

INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN & FAMILIES POLICY 2020

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN		
5.1	Relationships between educators and children	Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.
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.
5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.
5.2	Relationships between children	Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.
5.2.1	Collaborative learning	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.

QUALITY AREA 6: COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES		
6.1	Supportive relationships with families	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.
6.1.1	Engagement with the service	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.
6.1.2	Parents views are respected	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected, and families share decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
6.1.3	Families are supported	Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS		
155	Interactions with children	
156	Relationships in groups	

Purpose

We aim to build positive relationships with children, families, and educators through collaboration and interactions, which is reflective of our Service philosophy and the Early Years Learning Framework.

This policy indicates the ways that are appropriate for staff to interact with the service's children to ensure that they feel safe, supported and respected. It is the responsibility of every staff member to make certain that the dignity and rights of every child are to be maintained at all times at the service.

Emotional development and social relationships are enhanced through thoughtful and sophisticated approaches to conversation, discussion and the promotion of children's language and communication. Children who experience relationships that are built on respect, fairness, cooperation and empathy are given the opportunity to develop these qualities themselves. When children have positive experiences of interactions they develop an understanding of themselves as significant and respected, and feel a sense of belonging.

Responsibilities of the Approved Provider

- Ensure the service operates in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011 with regard to the delivery and collection of children at all times.
- Ensure all staff have access to relevant professional development.
- Ensure the educational program contributes to the development of children who have a strong sense of wellbeing and identity, and are connected, confident, involved and effective learners and communicators.

- Ensure that the Nominated Supervisor and 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 166**).
- Inform the Regulatory Authority in writing, within 24 hours of receiving a notifiable complaint (**National Law 174(B)**).
- Inform the Regulatory Authority in writing within 24 hours of a serious incident occurring at the service (**National Regulation 12, National Law 173(A)**).

Responsibilities of the Nominated Supervisor

- Guide professional development and practice to promote interactions with children that are positive and respectful through the use of the ECA Code of Ethics and UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- **Guide children's behaviour positively**
- Establish practice guidelines that ensure interactions with children are given priority and those interactions are authentic.
- Ensure 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.
- Consider the size and composition of groups to ensure all children are provided with the best opportunities for quality interactions and relationships with each other and with adults at the service.
- Develop and implement 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.
- Ensure that staff provides education and care to children in a way that encourages children to express themselves and their opinions and allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem.
- **Provide new educators with relevant information about the Service and program through an Educator handbook, induction, and daily communication.**
- **Treat Educators with respect.**
- **Be sensitive to the feelings and needs of Educators.**
- **Provide constructive feedback to Educators.**
- **Value the role and contribution of each educator.**
- **Provide opportunities for all educators to have input and evaluate the program.**
- **Appreciate and utilise educator skills and interests.**
- **Provide support and assistance to Educators.**
- **Hold regular educator meetings.**
- **Use appropriate conflict resolution techniques to solve problems.**
- **Ensure policies and procedures are up to date regarding communication, expected behaviour and grievances.**
- **Provide opportunities for professional development**

Responsibilities of the Educators

- Act in accordance with the obligations outlined in this policy.
- Acknowledge children's complex relationships and sensitively intervene in ways that promote consideration and alternative perspectives and social inclusion.
- Respect children's agency and encourage them to express themselves and their opinions.
- Interact with children and families in the manner outlined in the ECA Code of Ethics.

- Maintains the dignity and the rights of each child at all times.
- Have regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for.
- Offer positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour.
- Ensure that routines such as toileting, nappy change and rest times are used for positive one to one interaction with children and a time that they can get to know more about the child.
- Genuinely seek children's input, respect their ideas and take their suggestions on board.
- Our educators will listen empathetically to children when they express their emotions, reassure them that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions and guide children to remove themselves from situations where they are experiencing frustration, anger or fear.
- Form warm relationships with each child.
- Participate in children's play using children's cues to guide their level and type of involvement while always maintaining a positive approach when responding to children.
- Model reasoning, prediction and reflection processes and language.
- Collaborate with children about routines and experiences.
- Use techniques such as sign language and other resources and tools to support children with additional needs.
- Engage in give and take communication by adding to interactions initiated by babies and toddlers by describing objects and talking about routine activities with babies and toddlers.
- Use their interactions with children to support the maintenance of home languages and learning English as an additional language.
- Use information from their observations of interactions with children to extend the children's thinking and learning.
- Also support children to build secure attachments with one and then many educators.
- Speak to children in a positive manner at all times, promoting respect, tolerance and empathy, including the use of non-verbal cues and communication.
- Listen to children and take them seriously; support and encourage children to use appropriate language in their interactions with adults and peers. Educators will extend upon children's interests and ideas through questions and discussions, supported and made visible in observations, reflections, and programming.
- Communicate with children by getting down to their level, using eye contact, and showing respect to the child whilst engaging in and promoting effective communication.
- Regularly reflect on their relationships and interactions with children and how these can be improved to benefit each child.
- Facilitate children's individual development.
- All families are treated equitably without bias or judgement, recognising that each family is unique.
- Families and children are greeted upon arrival.
- They endeavour to recognise and implement several different ways to communicate with families in the family's preferred way.
- Verbal communication is always open, respectful and honest.
- They regularly reflect on parent input into the program and make changes where necessary that will best benefit the service and children.

Responsibilities of the Families

- Read and comply with this policy.
- Engage in open communication with staff about their child.
- Inform staff of events or incidents that may impact on their child's behaviour at the service (e.g. moving house, a new sibling).

- Inform staff of any concerns regarding their child's behaviour or the impact of other children's behaviour.
- Work collaboratively with staff and others to develop or review an individual behaviour guidance plan for their child, where appropriate.

Children's rights, Family and Cultural Values

Interactions within the setting are greatly enhanced when children's rights and family and cultural values are given due consideration and respect. Administrative procedures, initial conversations, documentation and ongoing communication with children and families are a reference point for interactions and a foundation for authentic and respectful communication.

Communicating and Listening

Educators and staff must use listening as a foundation for interactions. Listening is based on observation and in leaving spaces in conversations and communication, suspending judgement and in giving full attention to children as they communicate. Truly attending to children's communication promotes a strong culture of listening.

Communicating with Young Babies

Each baby is born with an enormous capacity for learning. Language development illustrates this, whereby a baby, born with no language, learns to comprehend speech and in turn speak, within a relatively short period. Babies are born primed for the social and emotional interactions and communications that will allow them to develop into skilled, culturally knowledgeable participants and communicators.

Initially, communication is dominated by the baby's immediate needs for food, rest, comfort and sleep. But babies also have social needs for interaction. From birth babies respond to voices and imitate facial expressions, cooing and gurgling, attempting to make sounds, squealing with delight or giggling at something amusing. In this way they are responding to stimulus provided by their environment, as well as the people with whom they are having interactive communication.

Role Modelling

Educators model positive interactions when they show care, have empathy and respect for children, educators, staff and families.

Principles for Behavioural Management

Staff respect individual children's needs and differences in age, ability and experience regarding issues surrounding behaviour management and they are happy to discuss individual family expectations with parents. There may be times when staff will need to negotiate management strategies with parents to suit the needs of individual children.

- Wherever possible, children and staff will negotiate and determine boundaries and rules
- Rules will be reasonable considering the age, development and individual characteristics of the children
- Rules will be consistently enforced
- Children will be encouraged for desirable behaviour

- It is the behaviour that is praised or criticised, not the child
- Staff to present a good example through positive role modelling
- Children are encouraged to make appropriate choices

In response to unacceptable behaviour, staff will:

- Redirect the child or remove the child from the situation if necessary
- Advise children of the consequences of continuing with the behaviour
- Remind children of desirable behaviour
- Explain to children how behaviour results in consequences
- Actively listen to children's feelings and discuss the rules
- Help children to return to play
- Communicate with family should there be a need

Related Statutory Obligations & Considerations

Australian Childhood Foundation	www.childhood.org.au
Australian Human Rights Commission	www.humanrights.gov.au
Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)	www.acecqa.gov.au
ACECQA National Quality Standard	https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard
Children (Education and Care) National Law (NSW) No 104a	https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/2010/104a/full
Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act	https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/1998/157
Education and Care National Regulations	https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653/full
Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics	http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/eca-code-ethics/
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child	www.unicef.org.au
United Nations Human Rights	http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx

Related Telephone Numbers

- Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate – 1800 619 113
- ACECQA – 1300 422 327

Amendment History

Version	Amendment	Date
002	Grammar errors fixed Formatting NQS & Regulations Added	October 2019

This policy will be updated to ensure compliance with all relevant legal requirements every year. Appropriate consultation of all stakeholders (including staff and families) will be conducted on a timely basis. In accordance with Regulation 172 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulation*, families of children enrolled will be notified at least 14 days and their input considered prior to any amendment of policies and procedures that have any impact on their children or family.

Date: March 2020
Version: 002
Last Amended By: Susan Chahwan
Next Review: 2021
Position: Approved provider
