

## WCS Children's Services

### Interactions with Children

# Behaviour Guidance Procedure

#### Aim

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Children are guided to become responsible for their own behaviour in an environment that promotes respect for self and others.

#### Scope

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This procedure applies to all WCS Children's Services staff, children, parents and guardians.

#### Procedure

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When responding to children who have difficulty relating to others or following guidelines educators will adopt a positive and collaborative approach when guiding children's behaviour. Educators will:

- Accept children's behaviour as a natural part of acquiring social skills.
- Identify behaviour and feelings instead of labelling the child.
- View behaviour as a teaching/learning opportunity.
- Look at the reasons underlying the behaviour. Question aspects of the environment that might contribute to the behaviour:
  - Is adequate and safe playing space available?
  - Has sufficient personal play space been provided?
  - Is a quiet play space available?
  - Is an active play space available?
  - Do the resources, materials and equipment meet the children's needs?
  - Can children choose freely from the resources, materials and equipment?
  - Is the child familiar with the service's routines and expectations?
- Consider other influences on the child:
  - Specific circumstances leading up to event or incident
  - Family circumstances and home life
  - Medical condition, either diagnosed or undiagnosed
  - Specific times of the day or difficulty with transitioning
  - The weather and time of the year
  - Age and development
  - Level of familiarity with the educators, and the service's routines and expectations
  - General health and wellbeing

- Past traumatic events and experiences
- Prior experiences.
- Adopt a problem-solving approach which involves the children in deciding what to do in the situation.
- Model positive attitudes, behaviour and appropriate language.
- Give clear directions about routines and expected behaviour.
- Involve the children in decision making about rules and routines.
- Guide behaviour through various strategies which might include:
  - Redirection (methods may include changing the topic of conversation or moving to a different activity or area).
  - Reminders about the rules or explaining the reasons for the rules.
  - Suggesting alternatives.
  - Offering legitimate choices or limiting choices.
  - Encouraging children to think about how others might feel (empathy).
  - Modelling appropriate behaviours and language.
  - Modelling and encouraging empathy and care. However, children are not forced to say the words "I'm sorry" without genuine feeling.
  - Acknowledging children's efforts and intentions and giving feedback about the process rather than the outcome. Encouragement promotes the child's self-motivation and autonomy while praise can weaken motivation and teach children to rely on the approval of others and on reward systems.
  - Teaching the child to self-evaluate rather than judging them through questions such as: What do you think of that? How did that feel? Are you happy with how you acted?
  - Planning routines and transition times so children are not rushed. Have visual aids to support transitions.
  - Encouraging and supporting children to rest, drink water and eat healthy snack at regular intervals.
  - Looking for solutions together or providing support and strategies for children to resolve conflicts for themselves.
  - Providing opportunities for children to regulate their own behaviour i.e. have a sensory space available for all children to go to, to calm down without educator intervention, but that is still supervised.
- Acknowledge that corporal punishment in any form is strictly forbidden (refer to mandatory reporting procedure).

### **When other behaviour guidance strategies are required:**

Sometimes the actions and behaviours of a child will endanger other children and/or staff and further behaviour guidance actions will need to be taken.

- Reminders – Children are reminded to think about the effects of their actions and given the opportunity to adjust behaviour.

- Redirection to another experience or play area – If the child continues to model dangerous or inappropriate behaviour, they will be redirected to another activity. If the child is calm, behaviour may be discussed as appropriate for their age.
- Calm down/time away space – when children have become emotionally overwhelmed they need to learn how to calm down. Depending on the age of the child and the situation, the child may be asked to stay with an educator for a period of time or to have some time away to do something soothing until they feel better.
  - Educators will soothe, reassure and comfort any children hurt or effected by the behaviour. An educator may remind a child who has hurt someone else that “I wouldn’t let someone do that to you, and I can’t let you do that to someone else.” A child exhibiting unsafe or extreme behaviours may be asked to stay with the educator until they feel better and the other children will be safe. The child accompanies the educator until he/she is calm enough to be unlikely to hurt others.
  - Sometimes children need some time away to calm down. Children can withdraw to a private “sanctuary” and do something soothing until they feel better. Children are not isolated or left unsupervised at any time.
- Parents/guardians are informed about the behaviour and the procedures implemented.
- An incident form is written and signed by the educator and parent/guardian.
- In extreme cases, where there is risk of harm to the child, other children or educators, the parent/guardian will be contacted to collect the child, and must do so within 30 minutes of contact.
- At times, external support may be sought from organisations such as the Inclusion Agency, specialist children’s services or other health professionals. Parental consent is required when a referral for intervention is requested by staff.

### **Dealing with ongoing challenging behaviour:**

- Above steps are repeated and the behaviour is documented. Attention should be paid to identify triggers for behaviours and motivators for positive behaviour.
- Behaviour guidance strategies that cater to individual needs are created and worked on together with the child, parent/guardian and the supervisor.
  - The child, parent/guardian and supervisor meet to discuss the behaviour and strategies;
  - Natural and logical consequences for actions are decided on in collaboration with child, parent/guardian and supervisor.
  - A positive behaviour plan is drafted;
  - The plan is implemented for a set period of time;
  - The child, parent/guardian and supervisor meet to review, reflect, evaluate and revise the strategies after implementation.

- Collaboration between the service, child and family, as well as the school teachers (where applicable), is essential in establishing, implementing and following through with positive behaviour strategies.

Please note: The parent/guardian may be requested to withdraw their child from the Service if:

- The child's behaviour continues to put themselves, other children or staff at risk.
- The consultation with the parents/guardians and the development of the positive behaviour plan has not resolved the issue.

Excluding a child from the Service should be a last resort.

## Links to Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2018

Regs	155	Interactions with children
	156	Relationships in groups

QA	1.2.1	Educators are deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful in their decisions and actions.
	1.2.3	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions and influence events in their world.
	1.3.2	Critical reflection on children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, drives program planning and implementation.
	1.3.3	Families are informed about the program and their child's progress.
	2.2.1	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
	4.2.1	Management, educators and staff work with mutual respect and collaboratively, and challenge and learn from each other, recognising each other's strengths and skills.
	4.2.2	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
	5.2.2	Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve.
	6.1.2	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
	6.1.3	Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.

## Sources, further reading and useful websites

### Further reading

Safe Work Australia: Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011: Part 3.1 Managing Risks to Health and Safety. <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/system/files/documents/2003/model-whs-regulations-dec2020.pdf>

### Review

#### Current version

<b>Service line   Service area</b>	Children's Services	<b>Version</b>	2.0
<b>Process owner</b>	Director, Children, Youth and Family	<b>Date of issue</b>	Aug 2020
<b>Approved by</b>	Kate West	<b>Scheduled review date</b>	Aug 2022

**Modification history (including current version)**

Version	Date	Author	Approved by	Description of changes
1.0	Aug 2016		Susan Henderson	New procedure
1.1	Mar 2018		Susan Henderson	Revised National Quality Standard 2018
2.0	July 2020	Krysta Cordina	Kate West	Additional content