



Interactions with Children – Positive Guidance to Behaviour

QUALITY AREA 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN

Policy Statement

Educators at our service will:

- < be responsive to children's strengths, interests, abilities;
- < provide opportunities to become self-reliant and develop self-esteem;
- < uphold children's dignity, rights, and agency;
- < provide positive guidance and support towards acceptable behaviour;
- < help them develop ways to appropriately control their own behaviour;
- < promote a safe, secure and nurturing environment;
- < be authentic and responsive;
- < be based in fairness, acceptance and empathy with respect for cultural and linguistic rights.

Goals / What are we going to do?

A positive atmosphere and the wellbeing of children within an education and care setting is promoted through attentive care and quality interactions with children. Emotional development and social relationships are enhanced through thoughtful and sophisticated approaches to conversation, discussion and promotion of children's language and communication. Children who experience relationships that are built on respect, fairness, co-operation and empathy are given the opportunity to develop these qualities themselves. When children experience positive interactions they develop an understanding of themselves as significant and respected, and feel a sense of belonging.

The Centre's positive behaviour guidance strategies will enable Educators to be clear, consistent and supportive in guiding behaviours in children in order to provide a happy, safe and nurturing environment for every child that attends.

Strategies / How will it be done?

Factors that Influence Children's Behaviour

- < Being new to the Service, unfamiliarity with routines, peers, different times of the day, varying ages, interests and abilities, relationships with their family and general health and wellbeing.

Children's Rights, Family and Cultural Values

◁ Interactions within the setting are greatly enhanced when children's rights and family and cultural values are given due consideration and respect. Administrative procedures, initial conversations, documentation and ongoing communication with children and families are a reference point for interactions and a foundation for authentic and respectful communication.

Listening

◁ Educators and staff must use listening as a foundation for interactions. Listening is based on observation and in leaving spaces in conversations and communication, suspending judgement and in giving full attention to children as they communicate. Truly attending to children's communication promotes a strong culture of listening.

Children and Families

◁ A culture of respectful interaction is promoted when children's attempts to communicate are valued. Turn taking and regulating children's conversations promotes active engagement. Respectful communication with families generates greater confidence in interacting.

Reflection and Consideration

Time is dedicated to reflecting upon interactions within children. Reflections should consider how to spend extended periods engaged in interactions with children that comprise communication and listening.

Role Modelling

Educators model to children all behaviours that are acceptable in the centre environment. Educators will model appropriate interactions with children, other staff and parents. They will teach the children about what is good to do, what is not good to do, what is safe, what angers and hurts others and what helps and pleases others.

Educators model positive interactions when they:

- ◁ Show care, empathy and respect for children, educators, staff and families;
- ◁ Learn and use effective communication strategies.

Use Positive Guidance

◁ positive guidance can only occur when it:

- » does not damage self-esteem but allows children to feel capable, competent and compassionate to others
- » takes into account the child's developmental understanding and abilities
- » praises and acknowledges caring, cooperative, desirable behaviour
- » expresses itself positively e.g "walk inside" – not "don't run inside"
- » teaches/gives simple explanations and offers alternatives so that a child can make choices, and in time, wise choices
- » it show's what to do, not just what not to do
- » it is consistent
- » It is considered as a learning experience and consequently a normal part of a child's development
- » Have conversations with children about different emotions they experience through age appropriate conversations.

» Use positive consequences e.g. praise / children given special responsibilities / award stickers and stamps / write positive comments in communication books (set up for children with persistent inappropriate behaviours – see below)

Principles for Behavioural Management

Staff respect individual children's needs and differences in age, ability and experience regarding issues surrounding behaviour management and they are happy to discuss individual family expectations with parents. There may be times when staff will need to negotiate management strategies with parents to suit the needs of individual children.

◁ Wherever possible, children and staff will negotiate and determine boundaries and rules.

◁ Rules will be reasonable considering the age, development and individual characteristics of the children.

◁ **Rules will be consistently enforced.**

◁ It is the behaviour that is praised or addressed, not the child.

◁ Staff present a good example through positive role modelling.

◁ Educators will provide children with support, guidance and opportunities for children to manage their emotions and learn self regulation.

The Environment

◁ Alert children to educator / staff changes in advance if possible at morning talk times. Changes to staff with no explanation can cause children to feel insecure.

◁ Support children to make decisions about the environment, quiet spaces are utilized for children to encourage solitary play, children are encouraged to develop a sense of ownership about play and play spaces – using name cards.

◁ Ensure that the centre is set up so as to minimise 'disruptive' behaviour e.g. enough and varied equipment offered to cater for each age level, clear traffic flows

◁ Be alert to settle or redirect play at the beginning or end of an activity (transition times). Give sufficient notice that a change of activity is about to occur by giving a 5 minute notice timeframe. This can be done by using an hour glass timer, stop watch or clock on the wall e.g. "the big hand is now on the 4, when the big hand is on the 5, it will be time to pack away"

◁ Provide children with opportunities to work through their emotions independently and support through experiences and environments which challenge and strengthen social and emotional skills.

Adult Expectations

◁ What events or circumstances may cause children to experience difficulty coping with their emotions?

◁ How can the service prepare for, and minimise the likelihood of, children experiencing difficulty in coping with their emotions?

◁ How does the service support children's emotional needs while meeting the behaviour guidance expectations of families and colleagues?

◁ Is the child really demonstrating an inappropriate behaviour or does the behaviour just differ to my own expectations?

◁ Recognise certain reactions as understandable behaviour, a reflection of communication and social development.

The Role of the Staff In response to challenging behaviour, staff:

- ◁ Remind children of appropriate behaviour.
- ◁ Redirect the child or remove the child from the situation if necessary.
- ◁ Give children choices in managing their own behaviour. Use a firm, calm manner indicating what you expect from the child – presenting it to the child as a choice wherever possible e.g. “you can stand in the sandpit and play sensibly or you can move to another activity and come back to the sandpit when you feel calmer”
- ◁ Advise children of the consequences of continuing with the behaviour. This will encourage remembrance, respect and safety whilst ensuring stability. Follow through with the consequences – If a child says “I don’t care” - affirm that YOU do e.g. “I care, I don’t want to see another child unhappy”. Proceed to remove that child from the situation, let the child play alone; when you and the child have calmed down, return to the child and talk it over – or if the child is very angry, provide them with a sensory tool to assist them in self regulating their body. Resources such as a body sock, mood playdough and fidget toys. WHEN it is OVER – it is essential to restore a positive relationship between you and the child before either of you go home e.g. read a story, comment on a positive behaviour you observe the child carrying out.
- ◁ Actively listen to children’s feelings and discuss the rules.
- ◁ Help children to return to play.

Time Out

» In certain instances, it is appropriate that children are given supervised time out, to enable the situation to cool down, the child to calm down or other children to be protected. Time out will involve the child sitting away from the play of their peers. There will not be a fixed position in the room that will be designated as time out so we can avoid terms such as “the naughty chair”. Time out must be kept short – approx. 1min for each year of the the child’s age eg 4 yrs old equals 4 minutes. Once the time is up, ask the child which activity they would like to participate in or what the appropriate behaviour is for them to carry out upon returning to play e.g. Keep our hands to ourselves.

Specific Inappropriate behaviours

◁ Hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, attacking and throwing things

- » give attention to the hurt child (call another educator if necessary)
- » kneel and talk to the child directly. Explain what the unacceptable behaviour is and why e.g. “you can’t hit Tim because it hurts him” or “I cannot let you hit, it hurts people and I cannot let them hurt you”, or “he has sand in his eyes, now he cannot see” (hold child if necessary).
- » Use time-out, to allow child to calm down or think about actions.

◁ Biting

- » Comfort hurt child and attend to injury if needed (call another educator if necessary)
- » 0-3’s - break contact and use verbal explanation “no biting”
- » 3-5’s – explanation of why behaviour is not acceptable “biting is not allowed, it hurts people”
- » If ongoing, observations will need to be taken to establish any triggers and a behaviour plan may need to be developed with parent consultation.

< Swearing & Spitting

» Explain to child that we don't use those words here, or we don't spit here.

< What to do when children refuse to join in activities:

» Simply accept them as they are. Make it clear you will help if the child wants help, but do not pressure them. Children will usually respond when you say "if you want to watch for a while, that's okay ... and if you need help or want to talk, I'll be right here (or) you can join in when you are ready".

» **It is essential that individual development levels are taken into account at all times.**

Characteristics of Children

< Infants/Babies:

» Positive guidance begins at birth, along with other teaching and learning. Educators must be ready to distract, guide, re-direct attention and interest and remove temptation.

< Toddlers

» Toddlers can be EGOCENTRIC – the world revolves solely around them. They have little regard for others needs, rights and feelings and do not understand when they hurt or offend others.

» Toddlers explore their world through hands on experiences – poking, jabbing, pulling etc. They need to be shown how to do it gently.

» It is characteristic for under 3's to lack willpower or self control (they simply cannot stop themselves). Many acts that are labelled aggressive or impulsive are due to the child's inability to stop.

» **Therefore, we should not expect them to share, play together or cooperate.** We can avoid conflict by distracting them from a situation and ensuring that enough toys are available for all children. Disapproval of behaviour should come through the **educator's tone of voice and manner** and kept for situations that really matter e.g. biting and hurting someone – not necessarily taking things from other children.

< Preschoolers

» Know more about appropriate ways of behaving

» Have more self control

» Are fairly skilled in the use of language

» Can understand language well

» Are less egocentric than younger children

» Therefore we can reasonably expect them to share, deal with situations with language rather than physical force, respond to requests from both peers and adults, make choices and be responsible for their own actions by accepting the consequences, as well as be sympathetic towards other children and adults.

< Persistent Inappropriate Behaviours

» When the environment, adult expectation and characteristics of children have been evaluated and the techniques and strategies lists above have been used, but the behaviour still continues, educators will follow the following steps in an attempt to reduce the inappropriate behaviour from occurring;

» Educators will inform the Nominated Supervisor and show documented observations, incident reports or other written material to demonstrate what behaviours are present and what strategies have already been tried.

» This information will be recorded in a communication book (per child) that will be created to keep track of the inappropriate behaviour. It will record the frequency, intensity and / or duration of the inappropriate behaviour. Details to be logged will be date/situation/whether the behaviour was attempted or carried out/how the situation was handled.

» The Nominated Supervisor will arrange a meeting with the child’s parents to discuss the concerns. During this meeting strategies will be formulated to deal with the inappropriate behaviour. By involving the parents, this can ensure the same strategies are used at home to create consistency between the Centre and home.

» Educators will continue to record instances in the communication book. This will enable to see if the new strategies are having a positive effect on the behaviour/s by observing if the frequency and/or duration reduces or increases or another behaviour occurs as a result.

» Educators will report back to parents

» **Educators must remember that it can take up to four weeks to break a habit** and that sometimes the behaviour may get worse, as the child tests new limits, before it gets better. A strategy and documentation must be implemented for a minimum of 4 weeks before a decision is made that the strategy is not working, unless it is clearly evident from earlier on that the strategy is making the situation worse.

» Educators must also remember throughout this time that behaviours can be the mask of other issues. Educators should not look at the behaviours in isolation, but as part of the whole child’s development and compare other observations taken on the child. It may be necessary for educators to recommend having the child’s hearing checked or referring them onto another agency.

Confidentiality

◁ **At no time are specific children to be discussed in front of other children or parents and visitors.** Discussions with the parent of a child are to be in a private area, and the child is not to be present.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Authority/Responsibility For
Approved Provider	<p>◁ Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011 with regard to the delivery and collection of children at all times.</p> <p>◁ Ensure all staff have access to relevant professional development.</p> <p>◁ Ensure the educational program contributes to the development of children who have a strong sense of wellbeing and identity, and are connected, confident, involved and effective learners and communicators.</p> <p>◁ Ensure that the Nominated Supervisor and all staff members at the service who work with children are aware that it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances (National Law: Section 166) (Regulation 73).</p> <p>◁ Inform the Regulatory Authority in writing, within 24 hours of receiving a notifiable complaint (Section 174(4), Regulation 176(2)(b)).</p> <p>◁ Inform the Regulatory Authority in writing within 24 hours of a serious incident occurring at the service (Section 174(4), Regulation 176).</p>

<p>Nominated Supervisor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> < Guide professional development and practice to promote interactions with children that are positive and respectful. < Establish practice guidelines that ensure interactions with children are given priority and those interactions are authentic, just and respect difference. < Ensure all staff are aware of the service’s expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and reactions when working with children and families. < Consider the size and composition of groups to ensure all children are provided with the best opportunities for quality interactions and relationships with each other and with adults at the service. < Develop and implement educational programs, in accordance with an approved learning framework, that are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child. < Ensure that staff provide education and care to children in a way that encourages children to express themselves and their opinions and allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem. < Access current training and resources on dealing with behaviour issues in children. < Under section 166 of the Education and Care National Law, a staff member, nominated Supervisor and Approved Provider may receive a penalty for up to \$10,000 (up to \$50,000 in the case of Approved Provider) for subjecting a child to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances.
<p>Early Childhood Educators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> < Act in accordance with the obligations outlined in this policy. < Access current training and resources on dealing with behaviour issues in children. < Acknowledge children’s complex relationships and sensitively intervene in ways that promote consideration and alternative perspectives and social inclusion. < Respect children’s agency and encourage them to express themselves and their opinions. < Maintain the dignity and the rights of each child at all times. < Have regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for. < Offer positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour. < Raised voices are not allowed. < Ensure that routines such as toileting, nappy change and rest times are used for positive one to one interactions with children and a time that they can get to know more about the child. < Genuinely seek children’s input, respect their ideas and take their suggestions on board.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> < Support babies to build trusting attachments with one or two educators in order to develop a secure base for their exploration and learning. < Form warm relationships with each child.
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> < Reading and complying with this policy. < Engage in open communication with staff about their child. < Inform staff of events or incidents that may impact on their child’s behaviour at the service (e.g. moving house, a new sibling). < Inform staff of any concerns regarding their child’s behaviour or the impact of other children’s behaviour. < Work collaboratively with staff and others (e.g. O/T, speech therapists) to develop or review an individual behaviour guidance plan for their child, where appropriate.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every two years.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family’s ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

RELATED GUIDELINES, STANDARDS, FRAMEWORKS

- < National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships with children – Standards 5.1, 5.2
- < National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership – Standard 7.1.2

RESOURCES/USEFUL LINKS

- < Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – www.acecqa.gov.au
- < United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – www.unicef.org.au
- < The Supporting young children’s rights: Statement of intent (2015-2018) – www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au
- < Australian Human Rights Commission – www.humanrights.gov.au

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