

## 2.24 Interactions and Relationships with Children

### Policy Statement

We encourage all our educators to build positive relationships with children that make them feel safe and supported in the service. We encourage interactions with children to be authentic and responsive and be based on fairness, equity, acceptance, empathy and respect for the child's culture, rights and community. The rights of the child will be paramount when interacting and building relationships. Educators will encourage positive relationships and interactions between children and their peers as well as with educators, volunteers and other staff at the service.

### Procedures

- ❖ A positive atmosphere and the wellbeing of children attending the service is promoted through attentive and nurturing care and quality interactions between educators and children.
- ❖ Children's emotional development and social relationships are supported and enhanced by educators through conversation, discussion and promotion of children's language and effective communication.
- ❖ The Coordinator shall:
  - Guide educator's professional development and practice to promote interactions with children that are positive and respectful;
  - Establish practice guidelines that ensure interactions with children are given priority and those interactions are authentic, just and inclusive irrespective of difference; and
  - Encourage positive interactions which lead to supportive, trusting and respectful relationships.
- ❖ Educators, volunteers and other staff will:
  - Respond sensitively and appropriately to children's efforts to communicate, and to initiate interactions and conversations;
  - Encourage children to initiate conversations about their experiences, express their ideas and feelings, share humor and seek assistance as they take on new challenges
  - Organise routines, as well as planned and spontaneous experiences, to maximise opportunities for meaningful conversations between children and educators as well as ensuring children have equal opportunity to engage in one on one and small group conversations with educators;
  - Support play by responding to children's cues to guide their level and type of involvement while always maintaining a positive approach when responding to children and offering assistance;
  - Collaborate with children about routines, activities and experiences, encouraging children to make choices and decisions;

- Provide support so that meal times are relaxed and comfortable with opportunities for educators to sit and talk with children;
- Use techniques such as sign/body language and other resources/tools to support children with special/additional needs to communicate effectively;
- Encourage children to participate in enjoyable interactions with their peers, respond positively to other's ideas, negotiate roles and relationships, contribute to shared play and develop friendships;
- Acknowledge children's complex relationships and sensitively intervene, when appropriate, in ways that promote consideration, alternative perspectives and social inclusion;
- Listen attentively giving full attention to children as they engage in interactions and conversation; and
- Use their interactions with children to support the maintenance of home languages and learning English as a second language;

### **Supporting Children through Difficult Situations**

- ❖ A child's reaction to a stressful or traumatic situation will depend on factors such as their development and maturity and impact of the event on individuals around them. A child may react in unexpected ways. They may act 'normally' at first however, educators must be alert to delayed reactions.
- ❖ Educators will help and support the child to cope with such situations through:
  - Talking to the child about what happened in a way that they will understand and without going into frightening or graphic detail;
  - Reassuring the child, they are safe (but only if they really are);
  - Ensuring the child doesn't jump to conclusions and think they may be to blame in a tragic event;
  - Talking about the event with those affected (for example, all children if the event has affected the whole service or the children that have been affected) and letting everyone have their say, including the children; and
  - Talking to the children about how individuals react to stressful or traumatic situations and that the feelings they have are important and valid.
- ❖ Should it be required, the service will liaise with appropriate authorities (such as Child Safety) and follow any recommendations made by such authorities.

**References**

The laws and other provisions affecting this policy include:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act, 2010 and Regulations 2011
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

NQS Area: 1.1; 4.2; 5.1, 5.2; 7.3.

- Policies; 2.1 – Respect for Children, 2.6 – Behaviour Support and Management, 2.8 – Anti-Bullying, 2.9 – Inclusion and Anti-bias, 2.11 – Including Children with Special/Additional Needs, 3.3 – Educators Practice, 8.1 – Role and Expectations of Educators, 8.4 – Educator Professional Development and Learning, 8.9 – Employee Code of Conduct, 8.15 – Children of Employees

Date of Development	Reason for Modification	Date Ratified	Date of Review