

Educators

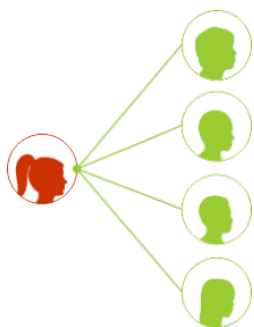
Each child’s wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child’s need for sleep, rest and relaxation

Looking at the element in detail - A service reviewed what the NQF Guide said about element 2.1.1 and understood wellbeing and comfort:

- involves active and restful experiences that support each child’s health, nutrition, sleep, rest and relaxation.
- includes children’s physical, mental and spiritual needs

Where you live affects your health outcomes. Research in Australia has identified low quality housing affects our health. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may live in houses that are overcrowded, which affects their health. In larger cities many families are now needing to live in multi-generational apartments, again affecting health. Some families can only afford to live on busy roads, or near airports, busy factories, rubbish dumps and train lines. All these locations can result in less sleep, poorer health outcomes and irritable children. **You can’t tell the families to move. What can you do as an educator to assist children who live in these environments?** Let’s look at these locations to see how they could affect children and what you could do to help.

Location/Situation		What are the effects?	What can you do to assist?
Overcrowded/multigenerational housing	➡	Waiting to go to the toilet, noisy shared bedroom, people coming in and out of houses at all hours, TV constantly on.	Identify who’s living in the home and where home is located. Learn to identify when you need to offer children more rest and relaxation time and customise relaxation and rest times for individual children. You may need to locate sleep and rest spaces away from classroom doors, bathrooms and noisy activities. Some children who are used to lots of noise may need more noise (eg ‘white’ noise) because they can’t sleep in a quiet environment. As an educator you need to meet each child’s needs.
Living on busy roads	➡	Traffic starting very early and emergency vehicle sirens waking children	
Living near airports/train lines	➡	Planes taking off late at night waking children, planes landing early in the morning. Trains going by early and late.	
Living near rubbish dumps, or very early morning garbage pickups	➡	Heavy large trucks make lots of noise and can also cause road vibrations that flow into houses and disturb children’s sleep.	
Living near busy factories	➡	Factories can create a lot of extra noise via increased traffic, and noise from suppliers, customers and workers.	



Educators began to discuss their ideas as to why the children were becoming less engaged during group and learning times. It was noted that the children were tired, but educators maybe didn’t know enough about the children when they weren’t here. For example, Chloe spends two days a week with Nan, and it wasn’t till we spoke to Nan that we discovered Chloe has a nap a lot earlier than we do. Educators discussed with the Nominated Supervisor and Cook. They noted their meals may be coming out too late for all children. The cook said the meals could come earlier because they were ready and were just waiting in the kitchen because that is the time she was told they needed to be delivered when starting at the centre. **Practice changed.** Chloe and some other children ate earlier, and a small rest space was set up for Chloe and these children to rest earlier than the other children. This practice change made a huge difference and Chloe was more engaged during group times.

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Supporting rest and sleep in early childhood settings for toddlers

Daytime rest and sleep is an important feature of an early childhood centre routine and significant for children's health, behavioural regulation and learning. To create the best environment for children to rest and sleep in there are four keys things to consider:

1. appropriate **sleep scheduling**
2. **pre-sleep routines** that signal the start of the sleep period and reduce stimulation
3. **environment factors (stimuli)** that reduce stimulation
4. **emotional climate** - practice that is calm and free of threatening or punitive behaviours

1. Sleep scheduling

Sleep scheduling includes the consistency and duration of sleep and respecting a child's sleep needs. We need to be aware of a child's sleep schedule at home because it helps us to establish positive sleep and rest practices at the centre. Another important point is to know when a child has had their sleep schedule interrupted because we all know how a child's behaviour can be linked to a lack of sleep.

We can help parents by teaching them the importance of regular bedtime, rise time, and allowing children to sleep when they need to. There is a link between sleep scheduling and behaviour, for example, irregular bed and rise times might disturb the circadian rhythm (body clock). When exposed to irregular sleep scheduling, children may experience tiredness and adverse effects on their behaviour and learning.

What DON'T WE DO WELL in centres?

Research shows that some educators often expect children to have lengthy periods of sleep time, often up to 2 hours or more during which non-sleeping children aren't provided with alternate activities. These educators don't implement pre-sleep routines to decrease arousal. How can you improve sleep and rest schedules at your centre?



quality of sleep.

2. Sleep routines

Sleep routines include consistent activities that are associated with the start of sleep time and increase predictability for children. Effective routines reduce stress, lead to a decrease in arousal levels and result in a shorter period in getting to sleep and an overall improved

What do we do well in centres?

When we look at research studies many educators are good at maintaining sleep and rest routines, telling stories, and offering children an opportunity to play with a soft toy or read a book on their bed before they're expected to sleep. These educators also engage in routines that prepare children for sleep time.

Tips for parents. For night bedtime routines to be most successful, they should start before putting the child to bed and include a pre-sleep activity that is low in stimulation and signals transition to sleep. The worst things parents can do before bed are boisterous or mentally exciting activities that arouse the child and heighten physical and emotional states. The above works well in ECE setting too. For daytime rest and sleep we need to use consistent routines that reduce arousal states and signal the approach of rest and sleep time.

As a team create a list of pre-sleep routines that are low in stimulation and signals transition to sleep. Don't forget to share the successful ideas with parents. They will love you for it.

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Now list all the things you have seen or accidentally done that is the opposite of a pre-sleep routine and boisterous or mentally exciting activities.

3. Stimulus in the sleep environment

As we discussed for routines, it's important to evaluate activities that occur within the rest and sleep environment as they influence rest, sleep including sleep quality in both positive and negative ways. Reading a book has a positive effect on sleep, but activities involving screen-based media, for example TV, iPads or computer screens have a negative effect. Many research studies have shown the presence of screen technology reduces sleep duration and quality. Screen-based technologies heighten emotional, cognitive and physiological arousal by increasing levels of environmental light and sound, and exposure to emotional content.

It's good to remind parents of the negative effect of screens/iPads etc in the bedroom. Put simply, beds are for sleeping in and we don't want to learn beds are for stimulating non-sleep screen activities. Sleep clinics and sleep health practitioners are worried about this trend in modern life.

Evaluate your sleep environment

Do you have calming, soothing music and low levels of noise and light? How can you improve?

4. Emotional climate

Adult behaviour affects arousal levels in the sleep environment and sets the emotional tone of the room. A calm emotional climate can facilitate sleep, whereas an environment that is threatening or punitive (eg "on your bed" said in a harsh voice) may limit sleep and may become associated with sleep disorder.

Research shows centres scheduling prolonged sleep times without alternative activity for non-sleepers had lower emotional climates, whereas those with more flexible timing and quiet activities for non-sleepers had higher emotional climates. Coercive and punitive methods to keep children in their beds not only disrupts and distresses those children but also disrupts the sleep of other children in the room. In contrast, positive behaviours like gentle and respectful communication provide a calm and emotionally supportive environment.

What are the alternatives for non-sleepers?

Other areas of wellbeing and comfort

Toileting

- Your practices need to ensure toileting is a positive experience for children.
- If you make an issue of toileting accidents this can lead to constipation, and other health issues and phobias. You are also not teaching the child to develop trusting relationships with adults.

Clothing

- Children's clothing needs to be safe, comfortable and appropriate for the weather.
- Children can die or be seriously harmed from unsafe clothing i.e. choking and strangulation from strings and cords on clothing.

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The EYLF and MTOP says “Critical reflection involves closely examining all aspects of events and experiences from different perspectives.” Pick one of the following reflection points to complete the table below:

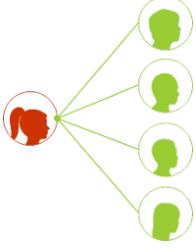
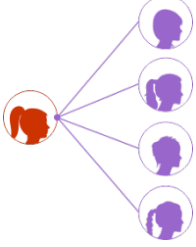
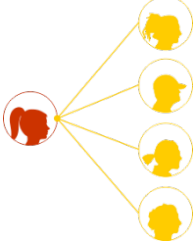
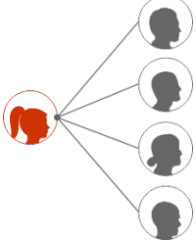
- Could you involve children more in organising spaces, or making rules and routines, that support their wellbeing and comfort?
- How do your relationships with children promote their mental health and wellbeing?
- How could you more actively promote safe sleep practices to families (included in QIP improvement plan)?

Critically reflect through the eyes of:	Write your critical reflection below	What changes did you or will you make because of the reflection?
<p>a child</p>	One of my friend’s had a baby sister who died. I’m scared the same thing might happen to my little brother.	<p>It’s Red Nose Day on Friday August 13 this year and the EL reflected with educators on what this might mean for their practice. Some educators thought it was irrelevant for them because they don’t work with babies, but discussion with other educators made them realise part of their role is to support families with resources and information about parenting (NQS 6.1.3)</p> <p>Educators decided to source the latest brochures on safe sleeping practices and equipment etc from Red Nose and they made a little display with this information where families sign in and out. Several families gave positive feedback, and we learnt that two of our families had lost a child to SIDS.</p>
<p>an educator</p>	I don’t work with babies so I don’t need to know about safe sleep practices.	
<p>your families</p>	It’s scary hearing about babies that died from SIDS. You feel like it could happen to you at any time. I’d like to feel more confident with little Sam.	
<p>theorist and current research</p>	Red Nose is recognised as Australia’s leading source of information and advice on sudden unexpected deaths in infancy. Red Nose supports current <i>research</i> into SIDS and <i>advocates</i> for the implementation of evidence-based best practice to reduce the number of preventable deaths from SIDS.	



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Critically reflect through the eyes of:	Write your critical reflection below	What changes did you or will you make because of the reflection?
 <p>a child</p>		
 <p>an educator</p>		
 <p>your families</p>		
 <p>theorist and current research</p>		



Complete your QIP

The information you write below can go directly into your QIP or Self-Assessment Tool (SAT) (NSW ONLY)

Instructions

For a MEETING QIP and Self-Assessment Tool (SAT)	For Exceeding the QIP and Self-Assessment Tool (SAT)
<i>Please give an example where you implemented quiet but meaningful activities/experiences for children who did not require sleep or rest.</i>	<i>Please discuss how all educators provide a range of opportunities to effectively address and respond to children's daily needs for sleep, rest and relaxation, individually and in groups.</i>
<i>Please give an example showing children in your room/group feel a sense of comfort and belonging at the service.</i>	<i>Please explain how all educators consider and discuss their practice from a social justice/ equity perspective to ensure the wellbeing and comfort of every child.</i>
<i>Please discuss how you accommodate children's individual needs and preferences in relation to health, nutrition, sleep, rest or relaxation routines and activities.</i>	<i>Please discuss how all educators engage meaningfully and regularly with families or professionals to meet children's changing physical, mental and spiritual needs.</i>
If you cannot answer these questions above the you are not meeting. This means you need to create an improvement plan and make changes to your practice	If you cannot answer these questions above the you are not exceeding. This means you need to create an improvement plan and make changes to your practice

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Checklist

Why are you doing the checklist?

The practices identified in the checklist are what the assessor needs to see you do so they can check you're 'meeting the NQS.' If you embed all the things in the checklist, then you are meeting the Element 2.1.1. If there's something on the checklist that you're not doing, then you need to either adjust your practice to do it, or ask for help and training to do what's on the checklist ie work with your educational leader or room leader who should teach/coach you how to do it.

The checklist keys to use.

E = Embedded I do that **ALL** the time

K = I know I need to do that, but I don't do it all the time

T = Please teach me how to do it or improve my understanding of why I need to do it.

Name Educator 1	
Name Educator 2	
Name Educator 3	
Name Educator 4	
Name Educator 5	

Do you consistently respond to children's cues or communication for assistance with personal needs and comfort?					
Do you make sure the sleep or rest area is comfortable and inviting eg children are not crowded too closely together?					
Do you support children's choice to participate in quiet, meaningful activities rather than rest or engage in other activities where appropriate?					
Do you discuss rest requirements with families, explaining your legal obligations to meet children's sleep and rest needs if necessary?					
Do you always follow the safe sleep practices outlined in your service Sleep and Rest Policy - could you explain them to an assessor?					
If responsible for sleeping babies' do you physically check them every 10 minutes and complete a sleep record?					
Do you provide children with clean spare clothes when needed or access to these?					
Do you respect families' clothing preferences where these meet service policies for children's wellbeing and safety?					
Do you respect and promote children's privacy during nappy changing, toileting, dressing/undressing etc?					
Do you communicate and interact with children while changing their nappies, assisting with toilet training or toileting so the experience is relaxed and positive?					
Do you encourage families to advise when their child's sleep, rest or personal care routines or needs change?					
Do you provide families with daily information about their child's nappy change/toileting routines and sleep/rest patterns (birth to three)?					
Do you involve older children in making rules and routines that ensure their comfort and wellbeing?					

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