

Policy Document No:	ELC05
Category:	Early Learning
Topic:	Behaviour Support Policy



Date of issue: January 2005
Last Review Date: May 2014

Considerations

To provide a secure, safe and stimulating environment.

Child's needs: To have their feelings acknowledged and accepted and be able to express their emotions appropriately; to feel safe and protected; to have their cultural, religious and racial diversity respected; consistent expectations.

Parent's needs: Clear guidelines about acceptable behaviours; involvement in determining appropriate strategies for dealing with poor behaviour; avenues of support for parenting skills; non-judgemental communication from staff.

Staff needs: Appropriate training to deal with behaviour issues and ensure that programs are meeting the child's developmental, social, emotional and cognitive needs; support from parents and management in dealing with difficult behaviours.

Management need: Appropriately trained staff and budget to sustain this; support from relevant agencies and professionals to make appropriate decisions in the best interests of the individual child and other children in the child care setting.

Legislation and Sources

*Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, Part 4, Reg. 155; 156; 73; 74; 162 (2, j),
Ministerial Council For Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs
National Law, section 166
Guide to the National Quality Standard, Area 5; Area 4 standard 4.2.1.
Federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992
Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 1995
Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*

Policy Statement

The Behaviour Guidance Policy:

- Emphasises the rights of children; and
- Recognises values and celebrates the differences and similarities that exist between individuals.

Our Early Learning Centres are committed to the behaviour guidance policy because it:

- Reflects the values, attitudes and current recommended strategies that promote positive play behaviour and patterns;
- Respects the importance of interactions and relationships between children, families and staff;
- Understands why children behave in certain ways in specific circumstances;
- Promotes realistic play and behaviour limits that guide children's safety and security rather than curb their play experiences, curiosity or creativity;
- Defines clear and transparent care giving strategies that communicate how behaviour guidance is implemented by the service; and
- Informs the stakeholders about the procedures involved in behaviour guidance management plans.

The purpose of the Behaviour Guidance policy is to:

- Encourage acceptable forms of behaviour by using strategies that build children's confidence and self-esteem;
- Provide children with support, guidance and opportunities to manage their own behaviour; and
- Promote collaborative approaches to behaviour guidance between staff, student services, parent's, management and external agencies as necessary.

The Service recognises and understands that a child's behaviour might be affected by their:

- Age and development;
- General health and well-being;
- Relationships with their family;
- Play and learning environments, which include the physical setting, the weather, the time of year, the time of day;
- Staff care giving strategies and practices, which includes how those strategies are implemented;
- Relationships with peers and adults;
- External factors, such as family, home life, school or peer group experiences or media coverage of traumatic events.

How the policy will be implemented – Specific Practices & Procedures

Behaviour Guidance Strategies:

Staff will adopt positive behaviour management strategies including, but not limited to:

- Indirect guidance — providing a well planned, developmentally appropriate environment to keep the children stimulated and interested;
- Direct guidance — presenting children with clear alternatives and helping them develop the ability to make decisions and direct themselves;
- Verbal guidance — used immediately to redirect a child's behaviour through language which is positive, clear and appropriate to the development of the child;
- Emotional guidance — acknowledging acceptable behaviour and promoting self esteem by using positive reinforcement; and
- Positive example — role model courteous, polite behaviour and display tolerance towards others

Children

Children are active participants in the development, implementation and monitoring of behaviour guidance management plans and should be consistently communicated with during the process.

- “**Essential agreements**” are established as a collaborative document by children and staff toward the beginning of the year. This document allows the children to classify what is appropriate behaviour and what is not. The essential agreement gives children the knowledge and responsibility to establish limits and gauge behaviour – ultimately assisting in behaviour guidance strategies.
- A “**cooling off**” period may be needed so the child can calm down before discussing what happened and sharing their feelings with the educators, who will in turn talk about their own feelings and responsibilities with the child. Educators will always talk to the child quietly and as an equal, and preferably away from the rest of the group. Time out to cool down will vary from child to child and may include: listening quietly to soothing music, sitting quietly with the educator; doing something physical i.e. kicking a football, sitting quietly with a book, talking to a close friend.
- Where a dispute or conflict occurs staff will talk separately to all the children involved, be calm, fair, positive and firm in their **assessment of the situation**. Wherever possible the children will be involved in deciding on the appropriate course of action to follow. Staff will not react to conflict situations by getting angry themselves as this could inflame the situation further. If a staff member feels they are unable to control their anger in a particular situation, they will ask for assistance from another staff member while they remove themselves from the incident to cool down.
- Where children exhibit recurring behavioural problems the qualified staff member may discuss establishing a **behavioural contract** with the child, whereby positive behaviour is rewarded and negative behaviour results in consequences that have been agreed to in advance by the child. The contract may also establish a code of signals between the child and the staff member, which act as a positive reminder for the child, when their behaviour is becoming unacceptable.

Families

Crucial to the success of behaviour guidance is the role that families play, particularly parents. Families will be provided with regular opportunities to contribute to the development and review of their child's behaviour guidance strategies and plan, along with the overall strategies to promote positive outcomes for the child.

- The service will seek information from parents during orientation interviews held at the beginning of each school year about the behaviour guidance strategies implemented at home. Staff will ensure strategies are consistent both at home and kinder.
- Many opportunities are made for meaningful and confidential information exchange during the year. They include, but are not limited to, term phone calls, parent teacher interviews at the conclusion of each term, staff make themselves available for meetings throughout the year, the school psychologist can be included at any time by request from parents or recommendation from staff.
- Clear guidelines about acceptable behaviours will be developed with input from parents, staff and management. Parents/guardians will be made aware of expected child behaviours at the centre via the Parent Handbook.
- Parents/Guardians who wish to discipline their own children whilst in the centre will not at any time use any form of corporal punishment or use unacceptable language.

Staff

Staff recognises that positive behaviour guidance is fundamental in developing appropriate behaviours in young children. If positive behaviour management strategies (as outlined above) are not successful, educators will collaborate with the family, in consultation with the school psychologist. (see appendix 1)

- Staff respond to, and acknowledge children's emotions, such as happiness, anger, pleasure, fear, anxiety, frustration, sadness and pride.
- Staff acknowledge that the emotions experienced by children are significant.
- Staff understand that children may not have developed the appropriate strategies to express emotions appropriate to their age and/or stage of development.
- Staff attitudes and care giving strategies demonstrate an understanding and empathy towards children who display behaviours that are not always consistent with their developmental and/or general disposition.
- Staff will show their respect by using normal tone and volume when speaking with children; allowing older children greater freedom and responsibility in recognition of their developmental stage; and working co-operatively with children to solve problems. Shouting at children will be avoided. Positive behaviours will be encouraged by diverting children to more appropriate activities, showing appreciation for appropriate behaviour and building on each child's strengths and achievements.
- The Centre believes that developing a supportive relationship with the children encourages them to learn skills in self-discipline. Punishing a child stops the negative behaviour for a while but does not teach the child self-restraint. The consequences of negative behaviour will be discussed with the child and will be consistently followed through. No punishment will be given and the child will be reminded in positive terms of the expected behaviour.
- **No child will receive any form of corporal punishment, punishment by solitary confinement, punishment by physical restraint or other demeaning, humiliating or frightening punishment,** or withheld food or drink as a form of punishment.
- No child will be isolated for any reason other than illness or accident for any period of time. **Children will be supervised by a contact staff member at all times.**
- If a child's behaviour places him/herself or another child in danger, staff will act immediately to prevent the danger, and then talk through the problem with the child or children concerned.

Management

Management recognise that their role in supporting the behaviour guidance policy includes, but is not limited to:

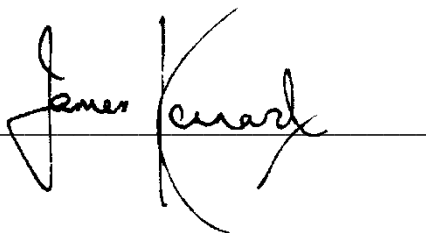
- Compliance with Legislation and regulatory requirements
- Ensuring Confidentiality and Privacy (refer to privacy policy)
- Recruiting staff with a solid understanding of age appropriate positive behaviour guidance strategies
- Providing professional development opportunities when required; and
- Ensuring relief staff and students understand their role in supporting permanent staff members in the behaviour guidance strategies in place.

Protective Behaviours and Practices

Staff, families, management, students and volunteers as role models

- Children learn through example and modelling is an important way to teach children behaviour guidance practices.
- Staff, students and volunteers must comply with the Behaviour Guidance policy.

Approved by the College Principal: _____

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Keane', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is cursive and stylized.

Date: May 2014

Appendix 1 - Procedures for the guidance of ongoing unacceptable behaviour

If children consistently display unacceptable behaviour the senior staff member in the child's room will ensure:

- The expectations of the child's behaviour are realistic and appropriate to their developmental level.
- The child understands the limits.
- There is no conflict between centre and home expectations.
- The child's needs are being met i.e. adequate storage for personal belongings, adequate nutritional snacks provided, centre set up to encourage independence.
- The child has no impediments which may cause the unacceptable behaviour.
- The child isn't copying observed behaviour.
- Events at the centre have not encouraged the behaviour.
- Consequences of the behaviour do not encourage it to persist.
- Strategies are consistently followed by all caregivers in contact with the child.

When dealing with ongoing unacceptable behaviour, the senior staff member will:

Step 1:

Enter into collaborative problem solving with the parents/guardians. Invite parents/guardians to help solve the problem through discussing:

- The ongoing unacceptable behaviour displayed by the child
- The parents/guardians and the centre's overall aspirations for the child.
- The types of solutions (strategies) possible in the circumstances.
- What has worked or failed in the past, whether at home or in the centre.
- The child's personal characteristics, such as her/his interests, age, temperament and size
- Other resources available, such as referral for specialist assessment, additional adult support.

Step 2:

The qualified staff member, together with the College psychologist, will develop a behaviour guidance plan which is

- Based on observations of the child and her/his interactions of the whole group.
- Acceptable by the parents/guardians and any other professionals involved in the care and education of the child.
- Clearly and easily followed by all staff working with the child and the parents/guardians.

Step 3:

A date is set to review, reflect, evaluate and replan (usually within two weeks)

- If the unacceptable behaviour persists staff will jointly with the parent seek advice from an appropriate agency or professional.
- After the child has been given every opportunity to respond positively and if all methods fail to result in an improvement in behaviour, the Head of Campus may need to discuss alternative care with the parent/guardian, in consideration of the health and safety of the other children in care.
- In the case of severe behaviour which threatens self harm or bodily harm to other children or staff, the parent will be informed that the child will be suspended or dismissed immediately.