



Educational Leader

Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.

Looking at the element in detail - A service reviewed what the NQF Guide said about element 2.2.2 and understood educators must practise and implement plans which effectively:

- protect children, staff and visitors during any incident or emergency
- maintain a safe environment and meet WHS/OHS laws.

We may practice our emergency responses, and hope we never have to implement them. What happens though, when children are impacted by emergency events? These may include natural disasters like fires and floods or other severe weather events, or events that affect individual children or families.

Children may experience trauma as a result which causes them to feel helpless and pushed beyond their ability to cope.

“Some events can have an impact on children and young people, not only from direct exposure, but also by seeing and hearing about them in the media, via the internet or from adults around them. Sometimes the effects of trauma are immediate and more obvious but on other occasions, the impact may take some time to appear.”
(Be You.)

How do you and your educators support children who have been/may be affected by a traumatic event. There are several recognised authorities that have a lot of helpful resources and information to assist.

[Emerging Minds](#) leads the National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health in partnership with the Australian Institute of Family Studies, the Australian National University, the Parenting Research Centre and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners.

This week we've attached a PDF from Emerging Minds which lists some of the [resources](#) they offer to help educators support children before, during and after a disaster or traumatic event.

The Centre is one of two initiatives under the National Support for Child and Youth Mental Health Program. The other is [Be You](#), led by Beyond Blue, which also offers resources on mental health for educators in early learning services and schools. These include resources on [grief, trauma and natural disasters](#).

Another great resource is QLD Health's [Birdie's Tree recovery suite](#) which has specifically designed resources and information to assist children aged 0 to 5. These include [Birdie books](#) covering severe weather events like bushfires, floods, cyclones and storms.

You may also find the Australian Childhood Foundation's [9 Principles of Trauma Informed Care](#) helpful. Here is a summary:

1. Trauma significantly alters baseline physiological arousal levels in children.

Children are likely to benefit from environments of care which pay attention to their mood, focus on adjusting their sensory stimulation to help them stay physically present feel safe to connect with others, and engage predictable strategies from carers that reduce reactivity and minimise volatile responses.

2. Trauma reduces cortical capacity to regulate subcortical activation in children.

Traumatized children are likely to find it difficult to utilise reasoning and logic to modify their behaviour or reactions... trauma ...reduce(s) children's capacity to be guided by rule based frames of behaviour...children's recovery from trauma will be enhanced through interactions with carers which promote physical activity that stimulates lower order parts of the brain responsible for movement, play and balance.

3. Trauma disrupts memory functioning in children.

Children are likely to benefit from strategies which support stressed memory systems, including the introduction of visual and mnemonic cues to prompt

Week 35, 7 November - 11 November 2022 – 2.2.2 Incident and emergency management

short term memory rehearsal and recall, repetition of episodic and narrative structures and the establishment of routines to structure behavioural rehearsal. In addition, children’s ability to generalise learning from one setting to another is also hampered by memory difficulties.

4. Trauma disconnects children from relational resources that can mitigate its effects.

Traumatised children require opportunities to experience attachment relationships which offer consistency, nurture and predictability.

5. Trauma restricts the attentional capacity of children.

Children may benefit from care environments which enable them to engage in experiences which redirect their attention away from past trauma oriented activation to the here and now.

6. Trauma based behaviour is functional at the time in which it develops as a response to threat.

Carers can be supported to understand the purpose and meaning of trauma based behaviour in children, helping to shift their interpretations away from blame to greater acknowledgement of the ongoing impact of children’s abuse experiences.

7. Trauma limits children’s response flexibility and adaptability to change.

Traumatised children may get ‘stuck’ due to constant trauma triggers, and so enact patterns of defensive behaviour that make sense in the light of their initial trauma(s) but may not seem obvious to those around them. ... while in these triggered states, children have little capacity to reshape their responses without the intentional resourcing of adults in their immediate care environment.

8. Trauma undermines identity formation in children.

Children are likely to benefit from reinforcement by carers and others for examples of qualities that denote positive sense of self and resource personal agency.

9. Trauma diminishes social skills and isolates children from peers.

Children with trauma backgrounds need support to engage positively with peers in social situations.

What steps will you take to help educators support children exposed to traumatic events, or children concerned about their potential effects?

What changes could educators make to the curriculum to promote learning about emergency events and how these may affect people?

Emergency Management and Evacuation Policy

Services must:

- conduct a risk assessment to identify all potential emergencies that could affect the service and use this to prepare emergency and evacuation procedures
- prepare an Emergency Management Plan that covers all potential risks, emergency response procedures, contact details for emergency services and service personnel, drills and training schedules
- have access to reliable communication equipment during emergencies (eg charged mobile phone) and prepare emergency communication plan to share relevant information with families
- have a prepared emergency evacuation kit stocked with all necessary items
- display evacuation diagrams and emergency telephone numbers
- rehearse all emergency evacuation procedures at least every three months, on different days/times each quarter.

Lockdown Policy

Examples of critical incidents requiring lockdown may

include a siege of service property, aggressive trespasses or a disaster in the local community. Policy contains lockdown procedures including:

- ringing 000 immediately if emergency services required
- notifying lockdown eg via alarm
- immediately moving people outside inside into their rooms, preferably under desks or out of sight, until all clear signal is given
- checking sign-in sheet to ensure everyone is present.

Bushfire or Grassfire Policy

Contains service procedures to prevent/minimise impact of bushfires/grassfires, closure due to bushfire/grassfire risk and detailed Fire Action Plan during:

- high, extreme and catastrophic fire ratings in local area
- a bushfire or grassfire in the local district
- a bushfire or grassfire threatening or impacting the service
- recovery after a bushfire or grassfire impacts the service.

Do you have any feedback or comments about these policies? Please include below.

Educator's Name	Educator's Signature

Note we are now listing any Procedures which relate to the Policy reviewed. We have a comprehensive Procedure Pack (in addition to the procedures already included in the policies) which is currently part of our HR Toolkit. Please contact us on admin@centresupport.com.au if you would like a quote for the Kit.

Procedure - Bushfire Smoke and Dust
Storm

Procedure - Emergency After Fire
Evacuation or Shelter in Place

Week 35, 7 November - 11 November 2022 – 2.2.2 Incident and emergency management

Procedure - Emergency Bomb Threat
Procedure - Emergency Earthquake
Procedure - Emergency Evacuation
Procedure - Emergency Evacuation
Bushfire and Grassfire
Procedure - Emergency Shelter in Place
Bushfire and Grassfire
Procedure - Emergency External and
Internal Emissions
Procedure - Emergency Influenza
Pandemic
Procedure - Emergency Lockdown

Procedure - Emergency Lockdown
Snakes
Procedure - Emergency Lockout
Procedure - Emergency Power
Procedure - Emergency Response
Rehearsals
Procedure - Emergency/Safe Refuge Kit
Procedure - Emergency Severe Storm
and Lightning
Procedure - Emergency Severe Storm
and Lightning Bush Kindy
Procedure - Emergency Shelter in Place

Procedure - Emergency Shelter in Place
Bushfire and Grassfire
Procedure - Emergency Shelter in Place
Bush Kindy
Procedure - Emergency Water
Procedure - Incident Children
Procedure - Incident Employees
Procedure - Serious Incident
Procedure - Water Damage

Week 35, 7 November - 11 November 2022 – 2.2.2 Incident and emergency management

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