



## 4.5 Educational Equipment & Toys

### Purpose

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To ensure a safe and stimulating play environment for children through the provision of appropriate play equipment and materials that facilitate a wide range of learning and leisure opportunities that are suitable for the developmental stages of each age group of enrolled children.

### Objective

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To ensure that:

- Children are provided with a safe environment that stimulates their interest so they can enjoy themselves and learn new things
- Equipment is culturally inclusive and appropriate, and suitable for different ages and stages of development
- Equipment is easy to store, access and to maintain in a safe condition, appropriate to the learning programs being offered at John Street, and that the price is within the budget.

### Scope of Policy

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This policy applies to children, families, educators and the John Street community.

### Policy Statement

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John Street believes that children benefit from an environment that is focused on their individual interests, needs and abilities.

Choosing equipment and toys that can be used in multiple ways allows the environment at John Street to be regularly and readily rearranged or adjusted to provide additional interest, variety and challenge.

Children's safety when using equipment is also of paramount importance.

### Procedures

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The following procedures are implemented to ensure a safe and flexible environment which supports the holistic way children learn:

- All equipment and toys purchased will meet the Australian Standards and be appropriate to the developmental stages, interests and cultures of children at John Street

- Toys of war are considered inappropriate to John Street’s aim of providing a safe and caring environment (See John Street’s Superhero Play policy)
- All equipment will be maintained in accordance with John Street’s Child Safe Environment Policy
- There will be sufficient equipment for the number of children enrolled to:
  - Avoid overcrowding and ensure that children do not have to wait for long periods of time to participate
  - Minimise disputes over who will use resources, materials and equipment
  - Engage children’s interests
  - Extend children’s learning
  - Provide for all children’s ages and abilities
- The equipment and material needed to facilitate learning and leisure opportunities for children will be identified as part of the planning process and provided by John Street for the delivery of the education and care program
- Specific equipment and other resources will be obtained to support the inclusion of children with additional needs
- Equipment that encourages and supports children’s physical activity will be readily available for children to use independently or in groups, in both spontaneous and planned activities
- Children will be carefully introduced to new toys and pieces of equipment and taught to use equipment appropriately
- John Street equipment must remain at John Street for all to use and must not be taken home. Equipment taken from John Street can disrupt programmed activities and many replacements are costly. If any unfamiliar toys or pieces of equipment are found at home please bring them to John Street for staff to clarify ownership
- Children using play equipment will be supervised at all times to ensure their safety when using the equipment. Equipment that should only be used under supervision will be stored in the storeroom which can only be accessed with adult supervision
- How children use the equipment and the value of equipment in supporting children’s learning and development and spontaneous play, will be assessed with John Street’s ongoing cycle of review and critical reflection
- Educators and the Director will determine which equipment is appropriate taking into account:
  - Previous assessments of equipment use
  - Durability and ease of maintenance

- Benefit to the children's program
  - Flexibility to create interesting and challenging environments for children
  - Cultural value
  - Opportunities for children to use the equipment in a variety of ways
  - Ability to stimulate children's curiosity
  - Ability to encourage children to explore, discover and experiment
  - Cost
- The Board will determine an amount each year based on budget provisions for each room and seek Educators' input on compiling an existing resources inventory and a prioritised list of items of equipment to be purchased within the amount offered by the Board
  - Families are invited to provide information about the toys their children enjoy at home at the time of their enrolment and through continuous conversation with room staff
  - An up-to-date inventory of toys and equipment is kept in the office at John Street, maintained by all staff
  - The purchase of new items and equipment will be determined by room staff, in consideration of current equipment available and the needs and interests of the children. The Director will advise the amount of funds available for these purchases.
  - When large/expensive items are requested, the Board will determine John Street's budget limitations
  - The Director will advise the Board about the purchase of new equipment, and gain its approval for purchases over \$1,000
  - All equipment purchased for John Street will be within budget limitations
  - John Street's fund raising committee may be approached for additional financial support for purchasing resources
  - John Street accepts donations through consultation with the Director and staff of furniture, equipment and toys for children.

### **Responsibility**

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Educators, the Director and the Board are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented.

### **General Information**

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The **Noah's Ark Specialist Equipment Program (SET)** provides equipment for loan to childcare services, building on their capacity to include children with high physical support needs. The Program is managed by Gowrie Victoria.

The SET Program is staffed by experienced equipment specialists who assist with the selection of equipment, provide professional advice and, in conjunction with the child's therapist, monitor the ongoing suitability and safety of equipment on loan. Eligible Victorian childcare services (as defined in the Inclusion and Professional Support Program) which include a child with a diagnosed disability and have identified the need for specialist equipment through a Service Support Plan (SSP), may borrow specialist equipment.

Phone: Professional Support Co-ordinator, Gowrie Victoria 1800 103 670 or (03) 9362 2210

Website: [www.noahsarkinc.org.au](http://www.noahsarkinc.org.au) ; <https://gowrievictoria.org.au>

### Legislative Provisions

**Education & Care Services National Law Act** – Section 3(2)(a)(b); 3(3)(a)(b)(c)(f); 167; 168

**Education and Care Services National Regulations:**

<b>r. 73</b>	<i>Educational Program (2) An educational program is to contribute to the following outcomes for each child: a) the child will have a strong sense of identity; b) the child will be connected with and contribute to his or her world; c) the child will have a strong sense of wellbeing; d) the child will be a confident and involved learner; e) the child will be an effective communicator</i>
<b>r.75</b>	<i>Information about educational program to be kept available</i>
<b>r.103</b>	<i>Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair</i>
<b>r.105</b>	<i>Furniture, materials and equipment</i>
<b>r.115</b>	<i>Premises designed to facilitate supervision</i>
<b>r.122</b>	<i>Educators must be working directly with children to be included in ratios</i>

### National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care & School Age Care

<b>Element 1.1.1</b>	<i>Curriculum decision-making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.</i>
<b>Element 1.1.2</b>	<i>Each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.</i>
<b>Element 1.3.1</b>	<i>Each child's learning and development is assessed or evaluated as part of an ongoing cycle of observation, analysing learning, documentation, planning, implementation and reflection.</i>
<b>Element 1.2.2</b>	<i>Educators respond to children's ideas and play and extend children's learning through open-ended questions, interactions and feedback.</i>
<b>Element 1.3.2</b>	<i>Critical reflection on children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, drives program planning and implementation.</i>
<b>Element 2.1.3</b>	<i>Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.</i>
<b>Element 2.2.1</b>	<i>At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.</i>
<b>Standard 3.1</b>	<i>The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service.</i>
<b>Standard 3.2</b>	<i>The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.</i>

**Early Years Learning Framework for Australia**

<b>Practices:</b>	<i>Holistic approaches; Collaboration with children; Learning through play; Intentional environments; Cultural Competence, Evaluation for wellbeing and learning</i>
<b>Outcomes:</b>	<i>1, 2, 3 &amp; 4</i>

**Background Legislation**

<b>Occupational Health &amp; Safety Act 2004 (Vic)</b>	<i>Safe work environment</i>
<b>Australian Standards for Equipment &amp; Safety</b>	<i>Safe Equipment Guidelines</i>

**Sources**

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SAI Global – *Portal for buying Australian Standards* – Retrieved 18 July 2018, from <https://infostore.saiglobal.com/store/Portal.aspx?publisher=AS>

Mac Naughton, G. & Williams, G. (1998) *Techniques for Teaching Young Children: Choices in Theory and Practice*. Addison WesleyLongman, Melbourne:

Australian Childcare Alliance Victoria <https://vic.childcarealliance.org.au/resources/policy-templates>

KidSafe <http://www.kidsafevic.com.au/>

**Related John Street Policies, Procedures and Guidelines**

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<b>Policies</b>	<i>Superhero Play; Children’s Personal Items from Home; Providing a Child Safe Environment; Occupational Health &amp; Safety; Supervision of Children; Program Planning;</i>
<b>Appendices</b>	<i>Daily Safety Checklist</i>

**Authorisation**

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This policy was approved by the John Street Board in March 2019.