



Interactions with Children Policy

Quality Area 5

Relationships with Children

References and Related Legislation:

Education and Care Services National Regulations: 155, 168

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 166, 167

Links to National Quality Standard: 5.1, 5.2, 7.3.5

Children's and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998

Disability Discrimination Act 1999

Discrimination and Children's Services by Maggi Smyth

Acknowledgement to Community Child Care Cooperative for the structure of this policy.

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.

Interactions with children will:

- promote a safe, secure and nurturing environment;
- be authentic and responsive; and
- be based in fairness, acceptance and empathy with respect for culture, rights, community and the individual.

Strategies - How will it be done?

The Nominated Supervisor and Educational Leader shall:

1. Guide professional development and practice to promote interactions with children that are positive and respectful.
2. Establish practice guidelines that ensure interactions with children are given priority and those interactions are authentic, just and respect difference.
3. Develop and implement educational programs, in accordance with an approved 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.



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Educators and staff will:

1. Organise and evaluate routines in ways that maximize each child's involvement and engagement in learning.
2. Ensure children's changing need for sleep and rest is accommodated in consultation with families.
3. Respond to children's communication in a just and consistent manner and minimise the use of negative communication such as 'no' or 'don't'.
4. Provide genuine acknowledgment of children's achievements and efforts through a range of methods that build intrinsic motivations. We choose strategies that build autonomy and respect so we don't resort to bribes or punitive strategies such as taking items away. We don't want children to rely on another person's approval to feel OK or a sticker to feel good. We want to build their self-confidence to evaluate themselves through an emotionally healthy lens and learn to regulate their own behavior accordingly.
5. Ensure children are educated and cared for in small groups to minimise excessive noise and avoid an overly restrictive and controlling environment.
6. Respond sensitively to children's attempts to initiate interactions and conversations.
7. Initiate one to one interactions with children, during daily routines and conversation with each child.
8. Support children's efforts, scaffolding and encouraging as appropriate.
9. Support children's secure attachment through consistent and warm nurturing relationships.
10. Support children's expression of their thoughts and feelings.
11. Encourage children to express themselves and show an interest and participate in what the child is doing.
12. Encourage children to make choices and decisions.
13. 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.
14. Acknowledge each child's uniqueness in positive ways.
15. Respect cultural differences in communication and consider alternative approaches to own.

Children's Rights, Family and Cultural Values

Interactions within the setting 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.



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Educators use the **Behaviour Guidance Checklist** to ensure the ongoing ways they manage challenging behaviours in partnership with families and specialists is respectful and does not cause undue hardship.

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.

Reflection and Consideration

Time is dedicated to reflecting upon interactions within children. Reflections should consider how to spend extended periods engaged in interactions with children that compliment communication and listening. When responding to children's behaviour we always look holistically at the context of the behaviour and adapt our strategy to best achieve the outcome of supporting that child to feel a sense of belonging, acceptance, trust and respect for themselves and their relationships.

In accordance with R.172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have a significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service, the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Last Reviewed: February 2017

Due for review: February 2019