

Relationships with Children

SWISH Education

Background

“In the process of learning the complex life skills of cooperation, conflict resolution, acceptable expression of strong feelings, children, like all of us, make mistakes” (Gartrell, 1997).

However, young children are likely to make far more mistakes than adults because their abilities to think and reason are in the early stages of development, their life experience is limited and they have had little exchange with other children.

Educators can effectively help children to learn social skills by providing them with supportive physical and social environments to learn and practise their social skills. When children make a mistake, educators are best to treat the children with respect and empathy as they guide and encourage them to recognise, manage and learn from the mistake, and to express their emotions in positive, non-threatening and productive ways.

Policy statement

This Policy sets out the Service’s expectations for educators’ relationships with young children and to facilitate the children’s friendships with each other. It also details the approach to children who have difficulty relating to others and following guidelines that uphold the safety, dignity and rights of other children.

Strategies and practices

- The Service’s wide variety of resources, materials and equipment meets the needs (e.g. age, development, culture) and interests of the children, and supports children’s learning and harmonious play. Refer to the Service’s *Educational Program Policy*.
- The Service’s expectation that educators relate to children in accordance with this Policy and the *Service’s Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy* is emphasised during their induction.
- The Service’s rosters are planned to support continuity of care where ever possible so that the children are with educators who know them well and are interested in what they think, feel and do. Further, the educators promote the children’s wellbeing, self-esteem and sense of security by being responsive, warm, trusting and respectful.
- Educators consistently model positive social skills in their everyday interactions with other adults and children.
- The Service provides educators with professional development in relating with children and in positive behaviour guidance.
- The Service is committed to working in partnerships with parents to best meet the education and care needs of their children. The communication between home and the Service is especially

Relationships with Children

important when children experience difficulty relating to others, and ensures that each party is aware of what is occurring in the child's day.

- The program has periods of uninterrupted play which accommodate child-initiated, educator-initiated and co-constructed activities. This blend provides children the opportunities to make choices, contribute their own ideas, thoughts and feelings – and to develop social competence. Children then know that they are valued as capable and competent.
- Educators encourage children's efforts, rather than praise the child.
- Educators intentionally teach children protective behaviours.

When responding to children who have difficulty relating to others or following guidelines, educators:

- Take a positive approach to guiding children's behaviour.
- Draw upon strategies that do not diminish the child in the eyes of others and, at the same time, do not negatively affect onlooking children. Strategies could include: redirection, reminders of the rules (without censure), suggesting alternatives, offering choices and encouraging children to think about how others might feel (empathy).
- Consider other influences on the child
 - Specific circumstances
 - Specific times of day
 - Developmental issues
 - Prior experiences, particularly those within their family.
- Adopt a problem-solving approach which involves the children in deciding what to do in the situation.

When managing children with recurrent difficulty relating to others or following guidelines, educators:

- Maintain written records of dates, times, circumstances and possible causes of the incidents.
- Discuss with the parents any concerns about their child's behaviour.
- In the interest of the learning opportunity of all of our students, consistently disruptive students will be removed from workshops and parents will be asked to collect them.
- Refer parents to an external support agency, when appropriate.

Dealing with Unacceptable and Continuously Disruptive Behaviour

- When confronted with negative behaviour, staff will be clear to distinguish between 'disengaged', 'disruptive' and 'unacceptable' behaviour. 'Disengaged' behaviour may indicate that a child is bored, unsettled or unhappy. With sensitive interventions, staff will often be able to re-engage a child in purposeful activity. Disengaged is not deemed as unacceptable or disruptive behaviour.

Relationships with Children

- 'Disruptive' behaviour describes behaviour which prevents other children from enjoying themselves.
- 'Unacceptable' behaviour refers to non-negotiable actions and may include discriminatory remarks, violence, intimidation, bullying or deliberate destruction of equipment.
- When an incident of unacceptable or disruptive behaviour occurs, staff will listen to the child or children concerned and hear their reasons for their actions. Staff will then explain to the child or children what was inappropriate about their behaviour and that such actions have consequences for both themselves and for other people.
- Staff will make every attempt to ensure that children understand what is being said to them. Children will always be given the opportunity to make amends for their behaviour and, if appropriate, be able to rejoin the activity. Consideration will be given to the child or young person's individual needs. Every effort will be made to communicate in the most appropriate manner in order to assist in an improvement in behaviours.
- Parents will be informed of inappropriate behaviour when picking up their child. The parent will be informed of the incident, how it was dealt with and how the child responded.
- In the event that unacceptable and/or disruptive behaviour persists, or in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour more serious actions may have to be taken, including Suspensions and/or Exclusions from SWISH Education.

Suspensions and Exclusions of Children

Persistent unacceptable and/or disruptive behaviour from a child will result in the following:

Suspension

In the event of a serious or dangerous incident or extreme disruption a child's parents will be called and they will be suspended from SWISH Education with immediate effect. Children are not be allowed to leave the premises until a parent arrives to collect them.

Staff should always keep parents informed about behaviour management issues relating to their child and attempt to work with them to tackle the causes of disruptive or unacceptable behaviour.

No staff member may impose a suspension from SWISH Education without prior discussion with the Director. Staff will consult the Director as early as possible if they believe that a child's behaviour may warrant suspension or exclusion.

When a suspension is over and before a child is allowed to return to SWISH Education, there will be a discussion between Director, the child and their parents, setting out the conditions of their return.

Exclusion

- In a situation of consistent disruptive behaviour or significant level of inappropriate behaviour which prevents staff from delivering their workshop and/or students from enjoying SWISH, SWISH Education has the right to permanently exclude a child.

Relationships with Children

Responsibilities of parents

- To inform the Service of any changes in their child's education and care needs.
- To contribute to the program.
- To provide the Service with up-to-date information on their child and on any external circumstances affecting the child.
- To collaborate with educators in establishing any behaviour guidance plan required.
- To seek professional help for their child when recommended by the Service.

Procedures and forms

- N/A

Links to other policies

- Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Educational Program
- Interactions with Families Policy
- Staffing Policy

Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2011

Regs	155	Interactions with children
	156	Relationships in groups
QA	1.1.1	Curriculum decision-making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators
	1.1.2	Each child's current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program
	1.1.3	The program, including routines, is organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning
	1.2.3	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world
	1.3.1	Each child's learning and development is assessed or evaluated as part of an ongoing cycle of observation, analysing learning, documentation, planning, implementation and reflection
	1.2.2	Educators respond to children's ideas and play and extend children's learning through open-ended questions, interactions and feedback
	2.1.1	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation
	2.2.1	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
	2.2.3	Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect
	4.1.2	Every effort is made for children to experience continuity of educators at the service
	5.1.1	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included
	5.1.2	The dignity and the rights of every child are maintained

Relationships with Children

5.2.1	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other
5.2.2	Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts
6.1.1	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
6.1.2	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected, and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing
6.2.2	Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program
7.1.1.	A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service's operations
7.2.3	The educational leader is supported and leads the development and implementation of the educational program and assessment and planning cycle

Sources

- Abbey, B. (2007). *Behaviour management of children in long day care centres: The effects of training on carers' practices*. PhD thesis
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Gartrell, D. (1995). Misbehaviour or mistaken behaviour. *Young Children*. 50(5) 27-34
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011

Further reading and useful websites

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority – <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/> accessed 24 December 2017
- Early Childhood Australia – <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/> accessed 24 December 2017
- Tebyani, V. (2009). *Guiding children's behaviour in child care*. http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/family-resources/factsheets/guiding_children's_behaviour.pdf accessed 24 December 2017

Policy review

The Service encourages staff and parents to be involved in the annual review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur and any issues identified as part the Service's commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

Version Control

Version	Date Reviewed	Approved By	Comments/Amendments	Next Review Date
1	8 January 2018	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated to changed NQF requirements 1 February 2018. Service to modify policies to its specific needs.	
2	2 May 2019	Rebecca Evans	Updated to support SWISH procedures	2 May 2019