Sturt Street Early Learning Centre and Preschool

Interactions with Children – Behaviour Guidance Policy

As a staff team we believe:

- Children have the same rights as adults.
- Families and staff/educators should use appropriate strategies to guide children to recognise, manage and learn from their behaviours and express their emotions in positive, non-threatening and productive ways.
- The use of physical punishment\(^1\) by any adult as a behaviour guidance strategy is not acceptable under any circumstances.
- The use of isolation, humiliation, intimidation or negative labelling by any adult as a behaviour guidance strategy is not acceptable under any circumstances.
- Children need to have their feelings acknowledged and accepted, and to be able to express their emotions appropriately. Emotional regulation is learned through sensitive adult child interactions.
- Cultural, religious and racial diversity needs to be respected.
- Children need to have consistent expectations in order to build positive behaviour and learn to regulate their emotions and behaviour.
- Families need to be involved in determining appropriate strategies for dealing with inappropriate behaviour.
- The centre needs to provide avenues of support for parenting skills.
- Staff and families need to have access to relevant agencies and professionals to make appropriate decisions in the best interests of the individual child and other children in the child care setting.

As a staff team we promote positive behaviour and interactions by:

- Planning and providing an environment that promotes a sense of belonging and attachment, and is attune to children’s emotional needs
- Reflecting on the behaviours of children and evaluating how experiences, interactions and routines have impacted on children’s behaviour both positively and negatively, in order to plan positive strategies for all children
- Providing children with opportunities to develop skills in resilience, conflict resolution, independence, entry and exit skills in play and respect for others.
- Ensuring staff use a calm speaking voice when working with children and use positive verbal and non-verbal guidance.
- Demonstrating appropriate behaviours when interacting with all children.
- Ensuring behavioural expectations are clearly expressed in positive terms and reinforced consistently in a developmentally appropriate way.
- Staff will deal with conflicts by encouraging problem solving and by diverting children to more socially appropriate behaviour. This will differ depending on the age and language capacity of the children involved.
- Following developmentally appropriate strategies for guiding behaviour

We will respond to challenging behaviours by:

- Using a positive approach to build on each child's strengths and achievements. If a child is having difficulty showing appropriate behaviour – time will be spent to support and encourage the child, to talk with parents/caregivers, to get to know what interests them, to give them the opportunity to practice doing the right thing and get acknowledgement for this. This may be specifically

\(^1\) For the purpose of this policy, physical punishment includes smacking, hitting, slapping, kicking, pinching, pulling, pushing, shoving or the inappropriate manhandling of a child by an adult.
detailed in a learning plan – to ensure consistency and common understandings between educators and families.

- Children often respond positively when they know that educators and families are communicating and being consistent.

- If children consistently display socially unacceptable behaviour the team leader will ensure:
  o the expectations of the child’s behaviour are realistic
  o the child understands the limits
  o there is communication about expectations between the staff and parents
  o the child’s needs are being met
  o the child has no impediments which may cause the unacceptable behaviour
  o the consequences of the behaviour do not encourage it to persist
  o strategies are consistently followed by all educators in contact with the child.

- If the socially unacceptable behaviour persists, the Director or senior staff member may jointly, with the parent, seek advice from a professional or appropriate agency.

- After the child has been given every chance to respond positively and if all methods fail to result in an improvement in behaviour, the Director or senior staff member may discuss alternative care with the parent / guardian, in consideration of the safety of the other children in care.

References:


Government of South Australia, Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people. Guidelines for staff working or volunteering in education and care settings. Department of Education and children’s services/ Catholic Ed and Assoc of Independent schools SA. 2011


Linke P. and Radich, J. , Children’s resilience; Working with the Early years learning framework. , Early Childhood Australia. 2010.


Rolle, S and Linke P., Every day learning about responding to the emotional needs of children. Early Childhood Australia 2011.
