



Relationships with children

Introduction

The requirements of the National Quality Framework on an education and care service in the area of interactions with children are outlined across in the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations, the Learning Frameworks and on professional requirements from the National Quality Standards, teaching standards and Teacher Registration Boards.

Core references are given in the main reference list at the back of the Manual, however the reader should consider the references that apply for their local situation.

The national Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics is an important part of this work.

Critical areas of concern

These policies are a requirement of all staff in the service without exception. This service supports the National Quality Framework and the Learning Frameworks which we know to be influenced by the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child and recognise the importance of all children's rights to:

- Have their voices heard
- Feel a sense of belonging
- Have free access to safe and appropriate play environments and resources
- Engage daily in social interactions with their peers and supportive adults
- Develop their independence at a pace that is right for them

Implementation

The service philosophy guides the development and implementation of all its policies and practices, the curriculum is no exception.

Knowledge Development

Staff in this service are required to have or be working toward the relevant baseline qualification and then continue their ongoing learning. In this area, it includes:

- Orientation
- Professional learning through staff meetings
- Ongoing reading, discussion and self-reflection
- External professional development as decided with the Director
- Professional development as decided by the service as being essential for all staff in the area:
 - Learning Frameworks
 - Curriculum development
 - Inclusion
 - Reflection and analysis of learning.



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Policy: Interactions with children

Policy statement

Our practices are embedded in the Early Years Learning Framework, the Framework for School Age Care and the National Quality Standard.

Quality interactions provide children with a model for the development of the skills they need to interact confidently and positively with others.

The Centre has established staffing levels that ensure continuity of care and that interactions with children are given priority.

Educators will:

- respond sensitively to children's attempts to initiate interactions and conversations
- initiate one to one interactions with children look for opportunities to have a conversation with each child
- support children's communication, assisting and encouraging as appropriate
- support children's expression of their thoughts and feelings
- encourage children to make choices and decisions
- acknowledge children's complex relationships and sensitively intervene in ways that promote consideration and alternative perspectives including social inclusion
- acknowledge each child's uniqueness in positive ways
- respect cultural differences in communication and consider alternative approaches to their own.

Rationale

National Quality Standard requires us to meet the following:

- 5.1.3 Each child is supported to feel secure, confident and included
- 4.1.1 Educator-to-child ratios and qualification requirements are maintained at all times (Rosters support continuity of care).
- 4.2 Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships
- 6.3.2 Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing relevant information and clarifying responsibilities
- 7.1.3 Every effort is made to promote continuity of educators at the service.

Professional practice note:

Inclusive pedagogy is defined as an approach, intended to promote a culture of accommodating all and ensuring practice is based on the use of diverse teaching strategies (Corbett, 2001).

Related policies

Code of Conduct
Orientation
Diversity
Dealing with complaints

Related Centre publications

Staff Handbook
Orientation - General
Orientation - Health and Safety

Related education

Parent orientation session
Staff orientation session

Review schedule

2 years or at need

Legal and professional requirements

Education and Care Services
National Regulations 73, 74, 155, 156

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
The Early Years Learning Framework

Policy: Continuity of care

Policy statement

This service supports the following essential understandings:

"Educators who give priority to nurturing relationships and providing children with consistent emotional support can assist children to develop the skills and understanding they need to interact positively with others" Early Years Learning Framework DEEWR, 2009, p. 12

The Service will strive to minimise the turnover of employees to better nurture and establish existing relationships with the children.

We believe that the sense of belonging that children form over the time in the service, supports their emotional development and their learning. To support this, we will act with parents to ensure that wherever possible children remain with their cohort within the service.

We commit to the objectives of the Educational and Care Services National Law that the best interest of the child are paramount. To enact this belief:

- we will ensure that the staffing cohort of the area are kept as stable as is possible

Related policies

Acceptance and refusal of authorisations
Confidentiality of records
Diversity and inclusion
Enrolment
Orientation
Dealing with complaints
Visitors (and volunteers)

Related Centre publications

Staff Handbook
Orientation - General
Orientation - Health and Safety

Related education

Parent orientation session
Staff orientation session

Review schedule

2 years or at need

Legal and professional requirements

Education and Care Services National Law - Section 165

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012
Regulations 145, 149, 150, 151, 152

National Quality Standard - Standards 4.2, 5.1

Policy: Guiding Children’s Behaviour

Policy Purpose

Subiaco Children’s Centre aims to help children develop the skills necessary to develop self-regulation of their emotions and socially-acceptable behaviours. Educators will model and promote positive ways to relate to others, supporting all the children to express their needs, resolve conflict, recognise when play is unfair and guide their responses to the behaviour of others to ensure a fair and inclusive environment. The use of physical punishment (which includes smacking, hitting, kicking, pinching, pulling, pushing, shoving or the inappropriate manhandling of a child by an adult) and restraint, physical, verbal or emotional punishment and practices that demean, humiliate, frighten or threaten a child is prohibited.

Legislation and Government Requirements

Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012.
 Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012
 The National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care

<p><u>National Law and Regulations underpinning element 5.2.2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Section 166 Offence to use inappropriate discipline - Regulation 155 interactions with children - Regulation 156 relationships in groups
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NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK

Standard 5.1	Relationships between educators and children	Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.
Element 5.1.1	Positive Educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
Element 5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of the child are maintained.
Standard 5.2	Relationships between children	Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships
Element 5.2.1	Collaborative learning	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.
Element 5.2.2	Self-regulation	Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.

The behaviour and guidance strategies used by educators at Subiaco Children’s Centre are designed to give children the opportunity to expand the self-regulatory behaviours, learn more about their own emotions and feelings and practice new social skills in an environment that allows individuals the right to safety, tolerance, self-expression, cultural identity, dignity and the worth of the individual.



The service recognises and understands that a child's behaviour may be affected by their:

- age and development
- level of familiarity of centre routines and play limits
- play and learning environments, which includes the physical indoor/outdoor settings, the weather, the time of year, the time of day
- educator's teaching strategies and caring practices, which includes how those strategies are implemented
- relationship with other children and stakeholders, such as students, volunteers and visitors
- external factors, such as family, home life, school or peer group experiences or media coverage of traumatic events

Educator Responsibilities

- Implement planned and spontaneous conversations about emotions, feelings and issues of inclusion, fair behaviour, bias and prejudice.
- Role model respectful behaviour and self-regulation strategies, and support children in expressing their concerns whilst genuinely listening and responding.
- Use restorative justice to encourage children to listen to other children's ideas, consider alternative behaviours and solve problems together.
- Discussing the reasons behind centre and societal rules, as well as consequences when they're not followed.
- Assisting children to identify their feelings and emotions, acknowledge their feelings and reassure children that it's normal to experience different emotions at different times.
- Support children to develop skills to identify and report inappropriate behaviours such as bullying and social exclusion.
- Educators will always listen and respond to children when incidents of bullying, violence or harassment are reported or observed and will act to eliminate such incidents
- Implement "Time with" an adult, which will be used when all other strategies (above) have been exhausted. "Time with" allows children time to reflect on their actions, assisting in fostering self-discipline and to acknowledge that there are consequences to actions. "Time with" will occur under the supervision of other Educators.

Educator needs

Educators to support each other and reflect on ways to improve relationships and interactions with children and their families; access to up-to-date training and resources on dealing with behaviour issues and ensuring that learning programs are meeting the child's developmental, social, emotional and cognitive needs, support from families and management in dealing with difficult behaviours

Children's needs

- To have their feelings acknowledged, accepted and be able to express their emotions appropriately.
- to feel safe and protected; to have their cultural, religious and racial diversity respected, and encourage a strong sense of identity and pride in themselves
- consistent expectations; maintain children's dignity and rights, and provide children with positive guidance towards acceptable behaviour.
- Be viewed as capable and competent and be approached from a strengths based perspective.

Family Responsibilities

Collaborate with Educators and professional agencies when required in order to develop a broader understanding of the child's developmental level and share any recent events which may be influencing the child's behaviour. Families should develop collaborative partnerships that involve respectful communication with educators so a consistent and positive approach to guiding children's behaviour. Together with the support from educators, families can identify different options which align with the service's behaviour policy to solve problems and behavioural issues.

STRATEGIES FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Environment

- Educators create environments with sufficient space that are likely to encourage positive social interactions.
- Children can act independently and have easy access to equipment and toys when choosing activities to increase their autonomy.
- Educators plan activities in which children practice cooperating, sharing and helping, and point out the advantages of behaving this way.
- Adequate resources are provided to reduce conflict, but still provide opportunities for children to share.
- Children's opinions and advice are taken into account when setting up the play environment and introducing new resources or toys.

Positive Behaviour Guidance Strategies

- Establish and nurture positive relationships with children.
- Empower children to use language and other non-hurtful communication to communicate their emotions.
- Promote positive, empathetic relationships between children assisting them to develop respectful relationships with others.
- Assist children in making decisions for themselves, by promoting autonomy, listening to their initiatives and providing opportunities for independence and self-regulation such as suggesting options they can choose from when resolving conflicts.
- Provide clear and reasonable limits so children know what is expected of them and help them abide by these limits, whilst taking into account their contributions in setting guidelines. Limits may be adjusted slightly for older children when it is developmentally appropriate to do so.
- Provide positive feedback, focusing on children's strengths and achievements to build on their abilities.
- Help children develop a sense of social responsibility, fairness and equity, so that they become aware of the impact of their actions on different people.
- Provide age appropriate, challenging, and interesting activities, experiences, and equipment for children to use and become engaged in, which is largely taken from their suggestions and involvement in program planning.
- Encouraging discussions about emotions, feelings and issues of inclusion and exclusion, fair and unfair behaviour, bias and prejudice.
- Implement a regular routine to support children's positive behaviour. Routines help to provide a sense of security, so children feel settled and their expectations are met.

Challenging Behaviours

When a child's behaviour repeatedly ignores rules and limits at the centre or engages in behaviour that is not tolerated at the centre at all such as bullying or harassment, consequences will be discussed with child first. Then depending on the degree of the behaviour families will be informed and included in the deciding of the consequence for the behaviour, such as writing an apology letter. The child may also be given time to self-regulate and be provided with options such as:

- Sitting quietly with an educator
- Engaging in a physical activity e.g. kicking a ball
- Talking with a close friend
- Drawing or colouring
- Being left alone (but not out of sight of an educator)

Educators will label the negative behaviour and not the individual child so that it is always the behaviour that is being managed and not the child. If an educator feels they cannot appropriately address the behaviour calmly and neutrally, they will ask for assistance from another educator, particularly if they believe the child will respond better to a different educator.



Where a dispute or conflict occurs between two or more children, educators will talk separately to all the children involved, be calm, fair, positive and firm in their assessment of the situation, and guide them to a resolution.

Daily Behaviour Observation

If challenging behaviours persist after the implementation of fair consequences, positive behaviour guidance strategies and collaboration with families, a two-week Daily Behaviour Observation will be filled out by numerous educators documenting all types of behaviour exhibited by the child at the centre.

At the end of two weeks this will then be provided to the family so as to give a comprehensive observation of the child's behaviour at the centre, which can then be further collaborated on together using a holistic approach by focusing on and reinforcing the child's strengths and positive behaviours, and determining how to reduce challenging behaviours.

Forms of behaviour management not tolerated at the centre

The following will strictly not be used as a form of behaviour management under any circumstances, including from families who wish to discipline their children whilst at the centre:

- Isolation
- Corporal punishment
- Physical restraint
- Inappropriate or frightening language
- Humiliation or frightening punishment
- Withholding access to food or drink

References

Guide to the National Quality Standard (ACECQA) <http://files.acecga.gov.au/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/NQF03-Guide-to-NQS-130902.pdf>

Guide to the National Law and National Regulations (ACECQA)
<http://files.acecga.gov.au/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/2014/NQF02%20Guide%20to%20ECS%20Law%20and%20Regs%20web.pdf>

Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework (ACECQA)
<http://www.acecga.gov.au/ResourceCategory.aspx?pid=412&gcpid=2> (Useful Word Version and PDF)

My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care (ACECQA)
<http://www.acecga.gov.au/ResourceCategory.aspx?pid=412&gcpid=2> (Useful Word Version and PDF)

In our reading, we used and recommend the resources in the Early Childhood Resource Hub (Australian and state governments) <http://www.echr.edu.au/#/>

Child Australia
<http://www.childaustralia.org.au>

Disclaimer

This resource is based on the most current information available in April 2016.

In developing this resource, we have referred to legislation and regulations, sought advice from professional organisations and reviewed contemporary research. This document should be used as a guide to compliment and develop service's existing practices. Services should always check the currency of information at the time of use and consider the information in this resource in the context of their particular service.