



Interactions with Children Policy

Policy Number: 22

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Rationale and Policy Considerations

Developing responsive, warm, trusting and respectful relationships with children promotes their wellbeing, self-esteem and sense of security. Positive interactions with children convey to them that they are valued as competent and capable individuals. Children then develop confidence in their ability to express themselves, manage their feelings, learn new skills and take risks to extend their capabilities.

Positive and responsive one-to-one interactions with babies and toddlers are important for their wellbeing and encourage them to thrive. Babies and toddlers need a secure base of trusting relationships with adults before they are ready to explore and learn about their world.

Older children need assistance from educators and other important adults in their lives to guide their interactions with their peers and others as they explore their identity and develop more complex social skills and relationships.

The Education and Care Services National Regulations requires the service to have a policy on interactions with children. The National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care requires that the rights and interests of children are paramount, and the approved learning frameworks identify developing secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships as one of the principles that reflects contemporary theories and research evidence concerning children's learning and early childhood pedagogy.

Most relevant policies and procedures

- Delivery and Collection of Children
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Educational Programs
- Guiding and Supporting Children's Behavior
- Partnerships and Communication with Families

Links to ECA Code of Ethics

- **Recognise children as active citizens participating in different communities such as family, children's services and schools.**
- **Work with children to help them understand that they are global citizens with shared responsibilities to the environment and humanity.**
- **Work to ensure children are not discriminated against on the basis of gender, age, ability, economic status, family structure, lifestyle, ethnicity, religion, language, culture, or national origin.**
- **Respect the special relationship between children and their families and incorporate this perspective in all my interactions with children.**
- **Encourage my colleagues to adopt and act in accordance with this Code, and take action in the presence of unethical behaviours.**

Scope

This policy is written for children, families, educators and visitors of Lifestreamers Early Learning

Policy Statement

The education and care service aims to develop responsive, warm, trusting and respectful relationships with each enrolled child through taking the time to genuinely listen and talk with children and their families. Educators relate to the children, their families, and to each other, in a friendly, caring and sensitive manner, valuing each individual and the unique contribution they make. The service aims to create an environment in which children feel they are valued members of their community, and in which their sense of belonging and wellbeing is supported. Educators will achieve this through providing consistent emotional support that will nurture the development of children's self-esteem and assist them to acquire the skills and understandings they need to interact positively with others. Educators will familiarise themselves with methods of communicating with families from non-English speaking backgrounds and use outside resource people where necessary.

Policy Principles

Nurturing positive interactions with children

- As each child arrives at the service they will be greeted by an educator.
- Educators will be supportive and encouraging and engaging in one-to-one and small-group communications with children in a friendly, positive and respectful manner. They will form warm relationships with each child in their care.
- Educators use children's names and get down to the child's eye level when communicating with them, and ensure that their interactions are both meaningful and personal.
- Educators create a relaxed and happy atmosphere in which children experience equitable, friendly and genuine interactions with all educators, the nominated supervisor and other educators at the service.
- Educators instigate many playful social interactions with children including conversations, songs, rhymes, finger plays, peek-a-boo games, sharing books or stories.
- Educators respect each child's uniqueness, are attuned to and respond sensitively and appropriately to children's efforts to communicate and will use the child's own language, communication styles and culture to enhance their interactions.
- Educators assist children to learn to communicate and interact positively and cooperatively with their peers through modelling appropriate communication and responding positively to children at all times.
- Educators encourage children to communicate their own ideas in a respectful and courteous way, and will respond appropriately to children's non-verbal cues.
- Educators show empathy, respect and understanding when communicating with children and model this in their interactions with adults.
- Children will never be shamed or embarrassed or made to feel inadequate at any time.
- Educators comfort children who are upset, or are showing signs of distress, and help them to feel safe, secure and understood.
- Educators ensure routines such as toileting, nappy change and rest times are used for positive one-to-one interactions with children and a time when they can get to know more about the child's likes, dislikes, interests, joys, fears etc.
- Educators interact with children during meal times in a relaxed, unhurried manner, in which the enjoyment of foods and the social aspect of meal times is promoted.
- Educators are genuinely interested in each child's own interests and needs, and take the time to fully understand what children are doing or saying, listening to their responses and asking open ended questions.
- Children are encouraged to share their feelings or thoughts, and express different viewpoints about matters that affect them.
- Educators provide time and experiences that support children in the development of their self-reliance and self-esteem.
- Educators share humor with children and are playful and friendly in their interactions.
- Educators engage in interactions which extend the learning, language and cognitive development of children.

- Educators respect children's desire not to engage in conversations or interactions at certain times or for particular reasons.
- Educators use positive language and explicit communication to guide children's behavior and to encourage them towards acceptable behavior.

Involving Children in Decision Making

- Educators will genuinely seek children's input, respect their ideas and take their suggestions on board.
- Young children will be encouraged to make decisions about:
 - the experiences or activities they would like to do;
 - the materials and resources they would like to use and how they would like to use them;
 - where they would like to play (i.e. indoors or outdoors)
 - who they want to play with, or whether they wish to play alone;
 - the adults with whom they feel most comfortable;
 - how they prefer to sleep or rest;
 - Whether they need to use the toilet or have a nappy changed.
- Older children will be encouraged to make decisions about:
 - what experiences are included in the learning program;
 - what experiences they will participate in;
 - the friends they choose to spend time with;
 - planning the afternoon snack menu;
 - appropriate rules or boundaries;
 - planning incursions;
 - setting up the environment;

Encouraging families to share information about the child

- Educators will use information gained from families to enhance their interactions with children and continue to build children's sense of wellbeing and belonging.
- Educators will encourage families to share important information about their child through:
 - initiating regular on-going communications with families in a manner that promotes the development of strong relationships that are based on mutual respect, trust and understanding;
 - encouraging families to share their thoughts, ideas, questions and concerns, and promoting supportive partnerships between families, educators and the service;
 - treating all families equitably without bias or judgement;
 - Recognising that each family is unique and valuing this uniqueness.

Educator communications with each other

- The service recognises that the way educators interact with each other has an effect on the interactions they have with children and families.
- Educators will role model warm and supportive interactions as they interact with each other.
- Educators will convey mutual respect and recognition of each other through:
 - recognising each other's strengths and valuing the different work each does;
 - working collaboratively to reach decisions which will enhance the quality of the education and care service;
 - welcoming diverse views and perspectives;
 - working together as a team and engaging in open and honest communication at all times;
 - respecting each other's feelings;
 - developing and sharing networks and links with other agencies;

- resolving differences promptly and positively and using the experience to learn more effective methods of working together;
- Using calm, friendly voices with each other.

Related Legislation and Documents

- **Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012**
- **Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012.**
- **The National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Aged Care**
- **Early Years Learning Framework for Australia**

Document History

Version	Date updated
Interactions with Children Policy	18/12/13
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