

INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN POLICY

PURPOSE

To ensure that all interactions between children and educators reflect our Centre Philosophy which states that “we aim to develop positive and nurturing relationships with each child”.

Child psychologist, Dr Louise Porter highlights the importance of early interactions when she states:

“From the earliest days of life, children learn about themselves from your reaction to them. They build your feedback into a picture of the type of people they are. Later, they take in the reactions of other important people in their lives. Together, all this information forms their self-concept.”

Children are People Too – Dr L Porter

BACKGROUND

A positive atmosphere and the wellbeing of children within an education and care setting are 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.

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 active and attentive 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 in an authentic and meaningful way, promoting, extending and facilitating learning opportunities,

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.
- Enabling connected educator child learning relationships to form.

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; encourage children to actively listen and communicate kindly with others.

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. Creating and implementing child specific individual plans to promote positive outcomes for all.
- Wherever possible, children and staff will negotiate and determine boundaries and rules. Effective and open communication between educators and staff will support a smooth implementation of this.
- Rules will be reasonable considering the age, development and individual characteristics of the children.
- Rules will be consistently enforced from all educators over all days.
- Children will be encouraged for desirable behaviour.
- It is the behaviour that is praised or criticised, not the child.
- Staff present a good example through positive role modelling.
- Children are encouraged to make appropriate choices; explained why choices may be inappropriate and provided opportunities to explain their thinking behind their actions.

The Role of the Educators and Staff

In response to unacceptable behaviour, educators and staff will:

- Redirect the child or remove the child from the situation if necessary.
- Advise children of the consequences of continuing with the behaviour.
- Remind children of desirable behaviour.
- Explain to children how behaviour results in consequences.
- Actively listen to children's feelings.
- Help children to return to play.
- Follow through with expectations.
- Communicate incidents or events to all applicable educators, staff and leadership team

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- 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.
- 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.

Educators will:

- Act in accordance with the obligations outlined in this policy.
- 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.
- Maintains 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 through role modelling and conversations.
- 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 through respectful and collaborative conversations.
- 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 will:

- Read and comply with this policy.
- Engage in open communication with relevant and/or room specific 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 other to develop or review an individual behaviour guidance plan for their child, where appropriate.

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12 August 2015 by M Duffy-Fagan
October 2018 by M Duffy-Fagan K Pomfrett P Rosenkranc
July 2022 by K Pomfrett, K Hewat, E Austin, L Berwick
August 2023 K Hewat, L Berwick
July 2024 K Hewat, L Berwick, B Creighton & P Guy
July 2025 K Hewat, P Guy

Source: Children's Services Regulation 2004
Children are People Too – Dr L Porter. 4th Ed. 2001. East
John Waring Child and Adolescent Psychologist – in-
service training and parent information evening
“Managing Young Children's Behaviour” March 6 2013
National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships
with children – Standards 5.1, 5.2
Working in the Reggio Way
National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Leadership
and Service Management – Standard 7.3
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