



INTERACTION WITH CHILDREN POLICY

MANDATORY - QUALITY AREA 5

Working in partnership with Cancer Council Victoria, ELAA has aligned this policy to the key policies and guidelines of the Healthy Early Childhood Services Achievement Program

PURPOSE

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines to ensure:

- the development of responsive, warm, trusting, and respectful relationships with children that promote their wellbeing, self-esteem, sense of security and belonging at Shine Bright EYM
- each child at Shine Bright EYM is supported to learn and develop in a secure and empowering environment.

POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Shine Bright EYM is committed to:

- maintaining the dignity, agency, and rights of each child at the service
- promoting fairness, respect, and equity
- encouraging children to express themselves and their opinions, and to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
- considering the agency, health, safety, and wellbeing of each child, and providing a safe, secure, and welcoming environment in which they can develop and learn
- maintaining a duty of care (*refer to Definitions*) towards all children at Shine Bright EYM
- considering the diversity of individual children at the service, including family and cultural values, age, gender, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child
- building collaborative relationships with families to improve learning and development outcomes for children
- encouraging positive, respectful, and warm relationships between children, families, and educators/staff at the service.
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SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, and others attending the programs and activities of Shine Bright EYM , including during offsite excursions and activities.

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Developing and implementing the <i>Interactions with Children Policy</i> in consultation with stakeholders, and ensuring that it reflects the philosophy, beliefs, and values of the service	R	√	√	√	√
Ensuring all stakeholders are provided with a copy of the <i>Interactions with Children Policy</i> and comply with its requirements	R	√	√	√	√
Ensuring all staff are aware of the service’s expectations regarding positive, respectful, and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and warm, trusting, responsive and reciprocal interactions when working with children and families (<i>refer to Code of Conduct Policy</i>)	R	√	√		√
Educators will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Greet and farewell children and families dailyInform children when they will be taking a break and who will be replacing themGain children’s attention by approaching them and addressing them by nameDevelop, in consultation with children, agreed rules of safety and respect for others and their environmentBe aware of the potential for conflict in groups of children and set up the environment to reduce this potentialUse positive techniques such as redirection, distraction, and specific positive feedback to guide children’s behaviour and develop empathy for others		√	√		√
Ensuring children are adequately supervised (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) and that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times (<i>refer to Supervision of Children Policy</i>)	R	√	√		
Ensuring the environment at the service is safe, secure, free from any hazards (<i>National Law: Section 167</i>) (<i>refer to Child Safe Environment Policy, Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Supervision of Children Policy</i>) and promotes the active participation of every child	R	R	√		√
Ensuring the size and composition of groups is considered to ensure all children are provided with the best opportunities for quality interactions and relationships with each other and with adults at the service (<i>Regulation 156(2)</i>).	R	√	√		

Developing and implementing educational programs that are delivered in accordance with an approved learning framework (<i>refer to Definitions</i>), are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences and strengths of each child (<i>refer to Inclusion and Equity Policy</i>)	R	R	√		√
Ensuring the educational program contributes to the development of children to have a strong sense of wellbeing and identity, and to be connected, confident, involved and effective learners and communicators (<i>Regulation 73</i>) (<i>refer to Curriculum Development Policy</i>)	R	√	√		√
Ensuring that the service provides education and care to children in a way that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourages children to express themselves and their opinions • allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem • maintains the dignity and the rights of each child at all times • offers positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour • has regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for (<i>Regulation 155</i>) 	R	√	√		√
Ensure that Shine Bright EYM provides children with opportunities to interact and develop positive relationships with each other, and with the staff and volunteers at the service (<i>Regulation 156(1)</i>)	R	√	√		√
Recognising the importance of friendships and encourage support from peers, to help children and young people feel safe and be connected	√	√	√		√
Ensuring clear documentation of the assessment and evaluation of each child's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developmental needs, learning, interests, experiences and program participation • progress against the outcomes of the educational program (<i>Regulation 74</i>) (<i>refer to Curriculum Development Policy</i>) 	R	√	√		?
Ensuring that procedures are in place for effective regular communication with parents/guardians to share information about children's learning, development, interactions, behaviour, and relationships. Educators will make themselves available to meet with families in their non-contact time.	R	√	√		?
Supporting ECT/educators/staff to access resources and gain appropriate training, knowledge, and skills for the implementation of this policy, including promoting social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing	√	√			
Ensuring that staff members at Shine Bright EYM who work with children are aware that it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is	R	R	R	Ö	√

unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances (<i>National Law: Section 166</i>)					
Promoting collaborative relationships between children/families and program support groups (if required) (<i>refer to Definitions</i>), to improve the quality of children's education and care experiences	√	√	√	√	√
Ensuring notifications of serious incidents (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) are made to the regulatory authority (DET) (<i>refer to Definition</i>) through the NQA IT System (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) as soon as is practicable but not later than 24 hours after the occurrence (<i>National Law: Section 174(2)(a), Regulations 176 (2)(a)</i>) Nominated Supervisor/Responsible person in charge to notify Shine Bright Central Office immediately	R	√	√		
Notifying DET within 24 hours of becoming aware of a notifiable complaint (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) or allegation regarding the safety, health and/or welfare of a child at the service (<i>National Law: Section 174(2)(b), Regulations 176 (2)(a)</i>) Nominated Supervisor/Responsible person in charge to notify Shine Bright Central Office immediately	R	√	√		
Ensuring that where the service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child, every reasonable attempt is made sure such contact does not occur while the child is on the service premises	R	R	√		√
Ensuring all staff, volunteers and contractors use positive and respectful strategies to assist children to manage their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others	R	√	√		√
Developing links with and referral pathways to services and/or program support groups (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) to support children experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and their families	√	√	√	√	√
Ensuring that there is a behaviour guidance plan (<i>refer to Definitions</i>)(<i>attachment 3</i>) developed, in consultation with parents/guardians, educators, other professionals and support agencies, for a child if educators are concerned that the child's behaviour may significantly impact on the educational program and/or put the child themselves, other children, educators/staff and/or others at risk	√	√	√	√	
Ensuring that parents/guardians and program support groups (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) (as appropriate) are further consulted if an individual behaviour guidance plan (<i>attachment 3</i>) has not resolved the challenging behaviour and are provided with the Letter to Parents re Inclusion (<i>Available from your EY Advisor</i>) if appropriate.	√	√	√	√	
Working collaboratively with educators/staff and program support groups (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) to develop or review an individual behaviour guidance plan (<i>attachment 3</i>) for their child, where appropriate.		√	√	√	
Working collaboratively with educators/staff and program support groups or professional agencies to access the support needed to support their child's continued development, health		√	√	√	

and wellbeing. This may involve the child's attendance at the service being temporarily suspending, or the hours of attendance reduced while the support is accessed to enable self-regulation and safe participation in the educational program.					
Setting clear timelines for review and evaluation of the behaviour guidance plan. (<i>attachment 3</i>)		√	√	√	
Where children's or staff's safety is repeatedly comprised and where Behaviour Guidance Plans (<i>attachment 3</i>) have been updated and reviewed with parent/guardian and any key workers involved with the child, staff are to notify and work with their Early Years Advisor. If after all attempts to work with all involved and the service is still not safe for children and or staff, the child may have their enrolment at the service temporarily suspended until further help/assistance is provided to support the child's behaviour. Staff will work with the family and provide assistance to get the professional help they need to support their child's health and wellbeing. Suspension of a child's enrolment at any time is at the discretion of the Early Years Advisor (in consultation with the Early Years Manager) or the Early Years Manager or their delegate. (<i>See Challenging Behaviour Flowchart attachment 5</i>)	√	√	√	√	
Suspension of a child's enrolment can also occur in other limited circumstances, including after a one-off incident, where the Early Years Managers or their delegate deems given the seriousness of the situation and to protect the safety and/or welfare of the child, other children or educators if it is deemed necessary.					
If at any time a child's behaviour compromises the safety of children or staff for any reason, staff are to complete an incident report and have the parent/guardian sign it as per our normal procedure. The report is to be forwarded to your Early Years Advisor immediately. Incident reports are to be completed and signed by a parent/guardian each time a child is sent home due to their behaviour.		√	√		
Providing information, ideas and practical strategies to families, educators and staff on a regular basis to promote and support health and wellbeing in the service and at home		√	√		
Consulting with, and seeking advice from, DET if a suitable and mutually agreeable behaviour guidance plan (<i>attachment 3</i>) cannot be developed	R	√	√		
Investigating the availability of extra assistance, such as Kindergarten Inclusion Support (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) or training, by contacting the regional Preschool Field Officer (<i>refer to Definitions</i>), specialist children's services officers from DET or other agencies working with the child	R	√	√	√	
Funded Kindergarten specific					
Investigating the availability of extra assistance, financial support such as Inclusion Support Program (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) or training, by contacting their regional Inclusion Agency (<i>refer to Sources</i>)	R	√	√	√	

Long day care specific					
Ensuring that additional resources are sourced, if required, to implement a behaviour guidance plan (<i>attachment 3</i>), including submitting an Additional Support and/or Special Consideration Request form (<i>attachment 2</i>) to Shine Bright Advisor, if applicable	R	✓	✓		
Ensuring that educators/staff at the service are provided with appropriate training to guide the actions and their responses to a child/children with challenging behaviour.	✓	✓			
Engaging in open communication with service staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informing educators/staff of concerns, events or incidents that may impact on their child's behaviour at the service (e.g. moving house, relationship issues, a new sibling) Informing educators/staff of concerns regarding their child's behaviour at enrolment and throughout the year Informing educators/staff of concerns regarding the impact of other children's behaviour 				✓	
Working collaboratively with educators (and other professional/support agencies, if applicable) to develop and regularly review an individual education plan (<i>attachment 1</i>) for their child.				✓	
Maintaining confidentiality (<i>refer to Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i>)	R	✓	✓	✓	✓

BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

BACKGROUND

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is founded on respect for the dignity and worth of each individual, regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, opinions, wealth, birth status or ability. When children experience nurturing and respectful reciprocal relationships with educators, they develop an understanding of themselves as competent, capable and respected. Relationships are the foundation for the construction of identity, and help shape children's thinking about who they are, how they belong and what influences them [Early Years Learning Framework, p. 20; Framework for School Age Care, p. 19]

'Constructive everyday interactions and shared learning opportunities form the basis of equitable, respectful and reciprocal relationships between educators and children. Educators who are actively engaged in children's learning and share decision-making with them, use their everyday interactions during play, routines and ongoing projects to stimulate children's thinking and to enrich their learning. These relationships provide a solid foundation from which to guide and support children as they develop the self-confidence and skills to manage their own behaviour, make decisions and relate positively and effectively to others.' (*Guide to National Quality Framework – refer to Sources*)

Child Safe Standard 3 requires services to have strategies to empower children about their rights, ensure children can participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously. When children feel respected and valued, they are much more likely to speak up about issues of safety and wellbeing. Enabling and promoting empowerment and the participation of children within a service has multiple benefits in addition to enhancing the safety of children, including demonstrating a commitment to upholding the rights of children, checking that what the service is doing is what children want and building the communication and leadership skills of children.

In developing an *Interactions with Children Policy*, early childhood education and care services must review and reflect on the philosophy, beliefs and values of the service, particularly with regard to the relationships with children. The development of this policy should also be informed by the service's *Code of Conduct Policy*.

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au

DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms e.g. Approved provider, Nominated supervisor, Notifiable complaints, Serious incidents, Duty of care, etc. refer to the Definitions file of the PolicyWorks catalogue.

Adequate supervision: entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used.

Adequate supervision refers to constant, active and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate supervision requires that educators are always in a position to observe each child, respond to individual needs and immediately intervene if necessary. Variables affecting supervision levels include:

- number, age and abilities of children
- number and positioning of educators
- current activity of each child
- areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility)
- developmental profile of each child and of the group of children
- experience, knowledge and skill of each educator
- need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies).

Behaviour guidance: a means of assisting children in a positive and effective ways to help children gain understanding and learn skills that will help them learn to manage their own behaviour.

Behaviour guidance plan: A plan that documents strategies to assist an educator in guiding a child with diagnosed behavioural difficulties or challenging behaviours to self-manage their behaviour. The plan is developed in consultation with the nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers, educators, parents/guardians and families, and other professional support agencies as applicable. *(see Attachment 3)*

Challenging behaviour: behaviour that can be described as:

- infringes on the rights of others
- disrupts others or causes disputes between children
- causes harm or risk to the child, other children, adults or living things
- is destructive to the environment and/or equipment

- inhibits the child's learning and relationship with others
- a child presenting as shy, withdrawn or excessively passive in a way which is inhibiting their learning and/or development
- is inappropriate relative to the child's developmental age and background.

Inclusion Support Program (ISP): is a key component of the Government's Child Care Safety Net. The program provides support for eligible mainstream Early Childhood Education and Care services to build their capacity and capability to include children with additional needs, alongside their typically developing peers, so all children have genuine opportunities to access, participate and achieve positive learning outcomes. For more information visit: www.dese.gov.au

Individual Education Plan: A plan which is developed in consultation with the teacher and educators, the child and families, and other professional support agencies as applicable. This plan documents goals and strategies for the learning and development of each child. (See attachment 1)

Kindergarten Inclusion Support Program (KIS): Supports funded kindergartens to plan and implement a program that is responsive to the individual abilities, interests and needs of children with a disability, developmental delay or complex medical needs. Long Day Care services can apply for the KIS program for their Victorian Government-funded kindergarten programs.

Program Support Groups (PSG): A program support group brings together key people to support the inclusion of children with disability or developmental delay, or complex medical needs, from the time of enrolment at kindergarten until they move to school. The group may include:

- the early childhood teacher
- the child's parent/carer(s)
- early childhood intervention professionals
- a preschool field officer
- medical practitioners, therapists or other allied health professionals
- a support person – if the child's parent/carer(s) chooses to use one.

Mental health: In early childhood, a child's mental health is understood as a child's ability to 'experience, regulate and express emotions; form close and secure interpersonal relationships; and explore the environment and learn – all in the context of family, community and cultural expectations for young children. Infant mental health is synonymous with healthy social and emotional development. <https://beyou.edu.au/>

Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) Program: The role of the PSFO Program to support the access and participation of children with additional needs in their kindergarten program. For more information visit: www.education.vic.gov.au

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

SOURCES

- Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Child Safe Standards: www.ccyp.vic.gov.au
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics: www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au
- Guide to the National Quality Framework, ACECQA: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Inclusion Support Program: www.dese.gov.au
- Kids Matter, an Australian mental health and well-being initiative set in primary schools and early childhood education and care services: <https://beyou.edu.au>
- The Kindergarten Funding Guide (DET): www.education.vic.gov.au
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: www.unicef.org
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Victorian Inclusion Agency (VIA): www.viac.com.au

RELATED POLICIES

- Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing

- Code of Conduct
- Compliments and Complaints
- Curriculum Development
- Inclusion and Equity
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Supervision of Children

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the approved provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk ([Regulation 172 \(2\)](#)).

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: [Individual Education Plan](#)
- Attachment 2: [Additional Support and/or Special Consideration Request Form](#)
- Attachment 3: [Behaviour Guidance Plan](#)
- Attachment 4: [Behaviour Guidance Plan-Example](#)
- Attachment 5: [Challenging Behaviour Flowchart](#)
- Attachment 6: [ABC Chart for recording behaviours.](#)

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Shine Bright EYM July 2022

REVIEW DATE: July 2025