

Behaviour Guidance

Purpose:

Early childhood professionals will take a positive approach to behaviour guidance and will ensure procedures and practices are in place to assist children in managing their own behaviour. Strategies to be used will demonstrate respect for children's dignity and self-esteem.

EY@PP educators define behaviour as neither negative nor positive, children will develop a range of behaviours, attitudes and different ways of expressing their needs depending on many factors. A child's behaviour has meaning and it happens for a reason. Educators understand that children are learning and have had not much experience in the world. At different stages of development children are engaging in experiences for the first time and they need to build up their experiences and understanding to assist them in guiding their own behavioural responses.

Families/guardians:

Families are encouraged to communicate and collaborate with educators, and when required service managers and/or professional agencies, in order to enhance understanding of their child's developmental stage and behaviour. It is recommended families communicate factors which may be influencing their child's behaviour to educators.

If requested guidance methods from families do not fall within the bounds of the centre policy or comply with regulative and legislative requirements, they will not be used at the centre.

Families are to refrain from negatively labelling children and have the right only to guide behaviour of their own children whilst at the service. Discussions with educators or management will specifically be only about a family's own child and information about other children will not be shared, protecting their right to privacy.

Principles for understanding children's behaviour

Educators will:

- Develop a sound knowledge and understanding of children's behaviour based on a child's age and developmental stages.
- Work to understand the needs of individual children and those in the group and acknowledge that many factors could influence behaviour. For example, a child's relationships with educators, feeling an attachment and security, a child's basic needs are met including sleep, food and nutrition, physical activity, the physical environment they are in, the program, resources, space, temperature, cultural and family influences, language skills along with development and emotional skills.
- Base their expectations on the child's individual level of development.
- Understand children learn through experiences and part of this is making mistakes. Mistakes are ok.
- Use positive guidance strategies. In the instance of adverse behaviour being persistently observed, educators will evaluate their program, room environment and supervision to reflect and identify triggers and sources.

- Work co-operatively with parents/guardians on issues relating to the guidance of their child's behaviour, keeping them informed of the techniques, strategies and methods used.
- Respect the confidentiality of both the parents/guardians and child when dealing with issues of behaviour guidance concerning an individual child.
- Comply with regulatory and legislative requirements. Children are not put in a position where they feel frightened, ashamed, embarrassed, insecure, or isolated.
- Ensure children feel secure, comfortable, accepted and acknowledged throughout the behaviour guidance process.
- Provide consistent and clear guidelines, limits and boundaries that will be known and understood by all key educators, shared with parents/guardians, explained to children (developed with their input), and incorporated into the curriculum
- Provide children with support, guidance and opportunities to manage their own behaviour
- Support families to understand children's behaviour which may be through knowledge, education or providing further resources such as books, factsheets, websites references or displays within the rooms.

Behaviour Guidance Strategies:

The below strategies are only a sample of ways educators support child behaviour at EY@PP. Every child is individual and in different developmental stages. Educators take this into account when supporting children and helping children learn about their behaviour.

- Provide developmentally appropriate behavioural guidelines for a child and/or room group
- Acknowledge and encourage children's appropriate forms of behaviour
"You are playing so well together", "Thank you for listening to your friend", "You were superfast packing away"
- Respond to children proactively, rather than reactively.
- The proactive approach attempts to 'get in first' before the need arises to 'react' to inappropriate behaviours. There are three major areas the environment, the curriculum and the educators.
- Anticipate potentially unacceptable behaviours and eliminate situations and physical arrangements that may encourage inappropriate behaviour.
- Assist children to control and manage (self- regulate) their own behaviour, and start to understand the behaviour of others.
- Use positive redirection: Redirecting unacceptable behaviour to an acceptable alternative focuses on the positive rather than the negative.
"Let see how far we can throw the ball outside"
- Discuss emotions, feelings and issues of inclusion with child/ren. Be appropriate to the child's stage of development
"It is ok your upset", "it is sad when (mum/dad) leave", "we all need to work together", "we are all different and different is ok"
- Educators are to model and demonstrate appropriate behaviour and communication through their everyday actions, children learn what is expected from them i.e. it is not appropriate to sit on tables and benches and then ask children not to do this
- Educators to problem solve with children by involving them in solving their own issues.

- If developmentally appropriate, educators can ask children questions to help them identify their needs, feelings, causes and choices.
e.g. “are you crying because you feel sad?”
- Acknowledge children when they show kindness or fairness throughout the day and continue to encourage and role model fairness in the room.
- Encourage children to listen to other people’s ideas, consider pro-social behaviour and collaborate in problem solving situations.
- Let children know that you appreciate their support, help and that you enjoy having them contribute to the group
- Acknowledge a child’s good intentions, (even if they were carried out inappropriately).
e.g. “I understand you were trying to get your friend to listen”
- Acknowledge that it is the behaviour that is the problem, not the child.
- Allow choices (age dependent) in decision-making and be prepared to accept the child’s decision if appropriate. E.g. “you have two choices”
- Use Logical consequences through the use of an “if.... then....” statement, children can be helped to see the logical outcomes of their actions. For example “If you run inside then you could trip over”.
- Be consistent in the guidance of all children.
- Use positive language, gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice when redirecting or discussing children’s behaviour with them.
- Educators to understand that children’s attention span at this age is developing, therefore conversations regarding behaviour would be very brief, eg 1 minute, and would occur at the time of the event.
- Remain calm, kind and tolerant as they encourage children who are strongly expressing distress, frustration or anger.
- Guide children’s behaviour with a focus on preserving and promoting children’s self-esteem.

Example of language to use based on age of child:

- **6 months-3 years**
“You are being very brave”
“It’s okay to cry.”
“let’s have a cuddle”
“let’s get another ball”
- **3-4 years**
“It is ok your upset, do you need some space?”
“what can I do to help you feel better?”

Procedures for dealing with ongoing challenging behaviour

Ongoing challenging behaviour is considered when behaviour is frequent, occurring daily or weekly, it may be a reoccurring emotional issue, or it may be a behaviour which is harmful to self or others. It may be associated with a child’s development or with a child who has a diagnosed learning disability.

Procedures educators need to follow with any of the above situations:

1. Develop a behaviour guidance plan (using the EY@PP template) in consultation with managers where educators need to:
 - Take and record observations
 - Identify triggers
 - Develop outcome and strategies with manager, remembering the strategies and outcomes need to be age and developmentally appropriate for the child
 - Develop a clear timeline to establish and review/evaluate when required.
 - Communicate plan and progress with child's family
 - Include additional advice from other professionals if/where appropriate.
 - Maintain confidentiality in relation to information gained about the child and their family.

If further strategies and procedures are required, the following may occur under management decision:

- The parent/guardian remaining with the child for a pre-determined period of time.
 - Complete a behavioural assessment of the child.
 - Seek further support through community services or specialist advice (i.e.: ISF/ Preschool Field Officer, Behavioural Intervention Programs, Funding programs)
 - A referral to a Parent Support program to obtain assistance or other support services for the family.
 - Additional staffing assistance where available.
2. If applicable, educators consult and assess the availability of support services for families, only after consultation with management

When discussing with the parent or guardian include:

- The behaviour shown by the child.
- Possible strategies that could be implemented.
- Resources available such as an Inclusion Support Facilitator (ISF), Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) a referral for specialist assessment, and additional adult support.
- Assess any training or support required for the staff or parent/guardian.
- Consulting with other professionals and agencies as appropriate.

Sources

- Kindergarten Parents Victoria, 2000, Model Policy - Behaviour Management, Kindergarten Parents Victoria, Northcote, Vic.
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 Section 166, 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulation 2011: Regulations 73 74, 155, 456, 157, 168(2)(j)
- NQS: Quality Area 5: Relationship with children
- Young Children's Behavior, Guidance approaches for early childhood educators. 4th Edition, Louise Porter, 2016

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