

Interactions with Children, Families and Staff Policy

Policy Statement

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

Links Education and Care Centres National Regulations 2018, National Quality Standard 2018

Regs	S. 166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline
	73	Educational program
	84	Awareness of child protection law
	115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
	117A	Placing a person in day-to-day charge
	118	Educational leader
	123	Educator to child ratios-centre-based services
	126	Centre-based services- general educator qualifications
	145	Staff record
	155	Interactions with children
	156	Relationships in groups
	157	Access for parents
	168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
	170	Policies and procedures to be followed
NQS	5	Relationships with Children (5.1, 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.2, 5.2.1)
	6	Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities (6.1, 6.1.1, 6.1.2, 6.1.3)

Statutory Legislation & Considerations

- Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010

Implementation

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for interactions with children (Regulation 168) and take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed.

In order to build and maintain positive and respectful relationships with children, families and educators of our Service will adhere to our statement of philosophy and the ACA Code of Ethics. We aim to provide a child safe culture where our values and practices that guide the attitudes and behaviour of all staff are guided by the implementation of the Child Safe Standards and related National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

Interactions with children

Children need positive relationships and interactions with educators that are trusting and responsive to their individual needs. Through these experiences and interactions children will develop a positive understanding of themselves and feel a sense of belonging. We promote a respectful, child safe culture where children concerns are always responded to, and children feel empowered to participate in decisions and provide feedback to educators and staff. All educators and staff play a vital role in protecting children from harm by responding to and reporting any incidents, disclosures or suspicions of abuse, harm, neglect or ill-treatment. Our Service upholds a strong reporting culture to safeguard children in our care.

Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor/Management Will:

- ensure compliance with the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations
- ensure educators, staff, students, volunteers and visitors are familiar with and follow this policy and procedure
- provide a copy of this policy to all new employees, students and volunteers during induction
- create welcoming, inclusive environments where children experience equitable, respectful and genuine interactions
- ensure children feel safe, valued, understood and supported to learn and develop
- maintain educator-to-child ratios and meet qualification requirements
- ensure all educators and staff complete current child protection training, including mandatory reporting obligations
- ensure all staff understand procedures for reporting allegations of abuse, neglect, harm or ill-treatment
- prohibit any form of corporal punishment or unreasonable discipline in accordance with s.166 of the National Law
- support educators to use trauma-informed practices to respond to children's emotional needs (see Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy).

Educators Will:

- role model positive language and behaviour
- support children to recognise and manage their own feelings and respect the feelings of others
- encourage children to treat peers with respect, empathy and fairness
- provide opportunities for children to express themselves, share opinions and contribute to decision-making
- ensure children understand how to raise concerns and provide feedback (see Dealing with Complaints Policy)
- respond to children's feedback and explain how it has been acted upon
- foster resilience, self-confidence and self-regulation through positive interactions
- use positive behaviour guidance strategies (see Behaviour Guidance Policy)
- respect children's rights, dignity and agency (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)
- supervise appropriately so children feel safe in all interactions
- engage in open, meaningful interactions that support children's lifelong skills and learning

- respect each child's culture, language, communication style and individuality
- listen to children attentively and extend their interests through discussion, reflection and programming
- understand mandatory reporting requirements and act immediately on any concerns, disclosures or suspicions of harm, neglect or abuse
- communicate with children respectfully, at their level, maintaining eye contact and showing empathy
- respect the values, beliefs and cultural practices of each child and family (Reg. 155)
- ensure no child is isolated, except where required for illness, accident or pre-arranged appointments with parental consent, and always under supervision
- reflect regularly on their interactions and relationships with children to improve practice
- build on children's strengths, abilities and interests to support individual development.

Interactions with Families

Positive, respectful communication underpins strong partnerships between families and the Service. Educators use open communication with families and siblings to create an inclusive environment where children feel safe, valued and supported.

Management and educators will ensure:

- treat all families equitably and without judgement, recognising and respecting diversity
- provide information and resources in families' preferred language, using translators if necessary
- greet families respectfully on arrival and departure, learning and using their names
- establish two-way communication by sharing information openly and encouraging feedback
- use plain language (avoiding jargon) when discussing children's learning and development
- maintain privacy and confidentiality at all times and never share information about other children or families
- be sensitive to cultural differences and encourage families to share their culture within the Service
- seek parental consent before engaging professional experts to support children with additional needs
- connect families with external support services when needed (e.g. Inclusion Support, health professionals)
- provide up-to-date information through newsletters, daily reports, notice boards, emails and sign-in sheets
- reflect on and incorporate parent input into the program where possible
- encourage family participation in Service routines and events
- ensure families are aware of the Service's complaints process (Dealing with Complaints Policy)
- declare to management any gift valued over \$50 received from families
- decline and report any bribes or gifts that could influence or be perceived to influence decision-making.

Interactions between Staff and Educators

The way educators interact with each other directly influences their relationships with children and families. All staff are expected to show respect, professionalism and teamwork.

To maintain professionalism at all times, EDUCATORS will:

- use professional communication to create a positive workplace and maintain a professional image with families
- promote a child safe culture through attitudes, actions and behaviours
- collaborate as a team, sharing roles and responsibilities
- respect colleagues' opinions and listen to different perspectives
- communicate effectively to ensure teamwork and consistency of care
- use staff meetings to reflect and share ideas for continuous improvement
- attend professional learning and stay up to date with child protection legislation and mandatory reporting requirements
- follow the Dealing with Complaints Policy if issues arise between staff members
- recognise and value colleagues' strengths and contributions
- engage in open, respectful communication and welcome diverse views
- resolve differences promptly and constructively, using them as opportunities for improvement.

To enhance communication and teamwork, MANAGEMENT will:

- provide new staff with induction information, including policies, procedures and program details
- treat educators respectfully and be sensitive to their needs
- provide constructive feedback and support professional development through learning plans
- value and acknowledge educators' contributions and skills
- promote collaboration and staff wellbeing through open engagement
- provide opportunities for all educators to contribute to program planning and evaluation
- offer mentoring, support and professional development opportunities
- hold regular meetings to encourage reflective practice
- ensure policies and procedures about communication, behaviour and grievances are up to date
- use fair conflict resolution strategies when required.

To enhance communication and teamwork, STAFF will:

- maintain privacy and confidentiality
- show respect, inclusivity and support to all team members
- provide constructive feedback and accept it from others
- demonstrate trust, cooperation and shared responsibility
- value colleagues' skills and interests regardless of qualification or experience
- support one another during challenging situations
- use clear, professional communication (verbal and written, e.g. diaries/communication books)
- resolve conflict respectfully and appropriately
- participate in professional development to enhance skills and teamwork.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Interaction with Children, Families and Staff Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis in consultation with children, families, staff, educators and management.

Source

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2021). Policy and Procedure Guidelines-
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NSW Department of Education. (2021). Implementing the Child Safe Standards: A guide for early childhood education and outside school hours care services.
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Comments:

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