

Behaviour Guidance and Interactions with Children Policy

1. Authorisation

This policy was adopted by the DSCCC Management Committee at its meeting on 30 July 2014.

It replaces the previous:

- *Behaviour Guidance Policy*; and
- *Interactions with Children Policy*.

A minor update to the policy was made and adopted in June 2016.

2. Review Date

This policy shall be reviewed in four years' time, in July 2018.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and the Management Committee.

The only complaints dealt with by this policy are those relating to the unacceptable behaviour of a specific child or children and guidance of the behaviour by staff. This policy should be read in conjunction with the *Complaints and Grievances Policy*.

4. Background and Relevant Legislation

Background

Under the *Education and Care Service National Regulations 2011 (NSW)*, DSCCC must take reasonable steps to ensure that it provides education and care to children in a way that, among other things, gives each child positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour.

Legislation

- *Co-operatives National Law Application Act 2013*
- *Co-operatives National Law (Victoria) Local Regulations 2014*
Education and Care Service National Law Act 2010.
Education and Care Service National Regulations 2011 (NSW).
Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
Disability Discrimination Act 1992
Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Victoria)

Sources

- *Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*: www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Policy_Agenda/Quality/Pages/EarlyYearsLearningFramework.aspx#key_documents
- Early Childhood Australia (ECA) *Code of Ethics* (2006): www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/code_of_ethics/early_childhood_australias_code_of_ethics.html
- *Guide to the National Quality Standard*, ACECQA: www.acecqa.gov.au and <http://acecqa.gov.au/links-and-resources/national-quality-framework-resources/>
- Guiding children's behaviour in child care – a NCAC Factsheet for Families: http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/family-resources/factsheets/guiding_children's_behaviour.pdf
- Inclusion and Professional Support Program (IPSP), Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Australian Government:

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www.deewr.gov.au/earlychildhood/programs/childcareforservices/supportfamilyccs/pages/inclusionsupportprogram.aspx

- Rothwell, Philip (2008), 'Guiding Children's Behaviour', from *Putting Children First*, Newsletter of the National Childcare Accreditation Council, 25 March, p16–18
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: www.unicef.org/crc
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework: www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/eyleft/default.htm

Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria, DEECD:

www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/funding/default.ht

5. Definitions

Normal challenging behaviour: Behaviour that disrupts others or causes disputes between children, but which is part of normal social development.

Unacceptable behaviour: Ongoing behaviour that has not responded to the strategies set out under procedures in this policy. Once-off or ongoing behaviour that is placing the individual concerned, other children, staff or adults at risk

6. Policy Statement

Values

This service is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children, staff and volunteers in attendance.

We believe:

- All children need a safe and secure environment, and positive interaction with adults and other children.
- In encouraging positive behaviour in all children and ensuring that all children are respected and valued as individuals.
- That setting limits for behaviour is important for the safety and protection of children, others and the environment.
- In helping children learn the consequences of their behaviour and thus develop an understanding of how their actions affect others.
- In involving parents/guardians in issues relating to the guidance of their child's behaviour.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to achieve the above values by providing a developmentally appropriate behavioural guidance structure for all staff and others working with the children.

7. Procedures

7.1 Procedures for the guidance of normal challenging behaviour in young children

Guidance is a term that is used in relation to guiding young children toward desirable and appropriate behaviours. Through positive, consistent and non-threatening behaviour guidance techniques the staff aim to assist children in becoming happy and co-operative participants in the programme.

Every effort is made to assist the children to learn appropriate behaviours in a positive manner. The underlying goals in all behaviour guidance strategies are to promote, not diminish, the child's self-esteem. A strong emphasis is placed on being positive, respectful and consistent.

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For all children, staff should:

- Understand the needs of individual children and those in the group and acknowledge that many factors could influence behaviour.
- Base their expectations on the child's individual level of development.
- Respect the cultural differences in children.
- Respond to children proactively, rather than reactively.
- Encourage all children to express themselves and be comfortable enough to offer opinions.
- Assist children to develop self-reliance and self-esteem.
- Assist children to control their behaviour, and to understand the behaviour of others.
- Anticipate potentially unacceptable behaviours and eliminate situations and physical arrangements that may encourage inappropriate behaviour.
- Reinforce children's positive behaviours and provide positive role models.
- Encourage children to resolve potential conflicts for themselves, but step in when needed.
- Acknowledge a child's good intentions, (even if they were carried out inappropriately).
- Acknowledge that it is the behaviour that is inappropriate and NOT the child.
- Allow choices in decision making and be prepared to accept the child's decision if appropriate.
- Be consistent in the guidance of all children.
- Work cooperatively with parents/guardians on issues relating to the guidance of their child's behaviour, keeping them informed of the techniques and methods used.
- Work in partnership with parents/guardians to support children who are learning to use the toilet. (See Appendix for guidelines).
- Respect the confidentiality of both the parents/guardians and child when dealing with issues of behaviour guidance concerning an individual child.
- Make sure that children are not put in a position where they feel frightened, ashamed, humiliated, embarrassed, insecure, or isolated. This includes being aware of the tone and body language that staff use when guiding children's behaviour.
- Provide a set of basic developmentally appropriate behavioural rules which:
 - Emphasise positive actions.
 - Give children reasons for the limits.
 - Are implemented in a consistent manner.
 - Are reinforced regularly.
 - Ensure each child's dignity and rights will be met at all times.

Staff should seek assistance or support whenever necessary.

7.2 Prohibited Actions in Discipline Strategies

In accordance with relevant legislation and the centre's philosophy, the following actions are prohibited at all times:

- Corporal punishment of any form including smacking, pinching, slapping and shaking.
- Emotional abuse of any form including name calling, ostracism, shaming, derogatory comments about the child or family and threatening, humiliating or frightening language.
- Punishment of any form with regard to toileting habits, or lack thereof.
- Physical restraints of any form/kind.

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The use of corporal punishment or other types of abuse constitutes grounds for immediate dismissal of a staff member.

7.3 Procedures for the guidance of ongoing unacceptable behaviour

When dealing with unacceptable behaviour, staff should bring it to the attention of the Director then:

1. Consult and assess the availability of support

Discuss with the parent/guardian:

- The unacceptable behaviour shown by the child.
- Possible strategies that could be implemented to help ensure consistency between home and the centre.
- Resources or changes to the environment/program that may be required for a behaviour guidance plan to be implemented e.g. changes to routines and transitions.
- The support already accessed by the family to assist with managing the child's behaviour.
- Other support available, such as a Preschool Field Officer (refer to Definitions), referral for specialist assessment and additional adult support (written consent is required from parents/guardians before any intervention/assessment is undertaken).

2. Develop a behaviour guidance plan which is:

- Based on the consensus reached with the parent/guardian on the strategies to be used.
- Clear and easily followed by all staff, parent/guardian and/or volunteers working with the child.
- Discussed in detail with other staff.
- Reviewed and revised by both the parent/guardian and staff.

3. Refer the situation to the Director if:

- The staff are concerned that the child's behaviour may put themselves, other children, or others at risk and the consultation with the parent and others and the behavioural guidance plan has not resolved the problem.
- Resources such as Preschool Field Officers, referral for specialist assessment, additional adult support and/or training for the staff and/or parent may be needed (noting that consent from parents/guardians must be given before any intervention/assessment is obtained).

4. The Management Committee should become involved when:

- Determined by the Chair of the Management Committee.
- Requested by staff.
- A parent/guardian lodges a complaint concerning a child's behaviour that is threatening the safety of other children.
- They have concerns about the unacceptable behaviour of a child and the effect of this on other children, staff, etc.
- There is an occupational health and safety issue involved for staff or others at DSCCC.

The Management Committee will attempt to resolve the issue as soon as possible (see Complaints and Grievances Policy for procedures), especially if the child's ongoing unacceptable behaviour is putting themselves, staff and/or other children and adults in danger.

In the event that the Management Committee becomes involved, staff should:

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- Not divulge confidential information provided by the parent/guardian without first obtaining their consent.
- Provide only relevant information to the sub-committee/Committee in order to assist with the resolution of the issue.

If a resolution involves removing the child from the centre, this recommendation shall be referred to the Management Committee for a decision.

8. Key Responsibilities and Authorities

The Committee is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all parents/guardians and staff are aware of this policy and that it is implemented within the service.
- Approving any changes to the policy.
- Approving any additional expenditure or resources that impact on Committee finances.

The Director is responsible for:

- Ensuring that procedures are in place for effective daily communication with parents/guardians to share information about children's learning, development, interactions, behaviour and relationships
- Ensuring educators and staff use positive and respectful strategies to assist children to manage their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others
- Ensuring children are adequately supervised (refer to *Definitions*) and that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times (refer to *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- Ensuring the size and composition of groups is considered so all children are provided with the best opportunities for quality interactions and relationships with each other and with adults at the centre (Regulation 156(2)). Smaller group sizes are considered optimal
- Ensuring educational programs are delivered in accordance with an approved learning framework, are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- Ensuring 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 (Regulation 73) (refer to *Curriculum Development Policy*)
- Ensuring clear documentation of the assessment and evaluation of each child's:
 - developmental needs, interests, experiences and program participation
 - progress against the outcomes of the educational program (Regulation 74) (refer to *Curriculum Development Policy*)
- Ensuring the environment at the centre is safe, secure and free from hazards for children (refer to *Child Safe Environment Policy*, *Occupational Health and Safety Policy* and *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- Supporting educators/staff to gain appropriate training

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- Ensuring that individual behaviour guidance plans are developed for children with diagnosed behavioural difficulties, in consultation with educators, parents/guardians and families, and other professionals and support agencies (refer to Sources)
- Developing links with other services and/or professionals to support children and their families, where required
- Supporting educators/staff to gain appropriate training, knowledge and skills for the implementation of this policy
- Developing a behaviour guidance plan for a child if educators are concerned that the child's behaviour may put the child themselves, other children, educators/staff and/or others at risk
- Consulting the *Complaints and Grievances Policy* to ensure compliance with centre procedures, and regulatory and legislative requirements
- Consulting educators for their professional evaluation of the situation, and drawing on their expertise in relation to developing strategies and identifying resources required
- Meeting with the parents/guardians of the child concerned to develop and implement a behaviour guidance plan
- Ensuring that parents/guardians and other professionals (as appropriate) are consulted if an individual behaviour guidance plan has not resolved the challenging behaviour
- Consulting with, and seeking advice from, DEECD if a suitable and mutually agreeable behaviour guidance plan cannot be developed
- Ensuring that they are notified if a complaint is received about a child's interactions or behaviour e.g. when the safety of other children is in question
- Ensuring that, if a complaint is received, every attempt is made to resolve the issue by consultation and investigation as soon as possible
- Ensuring that additional resources are sourced, if required, to implement a behaviour guidance plan
- Investigating the availability of extra assistance, financial support or training, by contacting the regional Preschool Field Officer (refer to *Definitions*), specialist children's services officers from DEECD or other agencies working with the child
- Setting clear timelines for review and evaluation of the behaviour guidance plan.

The Staff/Educators are responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation of this policy and, where possible, resolving any behavioural guidance issues directly with the parents/guardians and children concerned:
- Delivering 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 (refer to *Inclusion and Reducing Bias Policy*)
- Documenting assessments and evaluations for each child to inform the educational program (Regulation 74)
- Observing children's challenging behaviour and identifying the need to develop a behaviour guidance plan to support a child in self-managing their own behaviour
- Assisting the Director to develop a behaviour guidance plan in consultation with parents/guardian and other professionals as appropriate
- Implementing a behaviour guidance plan and incorporating identified strategies and resources into the centre's program
- Undertaking relevant training that will enable them to guide children who exhibit challenging behaviour
- Maintaining ongoing communication and consultation with parents/guardians

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- Providing regular progress reports to the Director on the implementation and effectiveness of the agreed strategies contained in an individual behaviour guidance plan
- Maintaining the confidentiality of information provided by parents/guardians unless written consent is provided to disclose information to relevant parties
- Providing their observations, professional evaluation and expertise in reviewing individual behaviour guidance plans
- Providing other information, as relevant, to the Director to assist with the resolution of any issues.

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Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Reading and complying with the *Behaviour Guidance Policy*
- Engaging in open communication with educators about their child
- Informing educators/staff of events or incidents that may impact on their child's behaviour at the service (e.g. moving house, relationship issues, a new sibling)
- Informing educators/staff of any concerns regarding their child's behaviour or the impact of other children's behaviour
- Working collaboratively with educators/staff and other professionals/support agencies to develop or review individual behaviour guidance plans for their child, where appropriate.

9. Resources and Support

Centre Policies

- DSCCC Complaints and Grievance Policy
- DSCCC Inclusion and Equity Policy

Related documents

- The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) Kindergarten Funding Criteria at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/default.htm> (in relation to access and equity).
- A list of the contact numbers of individuals, agencies and organisations providing support and/or advice in relation to the behavioural guidance of children, for example the Preschool Field Officer, Children's Services Adviser and KPV.

Training

If considered appropriate, the Management Committee will:

- Consult with staff on their professional development needs in relation to the guidance of children's behaviour and on the availability of the range of support services available to families.
- Assess the interest of the parent/guardian group for an education session to be provided on the guidance of children's behaviour.

10. Evaluation

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes the Management Committee will:

- Conduct annual staff appraisals to ensure that staff actions are consistent with the approaches outlined in this policy.
- Assess whether a satisfactory resolution has been achieved in relation to behavioural issues raised.
- If appropriate, conduct a survey in relation to this policy or incorporate relevant questions within the general parent/guardian survey.
- Take into account feedback from staff regarding the policy.
- Monitor complaints and incidents regarding the behaviour of the children attending the service.

Date Reviewed	Details of Changes (if any)	Next Review
June 2016	Inclusion of Toilet Training Guidelines in Appendix	July 2018
July 2014	Incorporated relevant material from the Interactions with Children Policy	July 2018
June 2012	Reference to new regulations and	June 2012

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	corresponding procedures	
April 2010	Reference to new Children's Services Regulations	April 2012
November 2007	minor typos	November 2009
September 2006	Initial DSCCC policy based on 2006 KPV Behaviour Guidance Policy Policy.	September 2007

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Toilet Training Guidelines

Educators/staff will work in partnership with parents/guardians to support children who are learning to use the toilet.

Children need to be consistently demonstrating the signs of readiness listed below before toilet training commences. If educators/staff feel that a child is not showing the required signs of readiness while at DSCCC, it will be expected that parents/guardians wait a period of time before recommencing toilet training. The age of the child is not considered an indication of their readiness to commence toilet training.

The signs of readiness may include, but are not limited to those listed below.

The child;

- has dry nappies for up to two hours
- can pull their pants up and down
- can tell you (or show obvious signs) when they have a dirty nappy
- can sit down quietly in one position for two to five minutes
- understands the physical signals that mean they have to go to the toilet and can tell you before it happens or even hold it until they have time to get to the toilet
- dislikes the feeling of wearing a wet or dirty nappy
- shows interest in others' bathroom habits.