



ACT
Government

Education

ACT Public Preschool – Interactions with Children Guidelines

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1. Overview

- 1.1. This procedure outlines strategies for the development of positive respectful relationships with each child enrolled at a Public preschool.
- 1.2. Each child enrolled at a Public preschool is supported to learn and develop in a secure and empowering environment.

2. Rationale

- 2.1 It is important that all educators are aware that responsive, warm, trusting and respectful relationships with children promote their wellbeing, self-esteem, sense of security and belonging.
- 2.2 The following procedures are in place to ensure that constructive interactions and shared learning opportunities form the basis of equitable, reciprocal relationships between educators and children and that these relationships are encouraged between children.
- 2.3 In developing this *Interactions with Children Guidelines*, it is assumed that Public preschools will have enacted the philosophy, beliefs and values of the learning environment, particularly with regard to relationships with children.

3. Values

- 3.1 In their interactions with children and their families all educators at Public preschools are committed to:
 - maintaining the dignity and rights of each child at the preschool;
 - encouraging children to express themselves and their opinions, and to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem considering the 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 the preschool;
 - considering the diversity of individual children at the service, including family and cultural values, age, 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 and educators and staff at the preschool; and
 - developing consistency of high-quality practices amongst staff members.

4. Scope

- 4.1 These guidelines apply to the nominated supervisor, responsible person in day to day charge, educators, teacher education students, volunteers, parents and guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of the Public preschool.

5. Background and Legislation

- 5.1 The United National 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.
- 5.2 Developing responsive, warm, trusting and respectful relationships with children promotes their well-being, self-esteem and sense of security.
- 5.3 Positive interactions between educators, other adults and children can empower children to feel valued, competent and capable.

- 5.4 Interactions which actively engage children in their learning and decision-making during play, daily routines and ongoing activities can stimulate children's thinking, enrich their learning and encourage them to explore and manage their feelings and behaviours.
- 5.5 *Having supportive relationships with the nominated supervisor, educators, co-ordinators and staff members enables children to develop confidence in their ability to express themselves, work through differences, learn new things and take calculated risks* (Guide to the National Quality Standard).
- 5.6 Regulation 155 of the *Education and Care Services National Law* requires an approved provider to take reasonable steps to ensure that education and care is provided to children in a way that encourages them to express themselves, and develop self-reliance and self-esteem, maintains their dignity and rights, provides positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour, and respects their cultural and family values.
- 5.7 Regulation 156 of the *Education and Care Services National Law* requires the approved provider to ensure that the service provides children with opportunities to interact and develop positive relationships with each other, and with the staff and volunteers at the service. To meet these requirements, the approved provider is expected to consider the size and composition of the groups in which the children are educated and cared for.
- 5.8 Section 166 of the *Education and Care Services National Law* requires that no child being educated and cared for is subject to any form of corporal discipline; or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances.

6. Procedures

6.1. The Educational Leader in consultation with Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- Developing and implementing the Interactions with Children Policy at the service ensuring educators, staff and parents/guardians are provided with a copy of the Interactions with Children Policy and comply with its requirements.
- 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.
- Ensuring children are adequately supervised, that educator-to-child ratios are always maintained, and the environment is safe, secure and free from hazards considering the size and composition of groups when planning program timetables to ensure all children are provided with the best opportunities for quality interactions and relationships with each other and with adults at the service.
- Overseeing the development and implementation of 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 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 educators provide education and care to children in a way that:
 - 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;
 - ensuring clear and straightforward documentation of the assessment and evaluation of each child's;
 - ✓ developmental needs, interests, experiences and program participation; and
 - ✓ progress against the outcomes of the educational program organising appropriate training for educators/staff to assist with the implementation of this policy.

- Ensuring educators 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.
- Ensuring that procedures are in place for effective daily communication with parents / guardians to share information about children’s learning, development, interactions, behaviour and relationships informing School Operations of any notifiable complaints or serious incidents at the preschool.
- Ensuring that where the service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child, such contact does not occur while the child is on the service premises
- Ensuring educators and staff use positive and respectful strategies to assist children to manage their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others.
- Ensuring that an individual learning plan is created to support children as required
- Co-operating with other services and / or professionals to support children and their families, where required.
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times.

6.2 Educators are responsible for:

- 6.2.1 Assisting with the development and implementation of the Interactions with Children Policy, in consultation with the approved provider, nominated supervisor, parents/guardians and families.
- 6.2.2 Providing copies of the Interactions with Children Policy to parents/guardians and families.
- 6.2.3 Complying with the requirements of the Interactions with Children Policy.
- 6.2.4 Being aware of service expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and reactions when working with children and families.
- 6.2.5 Providing adequate supervision of children at all times.
- 6.2.6 Communicating and working collaboratively with parents/guardians and families in relation to their child’s learning, development, interactions, behaviour and relationships.
- 6.2.7 Delivering 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.
- 6.2.8 Delivering programs that develop a sense of wellbeing and identity, connection to community, and provide skills for lifelong learning in all children.
- 6.2.9 Providing education and care to children in a way that:
 - 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;
 - developing warm, responsive and trusting relationships with children that promote a sense of security, confidence and inclusion; and
 - supporting each child to develop responsive relationships, and to work and learn in collaboration with others.

- 6.2.10 Using positive and respectful strategies to assist children to manage their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others.
- 6.2.11 Documenting assessments and evaluations for each child to inform the educational program.
- 6.2.12 Being 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 maintaining confidentiality at all times

6.3 Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- 6.3.1 Reading and complying with the Interactions with Children Policy.
- 6.3.2 Engaging in open communication with educators about their child.
- 6.3.3 Informing educators/staff of events or incidents that may impact on their child's behaviour at the preschool.
- 6.3.4 Informing educators/staff of any concerns regarding their child's behaviour or the impact of others.
- 6.3.5 Working collaboratively with educators/staff and other professionals/support agencies to develop or review an individual behaviour guidance plan for their child, where appropriate.

7 Contact

- 7.2 The Director, School Improvement is responsible for this procedure.
- 7.3 For support contact The School Operations Branch on 6205 3313 or email SchoolOperations@act.gov.au

8 Monitoring and review

- 8.2 The procedure owner will be responsible for monitoring the procedure through annual scans. A full review will occur as necessary, or within a three-year period.

9 Complaints

- 9.2 Any concerns about the application of this procedure or the procedure itself, should be raised with:
 - the school principal in the first instance;
 - the Directorate's Liaison Unit on (02) 6205 5429;
 - online at http://www.det.act.gov.au/contact_us;
 - the Director of Early Childhood Policy and Regulation within *Children's Education and Care Assurance* within the Education Directorate via complaintsCECA@act.gov.au ;
 - see also the *Complaints Policy* on the Directorate's website.

10 Policy and Implementation Documents

- 10.1. Curriculum Requirements Policy
- 10.2. Curriculum Requirements in ACT Public Schools, Preschool to Year 10
- 10.3. Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
- 10.4. Respectful Relationships Education
- 10.5. Safe Supportive Schools Policy
- 10.6. Safe Supportive Schools Procedures
- 10.7. Additional Information
 - Building Positive Partnerships
 - Managing Behaviours Safely Risk Management Approach
 - National Safe Schools Framework

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- PBSP Protective Action Plan Flowchart and Template
- Restrictive Practices FAQ's
- Use of Withdrawal Space Factsheet
- Working together with you school

11 References

11.2 Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations

11.3 National Quality Standard and Assessment and Rating