

# Interactions with Children



Review Date: 20/05/2028

## Introduction

A positive atmosphere and the safety & wellbeing of children within an education and care setting, is promoted through a child safe culture, responsive relationships, engaging experiences, a safe & healthy environment, attentive care and quality interactions with children.

Emotional development and social relationships are enhanced through thoughtful and sophisticated approaches to conversation, discussion and promotion of children's language and communication.

Children who experience relationships that are built on respect, fairness, cooperation and empathy are given the opportunity to develop these qualities themselves.

"When children have positive experiences of interactions and can exercise agency: they develop an understanding of themselves as significant, respected, and feel a sense of belonging" (EYLF v2.0, 2022).

## Goals – What are we going to do?

Interactions with children will promote a safe, secure and nurturing environment; be authentic and responsive; be based in fairness, acceptance and empathy with respect for culture, rights, a balance between community and the individual.

## Child Safety and Inappropriate Conduct

The service is committed to providing an education and care environment in which children are physically, emotionally and psychologically safe at all times. Interactions with children must always reflect professional standards, uphold children's rights, and support their dignity, wellbeing and development.

The service has **zero tolerance for inappropriate conduct** towards children.

In accordance with the *Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW)*, it is an offence for any approved provider, nominated supervisor, educator, staff member, volunteer or student to subject a child to **inappropriate conduct** while the child is being educated and cared for by the service.

**Inappropriate conduct** is conduct that a reasonable person would consider to be inappropriate in an education and care setting. This includes conduct that:

- is inconsistent with professional standards or accepted education and care practice
- causes, or is likely to cause, emotional, psychological or physical harm to a child
- has sexual, aggressive or violent connotations.

In determining whether conduct is inappropriate, consideration is given to the child's age, stage of development and individual circumstances. A child's consent, or an adult's belief that a child has consented, and an adult's intent, are not relevant when assessing whether conduct is inappropriate.

Inappropriate conduct may occur through:

- verbal, non-verbal or written communication
- physical interactions
- electronic or online communication
- the capture, use or storage of images, recordings or live video
- single incidents or repeated or ongoing patterns of behaviour.

## **Strategies - How will it be done?**

**The Nominated Supervisor and Educational Leader shall:**

1. Guide professional development and practice to promote interactions with children that are positive and respectful;
2. Establish practice guidelines that ensure interactions with children are given priority and those interactions are authentic, just and respect difference.

**Educators and staff will:**

1. Respond to children's communication in a just and consistent manner;
2. Respond sensitively to children's attempts to initiate interactions and conversations;
3. Initiate one to one interactions and one to one conversations with children and promote positive interactions during daily routines.
4. Support children's efforts, assisting and encouraging as appropriate;
5. Support children's secure attachment through consistent and warm nurturing relationships;
6. Support children's expression of their thoughts opinions and feelings;
7. Encourage children to express themselves and show an interest and participate in what the child is doing;
8. Encourage children to make choices and decisions;
9. Acknowledge children's complex relationships and sensitively intervene in ways that promote consideration of alternative perspectives and social inclusion. Guidance strategies should be reflective of this approach;
10. Acknowledge each child's uniqueness in positive ways;
11. Respect cultural differences in communication and consider alternative approaches to own.
12. Be aware of and comply with current child protection legislation, including mandatory reporting obligations, child safe standards, and the offence provisions relating to inappropriate conduct towards children.

## Professional Boundaries and Behaviour

Educators, staff, students and volunteers must maintain clear professional boundaries when interacting with children at all times.

This includes:

- using respectful, calm and supportive language
- responding to children in ways that are appropriate to their age and developmental stage
- ensuring physical contact is appropriate, necessary, respectful and in line with service procedures
- interacting with children in ways that are observable and transparent
- never using language, behaviour or interactions that intimidate, humiliate, threaten or demean a child.

Educators and staff must not engage in conduct that a reasonable person would consider inappropriate, including but not limited to:

- shouting at, ridiculing, threatening or belittling a child
- isolating or excluding a child in a punitive manner
- using force or rough handling
- engaging in inappropriate conversations or behaviour
- taking or using images or recordings of children in breach of service procedures or legislation
- engaging in any form of sexualised, violent or aggressive behaviour.

## Children's Rights, Family and Cultural Values

Interactions within the setting are greatly enhanced when children's rights and family and cultural values are given due consideration and respect.

Administrative procedures, initial conversations, documentation and ongoing communication with children and families are a reference point for interactions and a foundation for authentic and respectful communication.

## Listening

Educators and staff use active listening as a foundation for interactions. Listening is based on observation and in leaving spaces in conversations and communication, suspending judgement and in giving full attention to children as they communicate. Truly attending to children's communication promotes a strong culture of listening.

## **Children and Families**

A culture of respectful interaction is promoted when children's attempts to communicate are valued. Turn taking and responding to children's invitations promotes active engagement. Respectful communication with families generates greater confidence to interact.

## **Reflection and Consideration**

Time is dedicated to reflecting upon interactions within children. Reflections should consider how to spend extended periods engaged in interactions with children that comprise communication and listening.

## **Responding to Concerns and Reporting**

Any concerns, disclosures, observations or allegations relating to inappropriate conduct must be taken seriously and acted upon immediately.

Educators, staff, students and volunteers are required to:

- report any suspected or alleged inappropriate conduct in accordance with the service's Child Protection, Complaints Management and Reportable Conduct procedures
- comply with all mandatory reporting and notification requirements, including reporting to external authorities where required
- cooperate fully with any internal or external investigations.

No person will be disadvantaged for raising genuine concerns about child safety.

## **Role Modeling**

Educators model positive interactions when they:

- Show care, empathy and respect for children, educators and staff and families;
- Learn and use effective communication strategies;

Remember - quality interactions increase children's knowledge and understanding of themselves, each other as unique individuals and develop the skills and understandings they need to interact positively with others.

## Statutory Legislation & Considerations

Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, 168 & 169.

## Sources

Belonging Being and Becoming: [The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia v 2.0](#), 2022

Community Childcare Cooperative Sample Policies [www.cccnsw.org.au](http://www.cccnsw.org.au)

ECA Code of Ethics 2016

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

[ACECQA- Relationship with children information sheet](#).

## Related Policies

- Guiding Children’s Behaviour
- Inclusion
- Supervision
- Employee Induction
- Volunteers and Students
- Staff Appraisal
- Family Participation and Communication
- Cultural Competency
- Governance & Management
- Child Protection
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Child Safe Environment / Child Safe Standards
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Complaints Management and Feedback

## Evaluation

Interactions between educators and children are genuine, positive and responsive and based on respect, fairness, acceptance, co-operation and empathy. This is evident in conversations, communication, pedagogy, and planning for children and families.

### Approved Provider Representative:

**Name:**..... Ashleigh Mitchell .....

**Role:** ..... President .....

**Signature:** .....

**Date:** ..... 20/05/2026 .....

**REVIEW DATE:** ..... 20 May 2028 .....

POLICY REVISIONS		
Policy Adopted	Approved Provider Representative	Review Date
25/06/2018	Belinda Fayle	25/06/2020
19/04/2021	Kieran O’Reilly	29/04/2023
28/11/2023	Narissa Cuskelly	28/11/2025
20/05/2026	Ashliegh Mitchell	20/05/2026

