

BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE AND MANAGEMENT POLICY



OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this policy is to provide staff and parents/guardians with information, strategies and support to guide children's behaviour in a positive way. Reid Early Childhood Centre (RECC) believes that, as a community based centre, the care of children is a partnership between the Centre and the parents/guardians.

This policy is a requirement of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 under the Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011 that require the centre to maintain policies regarding interactions with children [Regulation 168 (2)(j)]. This policy also describes how staff at the centre give each child positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour as required by Regulation 155(d) of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 under the Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011.

GENERAL APPROACH TO BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE

Children behave according to their understanding of the world and their individual needs. The role of staff is to guide and encourage behaviour that supports a child to feel accepted and happy within themselves. Children may "act out" when they do not feel they can cope with a situation. RECC aims to assist the development of each child's self confidence and social and emotional development so they can better cope with new situations. RECC staff use positive language when guiding and interacting with the children.

RECC encourages parents/guardians to provide positive input into the children's program and are actively involved in forming solutions should a conflict arise. Families are encouraged to participate in developing resilience by discussing any concerns about behaviour with their Room Leader or the Director.

BEHAVIOURS THAT ARE ENCOURAGED AT RECC INCLUDE:

- Verbal expression of feelings in a calm and controlled manner (staff model and teach appropriate use of language to resolve disputes if they arise)
- An understanding of feelings and appropriate ways to express yourself
- Sharing and taking turns
- Problem solving and working together
- Discussions about feelings and redirection are encouraged
- Age appropriate choices are given, giving the child opportunity to take charge of their actions.

Reviewed and updated in September 2014 with approval from RECC Management Committee

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The behavioural guidance at RECC is shown through:

- Individual consideration for each child (e.g. age, cultural background, family situation)
- Careful planning of environment and program to suit all/each of the child's needs
- Anticipation and prevention by being aware and sensitive to potential problem situations (e.g. through consultation between parent/guardian and staff)
- An atmosphere that is happy and relaxed and enables children to experience trust, initiative and purposefulness
- An approach that responds to the age/developmental level of the individual child concerned (including the response when intervening)
- An active teaching and promoting of acceptable behaviour (by staff role modelling)
- Encouraging respect and empathy for others
- Fostering and encouraging self control
- Teaching about turn taking, sharing and caring through everyday activities
- Consulting with parent/guardian on a regular basis and discussing the child's routine, development and self esteem
- Scheduling suitable rest and sleep areas and provision of adequate rests for children
- Managing nutritional and medical requirements of children

BEHAVIOURS THAT ARE DISCOURAGED AT RECC INCLUDE:

- Physical and verbal aggression such as biting, pushing and yelling
- Deliberate destruction of toys and equipment
- Bad language
- Use of demeaning verbal expressions or hand signals

BUILDING RESILIENCE

Depending upon the age and the developmental stage of the children, different techniques and activities are used at RECC to build awareness of appropriate behaviour and, if necessary, discourage unacceptable behaviour.

Room leaders incorporate elements of resilience in programming so learning may be subtle or specifically tailored to behavioural trends or interests within the group. Learning is age-appropriate and relies on interactive experiences for the children to comprehend concepts. Examples may include: brainstorming session (for older children) or through song or story-telling. Room leaders and all staff receive regular training on strategies to address concerning behaviour.

Regarding behaviour modification for younger children, diversion, removal or the provision of additional equipment are methods used at RECC to resolve problems, which have proven effective.

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For older children, a logical consequence approach is used to support a child to change their behaviour. Discussions about set rules are undertaken with the children. Rules are to be kept to a minimum and must be clearly understood. Quiet areas for self-reflection have also proven effective in allowing older children to practice regulating their emotions and behaviours. These spaces enable children to make informed choices regarding their preference for play and learning in a supportive and comfortable environment.

Staff help children prepare for visitors and relief carers and acknowledge that some adjustment may be necessary for the children to feel comfortable in the presence of new people.

ADDRESSING INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOURS

Staff at RECC accept that it is never acceptable to shame, embarrass, ridicule, demean or show disappointment in children. If a child has done something that is unacceptable, it is made clear to the child that their behaviour (the act) is unacceptable – never themselves. Staff are trained to calmly discuss situations with children in a manner comfortable to the child such as at the child's eye-level.

Parents/guardians will be consulted as soon as possible if a behaviour management issue is identified with their child. Initially, the Room Leader will discreetly discuss the concern with the child's parent/guardian, being mindful of the need to open up communication whilst maintaining trust and privacy. Details of the behaviour will be outlined by the Room Leader, including dates and times/number of times. Discussion may include possible contributors to the behaviour, such as changes in the child's routine, and suggestions to remedy.

If a child's behaviour is threatening to the safety of children or staff at RECC, the Management Committee will be informed of all incidents as soon as possible. As an employer, RECC has an obligation to safeguard all people in the Centre. In the event that inappropriate behaviour is brought to the attention of the Management Committee, the Behaviour Support Unit from Belconnen Community Services will be requested to provide support to educators .

STAFF RESILIENCE

RECC takes the obligation to provide a safe and healthy workplace seriously. Staff who are implementing behaviour guidance strategies and/or plans for children that display inappropriate behaviours (especially if the behaviour is aggressive towards other children or adults) are provided with continued support and assistance, including external support from the Behaviour Support Unit.

Staff may experience levels of stress or anxiety if behavioural issues arise with children. This may contribute to sickness or apprehension in the workplace. RECC acknowledges the duty of care to ensure that employee mental and emotional well-being is considered, as well as the child's need for positive behaviour guidance strategies. Counselling is available to staff and the Director is available to support staff and to talk to about their concerns.

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BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

Where behavioural problems persist, to ensure the safety and well-being of children and staff, the following procedures are followed:

- The child's behaviour is to be documented through observations and incident reports
- Senior Educators, with support from the Educational Leader, is required to implement various strategies to address the behaviour/s within the program
- If the behaviour/s persist, Senior Educators and parents/guardians, will develop a behaviour management plan (BMP) to assist the child
- All educators and the parents/guardians will work co-operatively to support the child in achieving the BMP goals
- If the inappropriate behaviour persists despite these actions, parents/guardians will be required to attend a meeting* with the Director and the child's Senior Educator to review the BMP
- The Senior Educator will evaluate and document the child's behaviour on a daily basis, in line with the BMP, informing parents/guardians and Director of progress, through weekly meetings/phone calls/communication book. This will continue for an agreed upon time frame*
- Parents/guardians will be invited to attend information sessions with an appropriate external behaviour management consultant as required and to allow the Behaviour Support Unit Early Intervention Program** to become involved in guiding the child's behaviour where applicable
- If, after these steps have been taken, the behavioural problem continues, or it is reasonably determined that behaviour poses a threat to the safety and well-being of other children, staff or visitors, RECC reserves the right to refuse the child attendance at the Centre. If the threat is considered to be serious and immediate, notification of the exclusion, to the parents, can be with immediate effect. The Director, in consultation with the President, is authorised to make this decision.

Parents/guardians and Senior Educators will receive a copy of the BMP once drafted and may be provided upon review.

* If the parent/guardian does not attend these meetings, or does not respond to RECC's requests for meetings, RECC reserves the right to exclude the child from care.

** The Behaviour Support Unit Early Intervention Program at Belconnen Community Service is a free and confidential service for families and childcare programs with children needing behaviour support. Not all cases can be dealt with by the Program and priority is given to children with English as their second language or who are diagnosed with a behavioural condition.

RELATED POLICIES:

Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy

Child Protection Policy

Grievances and Complaints Policy

Illness Policy

Medication Policy

Behaviour Guidance and Management Policy

Partnership with Families Policy

Philosophy and Values Policy

Programming and Planning Policy

Privacy Policy

Sleep and Rest Policy

Work Health and Safety Policy

SOURCES:

Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

ACT WorkSafe

Behaviour Support Early Intervention Program, Belconnen Community Service,
www.bcsact.com.au, Tel (02) 6264 0200.

www.betterhealth.gov.au

www.parentlink.org.au

www.raisingchildren.com.au