



## Interactions with Children

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Scheduled review date: 20<sup>th</sup> September 2025

### Introduction

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.

### Goals

Educators at our service will:

- be responsive to children's strengths, interests, abilities;
- provide opportunities to become self-reliant and develop self-esteem;
- uphold children's dignity, rights, and agency;
- provide positive behaviour support;
- promote a safe, secure and nurturing environment;
- be authentic and responsive;
- be based in fairness, acceptance and empathy with respect for cultural and linguistic rights.
- All children will have respectful and reciprocal relationships
- Promote a positive culture in all interactions

### Policy

#### Children's Rights, Family and Cultural Values

Interactions with the Preschool 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 listening as a foundation for interactions. Listening is based on observation and in leaving spaces in conversations and communication, suspending judgment 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.

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## Reflecting and Consideration

Time is dedicated to reflecting upon interactions with children. Reflections should consider how to spend extended periods engaged in interactions with children that comprise of communication and listening.

## Role Modelling

Educators model positive interactions when they:

- Show care, empathy and respect for children, educators and staff and families;
- Learn how to use effective communication strategies.

Remember- quality interactions increase children's knowledge and understanding of themselves as unique individuals and develop the skills and understandings they need to interact positively with others.

Interactions between educators and children are genuine, positive and responsive and based on respect, fairness, acceptance, co-operation and empathy. This is evident in conversations, communication, pedagogy, and planning for children and families.

When grouped together for any reason (which may include in-Preschool celebrations or visiting shows, for example), educators will lead by example. This includes sitting with children on the floor (or on a small chair if needed), with particular attention to be paid to spacing and location around children who are known to require support. When educators are involved and respond enthusiastically, children will take those cues and will also be engaged and involved.

## Principles for Behavioural Management

Staff respect individual children's needs and differences in age, ability and experience regarding issues surrounding behaviour and they are happy to discuss individual family expectations with parents. There may be times when staff will need to negotiate strategies with parents to suit the needs of individual children.

- Wherever possible, children and staff will negotiate and determine boundaries and form agreements in relation to expectations for how we treat each other and our service.
- Agreements will be reasonable considering the age, development and individual characteristics of the children.
- Agreements will be consistently enforced and reflected on to evolve, along with children's developing skills and self-regulation competence.
- Children will be encouraged to understand the boundaries, agreements and expectations and build their skills to interact with each other within these.
- It is the child's skill development in relation to their behaviour that is praised or addressed. Children are never shamed.
- Educators acknowledge that they are there to support and teach skills that build children's self-control and regulation and always present a good example through positive role modelling, compassion and understanding.
- When all strategies have been exhausted it may become necessary to amend the child's attendance period at the discretion of the Nominated Supervisor.

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## The Role of the Staff

In response to challenging behaviour, staff:

- Will recognise the situation as an opportunity to help the child develop skills, including their language and communication, attention and working memory, emotion and self-regulation, cognitive flexibility and social thinking skills.
- Recognise certain reactions as understandable behaviour, a reflection of communication and social development.
- Acknowledge the child's intent with that behaviour.
- Clarify the preferred skills to be used and teach, role model and practice how to use them.
- Redirect the child or remove the child from the situation if necessary.
- Advise children of the consequences of continuing with the behaviour.
- Explain to children how their behaviour made others feel.
- Actively listen to children's feelings and discuss the skills to use in future.
- Help children to return to play.

## Responsibilities

The Approved Provider is responsible to:

- Ensure all staff have access to relevant professional development.
- Ensure the educational program contributes to the development of children who have a strong sense of wellbeing and identity, and are connected, confident, involved and effective learners and communicators (Regulation 73).
- Ensure that the Nominated Supervisor and all staff members at the service who work with children are aware that it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances (National Law: Section 166).
- Inform the Regulatory Authority in writing, within 24 hours of receiving a notifiable complaint (Section 174(2), Regulation 176(2)(b)).
- Inform the Regulatory Authority in writing within 24 hours of a serious incident occurring at the service (Section 174, Regulation 176).

The Nominated Supervisor shall:

- 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 a safe environment is maintained at all times for all users of preschool. 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.

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- Develop and implement educational programs, in accordance with the Early Years 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 and staff 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.
- Maintain 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.
- 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.
- Form warm relationships with each child.
- Respond to children's communication in a just and consistent manner;
- Respond sensitively to children's attempts to initiate interactions and conversations
- Support children's efforts, assisting and encouraging as appropriate;
- Support children's secure attachment through consistent and warm nurturing relationships;
- Support children's expression of their thoughts and feelings;
- Encourage children to express themselves and show an interest and participate in what the child is doing;
- Encourage children to make choices and decisions
- Acknowledge children's complex relationships and sensitively intervene in ways that promote consideration and alternative perspectives and social inclusion. Guidance strategies should be reflective of this approach;
- Acknowledge each child's uniqueness in positive ways
- Respect cultural differences in communication and consider alternative approaches.

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- Develop and implement Individual Learning Plans (ILP) as the need is identified.

Families will:

- Read and comply with this policy
- Engage in open communication with staff about their child
- Inform staff of events or incidents that may impact on their child's behaviour at Preschool (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 others to develop or review an individual behaviour guidance plan for them.

All interactions will be positive, including the language in our daily interactions. Should the need be identified, discussions will occur with the child's family and any other relevant support organisations and educators.

### Related Documents

Individual Learning Plan (ILP)

Parent Code of Conduct

The Rights of the Child

ECA Code of Ethics