



Policy and Procedures Interaction with children

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines to ensure:

- the development of positive and respectful relationships with each child at Acacia Children's Centres
- each child at Acacia is supported to learn and develop in a secure and empowering environment.

POLICY STATEMENT

Values

Acacia Children's Centre (Acacia) is committed to:

- maintaining the dignity and rights of each child at the service
- promoting fairness, respect and equity
- encouraging children to express themselves and their opinions, and to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
- considering the health, safety and wellbeing of each child, and providing a safe, secure and welcoming environment in which they can develop and learn
- maintaining a duty of care (refer to *Definitions*) towards all children at the service
- considering the diversity of individual children at the service, including family and cultural values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child
- building collaborative relationships with families to improve learning and development outcomes for children
- encouraging positive, respectful and warm relationships between children, families and educators/staff at the service.

Scope

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in day-to-day Charge, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Acacia

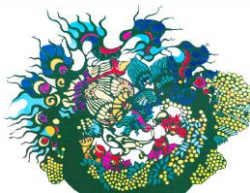
Background and legislation

Background

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is founded on respect for the dignity and worth of each individual, regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, opinions, wealth, birth status or ability. When children experience nurturing and respectful reciprocal relationships with educators, they develop an understanding of themselves as competent, capable and respected. Relationships are the foundation for the construction of identity, and help shape children's thinking about who they are, how they belong and what influences them [*Early Years Learning Framework*, p. 20; *Framework for School Age Care*, p. 19]

'Constructive everyday interactions and shared learning opportunities form the basis of equitable, respectful and reciprocal relationships between educators and children. Educators who are actively engaged in children's learning and share decision-making with them, use their everyday interactions during play, routines and ongoing projects to stimulate children's thinking and to enrich their learning. These relationships provide a solid foundation from which to guide and support children as they develop the self-confidence and skills to manage their own behaviour, make decisions and relate positively and effectively to others.' (*Guide to National Quality Framework* – refer to Sources)

Child Safe Standard 7 requires services to have strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children. When children feel respected and valued, they are much more likely to speak up about issues of



safety and wellbeing. Enabling and promoting the participation of children within a service has multiple benefits in addition to enhancing the safety of children, including demonstrating a commitment to upholding the rights of children, checking that what the service is doing is what children want and building the communication and leadership skills of children.

In developing an *Interactions with Children Policy*, early childhood education and care services must review and reflect on the philosophy, beliefs and values of the service, particularly with regard to the relationships with children. The development of this policy should also be informed by the service's *Code of Conduct Policy*.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)*
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015 (Vic)*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children*
- *Child Safe Standards 2022*

Definitions

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Adequate supervision:

Entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used.

Adequate supervision refers to constant, active and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate supervision requires that educators are always in a position to observe each child, respond to individual needs and immediately intervene if necessary. Variables affecting supervision levels include:

- number, age and abilities of children
- number and positioning of educators
- current activity of each child
- areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility)
- developmental profile of each child and of the group of children
- experience, knowledge and skill of each educator
- need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies).

Behaviour guidance plan:

A plan that documents strategies to assist an educator in guiding a child with diagnosed behavioural difficulties or challenging behaviours to self-regulate his/her behaviour. The plan is developed in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, parents/guardians and families, and other professional support agencies as applicable.



Challenging behaviour:

Behaviour that:

- disrupts others or causes disputes between children, but which is part of normal social development
- infringes on the rights of others
- causes harm or risk to the child, other children, adults or living things
- is destructive to the environment and/or equipment
- inhibits the child's learning and relationship with others
- is inappropriate relative to the child's developmental age and background.

Notifiable complaints:

The Regulatory Authority is required to be notified of a complaint that alleges:

- a serious incident has occurred or is occurring while a child is being educated and cared for by a service
- the National Law and/or National Regulations have been contravened.

Complaints of this nature must be reported by the Approved Provider to the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of the complaint being made (Section 174(2)(b), Regulation 176(2)(b)). If the Approved Provider is unsure whether the matter is a notifiable complaint, it is good practice to contact DET for confirmation.

Notification of complaints must be submitted within 24 hours through either the NQAIT System portal: <http://www.acecqa.gov.au> or where this is not possible, the Regulatory Authority must be contacted directly.

Inclusion Support Program:

Funded by the Commonwealth Government to assist services to build their capacity and capability to include children with additional needs in mainstream services; providing them with an opportunity to learn and develop alongside their typically developing peers: <https://www.education.gov.au/>

Mental health:

In early childhood, a child's mental health is understood as a child's ability to 'experience, regulate and express emotions; form close and secure interpersonal relationships; and explore the environment and learn – all in the context of family, community and cultural expectations for young children. Infant mental health is synonymous with healthy social and emotional development. <https://beyou.edu.au/>

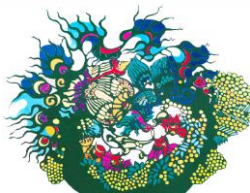
Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) Program:

The role of the PSFO Program is to support the access and participation of children with additional needs in preschool: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>

Serious incident:

A serious incident (regulation 12) is defined as any of the following:

- the death of a child while being educated and cared for at the service or following an incident at the service
- any incident involving serious injury or trauma while the child is being educated and cared for, which
 - a reasonable person would consider required urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner; or
 - the child attended or ought reasonably to have attended a hospital e.g. a broken limb*
- any incident involving serious illness of a child while that child is being educated and cared for by a service for which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital e.g. severe asthma attack, seizure or anaphylaxis*.



*NOTE: In some cases (for example rural and remote locations) a General Practitioner conducts consultation from the hospital site. Only treatment related to serious injury or illness or trauma are required to be notified, not other health matters.

- any emergency for which emergency services attended.

NOTE: This means an incident, situation or event where there is an imminent or severe risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a person/s at an education and care service. It does not mean an incident where emergency services attended as a precaution.

- a child appears to be missing or cannot be accounted for at the service
- a child appears to have been taken or removed from the service in a manner that contravenes the National Regulations
- a child was mistakenly locked in or out of the service premises or any part of the premises.

Examples of serious incidents include amputation (e.g. removal of fingers), anaphylactic reaction requiring hospitalisation, asthma requiring hospitalisation, broken bone/fractures, bronchiolitis, burns, diarrhoea requiring hospitalisation, epileptic seizures, head injuries, measles, meningococcal infection, sexual assault, witnessing violence or a frightening event.

If the approved provider is not aware that the incident was serious until sometime after the incident, they must notify the regulatory authority within 24 hours of becoming aware that the incident was serious.

Notifications of serious incidents should be made through the NQAIT System portal (<http://www.acecqa.gov.au>). If this is not practicable, the notification can be made initially in whatever way is best in the circumstances.

Sources and related policies

Sources

- *Behaviour guidance practice note series* (DET): <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>
- Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: <https://www.education.gov.au/>
- Early Childhood Australia *Code of Ethics*: <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/>
- *Guide to the National Quality Framework*, ACECQA: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Inclusion Support Program (ISP), Department of Education and Training: <https://www.education.gov.au/>
- Kids Matter, an Australian mental health and well-being initiative set in primary schools and early childhood education and care services: <https://beyou.edu.au/>
- *The Kindergarten Funding Guide* (DET): <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: <https://www.unicef.org/>
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>
- Child Safe Standards <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/>

Service policies

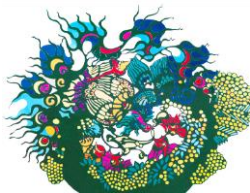
- Child Safe Environment Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Complaints and Grievances Policy
- Curriculum Development Policy
- Inclusion and Equity Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Supervision of Children Policy



PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider and Persons with Management or Control are responsible for:

- developing and implementing the *Interactions with Children Policy* in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, other staff and parents/guardians, and ensuring that it reflects the philosophy, beliefs and values of the service
- ensuring parents/guardians, the Nominated Supervisor and all other staff are provided with a copy of the *Interactions with Children Policy* and comply with its requirements
- ensuring the Nominated Supervisor and all other staff are aware of the service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and interactions when working with children and families (refer to *Code of Conduct Policy*)
- ensuring children are adequately supervised (refer to *Definitions*) and that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times (refer to *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- ensuring the size and composition of groups is considered to ensure all children are provided with the best opportunities for quality interactions and relationships with each other and with adults at the service (Regulation 156(2)). Smaller group sizes are considered optimal
- ensuring educational programs are delivered in accordance with an approved learning framework, are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- ensuring the educational program contributes to the development of children to have a strong sense of wellbeing and identity, and to be connected, confident, involved and effective learners and communicators (Regulation 73) (refer to *Curriculum Development Policy*)
- ensuring that the service provides education and care to children in a way that:
 - encourages children to express themselves and their opinions
 - allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
 - maintains the dignity and the rights of each child at all times
 - offers positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour
 - has regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for (Regulation 155)
- ensure that the service provides children with opportunities to interact and develop positive relationships with each other, and with the staff and volunteers at the service (Regulation 156(1))
- ensures that all educators recognise the importance of friendships for all children and encourages support from their peers, to help children feel safe and be connected.
- ensuring clear documentation of the assessment and evaluation of each child's:
 - developmental needs, interests, experiences and program participation
 - progress against the outcomes of the educational program (Regulation 74) (refer to *Curriculum Development Policy*)
- supporting educators/staff to access resources and gain appropriate training, knowledge and skills for the implementation of this policy, including promoting social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing
- ensuring the environment at the service is safe, secure and free from hazards for children (refer to *Child Safe Environment Policy*, *Occupational Health and Safety Policy* and *Supervision of Children Policy*) and promotes the active participation of every child
- ensuring that the Nominated Supervisor and all other 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)
- promoting collaborative relationships between children/families and educators, staff and other professionals, to improve the quality of children's education and care experiences



- referring notifiable complaints (refer to *Definitions*), grievances (refer to *Definitions*) or complaints that are unable to be resolved appropriately and in a timely manner to the Grievances Subcommittee/investigator (refer to *Complaints and Grievances Policy*)
- informing DET on the NQAIT System portal (<http://www.acecqa.gov.au>) within 24 hours of receiving a notifiable complaint (refer to *Definitions*) (Section 174(4), Regulation 176(2)(b))
- notifying DET on the NQAIT System portal (<http://www.acecqa.gov.au>), within 24 hours of a serious incident (refer to *Definitions*) occurring at the service (Section 174(4), Regulation 176)
- ensuring that where the service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child, such contact does not occur while the child is on the service premises
- ensuring educators and staff use positive and respectful language and strategies to assist children to self-regulate and manage their own behaviour; and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others
- developing links with and referral pathways to services and/or professionals to support children experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and their families
- ensuring that there is a behaviour guidance plan developed for a child if educators are concerned that the child's behaviour may put themselves and/or others at risk including other children, visitors educators/staff
- ensuring that parents/guardians and other professionals and support agencies (as appropriate) are consulted if an individual behaviour guidance plan has not resolved the challenging behaviour
- consulting with, and seeking advice from, DET if a suitable and mutually agreeable behaviour guidance plan cannot be developed
- ensuring that additional resources are sourced, if required, to implement a behaviour guidance plan
- ensuring that educators/staff at the service are provided with appropriate training to guide the actions and responses of a child/children with challenging behaviour.
- maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*).

The Nominated Supervisor and Persons in Day to Day Charge are responsible for:

- implementing the *Interactions with Children Policy* at the service
- ensuring all staff and parents/guardians have access to the *Interactions with Children Policy* and comply with its requirements
- ensuring 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 (refer to *Code of Conduct Policy*)
- ensuring children are adequately supervised (refer to *Definitions*) and that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times (refer to *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- ensuring that the environment is safe, secure and free from hazards (*Child Safe Environment, Supervision of Children Policy* and *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*)
- considering the size and composition of groups when planning program timetables to ensure all children are provided with the best opportunities for quality interactions and relationships with each other and with adults at the service. Smaller group sizes are considered optimal
- developing and implementing 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 (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- ensuring the educational program contributes to the development of children to have a strong sense of wellbeing and identity, and to be connected, confident, involved and effective learners and communicators (refer to *Curriculum Development Policy*)
- ensuring that educators provide education and care to children in a way that:
 - encourages children to express themselves and their opinions
 - allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem



- maintains the dignity and the rights of each child at all times
- offers positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour
- has regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for
- ensuring clear and straightforward documentation of the assessment and evaluation of each child's:
 - developmental needs, interests, experiences and program participation
 - progress against the outcomes of the educational program (Regulation 74) (refer to *Curriculum Development Policy*)
- organising appropriate training for all staff to assist with the implementation of this policy
- ensuring 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)
- ensuring that procedures are in place for effective daily communication with parents/guardians to share information about children's learning, development, interactions, behaviour and relationships
- informing the Approved Provider of any notifiable complaints (refer to *Definitions*) or serious incidents (refer to *Definitions*) at the service
- ensuring that where the service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child, such contact does not occur while the child is on the service premises
- ensuring educators and staff use positive and respectful strategies to assist children to manage their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others
- developing the behaviour guidance plan in consultation with the Approved Provider, educators and the parents/guardian of the child, and other professionals and services as appropriate
- supporting educators by assessing skills and identifying additional training needs in the area of behaviour guidance
- investigating the availability of extra assistance, financial support or training, by contacting the regional Preschool Field Officer (refer to *Definitions*), specialist children's services officers from DET or other agencies working with the child
- setting clear timelines for review and evaluation of the behaviour guidance plan.
- providing information, ideas and practical strategies to families, educators and staff on a regular basis to promote and support health and wellbeing in the service and at home
- co-operating with other services and/or professionals to support children and their families, where required
- maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*).

All other staff are responsible for:

- assisting with the development and implementation of the *Interactions with Children Policy*, in consultation with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, parents/guardians and families
- providing access to the *Interactions with Children Policy* for parents/guardians and families
- complying with the requirements of the *Interactions with Children Policy*
- being aware of service expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and reactions when working with children and families (refer to *Code of Conduct Policy*)
- providing adequate supervision of children at all times (refer to *Definitions* and *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- communicating and working collaboratively with parents/guardians and families in relation to their child's learning, development, interactions, behaviour and relationships
- delivering 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



- delivering programs that develop a sense of wellbeing and identity, connection to community, and provide skills for lifelong learning in all children
- providing education and care to children in a way that:
 - encourages children to express themselves and their opinions
 - allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
 - maintains the dignity and the rights of each child at all times
 - offers positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour
 - has regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for
 - teaching strategies that support self-regulation and emotional literacy
- developing warm, responsive and trusting relationships with children that promote a sense of security, confidence and inclusion
- supporting each child to develop responsive relationships, to work and learn in collaboration with others
- using positive and respectful strategies to assist children to manage their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others
- assisting the Nominated Supervisor to develop a behaviour guidance plan in consultation with parents/guardians and other professionals as appropriate
- implementing a behaviour guidance plan and incorporating identified strategies and resources into the service program
- undertaking relevant training that will enable them to guide children who exhibit challenging behaviour
- maintaining ongoing communication and consultation with parents/guardians
- providing regular progress reports to the Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor on the implementation, effectiveness of the agreed strategies contained in an individual behaviour guidance plan
- documenting assessments and evaluations for each child to inform the educational program (Reg 74)
- being 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
- maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*).

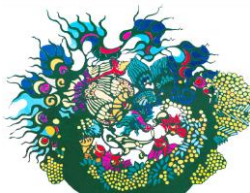
Understanding children's behaviour

Acacia understands that children do not set out to “misbehave or act inappropriately. There are many biological and environmental triggers that may factor in children's behaviour. These factors may include:

- Social and emotional stage of development.
- Language stage of development
- Temperament and personality;
- Health and well-being; tired, hungry, feeling unwell, stomach ache, irregular bowel movements
- Physical development;
- Cultural and family context;
- Parenting styles; and
- The quality of care environment, both physical and social, in which the child is raised.

To understand these will only assist educators to implement strategies within the positive approach. Therefore, it is vital that a strong, trusting relationship is formed between the educators and families so information can be exchanged about any changes to your child's home or life circumstance. This also enables educators to positively work with families when issues relating to a child's behaviour arise. Some aspects of a child's personality and circumstances that families are encouraged to share with educators are:

- How active or passive the child is at different times of the day;



- The child's initial response to situations or people - shy and cautious; sociable and eager; fearless and aggressive;
- How long it takes the child to adjust to new situations or people;
- How the child shows interest or disinterest;
- What type of stimulation the child responds to best, for example visual, vocal/auditory, tactile;
- How intense this stimulation needs to be;
- What level of energy or affect is displayed in responses?
- How the child responds to frustration;
- How persistent the child is with activities;
- Whether the child prefers easy or more challenging tasks;
- What activities, objects, or people interest the child?
- How the child displays a sense of humour;
- What specific child or family needs to be considered, for example culturally or developmentally?

Guiding Children's Behaviour

In guiding children's behaviour, the focus is on assisting children to attain self-control under conditions which guide their development and foster their self-esteem.

At Acacia children's services, we prioritise on:

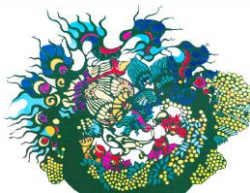
- A. Attachment theory:
 - Building positive relationships between educator and child;
 - Building positive relationships between educator and families;
 - Building positive relationships between peers
 - Getting to know each individual Child and their needs
- B. Teaching children about emotional literacy (PATHS) or (PYRAMID MODEL)
 - Reducing the likelihood for inappropriate behaviour (setting limits)
 - Encouraging children to come up with their own solutions to conflict;
 - Teaching children to recognise emotions
 - Teaching children calming down strategies
 - Using visuals
- C. Fostering teamwork and collaborative partnerships with families and other significant adults.
- D. Creating a stimulating learning and caring environment.

Physical and social environments

The environment, viewed in both physical and social terms - including personal relationships and interactions, as well as activities and experiences - should reflect the child's development; be warm, caring and safe; and stimulate and encourage skill development.

To support children's learning and development the environment at Acacia will ensure the following characteristics:

- Be attractive, appealing and interesting;
- Include a balance of busy, noisy areas with quiet, calm areas;
- Take into consideration safety, space, privacy, noise, activity;
- Include learning centres that provoke, excite and inspire;
- Provide sufficient activities and/or materials for all children;



- Offer activities that cover a range of learning and developmental areas;
- Include experiences based on children's strengths, needs and interests;
- Provide opportunities for small group work and individual activities;
- Demonstrate respect, love and attention for all children;
- Demonstrate respect for other people and the environment.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

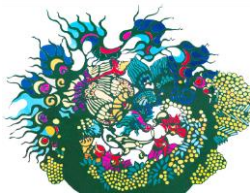
- reading and complying with the *Interactions with Children Policy*
- engaging in open communication with educators about their child
- informing educators/staff of events or incidents that may impact on their child's behaviour at the service (e.g. moving house, relationship issues, a new sibling)
- informing educators/staff of any concerns regarding their child's behaviour or the impact of other children's behaviour
- working collaboratively with educators/staff and other professionals/support agencies to develop or review an individual behaviour guidance plan for their child, where appropriate.

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures unless a lesser period is necessary because of a risk.

Version: 7	Endorsed By: CoM	Approved Date: 2008	Reviewed Date: June 2022
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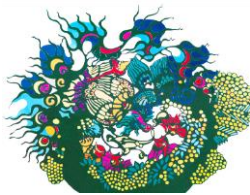
APPENDIX

Implementation

Positive strategies for guiding behaviour

For all children the educators will:

- Seek to understand the needs of the individual children and those in the group and acknowledge that many factors could influence behaviour e.g. medical, health, family, or emotional aspects.
- Base their expectations on the child's individual level of development. Have appropriate age or developmental expectations of individual children.
- Ensure all educators, family's s and children are aware of their social responsibilities as a member of the centre community. Make time to talk with children about what these responsibilities are and mean.
- Respect the cultural differences in children.
- Assist children to control their behaviour, and to understand the behaviour of others.
- Anticipate potentially unacceptable behaviours and eliminate situations and physical arrangements that may encourage inappropriate behaviour.
- Reinforce children's positive behaviours and provide positive role models.
- Encourage children to resolve potential conflicts for themselves, but step in when needed.
- Acknowledge a child's good intentions, (even if they were carried out inappropriately).
- Acknowledge that it is the behaviour that is inappropriate, not the child.
- Allow choices in decision-making and be prepared to accept the child's decision if appropriate.
- Utilise children's strengths and interests to promote considerate behaviour. Promote success through the provision of meaningful, achievable and motivating experiences.
- Be fair rather than consistent. 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 needs of the children involved.
- Work cooperatively with parents/guardians on issues relating to the guidance of their child's behaviour, keeping them informed of the techniques and methods used.
- Use team meetings to discuss and reflect on your approach to guiding children's behaviour.
- Where possible encourage consistency between educators and families. Provide information and opportunities to discuss positive approaches to guiding behaviour, for example at parent meetings.
- Respect the confidentiality of both the parents/guardians and child when dealing with issues of behaviour guidance concerning an individual child
- Provide a set of basic developmentally appropriate behavioural rules which:
- Emphasises positive actions.



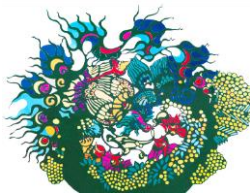
- Give children reasons for the limits.
- Implement in a consistent manner.
- Reinforce regularly.
- Seek assistance, or support, whenever necessary.

In setting the limits, staff will:

- Be consistent in the setting of limits so those children know what is expected of them.
- Use positive actions and words to guide children (E.g. walking inside, gentle hands, inside voices etc.)
- Give brief and simple explanations when setting limits so those children will know why the limit has been set.

When encouraging appropriate behaviour, Educators will:

- Remind children how well they are working, playing, and behaving
- 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.
- Praise children for positive behaviour. Give children lots of attention when they are demonstrating positive actions.
- Be aware of the "physical environment" which will influence/encourage appropriate behaviour physical set up of room, pre-empt scenarios or situations which may encourage inappropriate behaviour.
- Allow children some space to develop conflict resolution strategies offer suggestions or alternatives which will "empower" children to deal with scenarios.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding individual children's behaviour in the exchange of information and feedback.
- Approach the parent/guardian of the aggrieved child to inform them of the scenario and strategies used to deal with the inappropriate behaviour.
- Practice "pro-social behaviour" e.g. modelling calm voices, positive interactions.
- Show no bias or favouritism when working with children.
- Follow through - if you ask the child to do something, firmly and calmly persist, offering support and encouragement as required. Always ensure though, that your request is fair and reasonable, based on the current situation and context.
- Acknowledge the child's feelings and differentiate between feelings and behaviour.
- 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 like to come back to it after lunch?"
- Don't make promises, bribes or threats that you cannot follow through. This can cause a child to lose trust in you.



- Model appropriate pro-social behaviour. Children observe and imitate. Demonstrate the kind of behaviour you wish the child to develop. Any form of punishment, emotional or physical, teaches inappropriate behaviour damages your relationship with the child and can affect the child's self-esteem.
- Learning how to join people in social situations is complex and can be challenging for adults! Assist children to join their peers at play if needed, or join in yourself, to diffuse the situation.
- Only give choices if the child really has one, for example. When there is no choice use a statement rather than a question, for example, 'It's time for us to wash our hands for lunch' rather than 'Would you like to wash your hands for lunch?'
- Use logical or natural consequences, according to the child's developmental level. For example, if a child throws toys on the floor they are responsible for packing them away. In some circumstances though they may require the assistance and support of an adult to complete this task. Delayed or unrelated consequences have little effect or impact as the child may not relate the consequence to the behaviour and/or may have forgotten about it.
- Use acknowledgement and give specific feedback rather than offering praise when commenting on children's achievements and actions. For example, 'Thanks for packing away, now we have time to read that story you were asking about rather than saying 'Good boy'.
- Avoid labelling a child or referring to past incidents. This is humiliating and influences behaviour – a label of 'naughty', 'clumsy', etc. can become self-fulfilling.
- Teach children skills for problem-solving and conflict resolution. Encourage children to cooperate with each other and work together on collaborative solutions. When children are not encouraged to develop and use their own judgement they can become over reliant on adult direction.

Responding to 'challenging' behaviour

Challenging behaviours are:

- those that become frequent and intense;
- risk the wellbeing of the child and others;
- Impede a child's ability to participate in daily experience.

Examples of challenging behaviours include:

- tantrums;
- screaming;
- hitting;
- kicking;
- biting;
- pushing;
- bullying;
- damaging equipment;
- social withdrawal through anxiety,
- stress or depression.

These behaviours can interfere with the child's learning and development and restrict opportunities for others to learn. Additionally, they can compromise the safety of the child and those around them.

In order for Acacia to deal with children who display challenging behaviour it can be helpful to consider the following:



- Understand that the child may be out of control of their feelings and may need some help to regain control of their behaviour. Soothe and support them or offer them some 'time away' from the situation in order to regain emotional control.
- 'Time away' allows the child to withdraw to a comfortable and peaceful place or activity where they can calm down. Support the child to re-enter play when they are able to do so appropriately.–
- Help the child talk about feelings and how and why they might feel and act the way they do. Listen and help them to distinguish between feelings and the behaviour. We cannot tolerate inconsiderate behaviour but we can acknowledge the child's feelings and emotions. For example 'It's ok to feel angry, but it's not okay to hit someone'.
- Remember to consider individual children's development and preferences - redirect younger children without a fuss and discuss choices and effects of behaviour with older children.
- 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.
- Observe and listen to the child carefully. When necessary and when time allows, share your observations and interpretations with others - colleagues and the child's parents - in order to be ensure you are responding appropriately.
- Use positive reinforcement to comment on and acknowledge considerate behaviour. This should be something that occurs in private rather than as a public event that manipulates other children to replicate the behaviours we approve of.
- Unacceptable behaviour is rarely about seeking attention. Children can however learn to gain attention through behaviours; particularly if that is the only time they get any attention.
- If challenging behaviour persists you will need to look for the underlying motivation. Their behaviour for example may be to escape or avoid unpleasant situations, to gain attention - positive or negative, or due to the frustration of not being able to express needs and wants or have their needs fully met.
- Significant adults in the child's life should be treated with respect and included as partners in determining possible causes of 'challenging behaviours' and considering appropriate responses. Focus on positives, ask for their assistance, and acknowledge them as the experts in regard to their own children.
- In some situations it may be necessary to seek additional assistance and support from external agencies and support services. This action should only be taken in collaboration with the child's parents, in order to ensure you are adequately supported and resourced to assist the child and family.
- Take time to reflect and talk as a team about your roles and responsibilities in promoting considerate behaviour and responding to behaviour that is challenging.

Consider some of the following critical questions:

- Are you labelling the child and/or expecting 'challenging' behaviour?
- Are you losing your temper, raising your voice, blaming the child?
- Are you being assertive enough or are you being intimidated by the child?
- Is there conflict or competition among educators?

Procedures for the guidance of ongoing "inappropriate" behaviour

When dealing with inappropriate behaviour, the educator will:

a) Consult and assess availability of support by:

- Discuss with the parent/guardian the unacceptable behaviour shown by the child and possible strategies that could be implemented.

b) Develop a behaviour guidance plan which is:

- Based on the consensus reached with the parent/guardian on the strategies to be used.



- Be clear and easily followed by all educators, parent/guardian and/or volunteers working with the child.
 - Discussed in detail with other educator
- c) Refer the situation to the Committee of Management (COM) if:
- A parent/guardian lodges a complaint concerning other children's behaviour that is threatening the safety of other children.
 - They have concerns about the unacceptable behaviour of a child and the effect of this on other children, staff etc.
 - There is an occupational health and safety issue involved for educator and others at the centre
 - Educator feel they need extra support

The COM will then attempt to resolve the issue as soon as possible, ensuring all relevant staff and parents/guardians are kept informed.

Where the COM does become involved, the staff should:

- Not divulge confidential information provided by the parent/guardian without first obtaining their consent.
- Provide any relevant information to the COM or designated sub-committee in order to assist with the resolution of the issue.

DISCIPLINE OF CHILDREN

At Acacia, we abide by the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2018 and the Code of Ethics.

Discipline measures will not include any of the following:

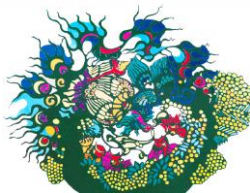
- Corporal punishment including hitting, shaking, biting, pinching, or spanking
- Binding or tying to restrain a child's movement
- Use of abusive, demeaning or profane language
- Forcing or withholding of food, rest or toileting
- Confining a child in a locked closet, room, or similar area

Therefore under no circumstance are educators to be asked by any parent to administer physical or corporal punishment on the children while in care at the centre.

Acacia does not permit any form of bullying in our Centre's.

Defining bullying

Bullying has three elements: it is an act is aggressive and intended to do harm; these are repeated over time; and, they occurs within the context of power imbalance. In other words, it is a series of acts intended to hurt another child, committed by a child to gain or to assert greater power over another child. The definition is important because it distinguishes bullying from rough and tumble play and other aspects of young children's developing social skills



Bullying behaviors emerge in early childhood. Early childhood educators play a critical role in determining whether bullying develops and escalates, or whether it is stopped and prevented. All of us who interact with young children can take steps to teach them the skills they need to avoid bullying altogether.

If you don't know that bullying happens among young children, you won't see it or stop it. If you don't stop bullying, it will grow and spread. When concerned adults are prepared, they can nip bullying in the bud.

Educators will;

- Use activities to help children develop the social skills to prevent and stop bullying
- Learn how to take advantage of teachable moments
- Develop an action plan for intervention

Bullies, Victims, and Bystanders: What Educators Can Do

Educators need to be prepared to identify and help all three players in a bullying situation—the bully, the victim, and the bystanders. The behaviors underlying each role can be modified through prevention, immediate intervention, and continued support. In addition, all children need to develop the social skills necessary to prevent and respond to bullying. Repeated bullying occurs only in early childhood settings that tolerate bullying behaviors and fail to teach social skills:

- Children who bully need to learn to stop bullying, engage in more cooperative behaviors, and develop empathy and social problem-solving skills.
- Children who are targets of bullying need to learn how to respond to bullying with assertiveness, rather than by submitting or counter-attacking.
- Bystanders need to learn that they have the power to stop bullying and how to use problem-solving strategies to help prevent and stop bullying.

Social Skills

Social skills are critical life skills which are learned. Adults play a significant role in modelling and teaching social skills. Educators' interaction with children builds a basis for those children's relationships with peers and adults in the future.

The social interactions that occur within the centre will provide an important platform for children to learn, and to develop self-esteem. They have a crucial role in the development of each child's identity. Interactions between adults and children and among adults will be respectful, genuine and caring.

Children learn best in an environment that fosters attachment, autonomy, independence and self-discipline, self-esteem, curiosity and co-operation. They need to develop competent social skills, which will foster effective interactions with peers, and adults in a range of context.

Implementation

Educators will be aware of their important role in modelling and facilitating positive social interactions. They will have the knowledge and skills to plan for, support and extend children's social development.

Educators will focus on programming which fosters the development of a positive self-concept in all children which is essential to the development of social skills.

Educators will program for social learning to occur at the individual and group level within the service.

Acacia's centres adopt the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, in which social skills development plays a crucial role in the children learning and development.

To achieve our goal:

- Educators will establish environments, which encourage interaction and foster social learning.



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- Educators will document observations of individual children and the group dynamics. Children at risk of social isolation will be identified and appropriate intervention strategies will be planned, implemented and evaluated.
 - Specific skills to be developed will be co-operation, problem solving, self-awareness, identification of emotions in self and others, and empathy.
 - Educators will assist children to develop strategies to manage frustration, and conflict and the beginnings of self-control.
 - Children will be taught specific skills with peers, which include appropriately assertive language and the use of "I" statements i.e. "Stop", "I don't like that".
 - Children will be taught how to resolve conflict without force or aggression. Social skills needed to enter play situations will be fostered.
 - Children will be helped to identify and talk about their own and others' feelings and learn the expressive language skills needed to achieve these goals.