

## **Equipment for Play and Child Care/Safe Play**

This policy represents the agreed principles for Equipment for play and childcare/ safe play in the Nursery. All Nursery staff, representing Jack in the Box Nursery have agreed this policy.

At Jack in the Box, we aim to provide the highest quality education and care for all our children. We provide a warm welcome to each individual child and family and offer a caring environment where all children can learn and develop to become curious independent learners within their play.

Please read this policy in conjunction with our Data Protection policy for the information collected by Jack in the Box, the professionals this information may be shared with and the retention periods this data is held for.

### **CHILDREN AT PLAY**

At all times, the safety of children is paramount. Before a play activity commences Senior Early Years Practitioners and other staff present should:

- Ensure that there is adequate supervision for the play activity and children partaking in the activity.
- Refer to any child specific Risk Assessments as required, e.g. if a child has a broken arm, allergy etc.
- Ensure that all toys and equipment are in good condition and are suitable for the age range and ability of children.
- Ensure that all materials used are suitable for the task and play and are not going to increase the risk of harm to children or staff.
- Ensure that the room layout is suitable for the play proposed.

### **GENERAL ITEMS**

It is important that items for play, or which are used for childcare, safety and transport are maintained in a safe condition. Staff must observe the following:

- All play equipment and toys must be checked on an ongoing basis for condition, cleanliness, and safety.
- Any damaged or defective items are to be removed from use immediately.

## Equipment for play and childcare/ safe play policy

### EXTERNAL PLAY EQUIPMENT

All areas that staff members and children may access could give rise to health and safety concerns. To ensure that there are no risks to the health and safety of anyone, regular checks are required of the areas and equipment.

A visual daily check should be undertaken by staff to check for obvious damage, broken glass and checking of all safety devices. They should also include checks for animal fouling, dangerous plants, and growth.

The checks should include:

- a) Fencing and security (are there any signs of significant vulnerability, (e.g. unlocked gates)
- b) Condition of impact surfaces
- c) Advisory and warning notices, such as 'Keep Gate Locked'
- d) Check each item of play equipment for:
  - damage
  - wear
  - corrosion
  - loose fixing devices
  - paintwork/finishes
  - lubrication of moving parts
  - sharp corners, protruding nails and screws, splinters
- e) Debris, fouling, sharp objects, or refuse

All defects should be reported to the Setting Manager, who shall keep a record and take action to remedy the matter immediately e.g. cordon off area, clear area of debris, etc. Any issues relating to debris, fouling or refuse must be cleared up before children are allowed to play in the area.

### PLAY WITH WATER AND SAND

- Adequate supervision is needed to deal with frequent spillage.
- When emptying and filling water trays, staff must use buckets or other suitable containers.
- Before carrying out the activity, staff must ensure the appropriate equipment needed is at hand.
- When the activity is finished, the sand tray should be covered/ if outside.
- Dispose of any sand that has spilt by sweeping up or placing in external refuse bin.
- After use, toys must be removed, and the sand raked through.
- On a regular basis, the sand should be checked and replaced when needed.

## Equipment for play and childcare/ safe play policy

### FOOD PLAY

- Diligent care must be taken to avoid using any food in play that could cause an allergic reaction if a known allergic child is present in the area of play.
- Any spillages should be cleared away immediately and wet floor signage used if food could cause a slip hazard.
- Children must be supervised to prevent them eating the play food.
- Play food should be disposed of:
  - after use if cooked or wet e.g. jelly, baked beans
  - regularly if dried e.g. cooked pasta/rice.

### PETS/ANIMALS WITHIN THE SETTING

Approval is needed from the Setting Manager and agreed with Hertfordshire County Council or the settings landlord if animals or pets are to be kept within the Setting, the Setting Manager will be responsible for ensuring the animal's welfare and the following:

- All housing and cages provide no safety risk to children, e.g. all wire is suitably protected.
- Hygiene is maintained at all times.
- Dirty sawdust and debris on the floor is cleared up without delay.
- Close supervision is maintained then children are having contact with the animal/pet.
- An assessment is made to the suitability of the pet/animal before purchase, and any allergies are accounted for before purchase.
- Ensuring weekend and holiday arrangements are made.

### TOP TIPS

- Play equipment and areas must always be checked by staff to ensure they are in a safe condition and that toys are suitable for the age range - this must be on an ongoing basis.
- External areas must be checked daily and before each use for any dangers before children enter the area to play.

**This policy was agreed by the management team during: September 2024**