



Behaviour Guidance Policy

Children face many challenges throughout their lives. Learning acceptable behaviours and being able to regulate their own behaviours in different social and emotional environments, or when interacting with their peers or adults, are two of those challenges.

Our child behaviour management policy is centred on the importance of respect and dignity for the child, acknowledging and accepting children's feelings and encouraging these feelings to be expressed.

Policy Statement

Park Ridge Child Care and Preschool is committed to a Behaviour Guidance Policy because it:

- reflects the values, attitudes and current recommended strategies that promote positive play behaviours and patterns;
- respects the importance of interactions and relationships between children, families and staff
- understands why children behave in certain ways in specific circumstances;
- promotes realistic play and behaviour limits that guide children's safety and security rather than curb their play experiences, curiosity or creativity;
- defines clear and transparent care giving strategies that communicate how behaviour guidance is implemented by the service;
- informs the service's stakeholders about the procedures involved in behaviour guidance management plans; and
- explains the service's commitment to professional development and utilisation of external agencies.

The purpose of the service's Behaviour Guidance Policy is to:

- encourage acceptable forms of behaviour by using strategies that build children's confidence and self-esteem;
- provide children with support, guidance and opportunities to manage their own behaviour; and
- promote collaborative approaches to behaviour guidance between the service's stakeholders and/or external agencies.

The service recognises and understands that a child's behaviour may be affected by their:

- age and development;
- general health and wellbeing;
- relationships with their family;
- play and learning environments, which includes the physical indoor/outdoor settings, the weather, the time of year, the time of day;
- staff care giving strategies and practices, which includes how those strategies are implemented;
- relationship with other children and stakeholders, such as students, volunteers and visitors; and
- external factors, such as family, home life, school or peer group experiences, or media coverage of traumatic events.

Families and staff display respect and empathy towards children when they label behaviour and not the individual child. This means that behaviours are managed, not children.

- While staff are aware and respect individual children's and families' backgrounds and beliefs, it may be necessary to balance the individual needs of stakeholders with staff knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices and current best practice recommendations from recognised authorities.
- The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* states that employers have a duty of care to their employees to ensure that the working environment supports emotional and mental wellbeing. Staff/carers 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) need continued support and assistance. Staff/carers can experience levels of stress or anxiety, which may lead to sickness or apathy in the workplace. Therefore the centre has a duty of care to ensure that employees' mental and emotional wellbeing is considered, as well as the child's need for positive behaviour guidance strategies.

Strategies and Practices:

Our program promotes a positive approach to managing the behaviour of all children. We believe in encouraging children to resolve problems, defeats and frustrations where appropriate. This can be achieved by exploring possible solutions, and helping children understand and deal with their emotions. This will depend on the child's age and level of development. Steps that we take towards establishing good behaviour management include:-

- Setting and maintaining appropriate limits of behaviour, encourage children to be involved in this. Write up rules and display them on a poster.
- Explaining the appropriate uses of materials and equipment, establish play spaces which include areas where children can find solace, peace and relaxation.
- Reinforcing positive behaviour with praise
- Explaining why a behaviour is inappropriate or unacceptable and providing acceptable options
- Offering children choices and encouraging decision making, and
- Setting realistic expectations which are age and stage appropriate
- A calm, controlled tone of voice and attitude should be assumed by the caregiver in all situations. It is not appropriate to use any form of physical punishment with children, and it is important not to demean, make fun, belittle or frighten a child as a form of punishment.

It is often important to remember that what works for one does not always work for all.

The following behaviour management techniques are implemented:

Prevention

A well-designed and equipped room, tailored to the needs of the children prevents frustration, interruption and hazards. It offers privacy, independence and easy supervision. The daily routine should provide enough time for play, a sense of security, little waiting, and well-planned transitions between activities.

Positive Redirection

This could be the basic procedure used in all rooms. Redirecting unacceptable behaviour to an acceptable alternative focuses on the positive rather than the negative. This can be enhanced through praise.

Modelling

When staff demonstrate appropriate behaviour and communication through their every day actions, children learn what is expected from them i.e. it is not appropriate to sit on tables and benches and then ask children not to do this.

Limit Setting

Staff need to set a few clear, simple rules that are appropriate to the age of the children in their care. It is appropriate to involve older children in the process by creating and discussing the 'rules' together. Limits should be displayed both in pictures and writing for the children, parents and other staff to read. Children should be reminded of what they need to do in a positive tone.

Problem Solving

Staff can appeal to children's growing cognitive reasoning by involving them in solving their own issues. Staff can ask children questions to help them identify their needs, feelings, causes and choices. The following problem solving techniques are to be used for all children within the centre:

- Tell the child to stop and take a deep breath!
- Collect information about the event and how the child feels "What happened? Why did you...? How are you feeling?"
- State the problem clearly back "You want the block but so does Amy. What can we do so you are both happy?" "What would be a better way to sort that out?"
- Generate ideas with the children about what can be done, encourage silly ideas as well as practical ones avoid criticizing ideas.
- Evaluate these ideas "So what will happen if you..." "Will it solve the problem?"
- Go back through the ideas the children generate and ask which one they are going to try. Implement their strategy and congratulate the child on their problem solving.

Logical Consequences

Through the use of an "if....then...." statement, children can be helped to see the logical outcomes of their actions. For example "If you run inside then you could trip over".

Family Communication:

Enrolling, orientation and settling in:

- Upon enrolment families will receive a copy of our behavioural guidance policy and will seek information from families about the guidance strategies used at home.

Continued communication:

- Families are always welcome to express their thoughts, expectations and feelings openly with staff.
- Should a child's behaviour begin to affect overall classroom management, the director will ensure the following processes are adhered to
- Organise formal and informal meetings to provide feedback to parents regarding the problems being raised in the classroom.
- Families are to be encouraged to make an appointment with their family GP and if necessary ask for a referral to a paediatrician.
- If possible we may arrange with the family a short break for the child to allow staff and the child a break. This will give everyone time to take a breath and the child a chance to stop the cycle of behaviour.
- Complete a risk assessment.
- Families who are unwilling to follow through with centre recommendations will have their care reduced to more manageable times or ultimately, if the centre feels they are unable to manage a child's care taking into consideration, the child's welfare, the rest of the group and staff then the centre will be forced to cease care. This decision would not be taken lightly and would be the last resort.

Staff Communication

- Staff and parents can provide an individual behavioural management plan which all staff within the group are aware of and implement. Strategies may include
 - Specific teaching of problem solving techniques.
 - Specific teaching of feelings, both of our own and of others.
 - Use a communication book to record when behaviour has been inappropriate.
 - Praise, praise any behaviours and rewards with verbal and non-verbal gestures.
 - Ignore behaviour where reasonable and appropriate.

- Offer choice where possible
 - Remember children learn slowly and forget quickly.
 - Use Makaton for non-verbal children.
- Consider a change of group, within the childcare setting.
 - Consult with Inclusion Support Team, and together ascertain whether a further referral is to be made. Follow up with staff workshops and educational material the Inclusion Support Team has to offer.

Staff professional development

The centre has a huge range of behavioural guidance material for reading and referring to for staff, students and volunteers. The centre encourages each staff member to attend professional development in this area every two to three years or as set out in the staff members work plan.

Management responsibilities in behavioural referral

Managing children's behaviour can be a complex task, at times it may be necessary for the group leader to discuss with the Director elements of a child's behaviour that they may find challenging. The Director will take the following steps:

1. Continue to document with the group leader the behaviour, looking for patterns, causes and triggers. Plan developmentally consistent strategies and share these with all staff allowing feedback and consistency.
2. The Director will liaise with parents asking them for background information regarding the behaviour. The centre will ask parents to support the work that the centre is trying to achieve reinforcing at home the appropriate behaviours. Feedback to families may occur informally or formally in a meeting situation. Families are encouraged to have both parents involved in these meetings.
3. Meetings held with parents will include both the Director and Group Leader. If the group leader is unable to participate in the meeting then the Director will include a member of staff who is available at this time. Parents may be asked to make an appointment with their GP and seek assistance from a paediatrician.
4. The Director will contact the Inclusion Support Team for external assistance in helping with the behaviour. A referral may be made.
5. The Group leader and Director will continue to monitor the child's behaviour, daily observations will be reviewed. If a child's behaviour begins to affect the other children within the group, parents may be required to collect their child. Continuing behaviour that puts staff and children at risk needs full investigation. The centre is happy to work with families during this time however it may be decided that shorter monitored inclusion is the best for all concerned. The centre will constantly liaise with families sharing information, offering support and assistance where possible. **Families who do not support the centre or follow up with centre or Inclusion support recommendations, and their child continues to put staff and children at risk may have their care suspended.**

Inclusion Support Team

Inclusion Support Team is a SUPS service that assists child care to provide inclusive care for children with additional needs. They do this through support, training and resources. Emphasis is given to increasing the confidence, skills and knowledge of centre staff to provide inclusive practice.

Staff having difficulties or ongoing concerns about a child's behaviour should consult with the Director. Staff should have a clear understanding of behaviour management techniques used at the centre and why they are used, to enable communication with parents.