

## **Parents / Family's Involvement & Code of Conduct**

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The provision of high quality child care is based on mutual responsibility. Therefore, the centre will seek regular information and feedback from families and undertake to provide regular information to families.

Acacia seeks to provide care in a manner, which is complementary to and supportive of the child's home environment. In order to meet the ongoing developmental needs of individual children, educators need to have a thorough understanding of the child's progress including attachment, temperament, interests, strengths, needs and an appreciation of home life including routines and rituals.

### **Communication**

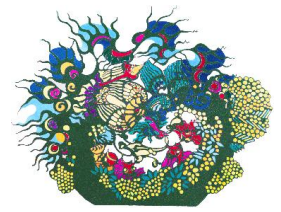
Educators will communicate with parents in a positive and supportive manner that encourages the parent child relationship. Information with regard to family issues and personal lives will be handled confidentially. Conversations will be held in an area where confidentiality will be achieved.

Parents are encouraged to regularly discuss their child's development with the educator involved.

- Communication begins at the time of enrolment where parents are requested to provide background information including any concerns or developmental issues, at a meeting with the Room Leader and primary educators.
- Day-to-day communication occurs mainly with educator in the child's room. Educator will maintain regular observations and a developmental profile of each child. Educator will keep parents/guardians informed on a daily basis about the day to day experiences of their children including any concerns or issues.

Parents are also requested to keep educator informed on a daily basis. This may be through:

- Conversation (in person)
  - Telephone
  - Email
  - Written via a daily record sheet or on daily communication board
  - Meeting as required
- Parents will be notified in person, by phone, email, in writing, and/or through parent notice board:
    - If the child is injured and the injury requires medical attention;
    - If the child has a sign of symptom requiring exclusion from care;
    - If the child has been involved in any situation that placed the child at risk;
    - If any situation renders the center unsafe;
    - If a less serious injury or incident takes place, the parents will be notified at the time of pick up;
    - If there are any changes to any policies or procedures;
    - If there is a change in educator working with your child on day-to-day basis.
    - If there is an outbreak of any communicable disease
  - Educators and parent meetings are encouraged regularly at either pre-arranged times or as requested by either educator or parent.
  - If parents have concerns, they are first requested to meet with the room leader. If this does not resolve the issue then parents are invited to request a meeting with the Director.



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- The centre will provide feedback regarding actions taken in relation to information or concerns from parents.

Educator will not discuss information of a confidential nature regarding any other child or family within the centre.

### **Parent Involvement**

Parents and family members are welcome to visit at any reasonable time, with due consideration to the children's program.

Parents are encouraged to share their special skills, interests and cultures both informally (by simply spending time in the centre) and formally (through arrangements with educator/staff).

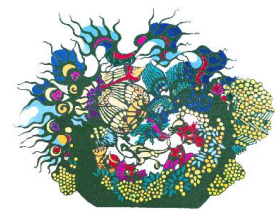
Parents are invited to be involved in decision making for the centre through involvement on the Management Committees, social functions, working bees, educator/parent interviews, reading, and help with excursions and contributing to the newsletter.

The centre acknowledges the central role of parents in the program and seeks to work in partnership with parents. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the centre to participate in the daily life of the centre including activities with children.

### **Procedure**

The centre involves parents in the following ways:

- Sharing information about their child's development through parent/ educator, meetings, informal conversations, child development records, newsletters, information sessions, social functions
- Including parents in children's activities such as
  - Excursions/ incursions
  - Special days
  - Celebrations
  - Visits with children
  - Pick up and drop off times
  - Formal and informal visits



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The inclusion of parents and families in the centre enriches the experience for all children. The centre seeks to create a community within the centre and to bring the broader community into the centre life. To assist families in participating in the centre, a guideline has been developed to help parents to establish appropriate ways of interacting with children other than their own.

In order to protect the rights and interests of all children in the centre, adults are required to behave within certain guidelines. (adults includes parents, grandparents, guardians of enrolled or enrolling children)

Parents leave their children in the care of educator and expect educator to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their children in their absence. The centre acts in "loco parentis" or act in the best interests of the child as they see fit which means that parents entrust the total care and protection of their child to educator.

The centre is responsible to ensure that

- safety of children, educator, staff and individuals is provided,
- protective behaviours are implemented and
- families' cultural values are respected.

The centre aims to create a community within the centre and actively seeks parent involvement.

Acacia's educator and staff are entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that the behaviour of any adult visitors within the centre meets the guidelines outlines in this policy.

### **Feedback/Suggestion**

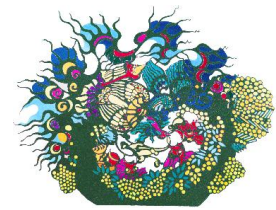
Feedback is very important to us, as we are committed to provide a good quality service all comments and suggestions to improve the quality of care are welcomed. When areas of concern arise, the problem should be brought to attention of the staff in-charge of the room who will listen to your suggestions and attempt to work through the problem.

If additional communication is necessary, the problem can be taken to the centre's Director. If the problem cannot be resolved, you will need to put your concern in writing to the Secretary of the Committee of Management of the Centre. Your concern will be placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the Committee for further consideration.

### **Parents Expression of Strong Emotions**

It is expected that when parents are talking to the educator about any matter, the following guidelines will need to be adhered to:

- The staff/educator and children are not to be subjected to any form of threatening behaviour i.e. physical or verbal abuse.
- Staff/educator have the right to ask a parent to leave the room if their behaviour is deemed to be unacceptable and refer them to the Parent's Complaint or Concern Procedure as set out in the centre's policy document.
- If, as assessed by the staff/educator, the situation appears that their safety or that of the children is in jeopardy, the police will be contacted.



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If a parent continues to display a disregard for the above guidelines, the following steps will be taken:

- A verbal warning will be issued to the parent concerned, indicating that their behaviour is not appropriate and a written report will be made by the Director, to be kept on file.
- If the behaviour continues, a second written warning will be issued by the Committee of Management to the concerned parent.
- If the behaviour continues, the concerned parent will be asked to find an alternative place for their child.

### **Protective Behaviours**

Refers to the set of skills which children are taught to enable them to be safe and includes an understanding in older children about the privacy of their own body, respect for personal boundaries and recognition and articulation of their feelings of discomfort when personal boundaries are compromised. We are therefore teaching children not to be overly familiar with adults not known to them.

The guidelines outlined in this policy apply to all parents/guardians and seek to establish appropriate ways of interacting with children to ensure children are treated with respect and that children's safety is protected. We require that within the centre boundary, parents treat all children (including their own) with respect.

Acacia's centre is also responsible for the safety of adults and these guidelines incorporate aspects, which safeguard parents/guardians from possible injury through interactions with children. (For example if a parent picked up a child they could sustain a back injury).

If parents observe any behaviours or incidents involving children which cause them concern they should speak to a staff member. They should not try to redirect or discipline children.

### **Procedures**

Acacia's educator and staff are responsible for supervising the behaviour of parents/guardians visiting the centre. Then guidelines for parent behaviour are based on the ground that children's rights are paramount. All children are to be treated with respect.

### **Language**

In interacting with any children in the centre, parents will:

- Refrain from discussing any children publicly
- Use positive language and /or acknowledges when talking with children
- Not swear or use coarse language
- Not use threatening or intimidating language towards children
- Not reprimand children
- Not use racist or sexist references

### **Physical Interactions**

In interacting with any children in the centre, parents will:

- Not use any physical punishments (smacking, hitting etc...)
- Ensure that physical contact is non-intimate - appropriate physical contact could include holding hands, hugging (only if child initiated), assistance with climbing equipment, touching an arm
- No parent/guardian should be alone with a child other than their own



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- Parents/guardians should not get involved in dressing/undressing children other than their own.
- Kinder age children are beginning to understand personal boundaries and parents/guardians should not have children other than their own on their lap. Children may be encouraged to sit next to adults if closer contact is initiated.
- In baby and toddler ages it is not acceptable for parents/guardians to pick up children other than their own. However, it is acceptable to sit on the floor at children's level and interact, including nursing babies or toddlers
- If a parent/guardian observes a child needing assistance it is recommended that they alert an educator - they should avoid lifting or picking up children but may approach the child on the child's level to offer comfort.
- Interactions with children should not be boisterous. Parents/guardians should avoid over exciting children which can lead to unsafe behaviour.

In any situation where a parent/guardian is unsure how to act or feels uncomfortable they should seek the guidance of educator/staff.

Suggestions for educator in talking with parents:

*"We have a policy about how parents/guardians should interact with children. All children must be treated with respect and we must ensure that they keep safe. This kind of behaviour:*

- *is not safe*
- *overexcites the children*
- *does not meet the policy guidelines*
- *does not respect personal boundaries*

*Would you like a copy of the policy?"*

### **Excursions helpers**

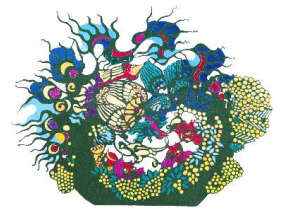
Acacia encourage parent or family members to participate and assist us on excursions that are organised as part of our educational program.

The room leader and the excursion coordinator will inform families on the details of each excursions and will be responsible on organising helpers.

If you would like to be a helper for the excursion please inform the Excursion Coordinator.

To ensure the safe and well-being of all children and adults, we expect that the following guidelines are meet by each helper:

- provide working with children check (volunteer)
- respect the directions given by the Excursion Coordinator
- have a clear understanding of the educational guidelines and purpose of the excursion
- stay within the set guidelines and purpose of the excursions
- stay with your designated group of children and educator at all times
- treat all children within your group with respect and dignity
- supervise children at all times
- Refrain from sharing any food with children (food will be provided by the centre for all children and educators and helpers).
- Refrain from buying any treats for children
- Wear sensible attire to suit the location, activities and weather, including sunhat, jackets, boots etc.
- Carry a mobile phone (with credit) which include contact number of the centre and excursion coordinator
- Carry some money for emergencies.



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### References

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority,

- *National Quality Framework Resource Kit, October 2011*

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

- *Belonging, Being & Becoming - The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* Commonwealth of Australia 2009
- *Educators' Guide to the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, Commonwealth of Australia 2010*

Early Childhood Strategy Division DEECD and Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority

- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, November 2009*

Royal Children's Hospital Safety Centre, Melbourne

- *Child Safety Handbook edition 5: Protective Behaviours for Children, Page 83, 2009*

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