

# INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN, FAMILIES & STAFF POLICY

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) identifies secure, respectful, and reciprocal relationships with children as one of the principles that underpin practice. Within an early childhood community many different relationships are negotiated with and between children, educators, and families. The way in which these relationships are established and maintained, and the way in which they remain visible impacts on how the early childhood community functions as a whole. Relationships directly affect how children form their own identity, whether or not they feel safe and supported, and ultimately, their sense of belonging.

## NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

| QUALITY AREA 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 5.1   | Relationships between educators and children | Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.  |
| 5.1.1                                       | Positive educator to child interactions      | Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included. |
| 5.1.2                                       | Dignity and rights of the child              | The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.   |
| 5.2   | Relationships between children               | Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.   |
| 5.2.1                                       | Collaborative learning                       | Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.  |

| QUALITY AREA 6: COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| 6.1  | Supportive relationships with families | Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.                                 |
| 6.1.1  | Engagement with the service            | Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.  |
| 6.1.2  | Parents views are respected            | The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected, and families share decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.    |
| 6.1.3  | Families are supported                 | Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing. |

| EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| 155  | Interactions with children |
| 156  | Relationships in groups    |

**RELATED POLICIES**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Arrival & Departure Policy<br>Behaviour Guidance Policy<br>Code of Conduct Policy<br>Educational Program Policy<br>Enrolment Policy<br>Facebook Policy<br>Family Communication Policy<br>Open Door Policy | Orientation of Families Policy<br>Privacy & Confidentiality Policy<br>Relief Staff Policy<br>Respect for Children Policy<br>Grievance Policy (Staff)<br>Student & Volunteer Policy<br>Supervision Policy<br>Transition to School Policy |
|---|---|

**PURPOSE**

We aim to build positive relationships with children, families, and educators through collaboration and interactions, which is reflective of our service philosophy and the Early Years Learning Framework. Educators will encourage positive relationships between children and their peers as well as with educators and families at the service, ensuring children feel safe and supported.

**SCOPE**

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, and visitors of the service.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

In order to build and maintain positive and respectful relationships with children, families and educators of our service will adhere to our *Service Philosophy* and *Code of Ethics* to guide:

**Interactions with Children**

Children need positive relationships with educators that are trusting and responsive to their needs.

**Management and Educators will:**

- Create a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere in which children experience equitable, friendly and genuine interactions with all educators.
- Role-model appropriate language and behaviour.
- Support children to be aware of their own feelings as well as the feelings of others.
- Encourage children to treat all children with respect.
- Provide children with the opportunity to explore their dispositions for learning by expressing themselves and their opinions.
- Assist the children to build resilience and self-assurance through positive interactions.
- Guide children's behaviour positively.
- Respect the rights of children.
- Support children in the early childhood environment.
- Speak to children in a positive manner at all times, promoting respect, tolerance and empathy, including the use of non-verbal cues and communication.
- Engage in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life and learning of children.
- Respect each child's uniqueness, be attuned to, and respond sensitively and appropriately to children's efforts to communicate and use the child's own language, communication styles, and culture to enhance interactions.
- Listen to children and take them seriously; support and encourage children to use appropriate language in their interactions with adults and peers. Educators will extend upon children's interests and ideas through questions and discussions, supported and made visible in observations, reflections, and programming.
- Communicate with children by getting down to their level, using eye contact, and showing respect to the child whilst engaging in and promoting effective communication.
- Show empathy to children.
- Ensure that the values, beliefs, and cultural practices of the child and family are considered and respected.
- Ensure that no child is ever isolated for any reason other than illness, accident or pre-arranged appointment with parental consent. During this time, they will be under adult supervision.
- Regularly reflect on their relationships and interactions with children and how these can be improved to benefit each child.
- Facilitate children's individual development.

## Interactions with Families

Effective communication is the key to developing and maintaining positive interactions and relationships with others. Educators working within our service are required to demonstrate mutual respect towards each other and value the contributions made by each educator. This enables our service to maintain positive relations and model the type of communication they want children to develop. Educators also need to use positive communication with families and siblings in order to create a responsive and inclusive environment for all.

### Management and Educators will ensure:

- All families are treated equitably without bias or judgement, recognising that each family is unique.
- Families and children are greeted upon arrival.
- Two-way communication is established through leading by example and asking questions.
- Common terminology is used when talking to parents regarding their child's development.
- Another child or family information is never discussed with a parent or visitor.
- They remain sensitive to cultural differences amongst families and encourage families to share cultural aspects with the children and educators at the service.
- They always endeavour to seek the advice and opinion from experts (with family permission), to help with regard to a child with additional needs or support a family through resources available from such support agencies as KU Inclusion Support Agency, Area Health, or the private sector.
- They endeavour to recognise and implement several different ways to communicate with families in the family's preferred way.
- Verbal communication is always open, respectful and honest.
- Families are provided with up to date service information and notices through daily reports, newsletters, communal notice boards, emails and sign-in sheets.
- They regularly reflect on parent input into the program and make changes where necessary that will best benefit the service and children.
- Children are treated and programmed for as individuals.

## Interactions with Staff and Educators

The service recognises that the way educators interact with each other has an effect on the interactions they have with children and families.

**To maintain professionalism at all times, Educators will:**

- Engage in professional communication in order create an effective work environment and to build a positive relationship with educators, children and families. Communication amongst colleagues creates a positive atmosphere and a professional image for families. Communication between staff and families ensures that important information is being passed on consistently.
- Collaborate together as a team sharing room roles and responsibilities through the use of a roster where necessary.
- Be respectful when listening to each other's point of view and ideas.
- Maintain effective communication to ensure that teamwork occurs.
- Use staff meetings to communicate their professional reflections and ideas for continuous improvement as a team.
- Attend in-service training to update and refresh and add to individual skills and knowledge.
- Refer to the *Staff Grievance Policy/Procedure* if they feel a situation with another educator is not being handled with professionalism, respect, and fairness.
- Recognise each other's strengths and value the different work each does.
- Work collaboratively to reach decisions which will enhance the quality of the education and care offered at the service.
- Welcome diverse views and perspectives.
- Work together as a team and engage in open and honest communication at all times.
- Respect each other's positions and opinions.
- Develop and share networks and links with other agencies.
- Resolve differences promptly and positively and use the experience to develop more effective methods of working together.

**To enhance communication and teamwork, Management will:**

- Provide new educators with relevant information about the service and program through a Staff Handbook, induction, and daily communication.
- Treat educators with respect.
- Be sensitive to the feelings and needs of educators.
- Provide constructive feedback to educators.
- Value the role and contribution of each educator.
- Provide opportunities for all educators to have input and evaluate the program.
- Appreciate and utilise educator skills and interests.
- Provide support and assistance to educators.

- Hold regular educator meetings.
- Use appropriate conflict resolution techniques to solve problems.
- Ensure policies and procedures are up to date regarding communication, expected behaviour and grievances.
- Provide opportunities for professional development.

**To enhance communication and teamwork, Educators will:**

- Maintain confidentiality.
- Treat each team member with respect.
- Be sensitive to the feelings and needs of other team members.
- Provide constructive feedback to each other.
- Trust each other.
- Value the role and contribution of colleagues.
- Appreciate and utilise colleague skills and interests.
- Provide support and assistance to each other.
- Share responsibilities.
- Have a flexible attitude towards team roles and responsibilities.
- Greet each other by name.
- Show genuine interest in the other person by using active and reflective listening.
- Communicate ideas and opinions clearly and professionally.
- Use a communication book or daily diary to pass on messages and record relevant information.
- Use appropriate conflict resolution techniques to solve problems.
- Engage in opportunities for professional development.

**Sources**

Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (2009)

Children's Services Central. Respectful Relationships (No longer available)

Education and Care National Regulations (2011)

Guide to the National Quality Standard (2017)

Revised National Quality Standard (2018)

REVIEW

| POLICY REVIEWED | May 2019   | NEXT REVIEW DATE | May 2020 |
|-----------------|--|------------------|----------|
| MODIFICATIONS   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added section '<i>To enhance communication and teamwork, Management will:</i>' taking relevant points from section '<i>To enhance communication and teamwork, Educators will:</i>'</li> <li>Additional information added to points</li> <li>Sources checked for currency. Made note of sources that are no longer available</li> <li>Sources/references alphabetised</li> <li>Minor formatting for consistency throughout policy</li> </ul> |                  |          |
| POLICY REVIEWED | PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS   | NEXT REVIEW DATE |          |
| May 2018        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor grammatical changes made to content (Not critical to its delivery)</li> </ul>   | May 2019         |          |
| October 2017    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated the references to comply with the revised National Quality Standard</li> </ul>  | May 2018         |          |
| May 2017        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor changes made and additions to ensure Educators are challenging children's individual development</li> </ul>   | May 2018         |          |