

Interactions with Children Policy

Policy Number:	11 ELEVEN
Purpose:	To ensure children can develop positive relationships with Educators and peers in a safe learning and caring environment.
Scope:	Ensuring children are valued and treated with respect and dignity by all Educators and their peers. To provide children with Educators that will work together to support their growth and development as well as providing children with adults they can trust and confide in.

Relevant Legislation

National Law

- 165 Offence to inadequately supervise children
- 166 Offence to use inappropriate discipline

National Regulations

- 73 Educational program
- 84 Awareness of child protection law
- 115 Premises designed to facilitate supervision
- 117(A) Glass
- 118 Educational leader
- 122 Educators must be working directly with children to be included in ratios
- 123 Educator to child ratios—centre-based services
- 126 Centre-based services—general educator qualifications
- 145 Staff record
- 155 Interactions with children
- 156 Relationships in groups
- 168 Education and care service must have policies and procedures
- 170 Policies and procedures to be followed
- 171 Policies and procedures to be kept available
- 172 Notification of change to policies or procedures

National Quality Standards

- Element 2.1.3 – Healthy lifestyle – Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.
- Element 2.2.3 – Child protection – Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.
- Element 3.2.1 – Inclusive environment – Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
- Element 4.1.1 – Organisation of educators – The organisation of educators across the service supports children's learning and development.

- Element 4.1.2 – Continuity of staff – Every effort is made for children to experience continuity of educators at the service.
- Element 5.1.1 – Positive educator to child interactions – Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
- Element 5.1.2 – Dignity and rights of the child – The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.
- Element 5.2.1 – Collaborative learning – Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.
- Element 5.2.2 – Self-regulation – Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.
- Element 6.2.1 – Transitions – Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing information and clarifying responsibilities.
- Element 6.2.2 - Access and participation – Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program.

Supporting Documents / References:

- Revised National Quality Standard
- Education and Care services Regulations and laws
- ACECQA
- United Nations convention on the rights of the child
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Related Policy or Documents:

- Health Policy
- Programming Policy
- Safety Policy
- Governance Policy

Attachment One:	 code_of_ethics_we b.pdf Code of Ethics
Attachment Two:	United Nations convention on the rights of the child https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention
Attachment Three:	National Principles for child safe organisations https://childdsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles

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Engagement

Supervision

Supervision ensures the safety of children whilst in care at the centre. All Educators are required to ensure constant supervision while working with children. Supervision not only requires Educators to watch and listen; supervision requires engagement with children, knowing how many children are in the Educator's care at any time of the day, supporting children to participate and maintaining Educator to child ratios. All Educators are required to use their time supervising to get to know children and develop relationships that will enhance children's time at the centre. Educators will, while supervising, observe all situations and pre-empt moments that may require their assistance and immediately step in to maintain a safe environment. Educators will inform co-workers when they are leaving the floor to ensure ratios are met and the co-workers can readjust themselves to cover the Educator's area of supervision. Educators while supervising will place themselves around the environment and ensure all areas are visible, Educators will not use supervision time to catch up on personal issues. Communication while on the floor needs to be professional and of a topic that is not detrimental to any child or inappropriate for children to hear. Educators will be alert and engaged while supervising.

Communication

All Educators will ensure their communication with children is positive and genuine. Educators will listen to children and engage in conversations that will provide children with a sense of worth. Educators will encourage children to communicate by using opened ended questions, with words like "who, how, when, why". Communication with children will be age appropriate and supportive of children's attempts to use language. Educators will provide the child with the correct pronunciation of a word, without bringing attention to the child's attempt. Educators will not use a child's attempt at language or words for their own amusement. Educators will introduce new words to the children as much as possible, through conversations, reading books, intentional teaching and using electronic media. Words introduced will vary in complexity, with Educators explaining the meaning of words to the children if required.

Relationships

Educators will ensure all relationships with children are positive and equal. Educators will not favour or discriminate against any child in their care. Relationships will be mutual, and Educators will work to earn the trust and friendship of each child. Relationships with children will remain professional, with Educators maintaining legal and ethical boundaries.

- **A professional boundary** is the distinction between the acceptable and unacceptable behaviour or emotional attachment in relation to a child (or child's family) during or outside your work.
 - Example: not being or being friends on Facebook.
- **Crossing a Professional boundary** is when you allow or initiate a behaviour to persist that compromises the relationship with the child and/or family.
 - Example: using information given by family to exclude a child.

- **A professional boundary violation** occurs when the nature of the relationship moves from a professional one to a personal one and is clearly harmful or exploitative of the child and/or family.
 - Example: spending free time with the family on weekends.

Any Educator who engages in paid employment with a family outside of Birralee, will ensure the agreement with the family remains professional and does not violate the professional boundaries.

Duty of Care

Duty of Care means providing care and support for children within the law and within the policies, procedures and agreed ways of working for your Employer. It is about avoiding abuse and injury to children, their friends and Family and their property. That is Educators “have an obligation to avoid acts or omissions, which could be reasonably foreseen to injure or harm other people” Educators will be knowledgeable on their duty of care responsibilities and ensure at all times a safe, friendly, well maintained and positive environment.

Behaviour Management

Positive Reinforcement

Positive reinforcement will be used to encourage appropriate behaviour. Educators will provide children with the positive action, ensuring the children are able to understand what is required from them and how to do it.

- Example: Educators will explain to children to use their walking feet, instead of telling children to stop running

Educators will reinforce appropriate behaviour by congratulating children on the use of appropriate behaviour. By providing visuals for the children and role modelling the required behaviour. Educators will be consistent when using positive reinforcement allowing children to understand in a relaxed and non-threatening manner.

Inappropriate use of discipline

Inappropriate discipline will be deemed as an action that causes distress, fear or other negative feelings. Children will not be subjected to any form of discipline that invoke these feelings.

- Physical discipline, including but not limited to
 - Physical force
 - Excluding a child from an environment
 - Physical violence, hitting, kicking etc
 - Withholding food
 - Withholding child’s comforter or Favorite toy
 - Restraining
- Mental discipline, including but not limited to
 - Yelling
 - Screaming
 - Humiliating

- Ignoring a child's needs

Educators found to be using negative discipline will be reported to the department of Early Childhood Education and Care and face immediate termination of their employment.

Working with Families

Families will be informed of any behaviour that is inappropriate and what strategies the Educators will be using to help the child manage the behaviour. Families will be asked to provide knowledge that may support Educators handle the behaviour in a positive manner. Families will be informed of any strategies used to support the child and may be asked to continue the strategy at home.

Strategies

Strategies will be used to ensure behaviours are managed in a positive manner. Any strategies used will be communicated to all Educators, to ensure consistency for the child. Strategies will vary for each child and Educators will need to work together to find the right strategy. Strategies will include providing the child options, reasons, compromises, and a sense of control of the outcome. Strategies will be implemented by all Educators, reviewed, and altered when necessary. Strategies will be communicated to families to keep them informed and to enhance the consistency, if families also adopt the strategy.

Development of Plans

If required management plans will be created to help understand and support the child. All plans will be created with Family input and approval. Plans will focus on the child holistically, ensuring an overall picture of the child is created:

- Likes
- Capabilities
- Strengths
- Areas of development needing support
- Goals
- Methods to reach goals
- How to implement methods
- Support from outside agencies

All areas of the plan will be explained to the Family and their approval by signing the document will be required. If the plan requires support from outside agencies Families will need to give written permission, no outside support can be obtained without the consent of the Family. The plan will be reviewed regularly and updated to reflect any changes to current behaviour in the child or ineffectiveness of the plan's strategies.

Implementation of Plans

The plan will only be implemented with the consent of the family. All Educators will need to follow the plan and strategies to ensure best outcomes. Once implemented Educators will work together to ensure the plan is followed and the strategies are embedded, Educators needing support to help implement strategies will be mentored by their peers. The Family will be kept updated on the

progress of their child and the impact the plan is having. Communication with the Family can be verbal or written, depending on the needs of the Family. The child will remain on the plan until outcomes are reached.

Child's Rights

Dignity

Educators will ensure the dignity of the child is maintained. The child will not be placed into a situation where they feel threatened, tormented, ridiculed, or feel in danger. Educators will ensure children's needs are met with compassion and empathy. Children will be valued and supported in all areas during their time at the centre and Educators will ensure vulnerable times for a child, including:

- Nappy changing
- Toileting
- Separation from parent
- Emotional distress
- Feeling insecure
- Physical distress
- Developing new skills

are handled in a manner that provides the child with a positive experience, that maintains their dignity, allows the child control over their body and situation, thus helping build confidence.

Resilience

Resilience is the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties. Educators will support the development of resilience in children by encouraging their attempts, scaffolding their efforts, and explaining that we keep trying. Educators will also develop resilience in children by supporting children through changes in the routines, programming, Employees and day to day experiences, by talking to the children about the changes, giving them reassurance and allowing them time to adjust to the changes.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is the confidence in one's own worth or abilities. Educators will support children to feel good about themselves by ensuring all interactions and conversations are positive and encouraging. Educators will never use language that belittles a child or make comments that will make a child feel incompetent. Educators will not talk about a child's concern to another Educator while the child or any other child is present.

Self-Regulation

All children need to be able to self-control, Educators will support children with self-control by giving them skills and language to deal with situations where they currently are not coping. Self-control support will be varying for each individual child and Educators will use strategies that will be understood and be able to be implemented by the individual child. Strategies will be developed by Educators and communicated to and used by all Educators to ensure the child has consistency and

reinforcement to help embed the self-control skill. Educators will provide the child with sufficient time to develop the skill and will be positive and supportive when helping the child through any challenging times.

Scaffolding

Encouraging Children's Efforts

Children will be encouraged and praised for their efforts. Positive reinforcement allows the child to feel appreciated and valued. Educators will focus on the task the child has achieved when praising, giving the child the reason for the praise. Praise or thanks can be verbal or non-verbal, can be extreme or simple. Educators will know the children and provide the encouragement suited to the individual child.

Rewards for children, including stickers, stamps or reward charts will be used sparingly. Rewards encourage children to get satisfaction from receiving an award, instead of completing a task, trying something new, looking after their environment etc. Educators will understand the child and decide if rewards will be helpful in supporting the child to achieve success.

Children as the Teacher

Children have varying skills and are competent in many things, Educators will allow children to use their knowledge and skills to support their peers and Educators to understand and develop the individual child's skills, themselves. Educators can encourage this both formally and informally into the daily program. Allowing children to use their skills to teach their peers and Educators, helps the holistic development of the child, building confidence and self-esteem.

Educator's Availability

Educators always need to be available to the children. Children will need support to complete varying tasks, need to feel success at completing a task, need further resources for the task or need support when the task is complicated. All Educators will monitor the environment, encouraging children's efforts, providing resources as requested and stepping in to give guidance and tips on how to succeed. Educators will provide support according to the level of development of the children, and at no time will Educators leave children to deal with situations of concern by themselves.

Definitions:

Term	Definition	Source
Open-Ended Questions	An open-ended question is a question that cannot be answered with a "yes" or "no" response, or with a static response	www.wikipedia.com
Duty of Care	a moral or legal obligation to ensure the safety or well-being of others.	www.google/define

Policy Details:

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