



Interactions with Children Guiding Children's Behaviour

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Aim:

We aim to:

- teach children socially acceptable behaviour through positive guidance, redirection and reinforcement.
- ensure that all children are safe under our care.
- encourage children in our care to become self-disciplined by providing consistent, clear guidelines on what is appropriate behaviour and to develop an understanding of the consequences of their behaviour.
- support children in managing their own behaviour and to respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and to communicate effectively with others to resolve conflicts.

Background Information: Children need to be given guidance and support to assist in learning how to respond appropriately to feelings and emotions. Children develop these abilities at varying ages and stages of development. Consistency between parents and staff in guiding behaviour is paramount for a child. When behaviour management is positive it does not damage self-esteem, but allows children to feel capable, competent and to experience pleasure from being around others.

Relevant Legislation: Children (Education and Care Services National Law) 2010, Education and Care Services National Regulations.

Practices:

This policy will provide general information on guiding children's behaviour for staff and parents.

Context of the situation

Effective behaviour guidance strategies must take into consideration the context of the situation, bearing in mind the age and developmental abilities of the children, *the environment in which the care is taking place, along with the type of experiences being provided.*

Where consistent behaviour issues are evident within a particular context staff will review the following:

- Is the environment stimulating or over stimulating?
- Are the activities age appropriate and providing children with challenge as well as achievement or success?
- Are there sufficient resources to allow children to play alongside one another with similar toys?
- Are the staff engaging the children and interacting with the experiences?
- Are the staff expectations of children's behaviour appropriate and applied consistently and equally with all children?
- Is the behaviour actually inappropriate or is it just annoying?

Guidance practices that support children

- Staff will provide a varied program that allows children to have access to both quiet and active experiences.
- Staff will set up an environment to provide children with play choices based on the children's interests and intentional teaching.
- Staff will provide consistent expectations of appropriate behaviour and where inappropriate behaviour is displayed respond to this immediately.
- Staff will treat children with respect at all times. Strategies will be used to guide behaviour in a manner that will not make the child feel frightened, humiliated or threatened. Staff will accompany these strategies with rational explanations of expectations.
- Staff will focus on the strengths of the child.
- Staff will use supportive, positive words when guiding children's behaviour towards the desired outcome.
- Staff will assist children to identify their feelings and provide the children with alternative means of expressing these feelings.
- Staff will provide children with the language needed to resolve conflict or to ask for assistance, such as "Stop I don't like that".
- Staff will discuss with children how their actions, both positive and negative, affect others.
- Staff will interact and socialise with the children using these opportunities to role model positive behaviours and socially acceptable strategies for resolving a situation.
- Staff will allow children to explain the reason or cause of the behaviour with the desired outcome to identify possible areas of change.
- Staff will join play when the children are getting unruly to redirect. (See value of redirection below).
- Staff will use "Redirection" of a child to assist in resolving a situation.
- Staff will label a behaviour, both positive and negative, and not label the child, such as "I really like how everyone is sharing the toys".
- Staff will work as a team, seeking assistance from other staff to create a positive environment for all.
- Staff will involve the children in the development of "service rules" so that children can take ownership and be committed to these.
- Staff will provide with appropriate training on Guiding Children's Behaviour as it is required.
- Staff will give priority to nurturing relationship and provide children with consistent emotional support so that children can be assisted in developing skills about how to interact positively with others.
- Educators are not just supervisors floating around. They are to facilitate learning by moving around children's play and spend time listening to the children and responding appropriately so they value the children's opinions and build self-esteem and self-concept.

The value of redirection

When we redirect a child to a new space, it is not likely to get the results that you want. The child who has been kicking or screaming is probably still worked up and will continue the behaviour in a different space/area impacting on the children in the area. As an educator it is our responsibility to guide the children in the redirection of activity. A simple example of guided redirection is to take the child to some puzzles/construction and stay with them to help settle them. When they focus on completing the puzzle/construction they will calm down and resettle. Wherever possible, to locate a place outdoors too where an educator can work with a child on a puzzle/construction.

Partnerships with families

Parents need to be involved in setting the expected behaviours and strategies used by the Preschool to guide children's behaviours as well as supporting the staff to implement this policy.

- Staff and parents need to openly communicate to ensure that they are working towards the same outcome.

- Staff and parents need to share information regarding a child to ensure that positive guidance strategies are implemented at the Preschool as well as at home.
- Staff will discuss with individual parents any behavioural concerns and together develop a strategy based on observations on the child's behaviour.
- Where determined appropriate staff will provide information to families regarding external support agencies that may be able to assist the service and the family.

When we speak to parents regarding a child's behaviour

- Always start with positive comments and then sandwich a negative comment
- Ensure that you have collected and recorded observations/running records/time sampling over a period of time at least 4 to 5 days. Don't put it off for too long.
- Have strategies put in place and think about what we can ask the parents to do.
- Make an appointment to talk with parents if necessary.
- Listen to the parents' ideas and hear their suggestions
- Work with them and come up with a plan
- Implement plan together
- Find a way to give them regular feedback through Appessment

Awareness of age appropriate conflicts

As children develop they progress through many stages of self-awareness. Staff and parents need to be aware of behaviours that are age appropriate and therefore typical for that age group and those behaviours that are more serious or dangerous that are not age related.

Biting is a common behaviour for young children. However it is a behaviour that has tremendous impact on other children. The Preschool will adopt individual Biting Procedures that will be implemented as required. When the Preschool experiences a child with a severe biting habit parents will be consulted and an appropriate strategy put in place.

Young children under three find it difficult to identify how they fit into the work around them, are not able to identify with the needs of others, have limited language to express feelings, and project a self-immersed response to life. These responses, are as hitting, snatching, pushing and punching are disruptive behaviours, however whilst disruptive to the group are not necessarily considered dangerous or inappropriate. These behaviours will be managed by positive guidance strategies as determined by the Preschool.

Children over 3 years of age are now able to better understand their roles and responsibilities within society. They are continuing to develop negotiation skills that assist with turn taking, establishment of leadership roles, following games with rules, accessing social situation and development of impulse control. Positive environments guide children to the appropriate responses to situations that do not turn out as planned. Staff will use strategies with this group that reflect their individual abilities and needs.

Procedures for managing difficult behaviours

Praise and encouragement to be used constantly to reinforce positive behaviours in all children especially children with difficult behaviours. We must remember that it is the behaviour that is being deemed as acceptable or unacceptable and not the child. We accept the child at all times but perhaps at times the behaviour might not be acceptable.

Reinforcement through positive phrases such as "Thank you for...., Good sharing...I like the wayetc. and gestures like giving a thumbs up, Hi 5, or a smile encourages positive behaviour.

Self-discipline and self-regulation can only be achieved if children are fully aware of the expectations which should be consistent amongst the staff.

Some useful phrases to use:

Use your words

Show me your eyes

Walking feet

Quiet voices

Kind hands and feet

Sometimes we can play with a different friend.

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

Unfortunately, at times staff must take action when children are breaking rules or hurting others, making the preschool unsafe for the children. The preschool adopts a 'calm down' approach, which acknowledges that children need time to calm down and think about how they have behaved. In this way, children become responsible for their own behaviour. When disciplining children....

- Take the child aside so as not to embarrass them in front of their peers
- Allow the child to calm down before discussing the problem
- Don't react in such a way that shows you are not in control of the situation
- Ask them why they behaved that way and what they are feeling
- Listen to their answers
- Be fair, but firm
- Remain calm and choose your words carefully
- Follow through the consequence of the child's action

Where a child demonstrates consistent inappropriate behaviour staff will:

- Ensure the child is aware of the limits and what is appropriate behaviour.
- Ensure the expectations are appropriate for the child's level of development and understanding.
- Discuss the issue with the parents and the child and gain permission to involve other agencies if determined appropriate.
- Record all incidents, indicating what occurred before, during and after the incident, time, date and who was involved.
- Record over a period of time and analyse the entries looking for patterns in behaviour.
- Develop a plan of action involving behaviour management in discussion with all staff, parents and other professionals as required.

Exclusion for inappropriate behaviour

Whilst the Preschool is responsible for providing care and education to all children it must also ensure that all those involved at the Meeting House, staff, children, parents and visitors, are provided with a safe, healthy and secure environment.

Aggressive, violent, threatening, dangerous or consistently disruptive behaviours that:

- Infringe on the rights of others,
- Present a clear risk of harm to others,

- Limit the opportunities for others or self to participate in the program or
- Result in the mishandling of objects as weapons

will result in the enrolment of that child being reviews.

The service will review the child's enrolment in consultation with the Preschool Director, educator and Senior Co-ordinator.

Where in the interest of the child and other children, parents, staff and visitors at the service, exclusion is seen as the only step to be taken it will be considered only after

- Adequate support has been offered to the child.
- Parents have been notified and given the opportunity to discuss their child's behaviour.
- Parents have been referred to other agencies, where necessary.
- Careful consideration has been given to the safety of others.

If so determined that the child's enrolment at the Preschool is to be withdrawn this decision will take effect immediately and there may not be any recourse for renegotiation or reenrolment.

This policy links to the following NQS: 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.3, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 6.3