Toddler and Pre-K Rest Time Guidance

Aim:

To ensure that all children receive the rest time appropriate to their individual needs.

Rationale:

All children in a child care setting require some quiet time in their day, a rest from the stimulation of the busy morning schedule including social interactions, educational program, and play. An important component of the day, rest time gives children the chance to physically rest and emotionally unwind. Rest periods renew energy and promote physical and emotional health for children. This midday break can go a long way in helping children stay healthy, alert and emotionally centered in the afternoon.

Implementation:

1. Rest time will be provided each day for all children. It will be preceded by a quiet activity and quiet activities will follow.

2. At no time will a child be forced to sleep, nor will the staff force a child to stay awake who is in need of sleep.

3. The atmosphere and environment for rest time is restful and calming. A low lit room (providing enough lighting for adequate supervision) and soft music help to set a restful mood. When developmentally appropriate, children will make their own beds with pillows and blankets from home, as well as security items such as familiar soft toys, are encouraged. Rest time procedures (in preparation and packing away) will be used to promote self-help skills as much as possible. Children will be encouraged to make their own bed, to take off and put on their own shoes and clothing, to select their own quiet activities and to pack away their belongings after use.

4. Stories or relaxation activities will be used to settle children and soft music or story tapes played while children rest on their own beds. The requests of parents, and the observed needs of the children, will be used to determine whether some children should be assisted to sleep (eg. By patting or soothing). Overall, staff will balance the needs of individual children and the needs of the group as a whole. If a child does not fall asleep, quiet activities must be offered on the child's bed, at a table or in an appropriate area of the room.

5. Areas within each room will be used to cater for different children's needs and preferences. Grouping will be arranged for children who:

    a. Sleep easily and quickly
    b. Need to relax and unwind
    c. Prefer adults close by

d. Wish to rest but not sleep
e. Sleep for short periods

6. Although you may ask all children to be fairly quiet, you can not expect all children to sleep. After the initial time it takes to transition and settle the children for rest, quiet activities will be offered to non-sleepers and children as they wake. At this time, alternate activities will be offered to non-sleepers and children as they wake.

7. For children that are not sleeping, it is helpful to allow them to play with quiet activities. A child may choose to be at a separate area or may choose reading, puzzles, board games, drawing, table toys etc. on their mat.

8. Children will be checked regularly for comfort and safety while resting, to ensure that they are warm but not hot, that their bodies are in a comfortable position and they can breathe freely. If a child's face is covered, the staff will immediately uncover the child's face. If a child is not breathing then the staff will commence first aid for a non-breathing child.

9. The classroom will resume scheduled activities once the majority of the children in the classroom are awake. Recognize waking is also a major transition for young children who may be initially disoriented or cranky, allow them to wake slowly with your calm reassurances.

<u>Sources</u>

J. Levine, 2004

Childcare and Children's health, Vol 1 No 4, August 1998

NCAC Rest time policy template (last reviewed June 2009)

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