**Home Away From Home Family Day Care Agency**

**Behaviour Guidance Policy**

**EXPECTATIONS FOR CHILDREN**

We understand that each child is different from the next with respect to activity levels, developmental progress and personality. Through these differences, each child forms into their own individual person and it is these differences that can make it challenging for them to participate with others in a group setting. Children will learn from their experiences. Children’s behavior (whether positive or challenging) will be used as teaching opportunities. When reasonable expectations are set based on the child’s level of development and their individual needs,

* The staff and care providers of will work towards developing relationships and understand the needs of the children in their care.
* The planning and implementation of activities is flexible to accommodate all children.
* We understand the developmental needs and processes of the children in our care. We expect the challenges and mistakes that occur during learning and growing understand this is a normal part of their development.
* Care providers will help children understand the rules of the home to help prevent behavior challenges from occurring.

 \* Help each other

 \* Take care of our toys

 \* Say please and thank you

 \* Be kind to each other

* 3 simple rules adopted by many centres and agencies are

 1. Respect ourselves

 2. Respect others

 3. Respect the centre/home

**ENVIRONMENT AND MATERIALS**

By preparing the daily learning environment in our home day care setting, it enables us to use it to encourage positive behavior and discourage challenging behaviors in children. By understanding this, we work hard to create a learning environment that is child friendly, provides opportunities for cooperative play and reduces opportunities for conflict. We will ensure that:

* The learning environment is divided into separate areas or centres with specific types of play in mind, when space allows. The noisy and messy areas are kept away from the areas for quiet activities.
* All areas provide enough space for the activities that they are designed for especially those that encourage socialization and movement (block area and housekeeping area).
* The child care environment is designed to allow for smooth traffic flow and to minimize opportunities for accidents.
* The learning materials and toys are plentiful, in good repair and age appropriate.
* Materials allowing for creativity and problem solving skills are used in a variety ways. These materials allow for little frustration and discipline problems.

**PROGRAM AND SCHEDULE**

To minimize frustration and behavior issues, the programming should discourage a lot of sitting and listening, and encourage acting and doing. Scheduling daily outdoor playtime, will allow the children to play and act constructively while discouraging the non-constructive behavior. We will encourage:

* Planning activities ahead of time with the children’s needs, interests and developmental stages in mind
* Designing activities that keep the children actively involved while learning to exercise their bodies and senses as well as their minds.
* Planning an outdoor play time twice each day, in a safe area for the children to play in.
* Planning for long periods of uninterrupted play

A well planned and organized schedule will provide children with abilities to develop trust, consistency and control.

* Children’s schedules are planned and consistent, but flexible enough to allow for unexpected events
* Following schedules whenever possible
* Informing children and parents in advance if the schedule or planned events are changing, to allow them to adjust easily
* Scheduling includes a balance of indoor and outdoor play, as well as active and quiet activities

**APPROACHES TO BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE**

The family home day care shall have in place behavior guidance approaches that are reasonable and acceptable. Behavior guidance approaches that are acceptable include:

* **Setting limits** –providing children with clear acceptable boundaries; repeating these frequently will help children to remember and understand
* **Say what you mean** - focusing on what “to do” rather than what “not to do”
* **Talking with the child(ren) – not “at” them** – getting down at their eye level, looking the child in the eyes, touch them on the shoulder and talk to them
* **Setting a good example** – children watch the care provider all the time, by modeling appropriate behaviors will show the children what accepted behaviors are
* **Encourage children to set good examples for each other** – children learn a great deal from each other; encourage children to use appropriate ways to share, play and be kind to one another
* **Give clear, simple choices** – toddler can choose between 2 simple things and preschoolers can choose between 2 things; give children a choice ONLY when there is a choice
* **Show respect for children** – talk to children in private about behavior, remind them of the rules and discuss what they can do differently
* **Catch children being good** – comment on something positive about the child, striving for several times a day
* **Teach children to apologize** – learning to apologize is a learned skill; at around the age of 4 children can begin to recognize that apologizing is a good way to make up for hurting someone. By teaching the 4 simple steps, children will quickly learn to apologize on their own

 1. Look at the other child

 2. Say the child’s name

 3. Say “I’m sorry”

 4. Say why

Staff and care providers are encouraged to model this support for children who would like to apologize but children should never be forced to apologize.

* **Teach children how to correct their behavior** – experiencing consequences helps a child learn self control (if he throws food on the floor, hand him a broom to sweep it up; if she marks on the wall, hand her a wet cloth to wash the wall)
* **Using their “words”** – children are taught to express their feelings and tell the other children if they are doing something he/she does not like

**PREVENTION STRATEGIES**

There are many ways to minimize conflicts through teaching and everyday learning. It is hard to completely eliminate conflict; due to this, conflict can be used to help teach children ways to cope and how to deal with conflict effectively. If conflict situations are handled appropriately, learning experiences can be developed by the children through this manner. Although care providers may not be able to eliminate conflict completely, they also do not want to create conflict.

The following strategies are followed by care providers:

1. **Establish clear, consistent and simple limits and provide explanations for limits.**

Limits are statements of what behavior is expected by children. When reasonable and understandable limits are set for the children, the easier they find it to follow them. Limits should be related to the safety, protection and rights of others and the environment.

* Reasonable limits are used to help to protect children and make them safe
* State limits in words that children will understand
* Enforce limits at all times, even by substitute care providers, volunteers and agency staff
* Explain limits to children to increase understanding of why to follow limits. For example:

**Say:** “When you sit on your bottom, everyone will be able to see the book”

**Instead of:** “Sit down!”

1. **State limits in a positive way, and periodically remind children.**

Telling children what to do, instead of what they cannot do, reinforces children for acceptable behavior, and decreases the chance that they will act defensively. As a care provider, reminding the children occasionally shows a complete understanding on the part of the adult. Once in a while, we all get consumed in our tasks and forget to do what we are supposed to, or we look for ways to finish quickly.

A simple reminder followed by a statement of what is acceptable will be helpful in teaching self-control and self-discipline, while still promoting self-confidence and child-control.

For example:

**Say:** “Put your shoes in your cubbie, please.”

**Instead of:** “Don’t leave your shoes in the way.”

1. **Provide opportunities for children to make choices throughout the day.**

Children need to have opportunities to practice their decision-making skills. It is necessary to allow them the opportunity throughout the day to make their own choices. By letting them choose what area to play in at free play, what songs to sing at circle time and how their art will look, gives them the chance to make their own decisions. Decision-making is an important skill for children to learn, which helps them gain self-control and to minimize their frustration. As a care provider, you need to use your words to offer choices to children, but still maintain the goals of the problem.

For Example:

**Say:** Would you like red or blue paper?”

**Instead of:** “Would you like a piece of paper?”

1. **Focus on the behavior, not the child.**

When dealing with a behavior issue, you need to lean away from focusing on the child’s character because it tends to initiate feelings of guilt and shame for the child. This in turn will eventually lower the child’s self-esteem. So, when you focus on the behavior, it gives the child the necessary information to change that behavior. By focusing more on the good, and less on the bad and will help promote a positive, healthy learning environment.

For example:

**Say:** “When you take Johnny’s truck it makes him angry.”

**Instead of:** “You know better than to grab.”

1. **Ignore minor accidents.**

Care providers need to understand what needs to be present to make an environment suitable for young children. There will be noise, clutter, and attention-seeking behavior that you need to expect for a child care environment. When deciding if it is necessary to act on a certain behavior, look to determine if the child’s safety, the safety and rights of others and the environment are being compromised; if not, it may best to ignore it.

1. **Prepare children for transitions.**

Changing activities is a difficult time for children. IT is best to give them plenty of warning time before the end of one activity and the beginning of another.

“When the music stops, it’s time to sit for circle.”

Help the children get excited about the next activity by talking about it with them.

For example:

**Say:** “After circle time, we will go outside and draw with the chalk.”

1. **Model and encourage appropriate behavior.**

Children learn by watching the environment around them. You need to show the type of behavior that you want the children to use. If you want the children to do something, you need to put the “do as I say, and not as I do” attitude away and show by example. When you see engaged in desired behaviors, praise them by telling them how their behavior affects the others in the group.

1. **Interact with children.**

A very effective way to guide behavior is to interact with the children throughout the day. This includes free play, both inside and outside and during snack and lunch time. You are able to model positive and appropriate behaviours by being available to the child in play situations. Behaviour problems generally do not start immediately, but are part of a gradual build up of events that the care provider needs to be aware of.

* Care providers need to be face on to the children and not back to.
* Keep your eyes on the room while interacting with the children.
* Placing furniture in a way that allows for full supervision of the room.
* Interact with all children by moving around the room.
* Help the children to use their words when interacting with others and to clarify the meaning.

**INTERVENTION STRATEGIES**

When undesirable behavior occurs, and you need to step in and intervene, be certain that your goal is to provide guidance and support, not to punish and solve the problem. By using the intervention strategies listed below, this will help you meet your goal.

1. **Physical closeness and touch**

Often the care provider can get children back on track to the desired behavior or to regain self composure by getting physically close to them. Sometimes just by comforting the child in your lap or a gentle touch may be all that is required.

1. **Remind and redirect if necessary**

An effective strategy for intervention is reminding the children of the rules, especially if the rules that they are breaking are not hurting anyone else. Keep in mind, young children have short memories and are easily distracted and may need reminders. The care provider may need to remind and redirect if the behavior is putting others at risk. A child who is throwing blocks at the other children needs to be reminded the blocks stay in the block area, because throwing blocks will hurt the other children and needs to be redirected to do something else with the blocks. Re-direction can include choices, giving the child the opportunity to think of different ways to use the blocks or if the child needs help thinking of an alternative, the care provider can offer choices to the child. Most importantly, try not to remove the chance of playing with the blocks.

1. **Get the child’s attention**

Be sure to respect the child when needing to intervene in a situation that requires discipline. As the care provider, you need to walk over to the child, get down at his/her level, get eye contact and speak in a calm voice. By using a calm voice and relaxed body language, you can be helpful in stopping the challenging behavior. It is not appropriate to shout at a child from across the room.

1. **Acknowledge feelings**

When guiding children’s behavior, consideration should be given to the feelings of the child and/or children involved. Remember to speak to all the children, should there be more than one child involved in the situation. Always begin by asking the child/children to tell you how they feel.

For example:

**Say:** “Can you tell me how it makes you feel when Timmy grabs your crayon?”

If the children are having difficulty trying to express themselves using words, help them …

**Say:** “Timmy, how does it make you feel when you want the blue crayon and Jill will

not give it to you?”

At this development level, the children may not be able to describe feelings or emotions or

they may be too upset at the time.

For example:

**Say:** “You look very angry too, but I can’t let you bite Sally.”

1. **Assist the children in problem solving the situation**

As a care provider, you are who the children come to while experiencing these feelings. You need to identify the feeling and then proceed to help them to find solutions.

You begin by stating what the problem is.

For example:

**Say:** “It looks to me like you both want the shovel.”

Ask the children what they think you can do about it. If they can’t find any solutions, then you provide some choices for them. You need to be the mediator, make sure information is clear and to make sure that there is no physical aggression. You need to remember that you do not solve the problem for them. The result may end up that there was too much time spent on social problem solving, that nobody gets a turn with the shovel. You can help children realize that this may happen by reminding them of the amount of time that they are taking, in a calm toned voice. Remember, us this as a “teachable moment” where problem solving skills can be learned.

**PROHIBITED BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE PRACTICES**

Under no circumstances will anyone affiliated with the agency, including but not limited to agency staff, care providers, students and volunteers, be permitted to use any of the following:

* Use corporal punishment to manage a child’s behavior, including but not limited to
1. Striking a child directly or with any physical object
2. Shaking, shoving, spanking, or any other forms of aggressive physical contact;
* Require or force a child to repeat physical movements
* Use harsh, humiliating, belittling or degrading responses of any form, including verbal, emotional or physical
* Confine or isolate a child (this includes time out)
* Deprive a child of basic needs including food, shelter, clothing or bedding

**HELPFUL HINTS FOR CARE PROVIDERS**

* Keep your emotions under control
* Use a calm toned voice and relaxed body language
* Be non-judgmental of the children
* Get to know children’s family and communicate behavior issues, ask what works well
* Don’t demand apologies from children
* Be clear and describe behaviors that are expected
* Should your frustration levels begin to rise, consult the family home day care consultant and discuss the situation

**SPECIALIZED INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOURAL INTERVENTION**

If you have children in your program who are not responding to the behavior guidance strategies in this policy, contact your family home day care consultant for support.

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