



Regular outings – ‘bush kindy’

A quality educational program includes outdoor activities, such as exploring natural environments, which benefit children’s learning, health and wellbeing.

Education and care services in Queensland may regularly deliver part of their kindergarten program off site in a natural setting. These programs can be described as bush, beach or rainforest kindy.

The *Education and Care Services National Law* (National Law) and the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* (National Regulations) prescribe a number of requirements for services when educators take children outside the service premises on excursions or regular outings.

A regular outing is a walk, drive or trip to and from a destination that a service visits frequently as part of its educational program.

The requirements for regular outings under the National Law and National Regulations also apply to bush, beach or rainforest kindergarten programs. These requirements are outlined in the *Excursions and regular outings* fact sheet.

In addition, services delivering bush, beach or rainforest kindy must consider the following:

Selecting the site

When selecting a site for bush, beach or rainforest kindy, considerations should include:

- distance from the education and care service premises
- surveillance points and lines of sight for educators to ensure adequate supervision at all times
- natural elements
- bodies of water
- mobile phone coverage
- nearby facilities, including shelter and toilets
- parkland management support that may be required.



Planning

Approved providers should carefully consider the planning and development of a partial kindergarten program off site. Consult and communicate with parents and carers during the planning stage.

The operation of any part of the program off site should be included in the service's policies, procedures and practices (regulation 168 National Regulations). In particular, policies and procedures should reference how the health and safety of children will be ensured off site (regulation 168(2), National Regulations).

Risk assessments

The service must take every reasonable precaution to protect children from any harm or hazard likely to cause injury (section 16, National Law). Services must complete a risk assessment for all regular outings at least once a year (regulation 100(4)(c), National Regulations).

Consider any unexpected incidents, potential harm and hazards, emergencies or extreme weather. This could include access to water, how children arrive and leave the location, how often the area is visited and who else uses or accesses the destination.

Read more about identifying and documenting risks and hazards in the *Excursions and regular outings* fact sheet.

Authorisation for regular outings

A child must not leave the education and care premises for a regular outing with educators without the written authorisation of the parent or other person named in the enrolment record. Authorisation is only required once every 12 months for regular outings (regulation 102(5), National Regulations). However, seek a new authorisation if the nature of the regular outing changes.

Authorisation for regular outings may be kept in each child's enrolment record (regulation 161(1)(b) and 161(2)(b), National Regulations). Approved providers must complete a risk assessment before obtaining authorisation for a child's participation.

Read more about what the authorisation must state in the *Excursions and regular outings* fact sheet.

Enrolment and orientation policy and procedures

Enrolment policies and procedures should contain detail relevant to the off-site delivery of the kindergarten program. Parents and carers should be able to access this information so they can make an informed decision as to whether they wish their child to attend.

Further information

The Department of Education is the Regulatory Authority in Queensland.

- Email the department at ecis@qed.qld.gov.au
- Contact your regional office (visit the department's website at www.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au and search for 'regional offices')
- Phone the Regulation, Assessment and Service Quality team on (07) 3328 6780.

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