



## INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN POLICY (Including Guiding Children's Behaviour)

### **Rationale**

Positive interactions between educators and children ensure that children develop to their optimum in all areas – physical, emotional/social, cognitive, spiritual and that their safety is maintained. Interactions and relationships ensure that children are able to develop a sense of belonging to the Centre and wider community.

### **Aims**

To ensure that all interactions between children and staff are in adherence with our Centre Philosophy and are in tune with the overall wellbeing of each child. To insure that every child is safe while in our care. To support each child to manage their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts. To have guidelines for managing children's behaviours that are firstly God centred, and encourage children to cooperate, enhance the child's self-esteem and build skills to be aware of and interact positively with others.

### **Implementation**

We, as educators and carers understand the privilege and responsibility that we hold in each child's life and therefore aim to care and educate each child through interactions that are meaningful, caring, respectful, warm and friendly. In doing so, we hope to pass on the same values and attitudes to the children in their own future interactions.

Educators ensure that interactions with children occur in a way that ensures the children:

1. Have the opportunity to explore their dispositions for learning by expressing themselves and their opinions.
2. Are given the opportunity to build resilience and self-reliance and to develop self-esteem
3. Are guided towards positive and responsible behaviour, based on control and understanding of self and understanding and appreciation of other people's needs, rights and feelings. We help children learn to read facial gestures of educators and other children, and to identify what they are feeling. Eg. Does "Billy" look sad/ angry/ happy/frightened?
4. Are not required to perform inappropriate duties with regard to each child's age and cultural values.

Interactions between educators and children ensure that the dignity and rights of each child are maintained at all times and that:

1. Child management techniques do not include physical, verbal or emotional punishment.
2. Children are not frightened, threatened or humiliated.
3. A child is not isolated other than in accordance with the biting, sickness or accident policies; or with pre-arranged parental consent.
4. A child is given positive guidance towards acceptable behaviour, so they know what to do instead of being told what not to do.
5. The values of the child's family are respected.
6. The child is supported in learning experiences.
7. The child is given emotional support and guidance.

### **Procedures and Strategies**

- The environment will provide places for children to play in both small and large groups (facilitating choice of peer group and choice of experience).
- The environment will be set up to provide children with play choices based on interests and intentional teaching (EYLF p. 15)
- The environment will be structured at times to limit how many children can participate in an activity at any one time, using the size of mat, number of chairs or room dividers etc.
- The environment and the program will provide for the child to succeed at managing their behaviours for example by providing sensory modulation activities.
- A visual timetable and transition songs etc. will be used to cue all children about expectations and the program.
- Educators will actively engage with children, as appropriate, rather than “floating”.
- Educators will notice escalations in play and join in to redirect it before it becomes unruly.
- Limits will be set and explained to children so there is consistency of expectations.
- Educators will give priority to nurturing relationships and providing children with consistent emotional support, so children can be assisted to develop skills and understandings about how to interact positively with others. Consider Circle of Security. (EYLF, p.12).
- Educators will spend time listening to children and responding appropriately so they learn their opinions are valued and can build self-esteem and self-concept.
- Educators will take every opportunity to help children learn about other cultures and lifestyles in everyday situations in order to facilitate respect for diversity. This will help children become aware of connections, similarities and differences between people. (EYLF. p. 27).
- The environment and interactions of educators will reflect all families both attending the centre and in the wider community, so children have opportunities to explore diversity of culture, heritage, background and tradition so children learn that diversity presents opportunities for choices and new understandings. (EYLF, p.27)
- Educators are not merely ‘supervisors’ of play but will facilitate learning in the environment by moving around between children’s play and experiences offered.
- set up to prevent problems
- Educators will take time to explain calmly to children why their behaviour is inappropriate and how it affects others. Educators will not shout or frighten children when they explain behaviour expectations. If behaviour continues, the child will be encouraged to sit with an educator or go with an educator and choose another experience for a short while before being offered the opportunity to return to the play of their choice.

**Procedures for managing difficult behaviours:**

Remember the relationship with the child is most important, but you can still have firm limits, boundaries and high expectations. When their behaviour is out of control the child really needs your help.

Engage with their emotion before trying to redirect. Be empathetic, let the child know you are “on their side”.. Name the emotions.

Get the timing of the “teaching and skill building” right. That is when the child is receptive.

Ask the child “ Remember when ...” (we are now told that even a young child will remember) “what was going on for you when...? Be genuinely curious! Eg What is it like for you...?

Listen and think about the child’s responses. They may reveal a way forward, a way to avoid problems in the future by changing something. Ask if they have a solution to the problem.

In the teaching / skill building, providing the child with a simple restatement of the boundaries or the expectations, give them time to process. Eg Ask them what do you need to do to make it right? Ensure the child has an alternative / acceptable way of reacting to that situation next time.

Praise and encouragement can be used regularly to reinforce positive behaviours but do so in a way that a child who does not like being "in the spotlight" does not respond badly. Educators need to be conscious of the child's developmental level. Remember it is the behaviour that is being deemed acceptable or unacceptable not the child. That is why we don't say Good girl/boy or naughty girl/boy. The child is acceptable at all times but at times the behaviour might not be.

We reinforce the positive with phrases such as "Thank you for..., Good sharing.. And with gestures such as Hi 5, Thumbs up, smiles or shoulder massage (if the child is comfortable with close touch).

Self-discipline can only be achieved if the children are aware of the expectations. Expectations should be consistent amongst educators and consistently reinforced by each Educator.

**Educator responsibilities:** To help children learn to manage their own behaviours rather than getting them to do what the educator wants or to follow the "rules".

To set the environment so the child can succeed at all things including managing their behaviours.

To put into place their learning about helping children to be able to engage with a program through Sensory Modulation, use of signing and Visuals for example.

To fully reflect on behaviours being seen and the impact of educator's actions on the child as well as personal factors that may be affecting the child. To consider what they, as the adult, and skilled educator can change? (not, what the child should change).

Record reflections.

To record behaviours of concern in a detailed way. Record what has occurred, when and all of the other circumstances that were occurring at the time. Record over a period of time and analyse the entries looking for patterns. Most people use the ABC form but any clear record is acceptable. Discuss with the Educational Leader and Director and brainstorm possible solutions.

**Other practices for staff to remember.** Ensure implementation of visual timetable, signing and transition songs.

Ensure the environment is structured to limit how many children can be together in some areas, or where toys can be used? (e.g. by number of chairs, size of mat, barriers)

Ensure educators are seated at activities and interacting rather than floating.

Ensure educators join into play that is getting unruly to redirect it.

Complete a Sensory Checklist from time to time as a reflective tool.

**Phrases to Use** - Use a minimal number of words to maximise effect. (ie Give the instruction then stop talking as you can confuse the issue). A melodic, calm, encouraging voice has been shown to be more effective with children with attachment disruption and trauma experiences, but many respond well to using eye contact and a low, firm tone.

Some simple phrases that can communicate clearly. Feet on the Floor / We bite our food (meaning - not people) Softer / gentle / high 5 hands / Be kind to people / Sometimes we like to play with a different friend.

That's not ... OK / acceptable/ safe

Using your words might be helpful in the early stage but will often inflame situations with this request if children have already overreacted.

Reviewed 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 (Previous input from Emma Langham Child Psychologist 2018)

Again the request to "Show me your eyes" can be problematic, while it may work for some, it is not recommended for ASD, anxiety, trauma, relationship problems. It is better for them to hear you and respond appropriately

As educators we often think it is about what we say but our role is to help the child towards self-management. So in most situations the educator's response should be to equip the child with words to use so we model language the child can use "Use your words, say....."

Situation	Phrase to train the child to use
Conflict resolution between children	Hand gesture STOP. (from infancy) I don't like it when you.... Added by 2's+ I want you to.....Added by 3's+
To join into play	Can I play?
Asking for help	"Help please Miss..." with the "help sign" of coupled fists.
Requesting a turn	"Can I have a turn please? "Turn key sign"
When expressing their feelings	That makes my heart feel sad/ happy/
To express friendship	We're playing, We're sharing, We're kind

### The Process of Logical Consequences

Remember, only state consequences you are able to follow through on.

Do not give a choice if the child actually has to do the action.

- 1) Remind children that this is not OK, (not acceptable).  
e.g You are .....(hurting Sam), that is not acceptable.
- 2) If you keep on ...you are choosing to ... (sit with me / play somewhere else)
- 3) Sitting out for a brief period i.e on the sideline for 20 seconds. If dysregulated it will help the child to have the educator next to them or if accepted by the child, with the child on educator's lap etc
- 4) Or redirect. Take the child to another area to play. See below.

**The value of redirection** - Sending a child to a new space is not likely to get the results you want. The child is probably still worked up and will continue the behaviour in a different space with more children impacted. As the educator it is your responsibility to help the child to settle therefore guided redirection and sensory strategies can make a difference. A simple form of guided redirection is to take the child to some puzzles and stay with them to settle. As they have to focus to complete the puzzle they calm and can resettle. Consider allocating a place outdoors too where an educator can work with a child on a puzzle.

**The value of Sensory Modulation for children.** Remember to reread the information you have about Sensory Processing and apply those techniques.

**For Biting issues see Biting Policy.**

If no solution to an issue can be found then the following steps should be taken: Seek additional help by contacting Inclusion Support Service or Special Education Unit at Newcastle University, or Samaritans.

This may involve making a referral for family to follow up.

If the family is unwilling to work with the Educators and the Service to manage a child's behaviours that are putting other children or Educators at risk, the family may be asked to leave the Service.

**Giving information to parents. DO NOT PUT IT OFF.**

**Level 1** Don't bombard parents daily with negative stories about their child's behaviours but don't mislead them that everything is wonderful if it's not. Always sandwich a negative comment between 2 positive ones.

**Level 2** When issues are starting to develop, communicate early. Do not put it off. If you are reporting on something you have already mentioned before then ensure the parents hear you this time.

- Make an appointment to talk with parents, it can still be a bit informal e.g. I need to let you know about some issues, can I talk with you this afternoon or can we make an appointment? (Director or Educational Leader may be involved)
- If speaking to parents ensure that at first we have:-
  - Collected and recorded information over a period of time, 4 or 5 days is enough...don't put it off too long but don't let one bad day become a mountain.
  - Put procedures in place to make whatever improvements we can to our practice and our environment
  - Thought about what strategies we'd like to put into place
  - Thought about what we'd like to ask parents to do
  - Spoken to Director or Educational leader before approaching parents

Then

- LISTEN to parents and hear their suggestions.
- Decide together on plan of approach
- Hopefully work together to implement plans
- Find a way to give them regular feedback e.g. private Storypark or email.

**Level 3** When you are revisiting concerning behaviours that you have already spoken to parents about then use the **attached Behaviour Incident Record (Green) form** so that parents have the information in writing. A copy goes into the child's file.

Behaviours that fall into his category might include :- Swearing, deliberately spitting at another person, biting, scratching, hitting / pinching etc., throwing dangerous items randomly, climbing onto benches, shelves etc., trashing the activity space, repeatedly and deliberately taking items from others.**Level 4 This is when a child's behaviour is putting other children or educators at risk. See Temporary Separation of a Child from the Early Learning Service Policy. Use the Unsafe Behaviour Incident record (Red/Orange) Form** which is part of that policy. The following behaviours are likely to be recorded on this form:- throwing furniture. deliberately throwing blocks or other such items at people, using scissors or pieces of equipment as a weapon, any act that could require medical attention for a child or educator

**Related Policies** Inclusion and Cultural Diversity / Biting Policy / Temporary Separation of a Child from the Early Learning Service

**This policy links to the following NQS:**

National Quality Standards: 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 4.2.2, 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.2.2, 6.1.2, 6.1.3, 6.2, 7.1.2.

National Law (section) and National Regulations (regulation 155-156)

