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1.5 Interactions with Children and Managing Difficult Behaviour Policy

Contents

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Aims

As with the centre's educational program, theoretical bases also influence the ways in which staff interact with children. The research based literature on this subject includes the development of moral reasoning and logical thinking from 3-5 years, perspective taking theories, social cognition, egocentricity during the preschool years, the development of pro-social behaviour, psychological theories of aggressive behaviour, theories of social development and the development of self esteem and self efficacy throughout childhood.

From these developmental bases, the work of many theorists has evolved. In relation to managing behaviour, this centre under the Director's guidance incorporates a mixture of preventative approaches influenced by the work of Ginott and Kounin plus the use of reinforcement taken from Behaviourist principles as well as reactive approaches which are applied after an event has occurred. The latter are influenced by the work of Dreikers, Glasser plus others and again, the use of reinforcement taken from Behaviourist principles. Along with these theoretical bases, the centre's approach to interactions with children and managing difficult behaviour encompasses the centre's philosophical statement, namely that the program at this centre is an inclusive one that expects and respects diversity in all its varied forms, and that it considers parental involvement and partnerships with parents to be a cornerstone of the way in which it functions

To this end the centre aims in respect of this policy are:

1. To ensure that staff interactions with children are positive, genuinely caring and conducive to their wellbeing

2. To acknowledge and respect each child's family and cultural background, and collaborate with and support parents regarding issues relating to the topic of this policy

3. To provide a secure, caring and stimulating environment that encourages children to cooperate and be tolerant of others (see also the centre's 'Anti-Bias & Equity Policy'), enhances their self esteem and furthers their ability to interact positively with others

4. To support and meaningfully guide individual children as well as the group as a whole as they learn how to respect the rights and needs of others and their property, and also how to assert their own rights in appropriate ways. This will occur by children understanding - with adult guidance - the consequences of their behaviour on others, how to manage difficult situations, and the use of appropriate and constructive language when involved in, or witnessing conflict

Legislative Requirements

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Children (Education and Care National Law Application) Act 2010

Children and Young Person (Care and Protection) Act 1998

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Who Is Effected By This Policy?

Children

Staff

Families

Management

Relevant Early Childhood Professional Standards

Early Childhood Code of Ethics: I-1 to I-10, II-1 to II-10, III-1 to III-5, VI,

                                               VII-3

Early Years Learning Framework: Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 3.1, 5.1, 5.3,

                                               Principles:1-4

Education & Care Services Australian National Regulations: 155, 156, 168(2,j)

National Quality Framework: Quality areas: 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.3, 2.1.1, 3.2.14.1.1, 4.2.2,

                                                 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.2.2, 6.1.2, 6.1.3, 6.2.2, 7.1.3,

Sources/References

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Berk, L. (2008). *Child Development* (8th Ed.). Boston MA: Pearson Education

Early Childhood Australia: *Managing Difficult Behaviour:* http:www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au (Retrieved January 2012)

Frydenberg, E., Deans, J, & O'Brien, K. (2012*). Developing everyday coping skills in the early years: Pro-active strategies for supporting social and emotional development.* London UK: Continuum Press

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Procedures

1. Staff will develop warm, positive relationships with each child and their family on a continuing basis

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2. Staff will - at all times - model positive, constructive ways to communicate and interact with others by the ways in which they support and talk to each other, children and parents

3. The Educator will ensure that the centre's learning/play areas foster positive and constructive behaviour and collaborative play by the fact that these:

- Will always be attractively set up prior to children's arrival so that children are immediately motivated to use the materials/equipment and become meaningfully engaged upon arrival

- Will always be set up so as to avoid overcrowding, obstruction of door areas and pathways etc which can trigger impulsive behaviour

- Will offer a varied pace of focus and interaction and may be changed or modified during each half day in relation to the group's needs, as decided by the Educator. This will enable children to refresh their focus and sense of enjoyment and avoid boredom and the floating and flitting behaviour that often accompanies it

- Will offer relaxing and enjoyable social play experiences for children as well as quieter opportunities where children can play individually or in pairs if they choose to

4. As well as the immediate benefits to children that the program offers, it also fosters lifelong skills, knowledge and dispositions in relation to learning to manage one's own behaviour. In relation to these, the staff will under the Director's guidance:

- Use positive reinforcement to encourage good, constructive and pleasant interactions with children when observed during play. (Preventative strategy)

- Plan for the support and nurturing of each child's emotional development plus their ongoing development of self esteem, both formally (re program planning) and informally (daily as children play, chat etc). This will involve helping children to talk about and recognise their own feelings and the feelings of others. This will be achieved by a variety of means e.g. chatting one to one or through the use of picture books, puppets, children's drawings etc. (Preventative and may also be a reactive strategy)

- Encourage and empower children to begin to take more responsibility for their own behaviour and its consequences by helping children to think through their actions and consider what is acceptable/unacceptable and why. (Preventative and reactive strategy)

- Continuously observe children's play so as to be able to pre-empt any likely disruptive behaviour and take early action so that it does not erupt. (Preventative strategy)

- In line with moral reasoning development at this age, staff will foster and consolidate children's basic understandings of what is right, fair and kind. These basic understandings have implications for later adult understandings of social justice issues (Preventative and reactive strategy)

5. Provide practical guidance for children to progressively gain better control of their own impulsivity towards others, plus an understanding of how to assert their own rights in socially appropriate ways (e.g. Step 1: instead of hitting, get

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an adult to help, Step 2: Instead of getting an adult to help, use words - not actions, Step 3: Use the 'right' language, etc). These developing skills will promote improved language and communication abilities

6. The Educator will make it very clear to children that there are rules about how 'we treat one another at preschool ' This will be communicated both individually and as needed to the group as a whole, and will be both a part of new children's orientation to preschool, as well as an ongoing practice

7. When managing difficult behaviour the Director will ensure that while needing to be firm, all staff will nevertheless treat children respectfully and with dignity. Therefore staff members will not humiliate, reject or insult them, or use any other intimidating or bullying forms of harassment to stop the behaviour. Research in this area repeatedly shows that inappropriate responses like these will only temporarily suppress negative behaviour and work against the development of good adult:child relationships. They will not contribute to empowering children to take more responsibility for their own actions as does learning (with adult help) to reason and think logically about why something is inappropriate and what would have been a better way to do it. Nor will inappropriate responses foster empathy for the needs and rights of others

8. The Director will ensure that the centre's program:

- Is a stimulating, engaging one that encourages children to remain focused and actively involved in exploratory learning

- With the Committee of Management's financial help, provides a range of good quality materials and equipment, including duplicates of materials where needed. Thus children do not need to 'float' around looking for something to do, which can be a precursor to impulsive behaviour that can both distract or hurt others

- Provides learning experiences that foster constructive and positive social interactions in a variety of ways that are supported and scaffolded by staff e.g., one to one or paired play experiences, small group play and sometimes whole group experiences

9. When managing difficult behaviour, the Educator will work closely with parents in developing strategies and goals for improving the child's behaviour at the centre

The Director will ensure that this policy is maintained and implemented at all times.