**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 behaviour (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 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.
* By understanding the developmental needs and processes of the children in our care, we expect the challenges and mistakes that occur during learning and growing to understand this is a normal part of their development.
* Care providers will help children understand the rules of the home to help prevent behaviour 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 behaviour and discourage challenging behaviours 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 of ways. These materials allow for little frustration and discipline problems.

**PROGRAM AND SCHEDULE**

To minimize frustration and discipline problems, the programming should discourage a lot of sitting and listening, but encourage acting and doing. Scheduling daily outdoor playtime, will allow the children to play and act constructively while discouraging the non-constructive behaviour. 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 play, as well as active and quiet activities

**APPROACHES TO BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE**

The family home day care shall have in place behaviour guidance approaches that are reasonable and acceptable. Behaviour 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 behaviours will show the children what accepted behaviours 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 misbehaviours, 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 learning 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

* **Teach children how to correct their behaviour** - experiencing consequences help 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 feeling 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 behaviour 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, reinforcing children for acceptable behaviour, decrease 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 cubby, 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 crafts 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 behaviour, not the child.**

When dealing with a behaviour issue, you need to learn 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 behaviour, it gives the child the necessary information to change that behaviour. 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 behaviour that you need to expect for a child care environment. When deciding if it is necessary to act on a certain behaviour, look to determine if the child’s safety, the safety and rights of others and the environment are being compromised; if not, it may be 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 behaviour.**

Children learn by watching the environment around them. You need to show the type of behaviour 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 children doing the behaviours that are what you expect, praise them by telling how their actions affect the others in the group.

1. **Interact with children.**

A very effective way to behaviour guidance 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 all furniture against the walls will allow for proper view 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.