Positive Relationships for Children Policy

Quick reference: positive relationships | child centred care | equity and inclusion | respectful interactions | dignity and rights of the child | belonging | connectedness | wellbeing | positive behaviour guidance | self-regulation | behaviour guidance plans | group relationships | collaborative learning | bullying | helping children with trauma

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

(1)   To set out how we ensure positive relationships between educators and children, and among children themselves

(2)   This policy is a requirement under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*. The approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for interactions with children (s 168), and take reasonable steps to ensure that children are educated and cared for in a way that meets specific requirements for interactions with children (s 155) and relationships in groups (s 156)

(3)   This policy aligns with the National Quality Standard Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children

SCOPE

(4)   This policy applies to:

- Educators and educational leaders, including permanent and temporary staff, third parties (e.g., contractors, labour hire workers), volunteers and work placement students who are carrying out the role of educator or educational leader

- The approved provider and the nominated supervisor/persons in day-to-day charge

- Children in our care, their parents, families and care providers

DEFINITIONS

(5)   The following definitions apply to this policy and related procedures:

- 'Parents' includes guardians and persons who have parental responsibilities for the child under a decision or order of court

- 'Staff' refers to paid employees, volunteers, students, and third parties who are covered in the scope of this policy

POLICY STATEMENT

Relationships between educators and children

(6)   Educators must demonstrate respectful and equitable relationships with all children (National Quality Standard 5.1)

(7)   Educators must encourage children to express themselves and their opinions (*National Regulations* s 155)

(8)   Children must be offered experiences that help them to develop self-reliance and self-esteem (*National Regulations* s 155)

(9)   Educators must develop strong, reciprocal relationships with the children in their care, treating each child as an individual and with regard to their individual family and cultural values, age, and physical and intellectual development and abilities (*National Regulations* s 155)

(10)   Educators must give children positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour (*National Regulations* s 155)

(11)   Educators must follow our procedures for positive interactions between educators and children with children (attached)

Positive interactions between educators and children

(12)   Educators must demonstrate consistent, responsive and meaningful relationships with children to build their trust and a sense of security (National Quality Standard Element 5.1.1)

(13)   All children must be treated fairly and with respect**,** regardless of their age, social or cultural or linguistic backgrounds, abilities, disabilities, gender, sexual identity, or family circumstances

(14)   Each child's contribution and presence must be acknowledged, and educators must provide an environment in which all children sense they belong and are accepted

(15)   Educators must model fairness and respect in their interactions with other adults at our service

(16)   Educators must support children's emotional needs and respond to children in a warm, empathetic and caring manner

Maintaining the dignity and rights of every child

(17)   Our service must uphold the dignity and rights of every child in our care (National Quality Standard Element 5.1.2), consistent with our *Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing* and the Convention on the Rights of the Child

(18)   Educators must always act in the best interests of children, including by empowering them to know and exercise their rights, valuing their views on matters that affect them, ensuring their safety and wellbeing, and creating an environment that allows them to learn and thrive and which values diversity, equity and inclusion

(19)   Educators must follow our policies and procedures to protect children from harm or risk of harm (e.g., Child Safe Environment Policy, Child Protection Policy, Child Safe Code of Conduct), including for mandatory reporting, or notifications to the regulatory authority

(20)   We have zero tolerance for bullying, harassment, punitive discipline or discriminatory behaviour. Staff are made aware that it is an offence to use inappropriate discipline, including any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances (*National Law* s 166)

(21)   If there are instances of bullying, discrimination or exclusion amongst children, educators must ensure that the behaviour is managed and that all children are safe

(22)   Educators must protect children's rights to privacy and freedom of thought

Relationships between children

(23)   Educators must support each child to have sensitive and responsive relationships (National Quality Standard 5.2)

(24)   The approved provider must ensure that staff can, and do, promote respectful and positive relationships between children themselves and with staff members (including students and volunteers) (*National Regulations* s 156)

(25)   The approved provider must ensure that the size and composition of the groups in which children are placed is conducive to forming positive relationships with each other and with staff members (*National Regulations* s 156). Where possible and appropriate, children will be placed in smaller group sizes to allow educators to teach and respond to children more effectively, and for children to form closer bonds with others

(26)   Educators must follow our procedures for supporting relationships between children (attached), which cover group interactions, self-regulation and positive behaviour guidance, helping children through difficult times, and how to manage bullying and biting in children

Collaborative learning

(27)   Educators must support children to collaborate, learn from and help each other (National Quality Standard Element 5.2.1)

(28)   Children are supported to cooperate and be respectful though our inclusive, well-planned, developmentally appropriate educational program and during our daily routines and interactions

Supporting behaviour regulation and communication

(29)   Educators must support each child to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts (National Quality Standard Element 5.2.2)

(30)   We must ensure that children develop their emotional regulation and social skills in a safe, respectful and nurturing way

(31)   Educators must guide children to regulate their emotions and behaviour:

- With clear and positive communication, reinforcement, and consistent routines

- Using their understanding of each child's family, background and culture

- By supporting children to understand their own feelings and the feelings of others, and to reflect on the impact of their actions on themselves and those around them

- With an understanding of child development and learning

- With a focus on the children's strengths

- In the context of mutually respectful relationships between children and adults

(32)   We must partner with families (and specialists and/or support agencies in some cases) to support each child's emotional and social learning, and if we need to develop specific behaviour guidance strategies for a child who is not responding to our routine strategies

(33)   Families should inform their child's educator about any relevant circumstances in their lives that might affect the child's behaviour at our service

(34)   If there is a difference of opinion about how to guide a child's behaviour, staff and families should work together to come to an agreement that is in the best interests of the child

(35)   The approved provider and nominated supervisor must ensure that educators have the resources and training to respond appropriately to children who are displaying challenging behaviour, including by organising any extra assistance that is needed (e.g., through government programs, external agencies and professionals)

(36)   Educators must never apply corporal punishment or unreasonable discipline to a child, including the practice of 'time out' if it involves isolating the child

Behaviour guidance plans

(37)   If a child needs more support to regulate their behaviour, we may need to implement an individual behaviour guidance plan for them

(38)   All plans must be developed in consultation with families and, if appropriate, with professional assistance or support agencies

(39)   Parental consent is always required where a referral for intervention is requested by educators

(40)   If there is dispute or concerns about a child's behaviour guidance plan that cannot be resolved within the service, the approved provider or nominated supervisor will consult with the regulatory authority

Quality relationships are embedded across our operations

(41)   Educators must act according to our statement of philosophy in their interactions with children:

We believe that all children have the right to experience quality child care.

Traditional Jewish values and ethics as promulgated by the Torah are central to the philosophy of our institutions. These values include belief in G-d, love of fellow man, respect for parents, pride in Judaism, study of Torah and observance and appreciation of Mitzvot.

Each child is encouraged to recognise their own self-worth and that through the particular gifts and abilities that G-d has bestowed upon them, they are able to better the world.

Essential to the centre's philosophy is the need to maintain a warm, positive and co-operative environment in which students can grow and learn. Such a nurturing environment is deemed vital for the development of self-esteem, and confidence.

Our Aftercare & Vacation Care aim is to support the wellbeing and development of the "whole child", and as such provide a balance of social, religious and secular themes as well as life skills, to promote the child's complete personal development.

The overall philosophy is developed in collaboration with children, educators, families, community and management. This process respects and values the views of all and enhances clarity and understanding between all users of the service.

Our philosophy draws on values held by educators, families and management and reflects the needs and values of the community. We value each and every child as capable and confident, regardless of their capabilities and background within the context of the family and

we believe that the family is the primary educator of each child. We work in partnership with all families, and promote an awareness and respect for all families, including indigenous owners and custodians of this land. Each child's family knows their child best, and staff will work in partnership with families to ensure the best outcomes for children.

We believe that children's learning in our setting complements their learning at home and at school however the importance of relationships and strengthening each child's strengths, skills, talents and interest is priority. We recognise and value that children's learning and development evolves through their relationships where they shape their own identities to become active citizens.

At Chabad Youth we strive to promote children to experience, meaningful and joyful learning to enrich their childhood. We value and encourage each child to be involved in decision making that influence their learning, wellbeing, development and decisions that affect their world.

We as educators and the service will be guided at all times by the Early Childhood Code of Ethics (2006), National Quality Framework and all Early Education and Care legislation.

(42)	The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations are embedded in our leadership, governance and culture. Staff must uphold our *Commitment Statement to Child Safety and Wellbeing,* and always act in accordance with our Child Safe Environment Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct

(43)	Our educational program and practice are aligned with the vision, principles and practices of *the National Approved Learning Framework,* which puts children's relationships with others as central to their learning

(44)	We only recruit educators who can demonstrate a deep understanding and commitment to creating and maintaining trusting, respectful and equitable relationships with children

(45)	The approved provider ensures educators are supported, resourced and trained to build and maintain positive relationships with and among children

(46)	We recognise that maintaining a consistent team ensures children feel secure and can build trusting relationships with educators. To retain and attract educators, we promote a positive workplace culture, offer professional growth opportunities, recognise and reward contributions, have strong leadership, and support work-life balance

(47)	We maintain our child-to-educator ratio at all times

Our practice is informed by critical reflection

(48) Our education program takes into account the individual needs and development of each child, including their strengths, experiences and interests

(49) Educators must regularly evaluate and adjust their teaching methods, interactions with children and the overall program and environment, including by:

- Observing, assessing and documenting individual children's behaviour, interactions and responses to activities

- Analysing their practices and interactions

- Gathering feedback from other educators, children and families

- Keeping abreast of the latest theoretical perspectives to inform their practice

(50) The nominated supervisor and room leaders must ensure that educators are given time on the floor and in team meetings for reflection and programming and time in team meetings to discuss:

- The social justice and equity implications of their approaches to their relationships with children and support for children's relationships with each other

- The personal, professional and organisational values that support children to have sensitive and responsive relationships

Our practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and communities

(51) Educators must contribute to our service having a culturally safe environment where everyone can feel safe to express themselves and their culture, and everyone is invited to challenge stereotypes and biases

(52) Educators must work in partnership with families so that children's values, cultures, traditions and languages are respected and incorporated into our daily activities, programming and physical environment

(53) Educators must respect families' input on guiding their child's behaviour, learning and wellbeing, and have open discussions about how to align these with our own practices, philosophy and standards

(54) We consult with, and value the input from, families about how we can improve our practice and interactions with children

(55) Educators must follow our procedures for communicating with families and documenting and sharing information about children's learning, development, interactions, behaviour and relationships

PRINCIPLES

(56) We provide a safe, nurturing, relaxed and happy environment for children at our service

(57) We help children to develop a strong and positive sense of identity. We respond to their individual needs, as well as their family and cultural values

(58) We are committed to helping children to develop effective ways to communicate with others, and to supporting them to express themselves and their ideas confidently

(59) Educators create and maintain respectful and equitable relationships with each child, and have responsive and meaningful interactions that build children's trust, confidence and security

(60) Educators use positive behavioural guidance that focusses on each child's strengths, and is based on knowledge of child development and a foundation of mutual respect

(61) We uphold at all times the dignity and rights of every child

(62) Educators have the resources and support they need to maintain positive relationships with children. They are reflective about their practice and our service's programming

(63) We work in partnership with families and communities in the best interests of children

(64) We regularly review and update our policies and procedures to make sure they still reflect current recognised best practice. We are committed to continuous improvement

POLICY COMMUNICATION, TRAINING AND MONITORING

(65) This policy and related documents can be found on our website and in our front office.
(66) The approved provider and nominated supervisor provide information, training and other resources and support regarding the Positive Relationships for Children Policy and related documents
(67) All staff (including volunteers and students) are formally inducted. They are given access to review, understand and formally acknowledge this Positive Relationships for Children Policy and related documents
(68) The Nominated supervisor runs a professional development program for each staff member, which covers this policy

(69) Roles and responsibilities and clearly defined in this policy and in individual position descriptions. They are communicated during staff inductions and in ongoing training

(70) The approved provider and nominated supervisor monitor and audit staff practices through supervision and regular performance appraisal and address non-compliance. Breaches to this policy are taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action against a staff member

(71) At enrolment, families are given access to our Positive Relationships for Children Policy and related documents

(72) Families are notified in line with our obligations under the *National Regulations* when changes are made to our policies and procedures

LEGISLATION (OVERVIEW)

Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations

Law	Description
s 165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
s 166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline
s 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
s 168	Offence related to required programs
s 169	Offence relating to staffing arrangements
Regulations	
s 73	Educational program
s 123	Educator to child ratios
s 155	Interactions with children
s 156	Relationships in groups
s 170	Policies and procedures to be followed
s 171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
s 172	Notification of change to policies or procedures

National Quality Standard

Standard / Element	Concept	Description
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 is 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 behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts

My Time, Our Place (MTOP) V2.0

Outcome	Key component
1: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY	• Children and young people feel safe, secure and supported • Children and young people develop their autonomy, interdependence, resilience and agency • Children and young people develop knowledgeable, confident self-identities and a sense of positive self-worth • Children and young people learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect
2: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE CONNECTED WITH AND CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR WORLD	• Children and young people develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary as active and informed citizens • Children and young people respond to diversity with respect • Children and young people become aware of fairness
3: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF WELLBEING	• Children and young people become strong in their social, emotional and mental wellbeing • Children and young people are aware of and develop strategies to support their own mental and physical health, and personal safety

National Principles for Safe Organisations

Most relevant principles
Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing
Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice
Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Key Policies	Child Safe Environment Policy	Child Protection Policy	Child Safe Code of Conduct	Inclusion Policy	Enrolment Policy	Orientation for Children Policy	Educator and Management Policy	Staffing Arrangements Policy	Education Curriculum and Learning Policy	Families and Communities Partnerships Policy	Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
Procedures	Roles and Responsibilities – Positive Relationships for Children (attached)	Positive Relationships for Children Procedures (attached)	Child Safe Environment Procedures (in Child Safe Environment Policy)	Child Protection Procedures (in Child Protection Policy)
Resources	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

SOURCES

Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations | National Quality Standard | ACECQA's Guide to the NQF | State/territory regulatory authorities' guidance on Standard QA5 | National Principles for Child Safe Organisations | National Approved Learning Frameworks | UN Convention on the Rights of the Child | Be You (Beyond Blue) | Raising Children Network | Circle of Security | Bullying. No Way! | NAPCAN resources | Australian Childhood Foundation | Blue Knot Foundation

POLICY INFORMATION

Approval	Dina Kahn

Review Reviewed annually and when there are changes that may affect this policy or related procedures. The review will include checks to ensure the document reflects current legislation, continues to be effective, or whether any changes and additional training are required

Reviewed: 2/3/25

Date for next review: 2/3/26

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES – Positive Relationships for Children

Approved provider responsibilities (not limited to)

Ensure our service meets its obligations under the *Education and Care Services National Law* and *Regulations,* including to take reasonable steps keep children safe from harm and hazards, and to ensure that children are educated and cared for in a way that:

- Encourages them to express themselves and their opinions
- Allows them to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self esteem
- Maintains at all times their dignity and rights
- Gives them positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour
- Has regard to their individual family and cultural values, age, and physical and intellectual development and abilities
- Gives them opportunities to develop respectful and positive relationships with each other and with staff members (including students and volunteers), with regard to the size and composition of the groups in which children are placed

Ensure that our service's governance, management, operations, policies, plans, (including risk management/action plans), systems, practices and procedures for relationships with children and between children are appropriate in practice, up-to-date, best practice, and comply with all relevant legislation, standards and guidelines

Ensure this Positive Relationships for Children Policy and related procedures are in place and available for inspection

Take reasonable steps to ensure our Positive Relationships for Children Policy and related policies and procedures are followed (e.g. through clear and accessible communication, and systemised inductions, training and monitoring of all staff – including volunteers, students)

Ensure that our service always meets the minimum educator and staff requirements, including for qualifications and educator to child ratios

Ensure that no child is subjected to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable or inappropriate in the circumstances. Always act on any concerns of harm or risk of harm to a child in line with child protection laws and our policies and procedures

Regularly review this Positive Relationships for Children Policy and related procedures in consultation with children, families, communities and staff

Notify families at least 14 days before changing this Positive Relationships for Children Policy if the changes will: affect the fees charged or the way they are collected; or significantly impact the service's education and care of children; or significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the service

Nominated supervisor / persons in day-to-day charge responsibilities (not limited to)

Ensure our service meets its obligations under the *Education and Care Services National Law* and *Regulations,* and support the approved provider to ensure that children are educated and cared for in a way that:

- Encourages them to express themselves and their opinions
- Allows them to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self esteem
- Maintains at all times their dignity and rights
- Gives them positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour
- Has regard to their individual family and cultural values, age, and physical and intellectual development and abilities
- Gives them opportunities to develop respectful and positive relationships with each other and with staff members (including students and volunteers), with regard to the size and composition of the groups in which children are place

Support the approved provider to ensure that our service's governance, management, operations, policies, plans, (including risk management/action plans), systems, practices and procedures for relationships with children and between children are appropriate in practice, up-to-date, best practice, and comply with all relevant legislation, standards and guidelines

Implement this Positive Relationships for Children Policy and related procedures

Take reasonable steps to ensure our Positive Relationships for Children Policy and related policies and procedures are followed (e.g. through clear and accessible communication, and systemised inductions, training and monitoring of all staff – including volunteers, students)

Ensure that our service always meets the minimum educator and staff requirements, including for qualifications and educator to child ratios

Ensure that no child is subjected to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable or inappropriate in the circumstances. Always act on any concerns of harm or risk of harm to a child in line with child protection laws and our policies and procedures

Contribute to policies and procedure reviews and risk assessments and plans in consultation with children, families, communities and staff. Support the approved provider to notify families of reviews and changes according to legislation and our policies and procedures

Educator / other staff responsibilities (not limited to)

Follow this Positive Relationships for Children Policy and related procedures

Ensure that no child is subjected to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable or inappropriate in the circumstances. Always act on any concerns of harm or risk of harm to a child in line with child protection laws and our policies and procedures

Implement our educational program and practices, regularly engage in critical reflection, and undertake any professional development you need

Provide children with positive behaviour guidance and emotional support according to your training and our procedures. Implement any behaviour guidance plans in place in collaboration with families and (if required) professionals

Communicate regularly and respectfully with families about children's behaviour, development, wellbeing and needs. Put children's best interests at the forefront if there are differences in opinion on the approach to behavioural guidance

Discuss any concerns you have related to interactions with or between children with your room leader, the nominated supervisor or the approved provider (e.g., if you need advice, resources or support etc)

Contribute to policy and procedure reviews, and to identifying and managing risks

Families responsibilities (not limited to)

Inform your child's educator about any relevant circumstances in their lives that might affect the child's behaviour at our service (e.g., moving house, new siblings, family relationship issues)

Collaborate with staff (and, where necessary, other professionals or specialists) if your child is having difficulty in self-regulating or maintaining positive relationships with other children or staff members. This may include consulting with staff to develop a behavioural guidance plan for your

child. Put your child's best interests at the forefront if there are differences in opinion about how to guide their behaviour

Model respectful and equitable interactions with children and staff while at our service

Positive Relationships for Children Procedures

Introduction

- These procedures apply to our Positive Relationships for Children Policy
- 'Parents' includes guardians and persons who have parental responsibilities for the child under a decision or order of court
- 'Staff' includes volunteers, students and third parties defined in the scope of the Positive Relationships for Children Policy
- 'Corporal punishment and unreasonable discipline' are considered serious breaches of the law. ACECQA gives the following examples:

Inappropriate discipline	Inappropriate practice
Hitting, slapping, or pinching	Negative labelling of a child or family
Isolating or locking children away (including if used during 'Time out'	Criticising a child's actions or behaviour
Yelling at a child	Discouraging a child from taking part in activities
Humiliating or belittling a child	Blaming or shaming
Physically dragging a child	Making fun of, laughing at or about a child, or using sarcastic or cruel humour
Force feeding or depriving a child of food or drink (including saying to a child 'if you don't eat your vegetables you can't have dessert')	Excessive use of negative language (e.g., saying 'no', 'stop that!', 'don't….', or 'you never...')
Unreasonably restraining a child	
Excluding children from events	
Consistently moving children to the office or to other space away from the play areas	
Moving children to another room as punishment (including if used during 'Time out')	
Verbally or physically threatening a child	

Attachments

- Appendix C – <u>Positive Interactions Between Educators and Children Procedure</u>
- Appendix D – <u>Positive Group Interactions Procedure</u>
- Appendix E – <u>Self Regulation and Positive Behaviour Guidance for Children Procedure</u>
- Appendix F – <u>Helping Children Through Difficult Times Procedure</u>
- Appendix G – <u>Dealing with Bullying Procedure</u>

PROCEDURE – POSITIVE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN EDUCATORS AND CHILDREN

When to use this procedure

- During everyday interactions with children in our care

1. **Maintain respectful and equitable relationships with each child:**

   - Do not show favouritism, bias or preference for any child, or make negative comparisons between children

   - Address all children by their names and treat them as individuals

   - Speak to children in a way that is positive, encouraging and respectful

   - Do not criticise children or speak to them in harsh tones

   - Treat all children as important and listen to their ideas, thoughts and feelings. Make them feel heard and valued

   - Participate respectfully in children's play, and use children's cues and signals to guide their engagement

2. **Maintain responsive and meaningful interactions with children:**

   - Consistently observe children's non-verbal cues and respond to their physical or emotional needs in ways that make them feel safe and supported

   - Talk to parents about their children to gain insight into them and their homelife

   - Have regular and sustained conversations with children about their interests, emotions, thoughts and experiences

   - Have relaxed and unhurried mealtimes where you sit and talk with children

   - Create a sense of belonging by acknowledging and valuing each child's contribution and presence

   - Demonstrate that you know each child well and have developed a unique, reciprocal relationship with them. Tailor your communication and interactions to the individual child

- Help children feel secure through consistent behaviour, communication and routines

- Encourage children who have separation anxiety when they are away from their families to bring a comfort item with them

3. **Use effective communication:**

- Use age-appropriate language and short, clear sentences

- Adapt your communication style according to the child's needs, preferences and developmental level. Use non-verbal communication where appropriate (e.g., sign language, visual aids, body language, facial expressions)

- Avoid overly complex instructions or abstract concepts that may confuse children

- Give children your full attention, make eye contact and show interest in their thoughts and feelings

- Repeat or paraphrase what children have said or conveyed to show you understand and encourage further conversation

- Use a warm and encouraging tone of voice

- Smile, nod and maintain a relaxed posture to show you are approachable and present

- Demonstrate respectful and polite communication (e.g., saying 'please' and 'thank you', not interrupting others or speaking harshly)

- Use positive phrasing to guide behaviour (e.g., 'Let's walk outside' rather than 'Don't run')

- Give explanations for rules or boundaries so children understand why they are in place

- Be patient and give children enough time to process and respond

- Maintain consistent language and expectations in interactions so children have a feeling of security and predictability

- Find out from families about any non-verbal forms of communication by their children to convey messages such as hunger, needing the toilet, tiredness or emotions

4. **Maintain the dignity and rights of every child:**

- Treat children as individuals. Address them by their names and respect their personal preferences and unique ways of doing things

- Do not allow any child to be bullied or harassed

- Treat children with kindness. Never humiliate, degrade or belittle children, or use punishment or discriminatory behaviour or language

- Be aware that it is an offence to use inappropriate discipline, including any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances

- Treat all children equally, regardless of their race, gender, disability, language, religion or other status

- Ensure our environment and activities reflect the diverse cultures, identities, abilities and family structures of our children and staff

- Adapt spaces, activities and routines to accommodate individual needs, so that everyone feels valued and can participate

- Support children to make choices and develop a sense of autonomy appropriate to their age and developmental stages

- Seek children's consent. Ask permission before helping children with personal care or involving them in activities

- Involve children in making decisions, particularly about matters that affect them. Show children that their opinion matters, and incorporate their ideas where you can

- Encourage children to express their views without fear of judgement

- Contribute to making our environment and activities reflect the diverse cultures, identities, abilities and family structures of our children and staff. Help to adapt spaces and routines to accommodate each child's individual needs, so that everyone feels valued and can participate. Partner with families to understand their values, cultural practices and expectations regarding their child's dignity and rights

- Protect children's privacy and handle their personal information (including their image) securely and confidentially

- Always abide by our strict rules for respecting children's privacy and physical boundaries set out in our Child Safe Code of Conduct

- Always act if a child is being harmed or is at risk of harm, in line with our Child Protection Policy

5. **Encourage children to express themselves and their opinions:**

- Create and maintain trusting and respectful relationships with each child, so that they feel secure in expressing themselves and their thoughts

- Tell children that their opinions are welcome and acknowledge their contributions. Where you can, let them have some influence over their activities, play areas, group routines, mealtimes etc

- Respond sensitively to children's verbal and non-verbal communication about their needs and preferences

- Have meaningful, two-sided conversations with children about their interests, and ask open ended questions (e.g., 'What do you think about…' or 'How would you do it differently?'). Give them enough time to process and respond to your questions

- Talk to children throughout the day about what is happening around them, and what they are learning and thinking about

- Set up resources to facilitate their expression, including through art and creativity, storytelling, role play and technology

- Run small group activities where children can listen to each other's opinions

- Encourage children to take risks in expressing themselves, and reassure them that we learn when we make mistakes

- When children speak to you, show them that you are listening (see 'effective communication')

- Be aware that there are cultural norms and preferences for self-expression. Learn about children's cultural and family backgrounds and each child's unique way of communicating

- Observe and document children's thoughts and opinions to understand their developing interests, preferences and developmental needs. Use this information to tailor our activities and your interactions with each child

6. **Help children to develop self-reliance:**

- Give children chances to make decisions about their environment, what they want to do or their daily routines

- Support them to develop 'life skills' such as tying their laces, packing their bags, tidying up, managing personal care routines

- Break down new skills into manageable steps. Gradually reduce the amount of assistance you give the child as they develop and become confident

- Model and scaffold learning. Show children how to perform a task and invite them to try it themselves. Offer guidance but do not take over – show children they can accomplish the task themselves

- Get children involved in self-directed imaginative play and creative projects

- Celebrate risk-taking (while providing safe boundaries) and normalise mistakes

- Help children to identify personal goals and encourage them to self-evaluate (e.g., ask them 'What do you like best?' or 'What would you do differently next time?')

- Encourage children to develop problem-solving skills and to engage in critical thinking

- Provide 'open-ended' resources and activities (e.g., building blocks, arts and crafts, STEM, storytelling, treasure hunts, music) that encourage problem-solving, critical thinking, exploration and experimentation

- Ask children questions that prompt them to think about different possibilities and ideas (e.g., 'How could we do this in another way?', 'What do you think would happen if…')

- Resist the urge to intervene immediately when children face challenges. Instead, give them time to think and try their own ways to work it out

7. **Help children to build their self-esteem:**

- Offer experiences that challenge children but don't overwhelm them

- When a child reaches a new milestone, acknowledge their progress to build their confidence and motivation. Use positive and affirming language and feedback that emphasises the child's effort and progress

- Build their social skills through group activities and leadership opportunities

- Reflect and document their achievements (e.g., showcase their creations or achievements, share their work with their family, keep a portfolio of their work that shows their progress and successes)

- Reinforce and acknowledge the child's perspective. Tell and show them that what they think and feel is valid

- Celebrate their unique identities and cultural backgrounds (see next step)

8. **Promote a sense of belonging for all children:**

- Learn about each child's unique characteristics and circumstances at enrolment and continue to learn throughout their time at the service. Interact with the child and their family, ask them questions. Observe the child while they are playing, learning and developing to deepen your understanding of them. Apply this knowledge to your interactions with the child and to adjust our activities and spaces to help them feel accepted and part of our group

- Learn about cultural safety for children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds. Acknowledge and teach their histories, cultures, languages, traditions, religions and spiritual beliefs

- Check that the diverse backgrounds, family arrangements, languages and identities of children and their families, staff and communities are reflected in our environment and activities. For example:

  - Books, stories and music from different cultures

  - Use art and creative projects to explore themes of identity, heritage and belonging

  - Partner with families and the community to mark cultural festivals and days of awareness

  - Share your own cultural experiences and family traditions

  - Posters that represent a range of identities, traditions, cultures, abilities, and family structures

- Make adjustments to our program and spaces so that children who have disabilities are properly involved and follow our access and inclusion policies

- If there are instances of exclusion or discrimination between children:

  - Support the child who has been discriminated against or excluded

  - Address the issue with the child/ren who is responsible. Focus on teaching the child/ren about inclusion, empathy and kindness. Reinforce to them that discriminatory or exclusionary behaviour is never allowed

  - Follow our procedures for positive group interactions and behaviour guidance (and, if the behaviour is or becomes bullying, our procedure for bullying)

  - Communicate with the child's parents to discuss what has happened, and work with them to understand any cultural or personal factors that are contributing to the child's behaviour

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- o Provide support and resources about inclusion for families to reinforce it to their child at home

PROCEDURE – POSITIVE GROUP INTERACTIONS

When to use this procedure

- During everyday group interactions with children in our care
- When facilitating play and group activities
- When children struggle to take turns, share or cooperate with each other
- When setting up collaborative activities and spaces
- When supporting children's social skills – making or keeping friends, communicating with each other
- When helping children to mediate conflicts or challenges with each other

1. **Help children to have sensitive and responsive relationships with each other and staff:**

   - Support children to initiate and sustain friendships with each other (e.g., through buddy arrangements, small group activities, cooperative play, reading stories about friendships, teaching children how to introduce themselves and ask other children to play, teaching children about reciprocity, helping children join in a game, teaching children communication and conflict resolution skills, encouraging children to help each other and share etc)

   - Encourage friendships between children of various ages, genders, cultures and capabilities

   - Make sure to help all children to participate in play and group activities. Give extra support to children who find it harder to interact with others

   - Teach children to identify and respect each other's feelings. This will help to develop their empathy, kindness and patience

   - Use intentional learning strategies to build children's emotional and social skills. For example:

     o Movement and object play - for understanding and solving problems, taking turns, sharing
     o Imaginative and role play - for emotional resilience, creativity, problem-solving and empathy
     o Social play and collaboration - for sharing, cooperation, negotiation, conflict resolution, reciprocity, taking turns

- o Celebrations, ritual play and storytelling - for a sense of belonging 'my world, myself and where I fit in'
- o Creative play - for learning new behaviour and expressing thoughts and feelings

2. **Support children to collaborate, learn from and help each other:**

- Set up activities that require children to work together, share and solve problems (e.g., social and imaginary play, group research, building projects, group games)

- Run structured activities to help children connect with each other (e.g., group storytelling)

- Create shared areas for collaboration where children can work with each other and with educators

- Pair children of varying ages, abilities and experiences to work with each other

- Make the environment inclusive so all children can contribute and participate

- Observe children while they are playing and learning together. Guide them through any conflicts or challenges that arise in ways that suit their age and development

- Acknowledge children who are cooperative and helpful

- Give children a good amount of time for uninterrupted play and self-directed projects

- Plan events and activities that bring families and communities together

3. **Help children to respond appropriately to others and resolve conflicts:**

- Encourage children to use polite and positive language when they are expressing their needs or feelings

- Teach children to identify and label their emotions and the emotions of others

- Use role-play or stories to demonstrate skilful social interactions

- Help children to think about things from the other person's point of view. Guide them in understanding and respecting others' emotions and reactions, and how their own actions can affect the way that others feel or behave

- Teach children about active listening and how it is important to make eye contact, nod and respond to what others say

- Teach children about inclusion and exclusion, fairness and bias, Help them to recognise when play is unkind, unfair or not inclusive

- Acknowledge and praise when children respond to others with kindness, cooperation or constructively

- Encourage children to use words to explain their feelings and the problem rather than reacting physically

- Teach children the steps involved in solving a conflict (e.g., identifying the problem, coming up with some solutions, choosing a mutually agreeable solution)

- Intervene sensitively when children have difficulty resolving a disagreement, and help give them strategies for calming down (e.g., deep breaths, taking a break, moving their body etc)

- Praise and acknowledge when children resolve their conflicts independently or with minimal intervention

- Suggest ways children can make amends with another if necessary

- Use your knowledge of children's individual personalities and friendships to help them manage their behaviour and develop empathy for others

- Use information from families about their children's social skills and relationship preferences to engage children in experiences that support their social development

PROCEDURE – SELF-REGULATION AND POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE FOR CHILDREN

When to use this procedure

- During everyday interactions with children in our care
- When a child is dysregulated
- When a child is exhibiting challenging or inappropriate behaviour, including physical aggression
- When you need to develop a behaviour guidance plan for a child

1. **Model and teach emotional regulation strategies when a child is dysregulated:**

    - Depending on the child's age, strategies may include:

        o Naming and communicating their feelings and problems (using words, symbols, gestures, pictures, non-verbal cues - depending on the age and development stage of the child)

        o Mindfulness exercises (e.g., identifying the physical sensations in their body caused by emotions, belly breathing, focussing on external stimuli, guided meditation)

        o Deep breathing

        o Counting to calm down

        o Physical activity, nature play, sensory play

        o Reframing worries and problems to get them into perspective

        o Offer to take the child to a quiet space if they need solitude or to calm down

    - Give children the vocabulary to identify the range of emotions people feel (e.g., 'You seem to be *frustrated* because this task is tricky' rather than 'You are *upset*'). Avoid labelling emotions as good or bad

2. **Offer children emotional support when they are dysregulated:**

    - Stay attuned to children's feelings and learn how each child expresses how they feel or what they want in their own unique way

- Acknowledge children's emotions and respond with genuine warmth, empathy and understanding

- Give children consistent support during challenging situations

- Use positive communication, reinforcement and reassurance

- Respond patiently and calmly to children's emotions, even when the emotions are expressed strongly

- Speak in comforting tones

3. **Model acceptable behaviour:**

- Treat children, families and other staff with kindness, patience and empathy

- Manage your own conflicts or disruptions calmly and respectfully to show children how to navigate their own conflicts or challenges

4. **Check the physical environment and daily program is set up for positive behaviour:**

- Keep our spaces tidy, well-organised and free of clutter. Walkways should be clear and free of obstacles

- Make sure resources are stimulating (e.g., colourful, textural, scented, patterned etc) and activities are of interest to the children

- Display resources in an attractive way and with labels to help children find them easily

- Consider including mirrors for children to focus on and for interest

- Make sure children can access quiet and comfortable areas to relax, read, or take a break when they need to

- Play relaxing music during quiet and rest times

- Give children lots of time to be outside in the natural environment

- Ensure that children are getting enough rest, water, healthy food and physical activity during their time with us

- Incorporate calming activities into our daily routines (e.g., mindfulness, yoga poses, breathing techniques, or listening to calming music)

- Set up activities that give children a sense of calm and focus (e.g., art, music, storytelling, puzzles, or sensory play)

- Keep to a regular and consistent routine and communicate to children about what will happen next, so they have a sense of predictability and control

- Give time for unstructured free play every day to explore their interests and be creative

- Don't rush children during transitions (e.g., when they arrive at the service, change activities, quiet times) to allow for a natural pace and reduce stress. Give children extra support if they need it during these times

- Respect each child's individual needs and preferences for relaxation and leisure, and give them choices of activities to match their energy levels

5. **Set expectations and reinforce positive behaviour:**

- Establish clear expectations for children using simple, specific and positive rules (e.g., rather than 'Be good on the bus', you could say 'When we are on the bus, we use our inside voices and stay in our seats', '*When* you have packed up the books, *then* we can kick the ball around outside.'). Don't assume that children know how to do things or how to behave

- Break down instructions into steps but keep the number of steps minimal. Make sure the child has time to process the instructions and use words and concepts they can understand

- Talk with children about our rules and why they are in place. Explain in advance what the consequences are for not following the rules

- Involve children in making the rules so they feel a sense of ownership and accountability

- Regularly remind children of our expectations in ways that children can understand, considering their ages and developmental stages

- Provide specific, immediate feedback to encourage positive behaviour when you see it (e.g., 'Thank you for *sharing* the monkey bars with your friends' or 'You put away your bag when I asked - great *listening'*)

- When praising children, focus on the effort or intention, rather than the outcomes (e.g., 'I see how hard you worked to put away all the bits of the board game')

- Use a mix of rewards for positive behaviour (e.g., explicit praise, extra playtime, small prizes, or rewards that benefit the whole group such as a special activity)

- Redirect negative behaviour and gently shift children's focus to more constructive activities

- Give children agency and control by giving them choices, but make the choices limited and controlled (e.g., 'Would you like to tidy up the books or the textas first?'

- Allow children to develop reasoning and emotional knowledge by helping them to reflect on their actions (e.g., 'What are you doing?' 'I saw you…' 'What were you about to do with…?')

6. **Support children who are exhibiting challenging/inappropriate behaviour:**

- Be aware that:

  o Some behaviour that you might think is inappropriate or challenging, is, in fact, developmentally appropriate. For example, a young child who can't sit still or a child who is so excited they can't wait their turn

  o Challenging behaviour can occur because a child's needs or interests are not being met or is their ways of saying that they need support

  o Children are not born knowing how to manage their feelings or express their needs and wants. These are skills they need to learn with help from us

- Be empathetic. Put yourself in the child's position to try and understand where the behaviour came from rather than focusing on the behaviour itself. Try to understand what the child is expressing or requesting through the behaviour

- Stay calm and composed. Use a neutral tone to explain the boundaries or rules (e.g., 'You are not allowed to yell at your friends when you get frustrated. It is disrespectful and unkind to them')

- Do not yell at, isolate or intimidate the child, or subject them to corporal punishment, or harsh treatment or language

- Acknowledge and explain the child's feelings (e.g., 'I can see you are frustrated. It's disappointing when you don't win card games')

- Soothe the child and help them to regulate their emotions (e.g., remind them to take breaths, take a break, practice counting etc)

- Redirect them to an appropriate activity or behaviour

- Once everyone is calm, discuss what happened with the child/ren in an appropriate way, and help the child/ren understand the effect of their actions and how to prevent similar incidents in the future

- Encourage children to let others know their needs or feelings in positive ways, such as by talking, or through art, movement or play

- Help them come up with alternative ways to deal with problems and reinforce our expectations for behaviour

- Note, if the child or another child is in danger of being harmed:

  o Position yourself between the children to block any physical aggression and/or remove any object that is causing harm

  o Separate the children involved and move other bystanders

  o Provide immediate comfort to any child who was harmed, check for injuries and administer first aid if necessary

  o Calm other children who might be upset and give them reassurance that they are safe

  o Take the child who is in danger of harming themselves or others to another area/room and stay with them while they calm down and regain control of their behaviour. Offer them reassurance. Do not leave them alone in 'Time out'

7. **Reflect, document, get support and engage with families:**

   - Record and report any incidents according to our procedures (see <u>Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy</u>, <u>Child Protection Policy</u>)

   - Communicate with families about the child's behaviour in a respectful, non-judgemental way

   - Observe and document patterns inappropriate/challenging behaviour to inform future ways to respond to it

   - Think about whether there are any possible causes or triggers within the service (e.g., bullying, educator practices, the physical environment)

   - Consider the child's developmental stage and any factors that might be affecting their overall behaviour (e.g., still learning how to regulate their behaviour and emotions, developmental stage or transition period, insecure attachment to educators, difficult or traumatic experiences in the past, insufficient language skills to express their needs and wishes, used to getting attention from negative behaviour, an issue in the physical environment or with another child at the service, neurodevelopmental disorder, changes to home life such as a new sibling or parents separating etc)

- If you have to impose consequences on the child, they should be logical, proportional and age-appropriate (e.g., change of activity, saying sorry, loss of privilege - if relevant and fair, replacing or repairing an item if they broke it). The aim is to guide behaviour, not punish. Exclusion should be a last resort

- Get support from other educators, the room leader, the nominated supervisor, and/or professionals (with parental consent) if you are not sure how to deal with a child's inappropriate or challenging behaviour

8. **Develop and implement a 'behaviour guidance plan', if necessary:**

- If a child's behaviour is concerning or very disruptive, talk to your room leader and the nominated supervisor to see whether we need to implement a behaviour guidance plan

- If a behaviour guidance plan is necessary:

  o Educators, parents, and the nominated supervisor must work in partnership to develop and implement the plan

  o Parents must consent in writing to all proposed actions

  o Consider support from specialists or if the child may be eligible for financial assistance through the government to pay for extra resources

- If an agreement cannot be made about a child's behaviour guidance plan, the nominated supervisor should contact the regulatory authority for advice

- Determine whether the child's behaviour poses a risk to other children or staff members at the service. If so, the nominated supervisor and educators must take steps to minimise the risk. Strategies may include:

  o Ensuring the child gets support from professionals (e.g., a paediatrician, speech pathologist, psychologist, occupational therapist, and/or family support services)

  o Reducing the hours of care or suspending until the child's behaviour no longer poses such a risk

- If parents have responsibilities under a behaviour guidance plan that they do not fulfil satisfactorily (and they don't have a reasonable explanation for why they haven't), or a child's behaviour poses too great a risk to others, the nominated supervisor may suspend or terminate the child's enrolment in line with our Termination of Enrolment Policy

PROCEDURE – HELPING CHILDREN THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES

When to use this procedure

- When a child experiences a stressful or traumatic event or situation (e.g., the death of a loved one, illness or accidents, violence, natural disaster, war, crime, abuse or neglect etc)

1. **Understand that a child's reaction to stress or trauma will depend on factors such as:**

   - Age and developmental stage – younger children may have limited coping skills or understanding of what has happened, whereas older children may be able to tell others how they are feeling but have more complex emotions and thoughts

   - Temperament – some children are more sensitive or reactive than others, and may be more deeply affected by stress

   - Coping skills – if a child has learned ways to manage stress well, they may be more resilient to stress than children who haven't learned these skills

   - Previous experiences – a history of trauma or stress can increase a child's vulnerability or affect their reactions to current stressors

   - The nature of the event – if the event is severe, life-threatening or sudden, the child may have a stronger reaction

   - Duration – prolonged exposure to stress or trauma (e.g., ongoing abuse, displacement) can have a more severe effect on a child

   - Social support – a child who has secure attachments to their family and caregivers, and access to wider social support, may be better able to process trauma or stress

   - Perception of the event – cultural norms and values, and a child's ability to understand what has happened, their sense of control, guilt or blame and exposure to the secondary stress of other affected people can all influence the impact of a stress or trauma

   - Baseline mental and physical health – children with pre-existing physical or mental health issues may have more difficulty coping

2. **Be aware that a child's response may be delayed, or they may react in unexpected ways. Common responses are:**

- Physical symptoms such as stomach aches, headaches, tiredness or low energy, unexplained ailments

- Being anxious, fearful, on edge, clingy, avoidant

- Sadness, anger, irritability, shame or guilt

- Suffering from separation anxiety, seeking constant reassurance

- Having sleeping problems or nightmares

- Re-living the experience through drawing or play

- Losing interest in activities

- Loss of self-confidence

- Regressing to 'babyish' activities such as bedwetting or thumb sucking

- Aggressive or withdrawn behaviour, increased conflict with others

- Difficulty concentrating, forgetfulness, negative thinking

3. **Give the child individualised support and collaborate with their family, caregivers, and (if required) professionals:**

   - Make sure that families know they can talk confidentially to us about any trauma or stress they have or are currently experiencing, and that we will help them in whatever way we can

   - Children respond differently to trauma, so follow their lead. Pay attention to how the child is reacting and adapt your approach to meet their needs

   - Involve the child in coming up with ways to how to overcome any challenges

   - Share your observations about the child with their family and caregivers. Ensure we have a consistent approach for supporting the child

   - If an educator thinks a child may need extra support from professionals, they should discuss this with their room leader and the nominated supervisor. The nominated supervisor can refer families to support services, such as therapists or family support agencies

   - If required, the nominated supervisor should liaise with relevant government authorities (e.g., the regulatory authority) and follow their advice about how to manage the situation

4. **Create a safe and predictable environment for the child:**

- Maintain consistent daily routines to make the child feels secure and stable

- Use clear, consistent rules and boundaries

- Minimise possible triggers or reminders of trauma in the environment if possible

- Provide quiet spaces for children who need time alone or giving extra attention to those who want connection

- Give them a sense of control over their themselves and their environment by letting them make minor decisions (e.g., what to eat for afternoon tea, what to wear, which game to play etc)

5. **Emotionally support the child:**

- Be calm and reassuring in your interactions with the child. Use soothing language to reduce their stress

- Offer ways for the child to cope with and express their feelings (e.g., drawing and painting; storytelling and role play; playing music; deep breathing and mindfulness; sensory or nature play or outdoor time; moving their body through sport, yoga, dance, play etc)

- Be patient and respond to children's emotions with empathy and space

- Recognise that children may express their feelings through behaviour rather than words (e.g., withdrawal, aggression, clinginess)

- Acknowledge and validate the child's feelings without judgment (e.g., 'It is natural to feel scared' or 'I would feel sad if that happened to me too')

- Encourage positive social interactions and friendships by facilitating group activities that promote connection and a sense of belonging

6. **Approach conversations about the trauma or stress with care and sensitivity to avoid retraumatising the child:**

- Stay calm and reassuring, use a neutral tone and avoid showing strong emotional reactions. Children look to adults to find ways to know how to react and deal with difficult situations

- Give the child truthful, simple information and answers to any questions they ask. Don't leave out important information, but don't go into frightening or graphic details. Don't use vague or complex language

- Follow the child's lead and let them decide when and how much they want to share. Don't press the child for details or make them relive the event through words

- Reassure the child that they are safe now (but only if they really are) and that it is okay to feel upset or scared. Tell them their feelings are normal and valid, and that's it's likely that others would feel the same way

- Reassure the child that they are not responsible for the situation and avoid implying or assigning blame

7. **If you or other staff members are distressed, talk to the nominated supervisor and get help for yourself**
8. **Take up any opportunities to learn about supporting children with trauma**

PROCEDURE – DEALING WITH BULLYING

When to use this procedure

- When you directly observe bullying behaviour
- When a child reports feeling hurt, excluded, scared, intimidated or unsafe as a result of another child's actions
- When a child or another adult at the service witnesses bullying behaviour
- When you suspect a child is being bullied (e.g., they are reluctant to come to the service, their behaviour or mood changes, physical complaints that don't have a medical cause)
- If a parent raises concerns about a child being bullied or bullying others

1. **Observe interactions between children and look for signs of bullying, including:**

   - Physical aggression (e.g., hitting, kicking, pushing, pinching, tripping)

   - Verbal aggression (e.g., teasing, name calling, threats, putdowns, talking in code with others, malicious gossip)

   - Aggressive gestures (e.g., intimidating others with a look or action)

   - Cyberbullying (e.g., inappropriate messages sent via electronic devices)

   - Repeated targeting of a particular child, even if subtle

   - Extortion (e.g., forcing others to give up toys, food or drinks, or to act as a go-between)

   - Consistent exclusion or isolation of a child by other children

   - Persistent power imbalances (e.g., where one child is always in the dominant position or they intimidate others, differences in age, size or developmental stage)

2. **Be aware that:**

   - It can be hard to tell the difference between friendly teasing, social awkwardness or normal conflict and bullying. The key characteristics of bullying are:

     o An intent to harm

     o Repetition

     o A power imbalance

- Avoid preconceived notions - children of all backgrounds can engage in or experience bullying

- It is very common for children who bully others to be bullied themselves (known as victim-bullies)

- Children who bully do not necessarily have low self-esteem – some are popular and have leadership skills

- Children who bully try to justify what they do by emphasising the child they are bullying is different in some way or that they are just having fun

- Anyone can be a victim of bullying. However, children are especially vulnerable if they are not assertive, have difficulty resisting the demands of their peers, lack social skills, have low self-esteem or if they tend to withdraw

3. **Respond promptly and calmly to any bullying you see or that is reported to you:**
   - If necessary, intervene immediately, check that everyone is safe, including the targeted child, the child who is/might be bullying, and any bystanders

   - Use a neutral, non-confrontational tone when you address the children involved

   - Help the targeted child to express their feelings and needs. Let them know that it is not their fault, that it is okay to feel upset and that bullying is never acceptable. Reassure them that you will try to help them. Where you can, and depending on their age/stage of development, give the child as much agency as possible

   - Speak to each child separately in a quiet place, away from other children:
     - Listen to the whole story without interrupting

     - Ask open-ended, non-judgemental questions to get each child's perspective on the incident (e.g., 'Can you tell me what happened?', 'How were you feeling/what did you think when that happened?', 'What do you think we can do to make things better?'

     - Don't blame anyone or make assumptions

     - Focus on understanding the behaviour and its impact

     - Do not label a child as a bully or a victim

   - Assess whether this incident is part of a pattern of behaviour or a one-off, the child had the intent to harm, and the power dynamics of the relationship

   - Inform the parents of all the children involved in a factual, non-biased way

- Record the incident

4. **Take appropriate action to address the bullying in collaboration with the children's parents. Actions may include:**

   - Facilitating a discussion (if appropriate) to help children resolve the problem. Don't force the meeting if it will make the situation worse or distress the children

   - Encouraging the child who engaged in bullying to take responsibility and, if appropriate, offer a sincere apology

   - Making it clear that the behaviour is not acceptable

   - Working out a plan together for fixing up the friendship or getting along in the future

   - Increasing supervision of the child who is bullying

   - Separating the children throughout the day or finding ways to reduce their contact

   - Implementing a behaviour guidance plan and/or getting professional support (with the consent from the parents)

5. **Provide ongoing support to the children involved and monitor their relationships**

   - Encourage the child who was bullied to make other friendships

   - Address any factors that might be contributing to the bullying

   - Help the child who has bullied to identify their own and other people's emotions, and teach them strategies for conflict resolution and emotional regulation

   - Reinforce and praise positive, prosocial behaviour

   - If the bullying behaviour continues (and depending on the circumstances), we may need to issue a formal warning, suspend or terminate the child's enrolment in line with our policies and procedures

6. **Promote a bully-free environment:**

   - Role model and actively encourage empathy, and cooperative, inclusive and respectful behaviour

   - Actively supervise children to identify and address problem behaviour early

   - Make sure the children are not bored, and the physical environment is set up for positive behaviour

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- Use stories, role-play and discussions to teach children about bullying (including cyberbullying), how to resolve conflicts without aggression and how to stand up for themselves and others in a safe way. Develop children's coping, communication and social skills

- Encourage children to tell an adult when bullying happens

- Communicate our expectations for positive behaviour

- Share information with families about bullying and how to support their children