

Quality Area 5 – Relationships with Children

Interaction with Children

Policy/Procedure Number: QA5 - 1

Policy/Procedure Requirement: National Quality Standards 1 & 5; Regulations 155, 156, 168, 169 & 170

Policy Statement

Relationships that are responsive, respectful and promote a sense of security and belonging should be established and maintained with children in FDC. Positive, supportive and individualised relationships with regard to the size and the composition of the groups in which children are being educated and cared for by the service, enhance and integrate the social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of young children.

Rationale

The manner in which adults interact with children is significant to the child's development and growth. Of particular relevance are behaviour management practices. It is well accepted that physical and humiliating punishment has negative consequences for children and that a warm, attentive atmosphere where every child is treated and valued as a unique individual, enhances children's ability to be responsible for their actions and build their self-esteem, sense of confidence and self-worth.

Strategies and Practices

The Service will take all reasonable steps to ensure that education and care to children is provided in a way that each child's **agency** is promoted, and:

- **Encourages the children to express themselves** and their opinions, to feel accepted and valued for who they are; to have their individual needs recognised and met; to recognise discrimination and prejudice; to understand the value of diversity; to be treated fairly and equitably
- Allows **the children to undertake experiences** that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
- Maintains at all times the **dignity and rights of each child**
- Gives each child positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour
- Has regard to the family and cultural values, age, and physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for by the service
- Commits to full participation of children with additional needs and supports educators to support children to identify their emotions and the emotions of others, and how their own actions affect others. This includes children with diagnosed additional needs (such as an Autism Spectrum Disorder or Attention Deficit Disorder)
- Provides flexible curriculum approaches that are responsive to individual interests and needs, and ensures that educators are equipped to support children who are struggling to build social skills
- Will access additional support, assistance and resources for children with additional needs including children from diverse cultural backgrounds and children with high ongoing support needs (including disabilities)

- Believes that the recognition and integration of cultural diversity into our daily programming will ultimately lead to the development of strong, caring and tolerant individuals who are capable of making a valuable contribution to society
- Ensure that the service provides children with opportunities to interact and develop respectful relationships with each other and with educators, having regard to the size and the composition of the groups in which children are being educated and cared for
- Ensure the service meets qualifications and educator to child ratios
- Ensure that FDC educators are at least 18 years old, are suitably qualified, have adequate knowledge of education and care, and are 'fit and proper' persons
- Ensure all educators and staff have undertaken current child protection legislation training
- Work with and support families who have different expectations about guiding children's behaviour

The Service believes punishment is inappropriate as a behaviour management technique. **No child is to be subjected to any form of corporal punishment, immobilisation or any other frightening or threatening technique.** FDC Educators shall ensure that all people in contact with FDC children behave in a non-aggressive manner.

The Coordinators will:

- Support educators and families to encourage positive interactions and actively seek information from children, families and the community, about their cultural traditions, customs and beliefs, and use this information to provide children with a variety of experiences that will enrich the environment within the service
- Support the employment of educators from diverse cultural, social and linguistic backgrounds that reflect the cultural diversity of the community wherever possible
- Ensure professional development is provided for educators to extend their knowledge of social justice, inclusive and anti-bias practices through development opportunities resources, publications and discussions with peers
- Develop guidance strategies with Educators that demonstrate respect and understanding of individual children
- Provide Professional Development and/or information for Educators and families on effective communication skills that help build quality supportive *relationships*
- Role model respectful and positive interactions with the children that convey to the children that they are valued and competent learners
- Have caring, equitable and responsive relationships between themselves and children
- Participate in Professional Development
- Ensure compliance with relevant state and commonwealth legislation to provide an inclusive and discrimination free environment
- Support educators to promote and adhere to inclusive practices and settings at their care environment

Educators will:

- Use best endeavours to build positive, respectful and equitable relationships with children that:
 - encourages children to express themselves and their opinions
 - allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
 - maintains at all times the dignity and rights of all children
 - gives each child positive guidance, and
 - has regard to the family and cultural values, age, physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for by the service
- Use best endeavours to ensure the atmosphere of the FDC is relaxed and happy
- Ensure that appropriate supervision is adequate so that children are safe in their interactions with other children, and to provide children with uninterrupted play experiences with their peers
- Engage with each child in meaningful open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life and learning
- Ensure routines such as meal times, toileting, nappy change and rest times are relaxed, unhurried and are used for positive interactions with individual children
- Show an interest in, participate and treat respectfully children's play and projects and actively engage in children's learning and share decision making with them
- Interact with each child in a warm, responsive manner to build trusting relationships
- Respond to children's efforts to communicate sensitively and appropriately supporting the child to feel safe, secure and confident
- Support each child to work with, learn from, and help others through collaborative learning opportunities
- Work with families, inclusion support agencies and other specialists working with the child to develop individual support plans for children with additional needs.
- Treat all children equitably and encourage them to treat each other with respect and fairness and will role model appropriate ways to challenge discrimination and prejudice, and actively promote inclusive behaviours in children.
- Respond positively and respectfully to children's comments, questions and requests for assistance
- Share information with families regularly in a constructive and confidential manner about children's interactions and offer the family links to other support services within the community such as Inclusion Support Agencies; Community Health Services etc.
- Create opportunities for children to be independent and self-reliant, to work through differences, learn new things and take calculated risks
- Treat each child without bias regardless of their physical or intellectual ability, gender, religion, culture, family structure or economic status
- Support children through periods of change and guide children in recognising and respecting similarities and differences in the cultures that are the fabric of our community
- Support each child to manage their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and to communicate *effectively to resolve conflict by:*
 - Promoting a positive learning environment that aims to foster behaviour based on self-knowledge and understanding.
 - Encouraging an appreciation of other people's needs, rights and feelings

- Promoting a sense of ‘belonging’ within the service by establishing relationships between children and those between children and educators, through providing environments appropriate to children’s needs including: routines, physical environment, learning experiences and expectations inherent in the programming. The total environment is regularly re-assessed to meet the changing needs of those who access it
- Participate *in Professional Development*

Parents/Guardians Will:

- Develop supportive relationships with Educators, Family Day Care Staff, each other and children
- Share relevant information with Educators and staff regularly
- Provide information relevant to the successful inclusion of their child into the service, eg, (cultural background, abilities, special needs and language) and update the educator and service about any new information on a regular basis
- Interact with all children in the Educators home in an appropriate manner
- Role model effective communication skills to their children
- Feel confident that their culture will be reflected in the service; to have opportunities to participate in the service; to feel a valued member of the service; and to know their child is valued and included.
- Will be consulted in the development of programs that are responsive to children’s lives, interests and learning styles, *and reflect children’s family, culture and community.*

Behavioural Issues

Co-ordination Unit Staff will:

Provide guidance and developmental resources to educators to enhance their skills and knowledge to promote socially acceptable behaviour and language among the children, without breaching the children’s rights to maintain their dignity and privacy, and by without having any bias or prejudice.

Educators will:

Take best possible efforts to ensure the development of socially acceptable behaviour and language among the children by:

- Using sustainable strategies that are consistent with the service’s policies and procedures as well as the families’ expectation
- Participating in various related professional developmental courses as directed by the service from time to time
- Role-modelling and by demonstrating good emotional intelligence
- Treating each child as an individual and by encouraging the children to express themselves and their opinions in a positive and constructive manner
- Promoting positive peer-to-peer interaction and respectful conflict management

Families are encouraged to:

- Be consistent with their responses when addressing behavioural issues with their own child/ren and other child/ren at the FDC service.
- Seek the educator's advice or guidance if they are not experience with handling specific situation related to their child/ren's behaviour

Resources and Further Readings

- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- ACECQA National; Quality Framework Resource Kit www.acecqa.gov.au
- ACECQA National; Quality Framework Resource Kit www.acecqa.gov.au
- UNICEF – United Nations Convention on the rights of the child
- Starting Blocks – Developing children's positive behaviour in childcare

Related FDC Policies, Procedures & Documents

- Professional Development Calendar for Educators and Staff
- Providing a Child safe Environment
- Child Enrolment and Parent Agreement Form
- Governance and Management
- Staffing

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Next Review: