

GUIDING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR PROCEDURE

Policy Hierarchy link	Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010 Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011		
Responsible Officer	Vice-President, University Services		
Contact Officer	General Manager – j.carlisle@unsw.edu.au 9385 1708		
Superseded Documents			
File Number	Contact the Records & Archives Office .		
Associated Documents			
Version	Authorised by	Approval Date	Effective Date
2.0	Early Years Management	20 November 2014	20 December 2014

1. Purpose and Scope

A behaviour guidance approach aims to support children's developing self-control and an understanding of how their actions affect themselves and those around them. It assists children as they learn to interact with care, empathy and respect.

UNSW Early Years Centres aim to maintain consistency in expectations of behaviour in order to minimise confusion among children. Educators will also consider a child's age and developmental stage when supporting children's growing capacity to engage with their peers and adults.

The centres will develop a culture of respect and help to grow considerate behaviour within children and all involved in the centre.

At all times it is responsibility of the child's family to manage their child's behaviour whilst they are on the centre premises with their child.

At no time is it acceptable for a family member to talk to a child other than their own about their behaviour – please find an educator to manage such an incident.

Educators are aware that preventative actions are most important in minimising possible behavioural issues. Preventative measures include developing strong relationships with peers and educators and providing appropriate curriculum which stimulates and supports children's current developmental stage.

2. Definitions

3. Procedure

3.1 Positive Behaviour Guidance

- Behaviour guidance involves teaching/showing/helping a child to understand:
 - appropriate behaviour;

- inappropriate behaviour;
 - what is safe;
 - what is dangerous ;
 - what is considerate
 - what is inconsiderate
 - appropriate strategies to express frustration and intense emotions
- Of greatest importance is a the educators thorough understanding of child development as well as typical behaviours
 - It involves positive techniques of guidance, re-direction and re-enforcement rather than promoting comparison, competition or criticism. Coercion or corporal punishment is never used.
 - It requires helping a child learn to direct his/her own behaviour so that it is eventually based on self-control and the understanding and appreciation of other people's needs, rights and feelings.
 - It involves acknowledgement of caring, co-operative, desirable behaviour.
 - It does not damage self-esteem, but allows children to feel capable, competent and comfortable around others.
 - It takes into account the child's developmental understandings and abilities - recognising that needs and behaviours change as children grow.
 - It expresses itself positively. It shows what to do, not just what not to do. (e.g. "walk inside" not "don't run inside").
 - It doesn't label the child - it labels the behaviour (e.g. "the way you behaved was not kind" not "you are an unkind boy/girl").
 - It gives simple explanations and offers alternatives so that a child can make judgments/choices and thus, in time, wise decisions.
 - It is consistent.

3.2 Creating a culture of rights and responsibility

We consider the rights of others when enacting our behaviour guidance approach. Consideration is given to caring about other people; the rights of all to be safe, loved and considered. We also all have a responsibility to support others safety and wellbeing.

This includes being:

- Gentle to other persons and ourselves physically and verbally
- Careful about our own and other people's work and belongings
- Careful with objects and equipment
- Gentle with insects, animals and plants
- Safe as we move around our environment

3.3 Some possible reasons for Inappropriate Behaviour

Many behaviours that children display are age appropriate. They are learning to socialise and control their emotions. There are a number of reasons that children may behave inconsiderately. These may include:

- **Basic needs** not being met- the child may be hungry; thirsty, tired or sick . This is always the first consideration
- **Expectations** adults sometimes are not aware of what is typical behaviour of children and may respond to incidents that are age appropriate
- **Requirements to share** - in early childhood centres children are required to share time, attention and resources for extended periods
- **Lack of appropriate stimulation** – curriculum not meeting needs of the child
- **Attention** - negative behaviour may become the most effective way of getting attention
- **Imitation** – children may model behaviour they have observed
- **Excitement** - some children lose control when over excited
- **Jealousy** - hurting others may be an expression of jealousy
- **Developing social skills** - some children do not have the social skills to initiate social interaction
- **High energy levels** - Opportunity to release this energy may be limited at times and may cause a child to find different ways to release this energy
- **Developing communication skills** - - either due to age or ability
- **Additional needs** – some children may have learning difficulties or delays that require additional support.

3.4 Techniques used for guiding children's behaviour

The techniques used for behaviour modification depend upon the child's age, development, personality and the probable cause of the behaviour. General guidelines follow.

- Acknowledge and accept the child's feelings such as anger, frustration or jealousy, even if the reaction seems out of proportion to the cause in adult terms. The child should be encouraged to talk about his/her feelings. It should be made clear that angry feelings can be normal, but hitting someone because you feel angry is unacceptable.
- Comfort the child who has been hurt and talk to the child who has hurt the other. Empower both children by talking about how it feels when you get hurt and the need to talk to each other instead of hurting each other.
- Keep close to support a child who seems unsettled to help reduce possible altercations through modelling before an incident occurs.
- Provide a balance of quiet activities and vigorous active ones.
- Maintain close communication between educators and families to be aware of anything that might impact upon a child's behaviour such as new baby; moving house; busy schedules etc..

- Provide time away from peers- at times a child may need space away from their peers - this is not seen as a punishment but as a method to regain control. This is 'time away' not 'time out". This time away may be with or without an adult close by to support the child - this will depend on the child's need for space or support-educators will make the decision with the child or from their knowledge of the child's needs.
- Any form of guiding behaviour will happen at the time of the event so it is relevant to the initial action.
- Food will not be used as a reward or punishment

3.5 Physical expression of emotions (eg biting and pushing)

Most physical behaviours in infants and toddlers occur when more than one children would like a toy, object, person or space. Given that they have not yet developed the language skills needed to effectively solve disputes they may use hitting, snatching or biting to meet their desired outcome (Porter, 2008).

When a child bites other children more than 3 times, we assess the situation through close observation and consultation with the staff team and family. Strategies will be put into place that reflects the observed patterns of behaviour in order to reduce further possible incidents.

It is upsetting for families of the child who is biting as well as the families whose children are bitten. This is equally the same for the children and educators and support as well as information is provided to all with the aim of reducing incidents and supporting families to understand what is happening and possible causes.

Families and educators will openly communicate about the child's behaviour, whilst maintaining confidentiality, in order to work together to help the child develop more appropriate ways of communicating their needs and wants.

For children under 3, biting can be a result of teething, a way of experimenting or a way of expressing their feelings/communicating. It is usually a stage they work through quickly with help. Educators have a great deal of experience in such situations and a range of strategies that help guide a child through this stage such as redirection, shadowing the child, providing chew toys or teething rings and crunchy foods as well as always meeting their needs for sleep/food etc.

Older children who bite are given tools to help in difficult situations. For example:

- recognising their own emotions so that they can learn to be in control of them and learn appropriate ways to express them
- practising being assertive with toys or props so that the child can use their words when they feel angry at their peers such as practice with puppets and through story books
- giving children alternative ways to gain control of their emotions such as listening to music, being physically active or quiet time away to calm down)
- supporting children with positive peer interactions in order for them to develop friendships

3.6 Behaviour Guidance Plan

If inappropriate behaviours continue, educators and the director will work with the family to devise a behaviour guidance plan. At times advice of professionals such as speech therapists, behavioural psychologists and others working at the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District Unit will also be sought.

If requested by the centre that further professional support be sought, it is a requirement of continuing enrolment that such support be accessed to ensure the wellbeing of the child, educators and other enrolled children.

3.7 Children's Sexuality

- In order to understand and learn about their world children need to explore and experiment. In learning about their bodies children will explore and discover all the things the different parts of their bodies can do - not only their arms and legs but also their genitals and bodily functions. Educators will use correct terms for body parts at all times and encourage children to do so also.
- Educators will be sensitive when reacting to children's exploration as it is natural and positive for children to be curious about their bodies and the bodies of other children.
- Educators are aware that self-exploration of genital areas is natural and common in young children.
- Educators will discourage children from touching other children's genitals and will talk to children about privacy of their own bodies and of their peers.

4. Review & History

5. Acknowledgements

Porter, L. (2008) *Young Children's Behaviour Practical approaches for Caregivers and Teachers*. Sydney: Elsevier Australia.

Community Child Care Cooperative (NSW) members website www.cccnsw.org.au

ECA 2006 Code of Ethics <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au>

Appendix A: History

The authorisation and amendment history for this document must be listed in the following table. Refer to information about [Version Control](#) on the Policy website.

Version	Authorised by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections modified
1.0	Vice President, University Service	11 November 2013	11 November 2013	
2.0	Early Years Management	20 November 2014	20 December 2014	

