

## **INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN**

### **QUALITY AREA 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN**

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#### **1. 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.
- 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;
- be familiar with attachment theory and the play spaces perspective .

#### **2. GOALS**

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, cooperation, and empathy are given the opportunity to develop these qualities themselves. When children have positive experiences of interactions, they develop an understanding of themselves as significant and respected and feel a sense of belonging.

#### **3. STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

##### **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, with the intention of listening to understand. 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**

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- 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.

#### **Sitting Still**

Sitting still allows children to know where educators are and to come to them as needed. It creates a calm and predictable environment for children and educators. Educators will do this during the morning drop-off and play times by:

- Sitting still in an area that has space for children to sit with them
- Observing children play and commenting on their play to the children who are sitting with them
- Observing children coming into their area and going out to play

#### **Role Modelling**

Educators model positive interactions when they:

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

#### **Principles for Behaviour Guidance**

Educators respect individual children's needs and differences in age, ability and experience regarding issues surrounding behaviour guidance and they are happy to discuss individual family expectations with parents. Behaviour guidance and support is a process that focuses on the child as a whole. The Service understands that a child's behaviour may be affected by a range of internal and external factors. 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.
- Children will be encouraged to demonstrate positive and assertive behaviour.
- It is the behaviour that is praised or addressed, not the child.
- Staff present a good example through positive role modelling.
- Staff will consider possible stressors that are causing challenging behaviours and attempt to remove or reduce these
- Children are encouraged to make positive choices.

#### **The Role of the Staff**

In response to challenging behaviour, staff:

- Recognise certain reactions as understandable behaviour, a reflection of communication and social development.
- Identify and remove stressors that may be contributing to challenging behaviours
- Redirect the child or remove the child from the situation if necessary.
- Advise the child of the consequences of continuing with the behaviour.
- Remind the child of positive behaviour.
- Explain to the child how behaviour results in consequences.
- Actively listen to children's feelings and discuss the rules.

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- Help the child to return to play.
- Work with families and/or external agencies to support children in developing positive behaviours and self-regulation

#### **4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Authority/Responsibility For</b>
Nominated Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011 regarding the delivery and collection of children at all times.</li> <li>• Ensure all staff have access to relevant professional development.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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).</li> <li>• Inform the Regulatory Authority in writing, within 24 hours of receiving a notifiable complaint (Section 174(4), Regulation 176(2)(b)).</li> <li>• Inform the Regulatory Authority in writing within 24 hours of a serious incident occurring at the service (Section 174(4), Regulation 176).</li> <li>• Guide professional development and practice to promote interactions with children that are positive and respectful.</li> <li>• Establish practice guidelines that ensure interactions with children are given priority and those interactions are authentic, just and respect difference.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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 consider the individual differences of each child.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Support educators to work with families to develop Individual Behaviour</li> </ul>

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	Support Plans, where appropriate.
Early Childhood Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act in accordance with the obligations outlined in this policy.</li> <li>• Acknowledge children's complex relationships and sensitively intervene in ways that promote consideration and alternative perspectives and social inclusion.</li> <li>• Respect children's agency and encourage them to express themselves and their opinions.</li> <li>• Maintain the dignity and the rights of each child at all times.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Offer positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour.</li> <li>• Ensure that routines such as toileting, nappy change and rest times are used for positive one-on-one interactions with children and a time that they can get to know more about the child.</li> <li>• Genuinely seek children's input, respect their ideas and take their suggestions on board.</li> <li>• Support children to build trusting attachments with one or two educators to develop a secure base for their exploration and learning.</li> <li>• Form warm relationships with each child.</li> <li>• Identify and remove stressors that may be contributing to challenging behaviours</li> <li>• Work with families and/or external agencies to support children to develop positive behaviours and self-regulation</li> <li>• Work with families to develop Individual Behaviour Support Plans, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Participate in professional development activities that promote interactions with children that are positive and respectful, and practice these.</li> </ul>
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading and complying with this policy.</li> <li>• Engage in open communication with staff about their child.</li> <li>• Inform staff of events or incidents that may impact on their child's behaviour at the service (e.g., moving house, a new sibling).</li> <li>• Inform staff of any concerns regarding their child's behaviour or the impact of other children's behaviour.</li> <li>• Work collaboratively with staff and other to develop or review an Individual Behaviour Support plan for their child, where appropriate.</li> </ul>

## **5. 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 24 months.

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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.

#### **6. LEGISLATION AND CONSIDERATIONS**

- Education and Care National Law Act 2010: Sections 166, 167
- Education and Care National Regulations: 73, 74, 155, 156, 157, 168(2)(j)
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- 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

#### **7. RELATED GUIDELINES, POLICIES, STANDARDS, FRAMEWORKS AND OTHER SOURCES**

- Behaviour Guidance Policy
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) - [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - [www.unicef.org.au](http://www.unicef.org.au)
- The Supporting young children's rights: Statement of intent (2015-2018) - [www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au)
- Australian Human Rights Commission - [www.humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au)
- Community Early Learning Australia (CELA) - [www.cela.org.au](http://www.cela.org.au)
- Shanker, S & The MEHRIT Centre (2017). Self-Regulation: The Early Years.
- Dolby, R, Friezer, B., & Hughes, E. <https://securebeginnings.com.au/playspaces/>
- Dolby, R, Friezer, B., & Hughes, E. (27 March 2021): Stepping Stones for the transitions

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