



Effective From	AY 2024/25 (Fall term)
Compliance From	AY 2025/26 (Fall term)

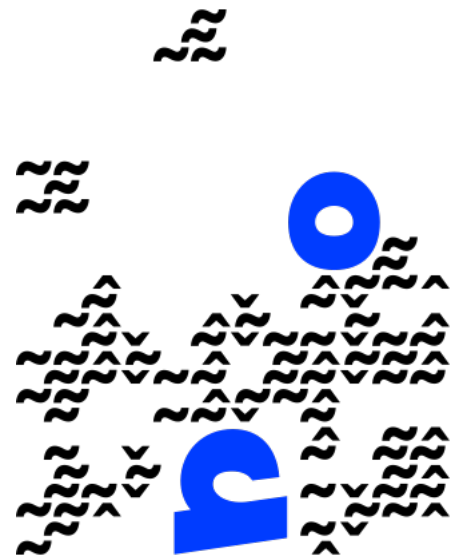
EARLY EDUCATION INSTITUTION **POLICY**

on

SAFE SLEEP

Purpose

This policy sets out a clear framework for the preparation, monitoring, and maintenance of a safe sleep environment for infants and young children. It standardizes health and safety requirements for sleep and rest arrangements across Early Education Institutions (EEIs).



Definitions

Child	A person under the age of 4 years, as per Federal Decree Law No. (51) of 2022 Regulating Nurseries.
Early Education Institutions (EIs)	All ADEK-licensed institutions that offer early years service (e.g., nurseries).
Infant	Child between 0-12 months of age.
Key Person	A key staff member who is the primary contact for a key group of children and helps them feel safe and cared for.
Rota	Schedule illustrating the rotation of staff while monitoring a space in the EEI.
Safe Sleep	Practices aimed to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and other risks related to sleep. A practice that aims to protect the health and safety of a child while in a crib/cot, bed, or any other sleeping arrangement in the EEI.
Sleep Log	A log to record children’s sleeping and waking time at the EEI.
Sleep Room or Sleeping Area	A room/space where children, toddlers, and babies are taken for their naps during the day. Infants would be napping in their own environment, and not be taken to a separate sleeping room.
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) or Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI)	SIDS, also known as SUDI or “Crib Death”, is the sudden death of an infant or young child which is unexpected by history and in which a thorough postmortem examination fails to demonstrate an adequate cause for death.
Toddler(s)	Children between 1 and 3 years of age.
White Noise	Refers to a noise that contains all frequencies across the spectrum of audible sound in equal measure.



Policy

EEIs shall develop and implement a Safe Sleep Policy.

The Safe Sleep Policy shall outline all processes, procedures, and guidelines to be followed regarding:

1. The physical sleep environment (e.g., suitable space, ventilation, temperature, lighting, noise level)
2. Sleep supervision and record-keeping
3. Crib and bed safety
4. Emergencies
5. Staff training
6. Parent communication

The Safe Sleep Policy shall state that it is applicable for children 0-4 years old and where appropriate, specifically mention the requirements for infants (0-12 months).

1. Physical Sleep Environment

EEIs shall ensure staff have access to relevant information about each child's sleeping habits.

1.1 Suitable Space

- a) EEIs shall follow the best sleep environment practices outlined in the [ADEK EEI Safe Sleep Policy Guide](#).
- b) EEIs shall prepare and maintain the sleep environment as per the approved and recommended guidelines of safety, ventilation, temperature, lighting, and noise level.
- c) EEIs shall prepare and arrange the sleep space to ensure that children can rest or nap safely.
- d) EEIs shall ensure that the sleep environment is appropriate for the number of children who will be using the space and their ages.
- e) EEIs shall ensure that all infants (under the age of 12 months) sleep in the same area/room where they spend their day.
- f) A separate sleeping room/space is not mandatory for children aged 12 months and above, however, EEIs shall provide a well-organized sleeping room for children 12 months and above, either in a separate room or as a space within the child's key group/area (physical environment criteria remain the same).

1.2 Ventilation

EEIs shall clearly state in their Safe Sleep Policy that the sleeping area/space shall be in a ventilated space that is adequately aired at all times.

1.3 Temperature

EElS shall maintain a sleep environment temperature of 21 - 23 degrees Celsius for infants (0–12 months) and toddlers (1-3 years), with supervising staff:

- a) Being aware of temperature guidelines outlined in the [ADEK EEI Safe Sleep Policy Guide](#).
- b) Regularly checking for signs that children sleeping in the room are comfortable.

1.4 Lighting

EElS shall ensure that the viewing panel of the sleeping space door is never obstructed, and clearly state in their Safe Sleep Policy that the sleeping space shall be sufficiently lit to allow for comfortable sleep while maintaining adult visibility for supervision.

1.5 Noise Level

EElS shall ensure that the sleeping area/space is away from the usual noise level of a regular early education environment. Soft music or white noise shall be played while children sleep in the sleeping area/space, to protect them from the damage caused by sudden loud noises.

1.6 Cribs/Stackable Beds/Mats

EElS shall provide an adequate and appropriate number of cribs, stackable beds, and/or sleep mats for children scheduled to sleep in the sleeping room or within their own key group environment. Cribs/beds for babies or children shall never be placed in play areas, shared areas, or outdoor areas. Both commitments shall clearly be stated in the EEl's Safe Sleep Policy.

2. Supervision and Record-Keeping

EElS shall not use devices such as CCTV cameras, baby sound monitors, or viewing panels as a supervision replacement for staff's physical presence in the sleeping area. This commitment shall clearly be stated in the EEl's Safe Sleep Policy.

2.1 Staff Supervision

EElS shall ensure sufficient sleeping room supervision by always having one staff member present when occupied by children and implementing a sleeping room supervision rota in line with the requirements outlined in the [ADEK EEI Safe Sleep Policy Guide](#).

2.2 Record Keeping

EElS shall mandate the use of a sleep log that records all required data points as outlined in the [ADEK EEI Safe Sleep Policy Guide](#). This commitment shall clearly be stated in the EEl's Safe Sleep Policy.

3. Crib/Bed Safety and Hygiene

3.1 Crib/Bed Positioning

EEl's shall ensure the safe positioning of cribs and beds by following the minimum recommendations outlined in the [ADEK EEI Safe Sleep Policy Guide](#) and by including this commitment in their Safe Sleep Policy.

The EEI's Safe Sleep Policy shall clearly define the safe positioning of cribs and beds in the sleeping area. This includes the following guidelines:

- a) Cribs and/or beds are not to be positioned below a window or adjacent to an air conditioner or heater.
- b) Cribs and/or stackable beds are to be positioned at a minimum of 50 cm apart from one another to allow space for movement of an adult around and in between the crib and beds.
- c) Cribs are not to be elevated and no pillows are to be used for children from 0 - 2 years of age.
- d) Cribs are not to be placed adjacent to a door, curtains, or anything that may help children climb out or pull (e.g., cords of curtains or blinds).
- e) No items are allowed to hang from the crib or the ceiling above the cribs or beds.

3.2 Crib/Bed Hygiene

At a minimum, EEI's shall follow the below crib/bed hygiene practices:

- a) Request parents to provide crib sheets and covers, ideally including an extra set.
- b) Always ensure crib/bed hygiene.
- c) Return crib sheets and covers to parents at the end of each week for washing and/or replacement.

3.3 Crib/Bed Suitability

EEl's shall ensure that provided beds and cribs are well-maintained and that they are manufacturer-certified to guarantee children's safety by ensuring:

- a) Crib barriers are of sufficient height to prevent a child from falling out.
- b) Stackable beds and cribs are assembled following manufacturer instructions.
- c) Makeshift cribs are never used.
- d) A well-fitting firm safety mattress of the correct size is used.
- e) Mattresses are kept clean, well-aired, and dry.
- f) Mattresses are protected with waterproof, easy-to-clean, and disinfected covers.
- g) There is no gap between the mattress and the sides of the crib or bed.
- h) Bars on cribs are no more than 6 cm apart for round bars and 7.5 cm apart for flat bars.

3.4 Unsafe Practices and Accessories

EEIs shall ensure staff is aware of unsafe practices, accessories, and equipment that risk the safety of infants and children in the sleeping room, such as:

- a) Sleeping children/infants shall not wear bibs and necklaces. Pacifiers shall not have any string, cord, clips, or decorations (e.g., beads, gems, etc.) attached, and shall be sized appropriately and in good condition.
- b) No soft, loose, or fluffy objects such as bedding, toys, bumpers, pillows, duvets, or quilts should be placed in cribs or rest areas for infants up to 12 months.
- c) No cords or strings of any kind (including those attached to things, such as toys or nappy bags) should be in or near cribs.
- d) There shall be enough space between each crib/bed/mat, allowing easy access to and around each one.
- e) All beds shall be used in the intended manner.
- f) Crib shall be checked to ensure that the sides are up and secured in place.
- g) Baby monitors shall never be placed in cribs.
- h) Children above 2 years of age shall not be placed in cribs where there is a risk of them climbing out.
- i) Only stackable beds or mattresses shall be used for children.

3.5 Prohibited Equipment

EEIs shall clearly outline prohibited equipment and sleeping methods for infants and children in their Safe Sleep Policy. Rockers and car seats are not permitted for sleeping infants and toddlers as they pose a high risk of SIDS.

3.6 Safety for Young Infants (0-6 months)

EEIs shall clearly outline specific safety precautions for young infants under 6 months of age, about the use of swaddles, slings, and positioning in the crib (refer to the [ADEK EEI Safe Sleep Policy Guide](#)) in their Safe Sleep Policy.

4. Dealing with Emergencies

- a) EEIs shall clearly state the steps to follow in case of a sleeping area emergency in their Safe Sleep Policy. These steps shall be aligned with the minimum requirements listed in the [ADEK EEI Safe Sleep Policy Guide](#).
- b) First aid-trained/BLS-trained staff or the nurse shall immediately administer first aid if an infant or child is found injured, hurt, unresponsive, and/or not breathing.

- c) Paramedics shall be called immediately, in the case of a child or infant who shows no response or signs of breathing.

5. Staff Training

- a) EEIs shall introduce and train all staff on their Safe Sleep Policy and on what to do in cases of emergency (see also [ADEK EEI Incident Management Policy](#) and [ADEK EEI Emergency Management Policy](#)). Training requirements include:
 - Certified first-aid training
 - Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) prevention training
 - Training on what to do in the event an infant is found to be unresponsive and not breathing
 - Resuscitation training
 - Sleep hygiene practice training
- b) The training shall be delivered by an appropriately qualified first-aid training service provider. EEIs may however deliver training internally on the safe sleep practices prescribed in their Safe Sleep Policy.
- c) EEIs shall display pictures depicting safe crib placing methods and prohibited practices in the sleeping area.

6. Parent Communication

- a) EEIs shall involve parents in decisions and consider their wishes related to their child's individual sleeping needs if these do not jeopardize the child's safety and health.
- b) EEIs shall communicate and explain the Safe Sleep Policy to all parents at the time of enrolment and on the Parent Induction Day, including:
 - The parent's role
 - A list of items to be provided by parents for their child's safe sleep
 - A list of equipment that is prohibited for the safe sleep of children under 2 years of age
- c) EEIs shall provide parents with educational materials and resources guiding them on safe sleep practices.

7. Compliance

- 7.1** This policy shall be effective as of the start of the Academic Year 2024/25 (Fall term). EEIs are expected to be fully compliant with this policy by the start of the Academic Year 2025/26 (Fall term).
- 7.2** Failure to comply with this policy shall be subject to legal accountability and the penalties stipulated in accordance with the ADEK’s regulations, policies, and requirements, notwithstanding any other penalties imposed by Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties and its amendments or any other relevant law. ADEK reserves the right to intervene if the EEI is found to be in violation of its obligations.

References

- Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties and its amendments
- Federal Decree Law No. (51) of 2022 Regulating Nurseries

Publication

2024 (September) ADEK_EEI_Safe Sleep Policy_v1.0

Department of Education and Knowledge, Abu Dhabi (ADEK)

This policy applies to Early Educational Institutions (EEI) in Abu Dhabi.

