

QA5 RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN POLICY

SCOPE

This policy and its associated documents provide a framework to guide all actions for the Approved Provider, Nominated supervisor, all team members, children, parents, volunteers, contractors, suppliers and any visitors to the Service.

Failure to adhere to this policy, or any of its associated documents, may result in disciplinary action being taken up to and including termination of employment for personnel, refusal of service for clients, and / or the dissolving of contractual agreements with suppliers and individuals outside of our Service.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to outline ways in which educators can develop responsive and respectful relationships with children.

This policy relates to:

- Relationships and interactions between educators and children
- Relationships between children
- Children's rights, and
- Children's self-regulation.

This policy relates to the National Quality Standard (NQS) Quality Area 5: Relationships with children.

POLICY STATEMENT

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN EDUCATORS AND CHILDREN

Our service has a focus on educators developing warm and responsive relationships with children. We understand that sometimes children and educators naturally gravitate to each other for a variety of reasons, including personality or temperament, shared cultural background and home language. We respect children's choice to have a deep connection with certain educators, and regularly reflect on our relationships with children to make sure these are positive and supported by our staffing systems.

Our educators view their relationships with children as reciprocal, they are mutually invested in the welfare of the children, act responsively to their needs, and value their perspectives. Our care giving system is designed so consistent and familiar educators work with the children. The relationships between educators and children contribute to a predictable environment that helps children to feel secure, confident and have a sense of belonging. Emotionally warm and positive interactions in learning situations lead to constructive behaviours in children.

Our supervision practices facilitate these interactions and promote engagement with children. This includes educators being responsive and sensitive to children's social cues, using positive tone of voice, body language, and consequences. As a result, children feel empowered and confident to make choices in their environment, to have agency, share ideas and opinions, and be full participants in the educational program.

We are acutely aware that the effectiveness of emotional communication between infants and caregivers contributes to a child's current and future wellbeing. Infants appreciate how educators respond to them, and they use these interactions as a cue for self-regulation. Our educators respond positively to children's intentions whether it is communicating a need, want or desire.

Educators plan for, monitor and assess relationships as part of an ongoing cycle of planning and programming, offering children opportunities to learn about themselves and their relationships with others. Educators gather information from observations, anecdotal records, and teacher and parent collaboration to make informed decisions as to how to adapt their practice to deepen their understanding of and relationships with children. This enables them to engage in conversations and develop learning programs that are responsive, relevant and authentic for each child. Educators gain insight into children's strengths, interests and abilities to identify the zone of proximal development and level of scaffolding needed to extend learning. This in turn increases social interactions with educators and peers.

We believe children are entitled to respect as human beings, with the right to be involved in decisions that affect them and their education. Diversity is celebrated to build a community based on a sense of belonging, solidarity, justice, responsibility, caring, and sensitivity. We value a culture of respect for children's rights, for their dignity and citizenship, and for their capacity to contribute significantly towards their own well-being beyond the confines of the educational context.

The dignity and rights of children are maintained through equity of service access, privacy provisions and opportunities to be active participants in a child-centred learning environment. The educators and teachers plan learning opportunities that facilitate self-directed learning in a Montessori environment. Through active participation children are supported to acquire skills in thinking, analysing, investigating, creating, and applying knowledge to achieve their optimum potential.

To ensure that children are provided with meaningful opportunities to be heard, it is important that they have access to appropriate information in forms that are consistent with their level of understanding. It is also important that they are offered privacy and confidentiality regarding their personal information, consistent with their right to protection. Furthermore, it is essential that they are informed about how decisions are to be made, and how their views will influence any decisions made about them.

We view the child at the centre of an ecological social system. We acknowledge the child's relationship with their family as an integral part of this system. This influences our practice as we value all those close relationships important to the child and understand that to build positive relationships with children, we must strive to build strong partnerships with families.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CHILDREN

Our educators are mindful observers and knowledgeable of ways to facilitate positive peer relations, and if necessary, engage in professional development to increase their repertoire of strategies to effectively facilitate positive peer interactions and relationships. We plan environments that allow

children to play in small groups providing opportunities to engage in meaningful reciprocal interactions, supported by educators as models for effective communication. Through these opportunities' children form bonds, develop strong friendships, and learn collaboratively.

Social and emotional education is embedded into all facets of the early childhood experience at our service. Our educators focus on supporting children's emotional self-regulation. We acknowledge that children's ability to read emotional cues, and to express emotions appropriately, leads to greater social success. We encourage children to draw on their social resources to enable increased participation in the educational program. These beneficial interactions in turn facilitate a positive influence on children's cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and biological responses.

Educators make intentional decisions in relation to planning for learning experiences and environments that promote children's development of the skills necessary to initiate and maintain positive interactions and relationships. This understanding of self and of others results in an increased ability to self-regulate, enabling the development of positive relationships with educators and other children.

We promote social understanding involving children's comprehension of their own and others' beliefs, emotions, and intentions, which directly affect their social interactions with others. When children work collaboratively, they develop a common understanding of the world as they acquire verbal, cognitive and social skills, all of which influence their learning. In this type of learning environment, children attain a better understanding of their peers' needs, points of view, and a better perception of social problems and how to resolve these.

DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

Agency - being able to make choices and decisions, to influence events and to have an impact on one's world.

Curriculum - all interactions, experiences, activities routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children's learning and development (DEEWR, 2009).

Ecological social system - how the inherent qualities of a child and his environment interact to influence how he will grow and develop. Through the Bronfenbrenner Ecological Theory, Bronfenbrenner stressed the importance of studying a child in the context of multiple environments, also known as ecological systems in the attempt to understand his development.

Program – the documentation showing children's educational goals, the learning opportunities that are provided by our educators to achieve these, and the related educator practices to support learning.

Scaffolding - the educators' decisions and actions that build on children's existing knowledge and skills to enhance their learning.

Wellbeing – being comfortable, healthy, or happy.

Zone of proximal development - is the difference between what a learner can do without help and what he or she can do with help.

LINKS TO STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

This policy relates to the National Quality Standard (NQS) Quality Area 5: Relationships with children.

Standard/ Elements	Concept	Descriptor
QA5		Relationships with children
5.1	Relationships between educators and children	Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.
5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.
5.2	Relationships between children	Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.
5.2.1	Collaborative learning	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.
5.2.2	Self-regulation	Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviors, respond appropriately to the behavior of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.

This policy relates to the following law and national regulations:

Standard/ Elements	Concept	Related law and national regulations
QA5		Relationships with children
5.1	Relationships between educators and children	Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.
		Section 166 Offence to use inappropriate discipline Regulation 155 Interactions with children Section 166 Offence to use inappropriate discipline Regulation 155 Interactions with children
5.2	Relationships between children	Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.
		Section 166 Offence to use inappropriate discipline Regulation 155 Interactions with children Regulation 156 Relationships in groups

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

ACECQA (2018). *Guide to the national quality standard*. Barton, ACT: Commonwealth of Australia.

Cefai, C. and Cavioni, V. (2014). *Social and emotional education in primary school: integrating theory and research into practice*. New York, NY: Springer New York.

Centre on the Developing Child Harvard University. *Early childhood mental health*. Retrieved 24 April, 2018 from www.developingchild.harvard.edu/science/deep-dives/mental-health/

Cohrssen, C., Church, A., and Tayler, C. (2011). *Victorian early years learning and development framework evidence paper, practice principle 5: respectful relationships and responsive engagement*. The University of Melbourne: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010). Retrieved 20 April, 2018 from <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations/national-law>

Education and Care Services National Regulations (2018). Retrieved 20 April, 2018 from <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations/national-law>

Everymind. *Foundations: developing social and emotional wellbeing in early childhood*. Retrieved 24 April, 2018 from www.everymind.org.au/resources/foundations-developing-social-and-emotional-wellbeing-in-early-childhood

Gomez, F., Nussbaum, M., Weitz, J.F., Lopez, X., Mena, J., and Torres, A. (2013). Co-Located Single Display Collaborative Learning for Early Childhood Education. *International Journal of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning*, 8(2), pp. 225-244.

Hazen, N. & Brownell, C. (1999). Peer relationships in early childhood: currents trends and future direction. *Early Education and Development*, 10(3), pp. 233-240, DOI: 10.1207/s15566935eed1003_1

Kang, D., Boss, L., and Clowtis, L. (2016). Social Support and Cognition: Early Childhood Versus Older Adulthood. *Western Journal of Nursing Research*, 38(12), pp. 1639-1659.

Lansdown, Jimerson, & Shahroozi. (2014). Children's rights and school psychology: Children's right to participation. *Journal of School Psychology*, 52(1), 3-12.

National Research Council. (2000). *Eager to learn: educating our preschoolers*. Washington DC: The National Academies Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17226/9745>

Stonehouse, A. (2012). Relationships with children. *National Quality Standard Professional Learning Program (36)*.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Retrieved 20 April, 2018 from <https://www.unicef.org/crc/>

DOCUMENT CONTROL		
Date Reviewed	Modifications	Next Policy Document Review Date
Nov, 2019	Developed & approved	Q4, 2021