

### 6.3 Guiding Children’s Behaviour Policy

<b>Policy number:</b> 6.3
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This policy relates to	
National Quality Standards Early Childhood Education & Care	5.1.1,5.1.2,5.2,5.2.1,5.2.2,6.1.3

#### Purpose

The service promotes a collaborative approach to guiding children’s behaviour with families, children, educators, community leaders and coordinators involvement. Educators will promote positive guidance techniques and provide an environment where children are helped to learn about their own rights and to develop a respect for the rights of others and skills to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

#### Policy

Educators will provide a secure, supportive and stimulating environment that encourages children to cooperate and interact with others, enhance their self-esteem and where acceptable behaviour is promoted and acknowledged.

The service acknowledges that all children at some time may display undesirable behaviour. The ability to manage young children’s behaviour in a positive manner is often challenging and complex and can best be worked through in consultation and collaboration with parents and coordinators.

Educators are expected to have an understanding of current information about child development and best practice in guiding children’s behaviour. Coordinators offer support and resources to assist with this.

#### Guidelines to Guiding Children’s Behaviour

- Behaviour management practices must ensure that the dignity and rights of the child are respected at all times and positive guidance strategies are used; child management techniques may not include physical, verbal or emotional punishment, including punishments that humiliate, frighten or threaten a child.
- Educator’s own beliefs, attitudes and experiences influence the way in which children’s behaviour is guided. These biases can often create challenges for educators when working with difficult behaviours. It is important that educators reflect on their own beliefs, attitudes and experiences in order to effectively guide children’s behaviour.

- Recognise that positive adult attitudes of encouragement, understanding and respect are the basic conditions for desirable behaviour.
- Create an environment where children are encouraged to make choices and are actively involved in planning experiences for the day. Provide opportunities for children to talk about their feelings through activities and spontaneous discussion. Recognise that children are social beings who have the need to belong and feel significant and important. Provide opportunities for children to be recognised and encouraged.
- Recognise that all behaviour has meaning and serves a purpose for the individual concerned. Consider the context in which negative behaviour occurs by observing and gaining clues to situations that may trigger behaviours. Observe situations where the child is happy and well-adjusted, and use the child's strengths to assist them to correct their negative behaviour.
- Understand and acknowledge that a child's behaviour may be affected by their:
  - Age and development – educators are encouraged to consider their knowledge of child development and be realistic in their expectations of children;
  - General health and wellbeing;
  - Relationships with the educator and other children;
  - Play and learning environment;
  - External factors (home life, media coverage of issues that may be traumatic).
- Set limits to behaviour and express and reinforce these clearly and consistently in a developmentally appropriate way:
  - A child may not hurt others;
  - A child may not destroy another's learning environment;
  - A child may not destroy property.
- Acknowledge that acting out behaviour in young children is often related to their language development. Children may feel and express frustration when they have not yet developed the language to effectively communicate their needs and wants. Encourage verbal skills and provide diversions for frustration (i.e. hitting a punch bag or carpentry or pounding pegs into a peg board) and relaxing activities (sand and water play).
- Involve and seek input from families on behaviour guidance strategies. Parents are advised of service policy through the service information booklet and discussion at enrolment and will be advised of and included in discussions about strategies in dealing with their child's challenging behaviours. Professionals and resource agencies working with the child may offer strategies that are tailored to a child's specific need or behaviour.

- Educators and coordinators will role model acceptable behaviours in their interactions and shall work to ensure that visiting parents and visitors do not use any form of physical punishment or inappropriate language while at the Family Day Care home.
- If removal from a group situation is used as a behaviour management strategy the child is not to be isolated, but will be redirected to an area where they can play with an activity and “sit and watch” the the acceptable behaviour of the group. This can be supported by the educator being present to assist the child to gain awareness of their actions. This time shall be for no longer than two minutes when the educator should encourage the child to re-join the group and give encouragement for appropriate behaviour. The child could be reminded in positive terms of the acceptable behaviour. During “sit and watch” time the educator should be aware of the feelings of the whole group and should be careful not to withdraw emotional support from the child who is watching.

### **Biting**

Physical actions as a means to communicate are normal behaviours in the development of young children. This is often caused by the inability to verbally communicate. If a child bites or hits another child the following procedures should be followed:

The educator will attend first to the child who was bitten to comfort the child and assess the injury:

- First aid will be applied;
- Immediately after attending to the child, or if possible, while attending to the child who was bitten, the educator will talk about the incident with the child who bit, explaining the consequences of their actions in words they understand. The educator will indicate disapproval for the child’s actions using tone of voice and facial expressions and encourage the child to “help” make the child who was bitten feel better through positive and gentle comforting. The educator will suggest an alternative to biting and will follow this up by encouraging the child who bit or hit to ask for what they want and assist them to learn how to verbalise their feelings.
- The educator will complete an incident report. Due to confidentiality, it is not appropriate for parents to be advised of the child who bit. The incident report will include how the situation arose and reasons why the child bit. This information may assist in preventing a repeat incident. The incident report is to be forwarded to the coordination unit.
- If the behaviour is an on-going concern with a particular child a discussion should be held with parents and Coordinators with the aim of the implementation of cooperative and consistent strategies to assist the child.

### **Proactive Strategies for Children**

Adults can promote self-protection by:

- Giving children choices and empowering them to make their own decisions;
- Listening and respecting individual children;

- Providing encouragement and praise;
- Empowering young children to say “no” and use a stop hand signal when personal safety feels threatened;
- Expressing feelings openly and honestly;
- Allow children to make decisions about rules, expectations and outcomes in relation to their own and other’s behaviour.

### Behaviour problems

If educators are following the policy and guidelines of the service and if children continue to consistently display unacceptable behaviour educators and Coordinators should ensure that:

- Strategies and expectations are realistic and consistent with the child’s level of development;
- The child understands the limits;
- There is no conflict between home and service expectations;
- The child’s needs are being met;
- The child has no impediments which may be the cause of the unacceptable behaviour;
- The child is not copying observed behaviour;
- Events at the educator’s home have not encouraged the behaviour;
- Consequences of the behaviour do not encourage the behaviour to persist (i.e. extra attention);
- Strategies are consistently followed by all educators in contact with the child.

Coordinators are available to discuss and assist educators and parents with concerns they have in respect of a child’s behaviour or participation in the group of children and develop a Behaviour Management plan. This would be developed in collaboration with the parents, educator and coordinator including any other services relevant to the child e.g. specialists, schools, other child care services, disability services with the permission of the parents. Behaviour Management Plans would be reviewed on a regular basis.

- Discussions with adults regarding a child’s unacceptable behaviour should **not** take place in the presence of other children.
- Parents, educators and Coordinators should take a collaborate approach when discussing appropriate behaviour with children.

- If a child continues to exhibit unacceptable behaviour after all methods have failed to result in improvement and after a reasonable period of time, the Coordinator may provide information and referral to support services, inclusion support services or discuss alternative care with the parent in consideration of the health and well-being of all children in care.

**Note:** *The service promotes cultural awareness and acknowledges that cultural and religious factors may affect children's behaviour. It is accepted that there are differences between cultures in what is considered appropriate. The service acknowledges the individuality of all children including those with special needs and seeks to apply behaviour management guidelines in a non-discriminatory manner. The safety and wellbeing of all children and the educator will be part of setting positive outcomes. Educators will be encouraged to be flexible and when necessary adapt guidance methods in consideration of some cultural differences.*

### **Relevant Legislation**

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 S163,164,169  
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010  
National Quality Standards 2012  
National Standards for In Home Care 8.2, 11.1

### **Key Resources**

Stonehouse. A. (2004). *Dimensions: Excellence in Many Ways*. NSW: National Family Day Care Council of Australia.  
Egle,C. (2004). *A Practical Guide to Working with Children*  
Ruffin. N (2000) *Goals of Positive Behaviour Management*  
Linke P. (1998) *Let's Stop Bullying*  
Kinnell G (2002) *No Biting, Policy and Practice for Toddler Programs*  
Noah's Ark : *Biting Fact Sheet*  
<http://www.noahsark.net.au/>  
[http://www.noahsark.net.au/PDF/Biting\\_in\\_childcare.pdf](http://www.noahsark.net.au/PDF/Biting_in_childcare.pdf)  
Parenting Australia: *Don't Fence Me In! Appropriate Limits for Children in Child Care*  
<http://parentingaustralia.com.au/articles/539-dont-fence-me-in-appropriatelimits-for-children-in-child-care>  
Family Day Care Australia  
[www.fdca.com.au](http://www.fdca.com.au)

### **Related Policies**

[Appendix I Child Protection](#)