Childcare Centre Fire Safety in Australia: Evacuating Babies and Young Children: Quick Guide

A workable childcare fire safety plan must suit real children, available staff and the building. It combines prevention, safe movement, regular practice, bushfire decisions and reliable communication.

Key takeaways

- In fire or smoke: raise the alarm, use a safe exit, call 000 and never re-enter.
- Use a site-specific plan; NQF services rehearse procedures every three months.
- Plan for sleeping babies, toddlers and children requiring individual assistance.
- Keep escape routes usable; check kitchens, dryers, chargers and fire systems.
- Plan bushfire decisions, accurate headcounts, responder briefings and family updates.

Step by step

1. **Act on fire or smoke**
   Alert people, evacuate by a safe route, call 000, check everyone and tell firefighters who is missing.
2. **Check legal and site plans**
   Display exit plans and review centre-based risk assessments at least every 12 months and after changes.
3. **Reduce everyday fire risks**
   Check cooking, dryers, batteries, doors and alarm systems; report faults and keep exits clear.
4. **Move and support every child**
   Test infant devices, routes and staff capacity; arrange individual help and a backup for each child who needs it.
5. **Assign roles and rehearse**
   Maintain child supervision and backup roles; vary drills, keep records and fix identified problems.
6. **Prepare for bushfire**
   Monitor ratings and incident warnings; check closure conditions and plan safe family communication.
7. **Brief crews and inform families**
   Share confirmed counts, missing people, access and hazards; send verified family updates when safe.

Common mistakes

- Assuming any evacuation cot suits the children, doorways and building.
- Re-entering a smoke-affected building to search for someone.
- Assuming all Victorian services have identical bushfire closure triggers.

Read the full article: firerescue.com.au/childcare-centre-fire-safety-australia/

General education only; follow approved procedures, current rules and emergency directions.