

Behaviour guidance and support policy

The purpose of our behaviour guidance and support policy is to:

- encourage acceptable forms of behaviour by using strategies that build children's confidence and self-esteem;
- provide children with support, guidance and opportunities to manage their emotions and develop ways to appropriately control their own behaviour; and
- promote collaborative approaches to behaviour guidance and support between the service's stakeholders and/or external agencies.

“An important aspect of children's belonging, being and becoming involves children learning how their behaviours and actions affect themselves and others and developing skills to regulate these independently.” Positive guidance and support towards acceptable behaviour enables children to learn over time how to manage their feelings, and take responsibility for their own actions.

We believe that effective behaviour guidance and support is a process that should focus on the 'whole' child. We recognise that a child's behaviour is influenced by a variety of factors including:

- the child's age and level of development
- the child's temperament, gender and culture
- the child's general health and wellbeing
- the child's level of familiarity with the service's routines
- the child's relationships with other children and educators
- the child's ability to communicate
- family relationships and/ or events within the child's family
- the play and learning environment, which includes the physical indoor/outdoor settings, the weather, the time of year, the time of day
- educator's teaching strategies and caring practices, which includes how those strategies are implemented

Educators are committed to providing safe, caring, well planned environments, in which expectations of children's behaviour are expressed positively and explicitly and are developmentally appropriate.

Creating the right environment includes:

- providing a supportive environment with educators who will provide each child with consistent emotional support and value the contextual factors that are impacting on a child's behaviour. (Circle of Security)
- creating uncrowded environments and a balance of activities, that promote positive social interactions.
- Implementing a flexible routine, where educators respond and adjust to children's needs
- minimising transitions and ensuring they are planned and considered to reduce anxiety and stress
- planning experiences that promote cooperation, sharing and helping
- providing adequate resources to reduce conflict, while still providing opportunities for children to share.
- providing experiences that challenge and interest the children.
- Ensuring lighting and noise levels that are calming

Centre staff will support children (in accordance with their age and stage of development) to:

- Express their wants and needs in ways that respect the rights and safety of others
- Interact positively with individuals and the group
- Care for themselves, others and the environment
- Recognise the consequences of their behaviour
- Choose positive behaviours
- Develop problem solving skills

Positive behaviour guidance strategies

Educators will:

- build relationships with children that are safe, secure, and convey respect.
- Understand that when children feel overwhelmed, they need adults to help because they are still too young to manage intense feelings on their own. When children get upset, frustrated, demanding or out of control their behaviour actually means that they need adult support. They need adults to: Be calm, Take charge, Be kind, Stay with the child until the child's feelings are under control, help the child to return to what they were doing – with a new option.
- anticipate potential environmental difficulties and use redirection / distraction /early intervention to avoid escalation of conflict
- encourage children to use a range of communication strategies to express their needs, wants and feelings
- support children to understand expectations and to learn acceptable behaviour
- be firm and consistent
- show their respect by using normal tone and volume when speaking with children.
- acknowledge appropriate behaviours so that children know when they have acted positively.
- Model and support children to express their feelings in acceptable ways
- support children to understand how their behaviour affects others
- model behaviour that encourages inclusion, a sense of fairness, empathy and co-operation with others.
- express behavioural expectations in positive terms and reinforce consistently in a developmentally appropriate way.

NB: The use of physical punishment (ie smacking) restraint; physical, verbal or emotional punishment and practices that demean, humiliate, frighten or threaten a child is prohibited.

Challenging Behaviour

Yankalilla Community Children's Centre defines challenging behaviour as behaviour that:

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

The response to challenging behaviours will be timely and appropriate. It is important to understand that there is a reason for all behaviour. Behaviour is a form of communication and educators through observation, reflection and conversations with families will try to determine possible reasons for the challenging behaviour. Communication with families about challenging behaviour will take place at the earliest opportunity and will be framed as a positive opportunity to address a child's behaviour needs within the group setting.

Responding to challenging behaviour

In supporting a child learn to manage their feelings, behaviour rights and responsibilities, educators may utilise the following strategies (according to the age and developmental level of the child) to respond to challenging behaviours.

- Redirection
- naming of child's feelings whilst reinforcing that the challenging behaviour is not OK
- providing an alternative action to replace the challenging behaviour
- 1:1 positive support of child while they regain control of their emotions and behaviour.
- Active problem solving with the child
- Supporting children to find appropriate self-regulation strategies

Completion of Antecedent / Behaviour / Consequences (ABC) observation chart can support educators to identify any triggers that may be proceeding the behaviour and provide useful information for educators to consider when planning how best to support the child with challenging behaviour.

If the challenging behaviour is ongoing, a behaviour support plan will be developed in consultation between the Director, Team Leader and the child's parent/guardian. With parental consent, YCCC may seek support from other professionals and support agencies if further strategies or assistance is required.

Support services available to support the child's behaviour improvement plan include:

- DFE Early Childhood Support Services (Social Worker, Psychologist)
- Child Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS),
- Private Counselors
- Southern Fleurieu Health Service (Social Work, Adult Mental Health, Parenting support)

In cases of a child exhibiting extreme violent / dangerous behaviour the Director reserves the right to exclude the child until an effective behaviour support strategy can be provided.

Sources:

Louise Porter (2009) Guiding children's behaviour

Community Child Care (2011). *Understanding children's behaviour: Self-guided learning package*

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (2016). *Supporting children to manage their own behaviour*

The circle of Security – Robyn Dolby 2007

Departments of Education and Children's Services (2004) *Behaviour support policy for early childhood services*