenger side door window. It is a good visual to remind children and families that this is the safest door for children to use to get in and out of the car.

- ▶ Never allow a child to get in and out of the car on the traffic side
- ▶ A child should remain in the car until an adult opens the Safety Door
- ▶ Ensure all passengers are securely buckled into a child car seat, booster seat or seatbelt before you start the car
- ▶ Never leave a child of any age in a vehicle without adult supervision
- ▶ Help them learn the passenger safety messages by using and sharing these messages whenever you are out and about in the car.

## Driveway safety

Accidents in driveways involving children are becoming increasingly common.

Children are naturally inquisitive, quick and mobile. They are naturally inquisitive, as well as being surprisingly quick and mobile. Their small size, together with the large blind spots behind most cars, means that children standing or stepping behind the vehicle, often, cannot be seen from the driver's seat. Even if the vehicle is fitted with parking sensors or a reversing camera, children may not be noticed until it is too late to stop.

Three simple steps can make all the difference:

### Supervise

At pick-up and drop-off times, you may have families using the driveway. Ensure all children in your care are kept well away from vehicles arriving and leaving. The area used by cars should be securely gated off so children cannot access the area.

### Separate

- ▶ Treat the driveway like a road – do not let children use the driveway as a play area
- ▶ Separate children's play spaces from garages and driveways. Some design features that can prevent children accessing the driveway include fitting high handles to garage doors, fences separating the house and garden from the driveway, and self-closing doors and gates
- ▶ On farms, in addition to providing a barrier between the farmhouse and the driveway, a second inaccessible driveway can be built for farm vehicles.

### See

- ▶ All vehicles have blind spots. Reversing sensors and cameras can assist with reducing blind spots, however, even when these are used, it may still be difficult to notice a small child until it is too late. It is important not to become complacent when these devices are used. There

is no adequate replacement for the active supervision of children by an adult

- ▶ Drivers should get into the habit of walking around their vehicle before getting into it when leaving an area where a young child is present
- ▶ You can always provide guidance to your families on what their responsibilities are when dropping off and picking up.



## Minibus transport

You may use a minibus within your Family Day Care service or hire a minibus for excursions. To ensure the safe transportation of children, the following steps should be followed:

- ▶ **Make sure your attendance records are accurate and up to date** – your service’s policies and procedures must include maintaining accurate and up-to-date attendance records. This includes for drop-off and collection from the service, and during excursions. Ensure you receive practical training on these policies, processes and procedures at induction and are retrained regularly. It is important to rehearse often.
- ▶ **Restraints** – children are strapped in correctly and according to policy and procedures. Age-appropriate car seats and boosters should still be used in a minibus.
- ▶ **Do a roll check and a headcount** – checking off a roll as children enter and leave the vehicle is essential. By only counting heads, you can miss individuals as they arrive or depart. When you look at the child, tick off their name on the roll. If calling out names from a roll, look at the child as they respond. If a child is present but not named on the roll, or vice versa, confirm whether they should be in care that day and update the roll accordingly.
- ▶ **Thoroughly check the vehicle** – physically inspect the vehicle to ensure all children have exited, including checking under the seats, in the luggage racks and in any storage areas.
- ▶ **Do another roll check and headcount when entering the service** – once the children are in their respective rooms at the Family Day Care home or venue, conduct another roll check and headcount to ensure all children are accounted for. This is a good practice which you should also be doing when you practice emergency drills and evacuations.
- ▶ **Check the vehicle again** – if possible, have a second person physically check the vehicle, including checking under the seats, in the luggage racks and in any storage areas.





If a child is unaccounted for, immediately make all necessary enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts. You will need to conduct physical searches of the service and any vehicles used and, if necessary, contact the child's family and/or the police.

We are all responsible for the safe transportation of children. Please make sure you check, recheck and triple check vehicles with children before locking them in safely and driving away. Make sure all children are accounted for and that you physically see the child in front of you when marking rolls, not just hearing their voice.

## Public transport safety

Public transport can be an affordable and convenient way to transport children in care, and most children love going on public transport!

### Prams on public transport

It's free to take a pram or stroller on all public transport in NSW and children aged three years and under, travel free and don't need a ticket. Children aged 4–15 will need to purchase a child ticket. You can plan your trip by using TripPlanner or by doing a Google search for your transport timetable.

There are some important safety measures to be aware of when travelling with prams and young children on trains, which are highlighted by Transport NSW:

- ▶ Strap the child in securely and hold on to your pram
- ▶ Apply the pram's parking brake and park parallel to the edge of the platform, footpath or water's edge
- ▶ Stand behind the line on platforms and away from the kerb at bus stops

- ▶ Board with the pram in front, lifting the front wheels over the gap
- ▶ Place prams out of the way of other passengers
- ▶ When young children are not in the pram, hold their hands when getting on and off public transport or on escalators and stairs
- ▶ Where available, use the lift or ramp to get to and from platforms, stops and wharves
- ▶ Keep children seated and close to you when waiting for and when on board public transport
- ▶ Never leave a pram or children unattended.

If you have any concerns or need assistance, ask public transport staff.

All public transport across NSW has the same safety rules and on regional trains, baby strollers, prams and capsules are classified as hand luggage. You may be required to fold

up your pram and store it in the appropriate area, and every regional train service has a fold-down baby change table – onboard staff can indicate the location to you.

## Buses

If you use bus services, you may be aware that some buses can be hydraulically lowered by the driver, so they are closer to the kerb. If needed, the bus driver can also extend the accessible ramp to help passengers board the bus.

Accessible buses have specific accessible areas for prams and wheelchairs near the front of the bus, which will allow children to remain in the pram while on board. The bus driver will wait until you have boarded, the pram is secure and you are safely seated before moving.

When securing your pram:

- ▶ Ensure you have the pram secured and children strapped in with the pram brake on
- ▶ The front of the pram must be facing towards the back of the bus and be in firm contact with the panel or bar behind it

- ▶ Attach the tether or restraining device provided through the pram handle as high as possible for maximum stability
- ▶ Remove all shopping, luggage or items that are hanging from the pram handles so the pram does not fall over.

The children in your care will need to be seated with you. It is not safe to stand and carry a child while the bus is moving. Alternatively, you can wait for the next accessible bus.

## Trains and light rail

Some cities also have access to light rail networks. These can be a great day out for children! The light rail network is different to other services, where to get to other platforms, it may be necessary to cross the light rail tracks: the light rail runs on the road with no barriers or walls around it and they're generally quiet. For this reason, there are specific safety considerations to take into account when travelling on the light rail network.

### Always keep a safe distance from light rail vehicles

- ▶ Do not push your pram or stroller along a light rail track
- ▶ Always cross tracks at designated crossings, and when

crossing, push your pram or stroller at a right angle to avoid wheels getting stuck in the groove

- ▶ Never cross directly in front of or behind a light rail vehicle, even if they seem stationary. Light rail vehicles are very quiet and might take off or brake at any time
- ▶ Do not stop on the light rail track.

### On the platform

- ▶ Be ready to board before the service approaches, to avoid getting caught between the doors
- ▶ Keep the light rail vehicle's doors clear to allow customers to board and alight
- ▶ Always hold children's hands.

### When onboard

- ▶ Prams must have their safety brakes on
- ▶ Hold onto children at all times: light rail services can move or brake suddenly to avoid a safety hazard.

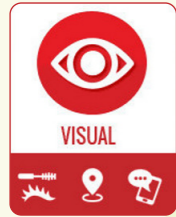




# Common distractions

It is imperative that educators are aware of the importance to focus and ensure no critical elements of child safety during transportation are compromised if or when external factors may interrupt a routine practice.

Here we have four categories of common distractions:



**Visual distractions are tasks that require you to take your eyes away from the supervision of children or perhaps the road while you are driving.**

Some examples of this may be:

- ▶ Mobile phones use
- ▶ Checking the GPS
- ▶ Weather conditions such as windy or heavy rain – this can apply to both driving or while out of the FDC service with children

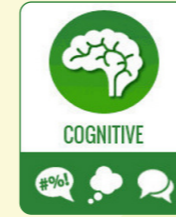
- ▶ Distracted by looking for irrelevant objects in the environment (such as birds or other animals)
- ▶ Information overload from displays- an example of this may be reading the noticeboard at the local library while on an excursion



**Physical distractions, also known as manual distractions, is anytime you take one or both your hands off the steering wheel while driving.**

Examples of this are:

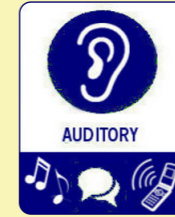
- ▶ eating and drinking
- ▶ Texting
- ▶ searching for items that fell underneath the driver seat
- ▶ reaching for items in the passenger or back seat.



**Cognitive distraction essentially is any activity that demands mental attention and takes focus away from keeping children safe.**

Examples are:

- ▶ Active conversations with colleagues or members of the community
- ▶ Mind wandering, rumination
- ▶ Inability to focus due to personal stress

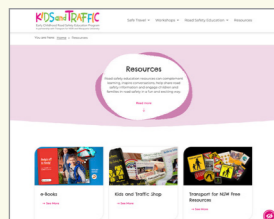


**Auditory distractions are any noises that affect our ability to hear and take away our attention from caring for children.**

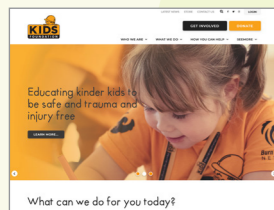
These distractions can include:

- ▶ listening to music at a high volume in the car
- ▶ traffic sounds such as sirens
- ▶ a phone conversation
- ▶ a conversation with passengers
- ▶ screaming children
- ▶ Mobile phone notification rings or ringtones.

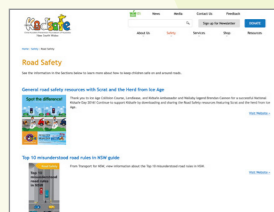
## Additional resources



► [Kids and Traffic](#) – Early Childhood Road Safety Education Program.



► [Kids Foundation](#) – Educating children to be safe and trauma and injury free.



► [Kidsafe NSW](#) – Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia.



► ACECQA – [Safe Transportation of Children](#) information sheet.



► ACECQA – [Safe Transportation of Children in Education and Care](#): Your questions answered.



► ACECQA – [Safe Transportation of Children](#) policy guidelines.

## This booklet is part of the PD In Your Pocket professional development program.



This topic – **Safe Transportation in Family Day Care** – has an accompanying webinar and video, both of which can be viewed as videos or listened to as podcasts.

There is also a Facebook Group where you can discuss the topic with other Family Day Care educators in NSW.

For more information about PD In Your Pocket, go to:

[www.nswfdc.org.au/pdinyourpocket](http://www.nswfdc.org.au/pdinyourpocket)



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