

# MUD PIT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

Mud is a raw, everyday material that is easily accessible and provides children with an opportunity to explore, create and discover through open-ended nature play activities. It is important for educators and families to understand the importance of playing with mud. Engaging children in mud-pit play encourages cooperation, turn taking and problem-solving skills. We will follow procedures to set up a mud-pit and maintain and supervise this play space and conduct a risk assessment to ensure a child safe environment is always promoted.

Working in conjunction with the *Adventurous Play Policy* and *Physical Environment Policy*, this procedure provides detailed steps for educators to follow to ensure mud play is a safe and hygienic place for children to explore.

*Education and Care Services National Law or Regulations (R. 73, 103, 113 and 115) NQS QA 2 and 3: Element 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.2.1, 3.1.2 and 3.2.1 Health and Environment practices and procedures*  
*Related Policy: Adventurous Play Policy and Physical Environment Policy*

MUD PIT MANAGEMENT		
1	The Director/Nominated Supervisor will consult with educators to select a suitable location for the mud-pit that is free of contamination and safe for children	
2	The Director/ Nominated Supervisor will ensure the mud-pit is positioned in a shaded area accessible to a hose or tap	
3	The Director/ Nominated Supervisor will ensure the following is considered when setting up a new mud-pit play area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lay a heavy-duty tarp on the bottom of the soil in order to reduce the spread of mess and assist with removing the soil easier</li> <li>• ensure the soil being used has no additives, such as fertilisers</li> <li>• use a soil blend of 50:50 sand and soil</li> </ul>	
4	Educators will ensure children are provided with ample space to create and explore their natural environment	
5	Educators will provide appropriate 'tools' for exploring the mud-pit (pans, utensils, serving dishes, water, natural materials, flowers, rocks, sticks, leaves, planks of wood, items for digging and scooping)	
6	Educators will involve children in decisions about what additional equipment or resources are needed for the mud-pit	
7	Educators will allow children's input for establishing guidelines for using equipment; being responsible and safe in the mud-pit for example not eating the mud, rubbing it in your eyes, throwing mud at other children, using sticks safely, washing hands after playing in the mud	
8	Educators will extend upon children's interests, suggestions and learning	

9	Educators will ensure children wear appropriate clothing for playing with mud: waterproof aprons/painting smocks/gumboots	
10	Educators will supervise the mud-pit carefully and observe children's interactions	
11	Educators will provide a bucket of warm soapy water for the children to wash their hands once finished with the mud-pit	
12	The Director/ Nominated Supervisor will support parents by communicating the benefits of mud play and risk taking through newsletters, conversations, weekly diaries, photographs, blogs	
13	Educators will regularly evaluate the benefits of the mud-pit for children's learning.	

#### MAINTENANCE OF THE MUD-PIT ENVIRONMENT

1	Educators will ensure a daily inspection is made of the mud-pit to identify any potential hazard and ensure equipment and tools are safe for children to use.	
2	The mud-pit may be a temporary or permanent play space in the Service. If it is temporary, the soil used in the mud pit can be added to the garden or grass at the end of the play period. Use of a large plastic tub or container makes disposing of the soil relatively easy.	
3	A more permanent mud-pit can be left to 'dry' over a few days and reactivated by adding water and more soil mixture when needed.	
4	If the mud-pit becomes contaminated by animal or human faeces, it must be cleaned and disinfected immediately. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wearing disposable gloves, remove the object with a shovel and dispose within a sealed plastic bag</li> <li>Remove a section of soil around the area of contamination and place into a sealed plastic bag</li> <li>Disinfect the whole mud-pit using a watering can with mild detergent diluted in water</li> <li>Allow to dry in the sun for at least a day</li> <li>If the contamination is large, remove all soil and replace</li> <li>Wash hands thoroughly</li> </ul>	

#### RISK ASSESSMENT OF MUD-PIT PLAY

	Consider the following when completing a risk assessment for the mud-pit play space. The mud-pit provides many opportunities for risk-taking however, safety is a priority to enable nature play to continue in the service. It is important to consider removing obvious risks and hazards but allow children to take risks and challenges to promote learning. Consider developing a risk assessment <i>WITH</i> your children to develop a shared understanding of the play space.	
1	<b>Choking-</b> ensure any object used in the mud-pit is not a choking hazard. Small pieces of plastic may become detached from toys and be dangerous when placed in the mouth	
2	<b>Infection-</b> Bacteria from animals for example, cats and bandicoots can be a source of infection and are dangerous to children and adults.	

3	<b>Sun safety-</b> ensuring the mud-pit has adequate shade to prevent children from becoming sunburnt from dangerous UV rays	
4	<b>Bites and stings-</b> mud pits may attract insects to nest in the sand. Keeping the sandpit dry and free from grass or weeds may assist. (Cinnamon is a natural bug repellent. Vinegar and water in a spray bottle is helpful to repel ants)	
5	<b>Bumps and scratches-</b> determine the level of risk using particular equipment that may cause injuries to children. Services are required to protect children from harm and hazard however they are not required to eliminate all risk and challenges.	