

INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN: POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Rationale

Children enter early years settings from a variety of cultural and social backgrounds and with differing knowledge, emotional maturity and behaviours. Young children need time to learn with and from other children – how to play, share, take turns and care for others as well as their environment. Children's behaviour is shaped by their stage of development, adult expectations, and any additional needs they may have. The early years provide the best window of opportunity for helping children to learn to recognise their needs, self-regulate and make appropriate behaviour choices.

At Lockleys Children's Centre we believe all children have the right to feel safe and have opportunities to learn in a psychologically and physically supportive environment.

Our *Interactions with children: positive behaviour policy* is aligned to the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the practices and principles of the EYLF are implemented into everyday interactions with children and families.

As educators we recognise

- each family as the first educator of their child with their own understandings and beliefs around parenting and behaviour
- the most effective learning occurs when families and educators work together to develop goals for a child's wellbeing and learning
- all behaviour is a form of communication and should be acknowledged as such
- children's individual needs, learning styles and context are crucial to successful learning and development of positive behaviour patterns

We also acknowledge that children can feel big emotions – get angry, frustrated and upset and may need adult support to express these feelings appropriately. We believe educators and families need to share responsibility for developing positive behaviour patterns by being consistent, creating safe and secure environments for all, and by modelling appropriate behaviours.

Positive Behaviour Outcomes

Our aim/goal is for all children to develop as socially competent individuals who can

- experiment and take risks
- use their initiative
- choose positive behaviours (*or make appropriate behaviour choices*)
- share and communicate with others
- express their feelings confidently and respectfully
- handle conflict in an appropriate manner
- be responsible for their actions

- respect and care for equipment and their environment (*or respect and care for themselves, their peers and the environment*)

Ways we maximise positive behaviour

- explicitly teaching and modelling acceptable behaviours
- having consistent routines, rules and expectations
- focusing on the behaviour and not the child.
- helping children to understand the consequences of their behaviour – both positive and negative
- using visual strategies to support children's understanding of routines, expectations and choices
- teaching appropriate strategies which may include:
 - Restorative Practices, which we have adapted for Preschool and uses 3 questions:
 1. what happened?
 2. who has been hurt or what went wrong?
 3. what do we need to do to make things better?
 - reminding children to **STOP** what they are doing, **THINK** about what needs to be done and then **DO** it.

Consequences: Children need to be aware of the consequences of their behaviour. Our aim is for all children to be responsible for their own behaviour. We support children to think about their actions and the effect on others. Educators understand each situation is different and while we will use the most relevant approach, the specific way this occurs may vary depending on our knowledge of the child, their age and developmental level.

Ways we respond to challenging behaviours

- Involving children in goal setting and developing group norms
- modelling appropriate behaviour
- discussing consequences of unsafe behaviour
- providing clear and consistent guidelines
- explicitly teaching 'feelings' vocabulary to enable children to articulate their needs and feelings appropriately
- supporting children to manage potential conflicts through negotiation and problem solving
- providing areas within the preschool environment for children to safely withdraw to – giving the child time and space needed to calm down and re-enter play successfully and supporting the development of self-regulation skills
- regularly reflecting on our planned curriculum and how our learning environment supports positive interactions between children
- Withdrawing children when they are at risk of hurting themselves or others, ensuring an adult is with them all the time

If children are at risk of hurting themselves or others it may be necessary to restrain them by physically holding the child with care. If this should occur, the family will be informed. Children with additional needs may have greater difficulty in self-regulation and understanding group norms. Educators will initiate discussions with families at the earliest opportunity when children are demonstrating unsafe or escalating behaviours to work together and develop strategies to support the child's learning and wellbeing.

Partnerships with families

We believe the most effective outcomes for children occur when educators and families work together to support and guide children's behaviour. We support family involvement by

- giving this policy to all families on enrolment as part of their enrolment package
- being available to talk with families about this policy at any time
- communicating with, and involving families at the earliest opportunity to work together to assist each child's wellbeing and learning
- working collaboratively with families to share and agree on consistent strategies for the child
- utilising the services of our Family Practitioner and other allied health professionals to support families in their parenting role
- planning, implementing, monitoring and reviewing individual behaviour plans or other supports in partnership with families and support services
- working with families to understand cultural or external factors that may be affecting a child's behaviour

Children may exhibit challenging behaviours for a variety of reasons and it is very important you keep us informed of any changes in family circumstances e.g. separation anxiety, a new baby, moving house, allergies, death of a family member, illness. Some events or needs will affect children in different ways and may result in challenging behaviours.

We are experienced observers of young children and will talk with you if we are concerned about your child's behaviour. We will work in partnership with you to develop consistent strategies, which may include modifying routines or curriculum to accommodate your child. Further advice and support may also be sought from the allied health team at the children's centre, the Department for Education Support Services team or other professionals who may be able to offer advice and support to the child, family and educators.

Educators will support this policy by

- contributing to discussions about maximising positive behaviour
- contributing to the development of individual learning plans and ensuring strategies to support children are implemented
- modelling and explicitly teaching appropriate behaviours
- being consistent in their approach to behaviour
- maintaining confidentiality about individual children and their needs
- furthering their own knowledge through professional development opportunities
- being aware of their own personal limitations and seeking assistance when needed
- contributing to the review of this policy

The site leader will support staff by

- including this policy in the staff induction book
- provide access for all educators to current information and research regarding behaviour guidance, either through written information or access to professional development opportunities
- providing new educators to the team, including relievers a copy of this policy and providing information about any children with behavioural needs

References

DECS - Supporting and Managing Children's Behaviour: An Early Childhood Resource (2004)

National Quality Standard 5.1(2011)

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard/quality-area-5-relationships-with-children>

National Quality Standard 5.2

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard/quality-area-5-relationships-with-children>

Education and Care Services National Regulations – National Regulation 155

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653/chap4/part4.5/reg155>

Education and Care Services National Regulations - National Regulation 156

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653/chap4/part4.5/reg156>

Playgroup SA – Playgroup Guide – Section 6 Exchanging ideas and sharing parent info

<http://www.playgroupsa.com.au/services-playgroup-guide.html>

Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people (2nd Edition)

<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/doc/protective-practices-staff-their-interactions-children-and-young-people>

Site Behaviour Code Exemplar

<https://edi.sa.edu.au/supporting-children/behaviour-and-attendance/behaviour-support/preschools-and-children>