

Interactions with Children in the ELC Policy

Introduction

Respectful and equitable relationships in education and care settings are at the core of children's wellbeing, learning and development. Warm and responsive interactions create a positive environment and enhance children's communication skills and social skills such as fairness, cooperation and empathy.

We value children as individuals with unique personalities, interests, strengths and needs and encourage their independence and sense of agency. Children are supported to form their own identity and feel a sense of belonging. Learning and development occurs in a social context. We recognise the importance of the child's family and primary caregivers. We also recognise educators bring their own personalities, backgrounds and experiences to their relationships with children.

Policy

IGS Early Learning will:

- Build positive, warm, responsive relationships with children and their families
- Promote a safe, secure and nurturing environment
- Recognise all behaviour as a form of communication
- View all interactions with children as an opportunity to learn and practice skills
- Provide positive behaviour support for each child
- Approach challenging behaviour and conflict as a way to develop and teach children skills
- Support children to develop positive relationships with each other
- Be responsive to children's strengths, interests, abilities and communication skills
- Provide opportunities for children to become self-reliant and develop self-esteem
- Uphold children's dignity, rights and agency
- Be authentic and responsive
- Demonstrate acceptance and empathy with respect for cultural and linguistic rights
- Collaborate with families, community members and allied health professionals to find solutions
- Provide families with information about early assessment and support interventions

Definitions

Term	Definition
Agency	Being able to make choices and decisions, to influence events and to have an impact on one's world.
Positive behaviour support	A process of recognising children's behaviour is a form of communication. Challenging behaviour indicates stress and highlights an area of underlying skill that needs to be taught. When children are supported to develop the skills their behaviour adapts positively.
Co-regulation	Co-regulation is defined as warm and responsive interactions that provide the support, coaching, and modeling children need to "understand, express, and modulate their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors" (Murray et al. 2015, 14).
Communication methods	Body language, facial expressions, gestures, Key Word Sign language, spoken language, drawing and writing, use of technology, behaviour.
Emotion coaching	5 steps of becoming aware of emotions, identifying emotions, labelling them and seeking solutions, whilst setting boundaries that build emotional intelligence. (Gottman, J. & Declaire, J. 1997)
Empathy	The ability to identify what someone else might be thinking or feeling.
Inclusion	Taking into account all children's social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographic location) in curriculum decision-making processes. The intent is to ensure that all children's experiences are recognised and valued. The intent is also to ensure that all children have equitable access to resources and participation, and opportunities to demonstrate their learning and to value difference.
Scaffold	The educators' decisions and actions that build on children's existing knowledge and skills to enhance their learning.
Self regulation	The ability to manage your own energy states, emotions, behaviours and attention, in ways that are socially acceptable and help achieve positive goals, such as maintaining good relationships, learning and maintaining wellbeing. (Shanker, S. 2012)

Eligibility

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and students in IGS Early Learning Centre.

Responsible

Responsibilities for this policy are:

Person	Responsible for
Approved Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensuring all staff have access to professional development. ● Ensuring the educational program contributes to the development of children who have a strong sense of wellbeing and identity, and are connected, confident, involved and effective learners and communicators. ● Ensuring that the nominated supervisor and all staff members at the service 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 unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances (National Law: Section 166) (Regulation 73). ● Informing the Regulatory Authority in writing within 24 hours of receiving a notifiable complaint (Section 174(4), Regulation 176(2)(b)). ● Informing the Regulatory Authority in writing within 24 hours of a serious incident occurring at the service (Section 174(4), Regulation 176).
Nominated Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Guiding professional development and practice to promote interactions with children that are positive and respectful. ● Establishing practice guidelines that ensure interactions with children are given priority and those interactions are authentic, just and respect differences. ● Ensuring all staff are aware of the service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and reactions when working with children and families. ● Considering the size and composition of groups to ensure all children are provided with the best opportunities for quality interactions and relationships with each other and adults at the service. ● Developing and implementing educational programs, in accordance with an approved learning framework, that are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child. ● Ensuring that staff provide education and care to children in a way that encourages children to express themselves and their opinions and allows children to undertake experiences that develop self reliance and self esteem.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Under Section 166 of the Education and Care National Law, a staff member, a nominated supervisor and Approved Provider may receive a penalty for up to \$10 000 (up to \$50 000 in the case of an Approved Provider) for subjecting a child to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances.
ELC Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acting in accordance with the obligations outlined in this policy. ● Working in a collaborative team approach with other ELC staff, the child's family and external professionals, communicating and sharing information, knowledge and skills. ● Acknowledging children's complex relationships and sensitively intervene in ways that promote consideration, alternative perspectives and social inclusion. ● Taking time to form authentic relationships based on trust and respect with each child. ● Respecting children's agency and encouraging them to express themselves and their opinions. ● Maintaining the dignity and the rights of each child at all times. ● Regarding the cultural and family values, age and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for. ● Offering positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour. ● Being engaged in the critical role of co-regulators with the children. ● Ensuring that routines such as toileting, rest times and mealtimes are used for positive one to one interactions with children and as a time that they can get to know more about the child. ● Genuinely seeking children's input, respecting their ideas and incorporating their suggestions into daily practice. ● Supporting children to develop trust and attachment through forming warm relationships with each child. ● Recognising and responding to their own biases and needs when forming relationships with children.
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading and complying with this policy. ● Engaging in open communication with staff about their child. ● Informing staff of events or incidents that may impact on their child's behaviour at the service (e.g. a new sibling, moving house). ● Informing staff of any concerns regarding their child's

	<p>behaviour or the impact of other children's behaviour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working collaboratively with staff and others to develop or review an individualised education plan, where appropriate.
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Strategies for guiding positive interactions with children

Getting to know children and families

- Gather relevant information about the child and family (such as cultural background, languages, interests, development) through pre-enrolment forms and meetings, 'What Matters Most' form and conversations.
- Continue ongoing gathering of information through respectful communication.
- Take time to value interacting with children to understand their interests and strengths.
- Plan for regular communication with families. For example parent/teacher conferences or individual learning plan meetings.
- Inform parents of their child's interests, learning and progress both informally and formally (for example, conversations, Storypark posts, individual goals and summative assessments).
- Include other professionals such as speech pathologists and psychologists, as relevant for Individual Learning Plans.

Establishing a warm, safe and consistent environment

- Consistently interact with children at their own level where possible. Communication includes facial expressions, body language, posture and tone of voice.
- Establish safe and respectful behaviours and rules, with the children linked to the IGS philosophy, values and IGS Way. Take into account children's age and development. Phrase rules positively e.g 'We walk inside'.
- Give specific feedback for positive behaviours e.g. 'You did a great job waiting for your turn.'
- Role model respectful and appropriate behaviours.
- Scaffold children's interactions with each other to promote empathy, fairness, equity and problem solving.

Responding to challenging behaviour

- Educators recognise that all behaviour is a form of communication.
- The expression of all emotions is valid. Educators recognise their own emotions and those of the child.

- For some children, specific and individualised strategies will be implemented in collaboration with their family and other professionals and may be detailed in an Individual Learning Plan.

Responding to challenging behaviour - Emotion Coaching

1	Emotional awareness: Be aware of your emotions and your child's emotions
2	Connecting: Connect with children by taking time to be with them during times of heightened emotion.
2	Listening: Listen with empathy and honour the child's emotions.
3	Naming emotions: Help children to identify and name their emotions.
4	Finding good solutions: Support and scaffold children as they find appropriate solutions.

Responding to challenging behaviour - Teaching Skills

Consider the skills the child needs to behave well:

- Language and communication skills
- Attention and working memory skills
- Emotion and self-regulation skills
- Cognitive flexibility skills
- Social thinking skills

Actively plan to teach these skills.

Responding to challenging behaviour - Conscious Discipline

Implement the A.C.T. approach when supporting children with challenging behaviour:

A: Acknowledge the child's deepest desire and intent

"You wanted _____" or "You were hoping _____"

C: Clarify what skills to use.

"When you want _____ then say (or do) _____"

T: Take time to practice.

"Say (or do) it now for practice"

Links to National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework defines requirements of the management of Relationships with Children as outlined below:

Quality Area	Requirement
QA5	Relationships with Children Standards 5.1, 5.2
QA7	Governance and Leadership Standards 7.1.2

Links to Early Years Learning Framework

The EYLF learning outcomes linked to this policy and procedure:

Number	Learning Outcome
1	Children have a strong sense of identity.
2	Children are connected with and contribute to their world.
3	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
4	Children are confident and involved learners.
5	Children are effective communicators.

Relevant Legislation

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Sections 166, 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011 SI 653, updated 1.10.20): Regulations 73, 74, 155, 156, 157, 168(2)(j)
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992

Related Documents

[IGS Early Learning Philosophy Tree](#)

IGS ELC Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

IGS ELC Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP)

[The IGS Way](#)

IGS Guide: Supporting Children's Behaviour

Key Resources

[National Quality Framework](#) (2012)

[Being, Belonging, Becoming: Early Years Learning Framework](#) (2009)

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority ([ACECQA](#))

[Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics](#)

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

[National Guidelines Best Practice in Early Intervention](#) Australia (2016)

Positive Behaviour Supports, Beth McGregor for the Department of Education ECE (May 2021)

[Conscious Discipline](#), Dr Becky Bailey

[CELA](#) Sample Policy, Interactions with Children (2019)

References

Gottman, J. and Declaire, J. (1997), Raising An Emotionally Intelligent Child: The Heart of Parenting, Fireside, New York

Murray, D.W., K. Rosanbalm, C. Chrisopoulos, & A. Hamoudi. (2015) Self-Regulation and Toxic Stress: Foundations for Understanding Self-Regulation From an Applied Developmental Perspective. OPRE Report #2015-21. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, US Department of Health and Human Services

Shanker, S. (2012). Calm, alert and learning: Classroom strategies for self-regulation. Toronto, ON: Pearson Canada.

Document Control

Element	Details
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Document name	Interactions with Children Policy and Procedure
Document owner	Sarah Herbert
Version number	2.0
Effective date	August 2021
Review date	August 2023
Authorisation	Mary Duma