Purpose Statement

A child's social development and behaviour is influenced by many factors including the environment, individual predispositions and other contextual considerations.

Staff and educators will work collaboratively with parents and/or guardians in understanding and managing children's behaviours and are committed to utilising a positive guidance approach in responding to challenging behaviours.

Scope

This policy applies to all salaried full time and part time staff (including casuals), educators and contractors.

Definitions

Challenging Behaviour – any behaviour that interferes with children's learning, development and success at play and/or puts a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure (Klass, Guskin & Thomas, 1995; Ritchie & Pohl, 1995).

Policy Statement

STAFF AND EDUCATORS WILL USE A POSITIVE GUIDANCE APPROACH IN THEIR DAILY INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN AND APPROPRIATE POSITIVE STRATEGIES IN RESPONDING TO CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS

Procedures

Positive Guidance Approach

1. A positive approach to understanding and responding to children requires a respect for children and their rights.

2. A positive guidance approach also involves teaching respect to young children. This includes assisting children to maintain self-respect and to enhance their skill in extending respect to others.

3. A positive guidance approach uses acknowledgement rather than praise to support children and promote healthy self-esteem and positive sense of self.

4. Understanding and acquiring social skills, as well as teaching children about the consequences of particular behaviours is important when teaching children to become socially responsible citizens. Educators can support children by:

    a. Acknowledging them when they arrive

    b. Supporting them to say goodbye to parent/guardian

    c. Using manners at mealtimes etc.

    d. Role modelling appropriate play

    e. Supporting children with their interactions with peers

NOTE: refer to Appendix 1 for Behaviour Guidance Strategies

Understanding Biological and Environmental Factors that Impact on Behaviours

Temperament and Personality

A child's individual characteristics, such as temperament, impacts upon the way they behave or respond to certain stimuli. It is important for educator's to develop an understanding of a child's characteristics and their temperament so they can guide positive behaviours and avoid challenging situations.

Health and Wellbeing

Health and wellbeing may temporarily impact on a child's behaviour. Poor physical health or a reduced sense of wellbeing (due to a family crisis, for example) may result in challenging behaviours. Educators are encouraged to talk with children and/or parents and caregivers about issues relating to health and wellbeing and develop strategies to guide positive behaviours.

Communication and Physical Development

Be aware of any developmental difficulties that could impact on behaviour, particularly speech and language. A child with communication challenges may become frustrated when they are unable to communicate their needs or wants effectively. While this does not excuse the behaviour, it can help you to understand and respond more effectively.

Cultural and Family Context

The primary influence on children's learning and development comes from their own families, communities and cultural background. Where educators work in partnership with families, they will be able to provide more relevant and meaningful experiences for children's development (including considerate behaviours).

Parenting Styles

An appreciation of different parenting styles and working collaboratively with parents/caregivers to develop a consistent approach to managing a child's behaviour (wherever possible) will ensure the best possible outcomes for children.

The Care Environment

Understanding a child's behaviour enables us to provide an environment (both in physical and social terms) that prevents behavioural concerns and supports children to develop pro-social and considerate behaviours. It is important to remember that children thrive in environments that value them as individuals.

Relevant Legislation/Standards

- National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care Services including:
  - Education and Care Services National Law 2011
  - Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Related Policies & Links

- *Convention on the Rights of a Child* procedure
- *Behaviour Guidance Using the ABC Tool* procedure
- *Rights of a Child* procedure

Appendix 1 - Behaviour Guidance

Strategies for Guiding Children's Behaviour in a Positive Way

- Involve children in developing a 'set of rules' for acting considerately and in a socially acceptable manner (i.e. not interrupting when someone else is talking)

- Set clear and reasonable limits and make time to talk about these with children. Mixed or unclear messages are likely to lead to confusion.

- Use coordination visits to discuss and reflect on your approach to guiding children's behaviour

- Be consistent in your approach to managing behaviours. Use strategies being utilised by families where possible

- Discuss with families positive approaches to guiding behaviour, as a means of encouraging consistency (both at home and in an education and care setting)

- Use positive comments frequently and specifically when children are behaving in considerate ways

- Utilise children's strengths and interests to promote considerate behaviour (ie where a child displays good teamwork by including peers in play based activities, acknowledge the behaviour)

- Be fair. Children respect wisdom and expertise not power. Being fair means you are able to change your mind and reconsider a course of action or response based on the current situation and the child's needs

- Be specific and positive with your requests. For example, say: "Walk inside please" rather than "don't run inside". Tell children what you want them to do rather than what not to do

- Follow through – if you asked a child to do something, firmly and calmly persist, offering support and encouragement as required. Always ensure though, that your request is fair and reasonable.

- Acknowledge a child's feelings and how this may be impacting on one's behaviour. Support children to understand that feelings and behaviour are different things.

- Ensure children have adequate time to prepare for a change of routine. Explain what is happening and help them to prepare for the change. For example, say "We are going to have lunch soon. That means you will need to stop playing. Would you like to play with the blocks again after lunch?"

- Do not make promises, bribes or threats to get a child to do something

- Model appropriate behaviour. Demonstrate the kind of behaviour you wish the child to develop.

- Assist children to join their peers at play if needed, or join in yourself, to diffuse the situation or alleviate any anxieties related to social situations of this kind

- Only give choices where there is a choice to be made. Where there is no choice use a statement

- Use logical or natural consequences, according to the child's developmental level.

- Give specific feedback rather than just offering praise when commenting on children's achievements and actions (i.e. 'You did a great job packing up. Now all the toys are ready for next time).

- Avoid labelling a child or referring to past incidents. This is humiliating.

- Be positive, loving and kind. It is the behaviour, not the child, that is unacceptable and the child should know this

- Teach children skills for problem solving and conflict resolution. Encourage children to cooperate with each other and work together on finding solutions.

- Acknowledge children for using good manners by responding 'It's a pleasure' or 'You're welcome' as an alternative to saying 'Good boy for using your manners'

Strategies for Problem Solving with Older children (3yrs and above)

- Involve all children

- Find a quiet place to discuss the issues

- Invite the children to talk about the issue at hand

- Talk about the issue at hand from your perspective

- Ensure everyone is heard

- Don't use language of blame

- Focus on a solution

Responding to Challenging Behaviour

- Understand that the child may be out of control of their feelings. Soothe and support the child or offer them some 'time away' from the situation in order to regain emotional control

- Help the child talk about feelings and how and why they might feel and act the way they do. Listen and help them distinguish between feelings and the behaviour (i.e. say to a child, "Its ok to feel angry, but it's not ok to hit someone")

- Remember to consider children's development and preferences – redirect younger children without a fuss and discuss choices and effects of behaviour with older children

- Observe and listen to the child carefully

- Use positive reinforcement to comment on and acknowledge considerate behaviour

- Where challenging behaviour persists, look for the underlying motivation (ie to escape unpleasant situations or due to the frustration of not being able to express needs/wants). Use the ABC Tool to assist you in developing strategies to deal with challenging behaviours (see Behaviour Management Using the ABC Tool procedure)

- Treat significant adult's in the child's life with respect and include them as partners in determining possible causes of 'challenging behaviours' and appropriate responses

- Utilise additional assistance and support from external services (with parental permission)

- What stresses, problems or difficulties is the child experiencing? Where an educator has an understanding of the issues facing a child, they are better able to support the child and his/her family and guide positive behaviours