



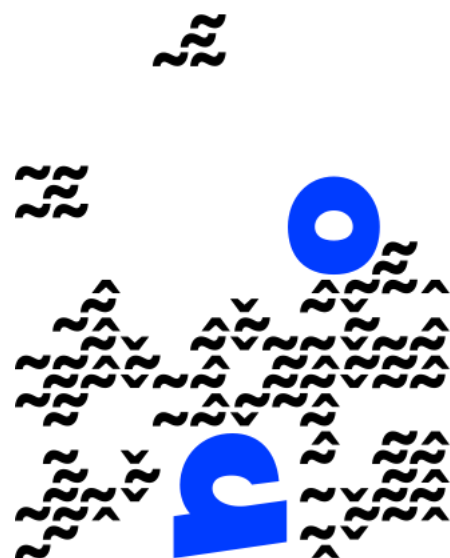
Effective From	AY 2024/25 (Fall term)
Compliance From	AY 2025/26 (Fall term)

EARLY EDUCATION INSTITUTION **POLICY** on

CHILD SUPERVISION

Purpose

This policy sets out a clear framework for providing essential and effective supervision practices and creating safe environments for the children cared for by Early Education Institutions (EEI). It standardizes EEI learning environments and sets clear expectations among all stakeholders (e.g., EEI management and staff, parents, regulators, service providers, etc.).



Definitions

Active Supervision	The act of focusing attention on and intentionally observing children to ensure their safety and prevent the occurrence of injuries in EEIs. It is also an essential component of quality programs by ensuring all children are supervised while allowing opportunities for educators to be engaged with individual or smaller groups of children.
Adult-to-Child Ratios	The ratios are the minimum number of adults (aged 18 and above) required to supervise, care for, and work directly with the children in the EEI.
Child	A person under the age of 4 years, as per Federal Decree Law No. (51) of 2022 Regulating Nurseries.
Child Supervision	Monitoring the activity of children with regards to their physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing and safety including when onsite, in transportation, on field trips, etc.
Children with Additional Learning Needs	<p>Individual requirements for additional support, modifications, or accommodations within an early years setting on a permanent or temporary basis in response to a specific context. This applies to any support required by children of determination and those who have special educational needs and/or additional barriers to learning, access, or interaction in that specific context (e.g., dyslexic, hearing or visually impaired).</p> <p>For example, a child with restricted mobility may require lesson accommodations to participate in Physical Education and building accommodations to access facilities but may not require any accommodations in assessments. Equally, a child with hearing impairment may require additional support in class to access lesson content but may not require any physical accommodations to access learning.</p>
Early Education Institutions (EEIs)	All ADEK-licensed institutions that offer early years service (e.g., nurseries).
Flexible Support Staff	A staff member who is not assigned to a key team but provides support where and when required such as in the case of special activities, field trips, substitution of absent staff or helping with a child with additional learning needs during special activities.
Head Count	The total number of children present in a given space and time.
Mixed-Age Groups	Grouping of children with more than one age group in a designated space.

Staff Roster	An EEI staff rotation list displaying timings, areas within the EEI, and the number of adults within a learning space or an activity area.
Transitions (related to supervision)	Time slots within the day when children are being moved and guided from one area of the EEI to another, or in between activities in a learning space.
Volunteer	An individual engaged by the EEI on a non-remunerated basis to interact with children (e.g., parent, chaperones, etc.).



Policy

All EEIs shall develop and implement a Child Supervision Policy, which outlines all processes, procedures, and guidelines to be followed regarding:

1. Staffing
2. Standard supervision for secure access
3. Supervision during drop-off and pick-up times
4. Supervision in outdoor areas and transition times
5. Supervision of special activities
6. Supervision of children with additional learning needs
7. Supervision during outings and field trips
8. Staff training and active supervision strategies

The EEI Child Supervision Policy shall state that all staff members responsible for the supervision of children shall be fully aware of all the children under their care at all times and shall always ensure their safety and wellbeing.

1. Staffing

EEIs shall effectively ensure the supervision of every child by:

- a) Mandating that a minimum of 2 staff members are always on premises at all times when children are present. At least 1 of the staff members shall be an Early Education (EE) Assistant.
- b) Maintaining the availability of sufficient appropriate staff during the day to meet children's needs.
- c) Adhering to the minimum adult-to-child ratios as per the table below:
 - EEIs with annual fees of 30,000 AED and above shall be subject to the ratios in [Table 1. Minimum Adult-to-Child Ratios for EEIs with Higher Fees](#) from 1 September 2026.

[Table 1. Minimum Adult-to-Child Ratios for EEIs with Higher Fees](#)

Age group	Adult-to-child ratios
(0-1 year)	1:3
(1-2 years)	1:4
(2-3 years)	1:5
(3-4 years)	1:8

- EEIs with an annual fees below 30,000 AED shall continue to be subject to the ratios in [Table 2. Minimum Adult-to-Child Ratios for EEIs with Lower Fees](#).

Table 2. Minimum Adult-to-Child Ratios for EEIs with Lower Fees

Age group	Adult-to-child ratios
(0–1 year)	1:4
(1-2 years)	1:5
(2-3 years)	1:8
(3–4 years)	1:10

- d) Assigning sufficient numbers of EE Educators within each learning group, depending on the number of children in each key group (see [ADEK EEI Learning and Development Policy](#) for more details).
- e) EEIs are authorized to mix age groups if they are licensed to offer a mixed-age curriculum, in which case, they shall apply the adult-to-child ratio for the youngest age in the mixed age group (see [ADEK EEI Child Supervision Policy Guide](#) for more information).
- f) Ensuring every staff member understands their role and responsibilities in safeguarding the minimum adult-to-child ratios at all times.
- g) Managing schedules and responsibilities during absences to ensure that a member of the key team is always present within the key group, unless in an emergency.
- h) Not including volunteers, trainees, or third-party service providers delivering extracurricular activities in the adult-to-child ratio.
- i) Recruiting enough staff members with the necessary experience and competencies (qualifications, knowledge, skills, and abilities) to always provide effective and sufficient supervision for each age group.
- j) Organizing staff duties.
- k) Ensuring that all staff have received first aid training from a certified provider in line with DOH/ADEK requirements and that, at any given time, at least one of the 10% of BLS-trained staff are present on EEI premises or any other external activity supervised by the EEI.
- l) Including the following information in the staff roster:
 - All staff on duty during EEI hours of operation
 - Daily adult-to-child ratio for each area of the EEI
 - Names of staff performing non-supervisory tasks and not included in the adult-to-child ratio (e.g., flexible support or additional staff)
 - Scheduled break times (start and end time) of each staff in attendance every day
- m) Displaying their current staff roster and keeping a record of all rosters at all times.
- n) Having a provision to substitute absent staff on short notice.

2. Standard Provision for Secure Access

- a) EEIs shall maintain a fully functional electronic entry system to control access to and movement within the premises (see [ADEK EEI Physical Environment Policy](#) for more information).
- b) As part of their risk assessment, EEIs shall evaluate whether their location or access points present risk factors affecting secure and authorized entry and exit from the premises, in accordance with the risk assessment approach outlined in the [ADEK EEI Risk Management Policy](#). Where the assessment identifies such risks, the EEI shall employ a security guard in addition to maintaining a fully functional electronic entry system (see [ADEK EEI Risk Management Policy Guide](#) for more details).
- c) In all other cases, the appointment of a security guard is optional and may be implemented at the discretion of the EEI based on its operational context and assessed needs.
- d) Any security guard appointed by the EEI must meet the qualification requirements outlined in the [ADEK EEI Staffing Policy](#).

3. Supervision During Drop-Off and Pick-Up Times

EEIs shall plan and organize drop-off and pick-up times in line with their Child Supervision Policy, and ensure that children's pick-up and drop-off points are:

- a) Clearly specified and distinctly marked as the sole supervised access points to the premises.
- b) Kept securely locked at all times, except during designated drop-off and pick-up periods.
- c) Subject to dedicated safety procedures, which shall be included in the EEI's Child Supervision Policy.
- d) Always supervised by specifically assigned and sufficient staff, depending on size and location. The assigned staff shall be clear about their roles and responsibilities in ensuring applicable safety procedures and shall **not** include members of the key team.
- e) Clearly communicated to parents.

4. Supervision in Outdoor Areas and During Transition Times

4.1 Outdoor Supervision

EEIs shall consider all outdoor environment supervision challenges before planning and organizing outdoor play by:

- a) Conducting a risk assessment and putting mitigation measures in place.
- b) Ensuring that staff always know how many children are in their care.

- c) Ensuring that all key group room supervision standards and ratios are also adhered to during outdoor play.
- d) Training staff so that they always position themselves in a way for all outdoor areas to be visible and easily accessible.
- e) Blocking off blind spots/areas that cannot be supervised by making them inaccessible for children.

4.2 Transition Times

EEIs shall ensure staff apply a transition supervision strategy (e.g., walking rope, taking headcount, etc.) and clearly outline in the Child Supervision Policy that:

- a) Rules for staff supervision during all transition times (within and outside the learning spaces) shall be followed.
- b) Staff are strictly prohibited from carrying out activities that may draw their attention away from active supervision, especially during transition times.

5. Supervision of Special Activities

- 5.1** EEIs shall conduct a risk assessment before a special activity takes place by accounting for the need for additional staff, depending on the activity's nature and duration.
- 5.2** EEIs shall train staff to confidently identify and respond to changes in the environment throughout the day by adjusting practice where necessary.
- 5.3** EEIs shall also include in their Child Supervision Policy that special activities involving water (splash pools or paddling pools), can only be conducted with the support of additional staff, who are only assigned to supervise the children's safety and shall not be involved in executing the activity.
- 5.4** EEIs shall ensure that all extracurricular activities conducted by third-party service providers are supervised by EEI staff members at all times (see [ADEK EEI Child Supervision Policy Guide](#) for more details).

6. Supervision of Children with Additional Learning Needs

EEIs shall include a clear statement in their Child Supervision Policy about supervising children with additional supervision needs and assign additional staff (an adult) if deemed necessary as part of the activity's risk assessment in the learning space to ensure that they do not affect their own and others' wellbeing and safety.

7. Supervision During Outings

EEIs shall develop clear supervision guidelines for outings in their Child Supervision Policy and conduct a risk assessment prior to the field trip or outing. These include:

- a) Facilities (e.g., parking, drop-off, elevator safety, staircase access, etc.)
- b) Activities (e.g., the necessity of additional support for participation, toileting, feeding, etc.)
- c) Transportation (e.g., bus capacity, route, additional supervision required, etc.)
- d) Services (e.g., service provider staffing, nature of support, first-aid provision, access to drinking water, toileting, etc.)

8. Staff Training on Active Supervision Strategies

8.1 EEIs shall train all staff at the time of induction and during ongoing staff training on safety and supervision strategies and ground rules, which are clearly outlined in their Child Supervision Policy and include, but not limited to:

- Environment preparation
- Staff positioning
- Scanning and counting
- Listening
- Activity planning and grouping
- Observation and anticipation of children’s play and behavior
- Engaging and redirecting

8.2 Staff responsibilities towards children’s supervision regarding the above shall be mentioned in the Staff Handbook (see [ADEK EEI Child Supervision Policy Guide](#) and [ADEK EEI Staffing Policy Guide](#) for details).

9. Compliance

9.1 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). EEIs shall be compliant with the updated requirements in version 1.1 of this policy by Academic Year 2026/27 (Fall term).

9.2 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

Publication

2026 (March) ADEK_EEI_Child Supervision Policy_v.1.1

Department of Education and Knowledge, Abu Dhabi (ADEK)

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

Current version:

Amended to add position requirements for supervising staff and update adult-to-child ratio rules, including provisions for mixed-age groups and exclusions from ratio calculations. It defines general supervision expectations across key groups and requires that a minimum proportion of BLS-certified staff be present at all times. Additionally, the update clarifies the obligation to operate and maintain an electronic entry system and links the employment of a security guard to the EEI's location-based risk assessment, easing this requirement for settings not classified as high-risk while specifying qualification standards for security personnel. The policy updates also require EEIs to ensure proper supervision of extracurricular activities delivered by external providers.

Past versions:

- 2024 (September) ADEK_EEI_Child Supervision Policy_v.1.0
First published

