

Heat and Temperature of Equipment or Surfaces Policy

Policy Rationale

TeamKids support children's play with more complex physical activities, in outdoor environments on a daily basis, taking into account that weather can be a determining factor of the suitability of the outdoor environment. TeamKids are aware that on many days at our services, when the weather is warmer, ambient temperature can increase and children may be at risk of overheated play equipment and surfaces. TeamKids has process in place to reduce the risk of children suffering any injury, including burns, from play equipment and heated surfaces (including ground surfaces).

Policy Statement

This policy is intended to be implemented in partnership with the TeamKids – Sun Smart Policy. The policy is intended to guide educators in their procedures for checking the heat emanating from / temperature of equipment and surfaces that children may come into contact with and in the actions to follow, if required. Play equipment and surfaces may heat to an unsafe level quickly during the day.

Where possible, shaded areas can be used to provide children with safe play spaces outdoors, including providing cool ground cover. Shade may include shade sails, verandas, built covered areas and large trees. Surface temperatures greater than 50 degrees celsius, can burn tender, young skin. Days where the temperature is in the high 20's, can provide these conditions. Rubber or synthetic grass playground surfaces have also been known to cause burns or scalds to the soles of children's feet if shoes are not worn.

Heat checking/reduction practices

The following practices (to be implemented by educators or the approved provider), may assist to prevent scalds and burns from overheated play equipment or other objects:

1. Regularly check the temperature of outdoor facilities and equipment on hot, sunny days to see if they are safe for children to use. This is crucial for surfaces that children may touch, kneel, sit or lie on.
2. Make sure all equipment and surfaces are suitable for outdoor use by checking manufacturers' warnings and instructions.
3. Consider if children should wear shoes outside, depending on the temperature of the surface on which they will interact.
4. Wetting the area with water may assist in cooling the surface temperature as a temporary solution.
5. Consider if shade structures can/should be moved throughout the day or seasonally to protect areas such as play equipment from direct sunlight.
6. Educators to test outdoor surface temperatures and follow manufacturer/ installer instructions for equipment use.

Temperature checking of equipment/surfaces

The outdoor environment will be checked for suitable temperatures as follows:

- If the outdoor temperature is greater than 25 degrees, an infrared thermometer will be used to check temperatures on the following surfaces:
 - slides
 - swing seats
 - climbing frames
 - rubber rock/synthetic soft falls spaces
 - handrails
 - balance beams
 - any other surfaces/equipment that is stationary in an outdoor space, that children are likely to walk on, sit on, climb, ride or touch.

This will be completed before children enter the outdoor space for the first time each day and every hour after that, until the outside temperature falls below 25 degrees.

If the recorded temperature is more than 50 degrees celsius, educators will take immediate action that that may include:

- Ensuring children wear shoes outside.
- Wetting the surface/equipment with cold water (as long as this will not render the surface/equipment unsafe for a slip hazard).
- Move equipment into a shaded area (as long as soft fall and fall zone requirements can continue to be met).
- Prevent children from accessing surfaces/equipment that display a surface temperature of over 50 degrees celsius with clear instructions and replacement experiences/equipment, to ensure they continue to have appropriate resources outdoors.
- Record the reading and action taken on the Temperature of Equipment & Surfaces Record.

References:

Quality Area 2 – Children’s Health & Safety
Quality Area 7 – Leadership and Service Management
Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011)
Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010)
KidsSafe NSW - <https://www.kidsafensw.org/newsletter.asp?id=74#s262>
ACECQA – Sun Protection Policy Guidelines information sheet

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