



INTERACTION AND BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE

Links

Education and Care Services National Regulations: 155; 156
National Quality Standard: 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.3, 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.2.3

Policy statement

We believe that educators who interact positively with young children, and who are attuned to their thoughts and feelings, support the development of a strong sense of well being.

When guiding the behaviour of young children, it is important to support each child to manage their own behaviour and respond appropriately to the behaviours of others. We believe that it is important to support children to communicate effectively to resolve conflict, so that they rely less on the guidance of others, and learn the skills to self regulate.

Behaviour guidance is more than simply reacting when a child does something that is inappropriate, it is about supporting each child to learn appropriate behaviours, and build on this through positive interactions, receiving modelling and support from educators when needed.

We believe that it is important for all educators to offer positive, developmentally appropriate guidance and encouragement and take into consideration that each child should be treated with respect and dignity, acknowledging that they have the same rights as adults. We acknowledge, value and celebrate the differences and similarities that exist in all people.

Implementation

Tropics Early Learning will ensure that:

- Educators are supported and guided in their professional development and practice surrounding interactions with children.
- Interactions with each child are warm and responsive for building trusting relationships.
- Each child is able to engage with educators in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life long learning.
- Each child is supported to feel secure, confident and included; to work with, learn from and help others; and to express themselves, to share their thoughts and feelings.
- Children are encouraged to actively be involved in decision making, and having control over things that affect them.
- Each child is supported to manage their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.
- The dignity and rights of every child are maintained at all times.

Tropics Early Learning recognises and understands that a child's behaviour may be affected by several things, including:

- Age and development.
- Inability to communicate effectively (insufficient language skills).

- Insecure attachment relationships – with educators and/or families.
- General health and wellbeing.
- Abilities of individual children, including their capacity for sensory processing.
- Family and cultural values, and child rearing practices.
- Play and learning environments, which includes the physical indoor/outdoor settings, the weather, the time of year, the time of day, and levels of stimulation.
- Educator care giving strategies and practices, including how those strategies are implemented.
- Relationships with their peers and other stakeholders (including students, visitors and volunteers).
- External factors, such as family, home life, peer group experiences, or media coverage of traumatic events.

Some questions that educators should consider when addressing children's behaviour and how they can best guide it:

- Is the situation or environment contributing to or creating the problem?
- Are my expectations appropriate?
- How serious is the behaviour?
- Am I being consistent?
- How is the child likely to be feeling – what does this situation mean for the child?
- To what extent is my mood contributing to my reactions?
- What might help this child regulate at this time? How can I support this child to learn the skills to regulate their emotions/behaviours ongoing?

Strategies and Practices:

Behaviour will be guided by positive guidance techniques which allow the child to become aware of and understand the consequences of their behaviour on others. These techniques will include:

- Involving children in the process of developing play and safety limits, and learning the consequences when the limits are not adhered to.
- Supporting the development of secure attachment relationships between children and educators.
- Talking with children about the consequences of their actions, and the reasons for this, as well as the appropriate rules.
- Allowing children to make choices and experience the natural consequences of these choices – ensuring there is no risk of physical or emotional harm to the child or anybody else.
- Encouraging children to engage in cooperative and pro social behaviour and express their feelings and responses to others' behaviour confidently and constructively – challenging the behaviour of others when it is disrespectful or unfair.
- Discussing emotions, feelings and issues of inclusion and fairness, bias and prejudice, including this a part of the curriculum.
- Encouraging children to listen to other children's ideas, consider alternate behaviour, and cooperate in problem solving situations.
- Acknowledging and supporting children as they experience a range of different emotions. Listening empathetically to children when they express their emotions, reassuring them that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions.

- Guiding children to remove themselves from situations where they are feeling frustration, anger or fear.
- Supporting children to negotiate their rights, and the rights of others, intervening sensitively when children experience difficulty in resolving a disagreement.
- Working with each child's family and, where applicable, other services, to ensure that a consistent approach is used to support children with diagnosed behavioural or social difficulties.
- Acknowledging children when they make positive choices in managing their behaviour.
- Role modelling positive and responsible behaviour.
- Avoiding using "hollow" gestures – eg making the child say "sorry" without genuine feeling. There is no benefit gained from children expressing something without a genuine feeling.
- Using terminology that children will understand and not assuming that they do understand.
- Avoiding using phrases such as "You know you shouldn't do that", "You know better than that" – the child may not know better and it is our role to teach them.
- Planning and setting up environments that will support children, and ensure that individual sensory processing needs are being met.

Techniques that will NOT be used in our centre include:

We will ensure that no child being educated and cared for in our service is subject to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or inappropriate. The following strategies may constitute a serious breach of the National Law and/or regulations:

- ✗ Hitting, pushing, slapping, pinching or biting a child
- ✗ Force-feeding a child
- ✗ Yelling at or belittling a child
- ✗ Humiliating a child
- ✗ Physically dragging a child
- ✗ Locking children away, or isolating them
- ✗ Depriving a child of food or drink
- ✗ Unreasonable restraining of a child
- ✗ Excluding a child from events, including the practice of "time out"
- ✗ Consistently moving a child to the office or other space away from play areas
- ✗ Moving children to another room as punishment
- ✗ Verbally or physically threatening a child
- ✗ Labelling children in a negative way – eg; "naughty" or "bad"

Persistent Negative Behaviours:

If a child consistently displays negative behaviour, the Lead Educator in the child's room will ensure:

- The expectations of the child's behaviour are realistic and appropriate to their developmental level.
- The child understands the limits.
- The child's needs are being met.
- The child is not copying observed behaviour.
- The situation or environment have not encouraged the behaviour.
- Consequences of the behaviour do not encourage it to persist.
- Positive reinforcement is used often to encourage desired behaviours.
- Strategies are consistently followed by all educators working with the child.
- There is open communication between educators and the child's family, to help maintain reasonable and consistent expectations.

For continual, repeated negative behaviours, behaviour guidance plans will be developed in consultation with families, educators and any other professionals who are working with the child. These will be implemented consistently by the educators caring for the child.

If negative behaviours persist, advice and possible training will be sourced to assist in developing responsive strategies.

Families will:

- Work in partnership with educators where concerns are raised about the behaviour of their child.
- Agree to work with educators to minimise risk where the child’s behaviour is a danger to other people in the environment, including other children and educators. This may include seeking professional support, or reducing the time the child spends in care, until the risk to others is minimised.
- Where families do not work in partnership with the service to support their child, and minimise behaviour issues, the child’s enrolment may be suspended or terminated.

Sources: Education and Care Services Law and Regulations 2011; Guide to the National Quality Standard; Belonging, Being and Becoming. The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. 2009; ECA Code of Ethics; ACECQA: Inappropriate Discipline; ACECQA: Supporting Children to Regulate Their Own Behaviour

Policy Redeveloped August 2022 (see archived Policies for previous versions)

Date of review	Modifications made	Approved
August 2022	Redeveloped policy	27/09/2022