



Interactions with Children

Related Documentation	Child Development Support Plan
Relevant Legislation	Refer to Legislation, Standards and Guidance Material Reference Table
Responsible Officer	Manager Education and Care Services

Uncontrolled when printed.

Definitions

EYLF – Early Years Learning Framework

Objectives

To ensure that respectful and equitable relationships are developed and maintained with each child attending our Education and Care Services.

Training and Competence

Council is committed to staff receiving training relevant to the tasks/activities undertaken in this procedure. Training requirements will be reviewed at least annually as part of the performance appraisal program and recorded in Pulse. All training will be evaluated to ensure continuous improvement.

Competence of employees, including any contractors, labour hire employees or volunteers, will be assessed prior to their being expected to carry out the tasks associated with this procedure.

Records Management

All records related to this procedure are to be stored in IRIS (Intelligent Record Information System) in accordance with Council's Records Management Policy.

Review and Evaluation

To maintain relevance and currency, this procedure will be reviewed on a two-yearly basis or as required due to changes in relevant legislation and codes of practice or changes to systems and processes.

The procedure will also be evaluated in consultation with employees at appropriately identified intervals to evaluate its effectiveness.

Regular review and evaluation is an opportunity to determine whether the procedure is fit for purpose and reflective of operational practice, and provide an opportunity to implement corrective measures or amend the procedure if required.

Procedure

Education and Care Services recognises the importance of educators developing warm, responsive, trusting and reciprocal relationships with children in our care. These respectful and equitable relationships promote children’s wellbeing, self-esteem, sense of security and belonging and ultimately provide a strong foundation for future learning and development.

There are four key concepts to maintaining these respectful and equitable relationships with children.

1. Positive educator to child interactions
2. Dignity and rights of the child
3. Collaborative Learning
4. Self-Regulation

1. Positive Educator to Child Interactions

'Positive interactions between educators and children involve educators viewing each child as capable and competent, with a right to a voice and able to contribute to decisions that affect them. This enables educators to focus their education and care practices on children's strengths and inclusion in the group environment' (Guide to the National Quality Framework, 2020).

Educators' interactions with children are to remain positive at all times. Strategies to promote and maintain these positive interactions with children include but are not limited to:

- Sitting with and engaging in relaxed and unhurried two-way conversations with children (including during mealtimes)
- Listening to and respecting all communication with children (verbal/nonverbal)
- Interacting with a pleasant tone of voice and respecting each child's level of skills
- Encouraging children to express themselves and their feelings openly
- Responding openly, positively and respectfully to children's comments, questions and requests for assistance
- Respectfully participating in children's play and using children's cues to guide their type of involvement
- Collaborating with children about routines and experiences and providing opportunities for them to make decisions and choices
- Interacting at the children's level. This means physically getting down to a child's eye level and keeping interactions appropriate to each child's development
- Supporting children to settle into the day and comforting children who cry or show signs of distress
- Being sensitive to and praising children's efforts to be independent
- Role modelling behaviour which encourages children to listen and respect each other
- Knowing about each child's background; therefore, responding sensitively and appropriately to the child's development
- Being sensitive to children's individual moods and personality
- Talking about children's interests both spontaneously and through the program
- Showing enthusiasm and respect when interacting with all children and their families
- Consulting each family individually about the care of their child
- Inviting and encouraging families to spend time interacting with their child at the service
- Greeting Individual families and children by name.

2. Dignity and Rights of the Child

Educators will ensure that the dignity and rights of every child are always maintained in accordance with Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is a universally agreed set of non-negotiable standards and obligations based on respect for the dignity and worth of each child. A simplified version of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child can be found here

<https://www.unicef.org.au/upload/unicef/media/unicef-simplified-convention-child-rights.pdf>.

Strategies to promote and maintain the dignity and rights of all children include but are not limited to:

- Maintaining positive interactions with children at all times
- Implementing a positive strengths-based approach to guiding children's behaviour
- Spending time with families to get to know about each child's individual culture and background
- Using diverse resources to celebrate different cultures and backgrounds

- Supporting the use of a child's first language by encouraging families to share family phrases, songs and words that are meaningful to their child
- Planning meaningful experiences and celebrations that represent the variety of cultures within the service
- Discussing any possible conflicts with the values and practices of the child's family sensitively
- Recognising that all children are individuals who learn at their own pace and have different strengths, needs, interests and abilities
- Talking to children about the importance of empathy, treating others equally and celebrating differences
- Role modelling and encouraging children to identify and challenge discrimination when they observe inappropriate behaviour or hear inappropriate comments
- Encouraging educators to share their own language, culture and background with the children, families and staff at the service
- Reflecting on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in relation to teaching practices and decision making within the service
- Respecting a child's request/decision if they do not wish to have their photo taken.
- Only taking photos of children (for documentation purposes etc.) on Council devices. Staff and educator's personal devices will be kept in the staff/educator's locker and are not permitted to be used in the learning environment with the children.
- Identifying any barriers to inclusion and developing strategies that support all children to access Education and Care Services, regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, opinions, origins, wealth, birth status or ability
- Creating and maintaining a Service Inclusion Plan (SIP) through the Inclusion Support Portal in collaboration with the services inclusion support representative from 'Include Me'
- Accessing the Inclusion Development Fund where necessary and available to support the inclusion of children with additional needs
- Implementing Council's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)
<https://www.campbelltown.nsw.gov.au/ServicesandFacilities/CommunityServicesandPrograms/Programssuitableforyou/AboriginalandTorresStraitIslander/RAP>
- Implementing Council's Disability Inclusion Plan (DIAP)
<https://www.campbelltown.nsw.gov.au/HaveYourSay/DisabilityInclusionActionPlanPE>

3. Collaborative Learning

Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other through a skilfully designed, thoughtful and deliberate play-based educational program. The educational programs are developed based on a cycle of assessment and planning for each child's according to their individual strengths, ideas, culture, abilities needs and interests.

Preparation for School (Long Day Care/Family Day Care)

A preschool program is designed and implemented by qualified educators in a structured learning environment for 3–5-year-old children that attend the service. Educators build on a range of experiences within each learning area to support the skills children need for a successful transition to school. These skills are not limited to reading, writing and counting but also include collaborative skills such as:

- The ability to communicate their wants and needs with adults and with other children.
- Confidence to join in play with other children.
- Social skills to manage their emotions such as frustration, anger and excitement.
- Self-regulation and the ability to make positive choices about their behaviour.
- Self-help skills such as looking after belongings, opening and closing their bag, accessing their own lunch and toileting independently.

Educators will liaise with local primary schools and share specific information with families to support children's transition to school.

Group Experiences

Planned and spontaneous, small and large group experiences are conducted by educators on a daily basis to support the children's critical thinking, extend upon identified interests, facilitate emerging language and literacy development and offer music and movement experiences. Educators support children to learn about and experience cooperation and develop friendships with others by role-modelling cooperative behaviour and acknowledging, labelling and praising cooperation when it occurs. Movement from one activity/area to another should happen in a relaxed manner. Children are given the opportunity to move freely from one area to another based on their interests.

Children spend time with other children in their designated rooms and have the opportunity to establish and maintain relationships with children of various ages, genders, cultures and capabilities when 'family grouping'. Educators will plan time for relaxed, unhurried experiences that allow children to collaborate and direct their own learning together.

Routines

Education and Care Services provides flexible care routines that allow children the time and opportunity to explore and develop life skills. Routine times are not seen as separate to the program, but an important opportunity for education and development. Individual routines are discussed with families both on enrolment and on an ongoing basis as the need arises.

Documentation

Documentation of the educational program includes the following:

- A written program of planned activities and experiences for a variety of developmental areas.
- An individual portfolio for each child enrolled at the service with an allocated 'focus teacher'.
In Long Day Care, a minimum of one observation per month (between February-November) will be included in a child's online portfolio. This individual entry will include an observation, analysis or learning, a reference to the EYLF, a reference to other relevant theorists or guiding documents and a plan for future activities to extend the child's learning. A welcome observation will be completed for January or the month a child commences care (this could be in the format of an 'eco-map' or 'interest tree' for example) and a wrap up observation or photo entry will be completed for December or the month a child ceases care.
- A photo gallery with examples of children's learning that occurred each day.
A relevant caption will be included with each photo entry to briefly describe the learning that occurred. Each child will have their photo gallery updated once a week as a minimum.
- Optional projects exploring a particular concept or identified common interest among the children.
- Critical reflection of the strengths and areas of improvement within the program.
These reflections will guide our goals and planning for individual children and groups of children.

Documentation includes references to contemporary theories and research, in particular the Early Years Learning Framework (0-5 years) and the Framework for School Age Care (6-12 years).

The Nominated Supervisor has overall responsibility for ensuring the development, implementation and evaluation of programs of the service. Educators of the service will contribute to the development of programs which will be regularly reviewed, evaluated and critically reflected upon on a regular basis.

Each programming educator Long Day Care is to be allocated a minimum non-contact programming time of half an hour per focus child per month. Nominated Supervisors will roster additional programming time for educators where possible within the roster, without the need to roster additional staff (for example, children are absent and ratios allow or if the Trainee or Nominated Supervisor covers the programming time).

When an educator misses their programming time due to unplanned leave, this time should be made up whenever possible. However, this additional programming time may not accumulate for extended or

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ongoing periods of leave. When an educator is on planned leave (for one week or more), their programming time should be allocated to the educator who is overseeing their focus children during the period of leave.

Family and Community Involvement

Campbelltown City Council's Education and Care Services values partnerships with families and communities. Educators welcome, reflect and draw on the voices, priorities and strengths of the children and families at the service. "Learning outcomes are most likely to be achieved when educators work in partnership with families. Educators recognise that families are children's first and most influential teachers" (EYLF, page 12).

Family and community partnerships with the service may include:

- Exchanging information about their family and their child
- Collaborating and participating in service open days/community events and/or celebrations
- Influencing and participating in decision making at the service
- Supporting the educators to design and deliver experiences within the service (such as suggesting and activity or reading a story to the children)
- Implementing and attending family committee meetings, information sessions and educator interviews
- Contributing to individual portfolios
- Providing photos to share

4. Self-Regulation

Education and Care Services takes a positive, strengths-based approach to guiding children's behaviour. Educators will support children's understanding of how they can positively express their needs, resolve conflict and respond to the behaviour of others. By maintaining positive educator to child interactions, educators foster children's developing understanding of how their actions affect the way others feel and behave.

Guiding Children's Behaviour

Strategies for positive behaviour guidance are included but not limited to:

- Being at the child's level when talking to and supporting them.
- Helping children know what to do instead of what not to do. When a child is redirected or stopped, educators explain why. This will assist children to make judgements about what they can and cannot do. Limits and orders given without explanation keep a child dependent on other people for information about what to do.
- Modelling and teaching children what is safe, what angers or hurts what pleases and what positive ways can be used to release anger or frustration.
- Teaching children self-control and an understanding of the consequences of their behaviour. When children demonstrate self-control and are self-directed their needs and interests become clearer to them and to others. Children also gain understanding and appreciation of other people's needs, rights and feelings.
- Establishing basic rules in the service in a way that children, families and educators can understand them. All rules and limits should be clear and consistent, and children should be encouraged to help develop these rules if developmentally appropriate.
- Considering the child's developmental level and individual backgrounds. For example, educators should understand that a child under two years may bite, hit or not be able to share.
- Encouraging children to consider what other children might be feeling and experiencing.
- Involving children in discussions about dealing with conflict.
- Supporting a child to have some quiet time with a book, walking around with an educator, lying down and listening to music or helping an educator to do an activity.
- Anticipate 'problem' behaviour and ensure an educator is near the situation so they can skilfully intervene.
- If there are extreme challenging behaviours, quietly move other children away from the behaviour.

- Role modelling appropriate behaviour at all times. Any adult conflicts must be resolved away from the children.
- Consistency among educators in their approach to behaviour guidance. This will minimise confusion and ensure that children are clear about what behaviour is expected from them and from each other.

Responding to Inappropriate Behaviour

Educators must respond immediately to inappropriate behaviour. They must use a positive approach to guide and discipline children and help them control their own behaviour. Educators must not shout at children. Loud voices must only be used in emergencies or dangerous situations when children need to respond immediately. An incident report will be completed for any emergency or dangerous situation where an educator is required to use a loud voice to get a child's attention

Educators must not:

- Use inappropriate language (for example, swearing).
- Use or threaten to use corporal punishment, (this means smack, grab, pull, tap, hit, pinch or physically punish children).
- Use threats of humiliation, (for example, threatening to put a four-year-old child in a cot).
- Withhold food, (this means children should be offered all food at mealtimes).
- Force feed children.
- Give children time out.
- Isolate children in corners, on chairs, in cots or on beds if they are not sleeping.
- Immobilise children (this means children cannot be tied up, held down or left in a high chair if it is not meal time).
- Make derogatory remarks to or about children or their families.

Unsatisfactory or Dangerous Behaviour by Children

In the case of serious injury or extreme threat to an adult or children by another child the Coordinator Education and Care Services and Nominated Supervisor will have a joint meeting with the child's parents/guardians. Where possible the appointment will be arranged in advance. A plan of action will be developed which may include:

- A suspension period for the child to enable the family time to seek support from appropriate referral agencies or professionals.
- Time for the family to consider their care needs.
- Time for a strategy to be implemented that may help to improve the child's behaviour.
- If the behaviour persists or is unresolvable, the child's position may be at risk. (Refer to enrolment procedure)

Child Developmental Support Plan

Educators are to develop a Child Development Support Plan to document strategies for supporting ongoing additional needs. The Child Development Support Plan is a document that will be used in conjunction with the service team, the child's family and other relevant professionals. With this in mind, it is essential that the support plan is written in a professional manner and is respectful and sensitive to the individual family situation. It should always reflect an unbiased and fair account of behaviours or areas of concern for the child.

The Child Developmental Support Plan should:

- Be completed by the child's focus teacher in conjunction with a Nominated Supervisor other educators the child's family and any relevant support agencies.
- Outline the identified concerns.
- Identify and list triggers that may cause challenging behaviours.
- Outline the strategies to be used.
- Have a time frame to achieve each strategy and who is responsible for putting the strategies into place.
- Be reviewed and approved by a Coordinator Education and Care Services.

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- Be signed by all educators, the child’s family and any relevant support agencies.
- Be written in a positive manner.

This procedure is a requirement under the Education and Care Services National Regulations and should not be altered without permission from the Senior Leadership Team.