

Interactions with Children Policy and Procedure

Introduction

A positive atmosphere and the wellbeing of children within an education and care setting are 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 in their interactions, they develop an understanding of themselves as significant and respected and feel a sense of belonging.

Learning Links’ provides children’s services in an environment that reflects the principles of the Early Years Learning Framework where the development of secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships with children are fostered and encouraged and genuine respect for diversity and a commitment to equity is reflected in all interactions with children.

Policy

- Learning Links’ Children’s Services staff will:
- be responsive to children’s strengths, interests and abilities;
 - provide opportunities for children to become self-reliant and develop self-esteem;
 - uphold children’s dignity, rights, and agency;
 - provide positive guidance and support towards acceptable behaviour;
 - promote a safe, secure and nurturing environment;
 - be authentic and responsive;
 - base interactions on fairness, acceptance and empathy with respect for cultural and linguistic rights.

Eligibility

This policy applies to all Learning Links Children’s Services staff. The term staff includes educators, therapists, students and volunteers.

Responsible

Responsibilities for the policy are:

Person	Responsible for:
Approved Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the service operates in line 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: Section 166) (Regulation 73). • Inform the Regulatory Authority in writing, within 24 hours of receiving a notifiable complaint (Section 174(4), Regulation 176(2)(b)). • Inform the Regulatory Authority in writing within 24 hours of a serious incident occurring at the service (Section 174(4), Regulation 176)

Nominated Supervisor / Preschool Manager	<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 that are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account their individual differences. • 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. • Ensure that they adhere to Section 166 of the Education and Care National Law, whereby 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.
Children's services staff	<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. • Maintain the dignity and 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 enable positive one to one interaction with children and allow them to get to know more about the child. • Seek children's input, respect their ideas and take their suggestions on board. • Form warm relationships with each child. • Support each child's ability to communicate through a Total Communication approach inclusive of Key Word Sign, gesture, symbols, objects and visuals/pictures. • Design and implement experiences and environments giving children agency, promoting inclusion and enable participation.
Families	<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 others to develop or review an individual behaviour guidance plan for their child, where appropriate.

Related documents

Relevant legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
Related guidelines, standards, frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

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.

Reflection and consideration

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.

Staff respect individual children’s needs and differences in age, ability and experience in relation to behaviour support and are happy to discuss individual family expectations with parents.

Principles for behaviour support

Educators model positive interactions when they:

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

Staff respect individual children's needs and differences in age, ability and experience in relation to behaviour support and are happy to discuss individual family expectations with parents.

The role of staff

In response to challenging behaviour, staff:

- Recognise certain reactions as understandable behaviour, a reflection of communication and social development.
 - 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 appropriate behaviour.
 - Explain to children how behaviour results in consequences.
 - Listen actively to children's feelings and discuss the rules.
 - Help children to return to play.
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Document control

This table outlines the control details for this document.

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