

# Animal and Pet Policy

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Having a relationship with a pet and/or animal can help children develop a caring approach and skills such as nurturing, responsibility, empathy and improved communication. Having a pet in an early childhood environment enables children who are not otherwise exposed to animals learn these skills. The pet will become part of the daily educational program and lead to activities and learning about other animals.

## National Quality Standard (NQS)

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety		
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard

Quality Area 3: Physical Environment		
3.1.2	Upkeep	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained
3.2.3	Environmentally responsible	The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible

## Education and Care Services National Regulations

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law NSW	
168	Policies and procedures are required in relation to health and safety

## Related Policy

Environmentally Responsible Policy
Physical Environment Policy
Supervision Policy
Hand Washing Policy
Work Health and Safety Policy

## PURPOSE

Having a pet at our Service can be a valuable part of children's education. Enriching their learning about nature, ecology and relationships. Our Service aims to provide a safe, hygienic and humane environment for all animals and pets that visit or reside at the Service, which will educate children in the proper care of animals.

### **SCOPE**

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the Service.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

The National Quality Standards encourages educators to understand and appreciate the natural environment and the independence between people, plants, animals and the land. Pets help children from a young age learn to care for other living things. They can teach a sense of responsibility, caring and tolerance. They can offer many opportunities for developing observational skills and basic natural science experiences. If the educators wish to have a pet in the Service, they must make all the decisions in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and families.

Whilst there are several benefits to keeping animals within the Service, there are also a range of concerns which Educators need to consider when maintaining the safety and wellbeing of both the children and the animals. Encouraging direct contact and developing bonds with animals can help children to develop empathy. Providing children with access to animals within our Service will help them learn about the life cycle and relationships, and improve communication. We feel role modelling of appropriate behaviours with animals and guidance in caring for the needs of animals are beneficial for children.

#### Questions to consider prior to having a pet at the Service

- Who will pay for the care and upkeep of the animal, including feeding, health care and cleaning?
- How will the animal be cared for on weekends and during service closure periods?
- What physical space is available in the Service? Is it adequate for the animal you are thinking of?
- Are all educators and families happy with the decision to keep an animal at the Service?
- What time will be available throughout the day to care for the animal or will educators be asked to give up some personal time for this?
- Are there any children or educators at your Service who are allergic to, or have phobias of, animals?