

## INSIGHT | SLEEP &amp; REST SUPERVISION

## Rest is Not Rest

*Sleep and rest periods look calm — but the supervision duty does not pause. What physical checks actually require, and the discipline that makes them defensible.*

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A quiet room is not a safe room by default. Sleep and rest periods remove the behavioural cues educators rely on during active play — the noise, the movement, the visible interaction. The supervision duty doesn't reduce in a sleep room; it changes shape. And the evidence of how that duty was fulfilled is the check record.

### Physical checks mean physical checks

A camera, a window, a monitor — none of these replace a physical check. The service procedure or risk assessment determines the check frequency, and educators need to know what they are assessing at each check.

What to assess	What to observe
<b>Breathing</b>	Visible chest or abdomen movement.
<b>Colour</b>	Any change from normal skin colour.
<b>Position</b>	Face and head uncovered; safe sleeping position.
<b>Bedding</b>	Cots secure; no loose items covering face.
<b>Room conditions</b>	Temperature within safe range; ventilation functioning.
<b>Hazards</b>	No objects in or near sleep spaces that shouldn't be there.
<b>Child state</b>	Appears settled; no signs of distress.

### Before and during: two different systems

Before sleep begins, set the system: assign roles, check visibility, review child-specific risks, prepare documentation, and confirm escalation pathway. During the routine, complete checks at the required frequency and quality, document at the required time, and never leave the sleep area without a clear handover.

**FIVE QUESTIONS BEFORE A CASUAL EDUCATOR ENTERS THE SLEEP ROOM**

1. What are the sleep and rest procedures here?
2. How often are checks required?
3. Where is the sleep check log?
4. Which children need closer monitoring?
5. Who covers the sleep area if I need to step away?

**The sleep room discipline that matters most**

If ambient noise — music, white noise, a fan — prevents an educator from hearing children breathing, coughing, moving, or becoming distressed, it needs to be reduced or turned off. Raising this is not being difficult. It is fulfilling the supervision duty. The sleep check sheet is the record of checks completed — not the check itself.

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This article is part of The Practitioner's Guide to the NQF — McArthur's editorial series for the early childhood education sector. For the full whitepaper and webinar replay, visit [www.mcarthur.com.au/insights](http://www.mcarthur.com.au/insights).