

Interactions with Children

Quality Area 5 – Relationships with Children

Policy Statement

A positive atmosphere and the wellbeing of children within Quirindi Preschool Kindergarten is promoted through attentive care and quality interactions with children. Emotional development and social relationships are enhanced through thoughtful and sophisticated approaches to conversation, discussion and 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.

Goals

Educators at our service will:

- Respect family and cultural values
 - be responsive to children's strengths, interests, abilities;
 - Encourage children to express themselves and their opinions;
 - provide opportunities to become self-reliant and develop self-esteem;
 - uphold children's dignity, rights, and agency;
 - provide positive and strength based behaviour support
 - provide positive guidance and support towards acceptable behaviour;
 - promote a safe, secure and nurturing environment;
 - be authentic and responsive;
 - be based in fairness, acceptance and empathy with respect for cultural and linguistic rights, as well as the rights of people with differing needs and capabilities.
 - Ensure children have opportunities to interact and develop respectful and positive relationships with each other and with educators, staff, and volunteers. In providing these opportunities, the size and composition of groups of children must be considered.

Strategies

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.

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.

Children and Families

- A culture of respectful interaction is promoted when children's attempts to communicate are valued. Turn taking and regulating children's conversations promotes active engagement.

Respectful communication with families generates greater confidence in interacting.

Reflective Considerations

- Time is dedicated to reflecting upon interactions within children.
- Reflections should consider how to spend extended periods engaged in interactions with children that comprise communication and listening.

Role Modelling

Educators model positive interactions when they:

- Show care, empathy and respect for children, educators and staff and families;
- Learn and use effective communication strategies.

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 form agreements in relation to expectations for how we treat each other and our service.
- Agreements will be reasonable considering the age, development and individual characteristics, background and needs of the children.
- Agreements will be consistently followed and reflected on to evolve, along with children's developing skills and self-regulation competence.
- Children will be encouraged to understand the boundaries, agreements and expectations and build their skills to interact with each other within these.
- Staff respond to behaviours thoughtfully, avoiding any form of shaming. They focus on praising positive skills or constructively addressing areas for improvement.
- Educators acknowledge that they are there to support and teach skills that build children's self-control and regulation and always present a good example through positive role modelling, compassion and understanding

The Role of Staff

In response to challenging behaviour, staff:

- Will build secure, safe authentic relationships with each child.
- Will recognise the situation as an opportunity to help the child develop skills, including their language and communication, attention and working memory, emotion and self-regulation, cognitive flexibility and social thinking skills.
- Recognise certain reactions as understanding behaviour, a reflection of communication and social development.
- Acknowledge the child's intent with that behaviour.
- Clarify the preferred skills to be used and teach, role model and support the child to practice how to use them
- Redirect the child or remove the child from the situation if necessary.
- Advise children of the consequences of continuing with the behaviour.
- Explain to children how behaviour made others feel.
- Actively listen to children's feelings and discuss the skills to use in future.
- Help children to return to play.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Authority/Responsibility For
Approved Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure all staff have access to relevant professional development ▪ Ensure the educational program contributes to the development of
	<p>children who have a strong sense of wellbeing and identity, and are connected, confident, involved and effective learners and communicators (Regulation 73).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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: Section 166) ▪ Inform the Regulatory Authority in writing, within 24 hours of receiving a notifiable complaint (Section 174(2), Regulation 176(2)(b)). ▪ Inform the Regulatory Authority in writing within 24 hours of a serious incident occurring at the service (Section 174, Regulation 176). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the regulatory authority in writing, within 24 hours of any incident or allegation of sexual or physical abuse of child when in attendance at the service. (regulation 175 (2)(d)(e).

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Authority/Responsibility For
Nominated Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guide professional development and practice to promote interactions with children that are positive and respectful. ▪ Establish practice guidelines that ensure interactions with children are given priority and those interactions are authentic, just and respect difference. ▪ 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 provide 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. ▪ Under section 166 of the Education and Care National Law, a staff member, nominated Supervisor and Approved Provider may receive a penalty for up to \$10,000 (up to \$50,000 in the case of Approved Provider) for subjecting a child to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances.

<p>Early Childhood Educators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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. ▪ 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
	<p>positive one to one interaction with children and a time that they can get to know more about the child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Genuinely seek children’s input, respect their ideas and take their suggestions on board. ▪ Support children to build trusting attachments with one or two educators in order to develop a secure base for their exploration and learning. ▪ Form warm relationships with each child.
<p>Families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reading and complying 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 other to develop or review an individual behaviour guidance plan for their child, where appropriate.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every 18 months.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family’s ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Related Guidelines, Standards, Frameworks

- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships with children – Standards 5.1, 5.2
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership – Standard 7.1.2

Sources

- Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – www.acecqa.gov.au
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – www.unicef.org.au
- The Supporting young children’s rights: Statement of intent (2015-2018)
www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au

- Australian Human Rights Commission – www.humanrights.gov.au
- Community Early Learning Australia (CELA)

Related Legislation

- Education and Care National Law Act 2010: Sections 166, 167
- Education and Care National Regulations: 73, 74, 155, 156, 157, 168(2)(j)
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)