

Document Title	NQS5.37 Interactions with Children Policy	Version	3a
Date Approved	January 2024	Date for Review	June 2024
Warning - Ensure you are using the latest version of this policy.			
DCC Network/All Organisation Information/DCC Policies/Quality Area 5 – Relationships with Children			

1. Policy Statement

At River Region Early Education our fundamental belief is that children's learning, development, and wellbeing are firmly anchored in reciprocal, responsive, and respectful relationships that are attuned to the context of children's lives within their families and community.

"Children thrive when families and educators work together in partnership to support young children's learning." EYLF (DEEWR 2009 p.9).

2. Rationale

- Educators demonstrate that they understand their interactions with children are critical to social and emotional development, attachment, relationships, individual self confidence, self esteem, emotional regulation and empathy.
- To consider each child in the context of their family and cultural values, strengths, abilities and life experiences.
- Interactions with children will emphasise learning through a play based curriculum recognising the importance of communication, language, cognitive and social and emotional development.
- For educators to give positive guidance and encouragement to each child.

3. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Approved Provider to:

- Ensure all staff have access to relevant professional development.
- Ensure 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.
- Ensure that the Nominated Supervisor 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 (National Law: Section 166) (Regulation 73).
- Inform the Regulatory Authority in writing, within 24 hours of receiving a notifiable complaint (Section 174(4), Regulation 176(2)(b)).
- Inform the Regulatory Authority in writing within 24 hours of a serious incident occurring at the service (Section 174(4), Regulation 176).

It is the responsibility of nominated supervisors to:

- Guide professional development and practice to promote interactions with children that are positive and respectful.

Interactions with Children Policy

- Establish practice guidelines that ensure interactions with children are given priority and those interactions are authentic, just and respect difference.
- Ensure 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.
- Consider the size and composition of groups to ensure all children are provided with the best opportunities for quality interactions and relationships with each other and with adults at the service.
- Develop and implement 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.
- Ensure that staff provide education and care to children in a way that encourages children to express themselves and their opinions and allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem.
- Under section 166 of the Education and Care National Law, a staff member, nominated Supervisor and Approved Provider may receive a penalty for up to \$10,000 (up to \$50,000 in the case of Approved Provider) for subjecting a child to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances.

It is the responsibility of educators to:

- Engage in constructive everyday interactions and shared learning opportunities that support child's sense of security and belonging and will ensure that children question, co-operate, debate, ponder and explain current interests to promote a collaborative commitment to planning, research, problem solving and shared decision making.
- respect children's agency and encourage them to express themselves, to speak up and they are believed.
- empowering children by supporting them to take part in discussions about their safety.
- genuinely seek children's input, respect their ideas and take their suggestions on board.
- maintain the dignity and the rights of each child at all times.
- Form warm relationships with each child.
- Ensure the tone of their interactions with children conveys authentic interest and respect, and promotes confidence, self-esteem and dignity.
- advocate for equity and inclusion
- Encourage friendships. Educators recognise the importance of friendships and support from peers is encouraged, helping children feel safe and be less isolated.
- ensure that routines such as toileting, nappy change and rest times are used for positive one to one interactions with children and a time that they can get to know more about the child.
- provide a relaxed and happy atmosphere for the children, including at meal times and transition.
- ensure that food is being used appropriately and not as a reward or punishment.
- have regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for
- interact with children to maintain the home language and the acquisition of English as an additional language.

Interactions with Children Policy

- develop positive and respectful strategies for guiding children's behaviour and assist children to recognise their rights and responsibilities in the context of the learning environment and in relation to the rights of others.
- implement intentional and spontaneous teaching strategies with individual children and small groups to provoke, scaffold (including peer scaffolding) and challenge children's thinking, problem solving and social connections.
- support babies to build trusting attachments with one or two educators in order to develop a secure base for their exploration and learning.
- Employ a variety of communicative strategies and draw on diverse knowledge, experience, theory and the views of colleagues to support children's social and emotional competence.
- Document interactions and relationships between children, peers and adults as integral to the documentation of learning.

It is the responsibility of families to:

- Engage in open communication with staff about their child.
- Inform staff of events or incidents that may impact on their child's behaviour at the service (e.g. moving house, a new sibling).
- Inform staff of any concerns regarding their child's behaviour or the impact of other children's behaviour.
- Work collaboratively with staff and other to develop or review an individual behaviour guidance plan for their child, where appropriate.

4. Definitions

Agency – being able to make choices and decisions, to influence events and to have an impact on one's world." (EYLF, 2009, p.45).

5. Guidelines

Our philosophy guides our interactions with children.

Educators at our service will:

- be responsive to children's strengths, interests, abilities,
- provide opportunities to become self-reliant and develop self-esteem,
- uphold children's dignity, rights, and agency,
- provide positive guidance and support towards self regulation,
- promote a safe, secure and nurturing environment,
- be authentic and responsive,
- be based in fairness, acceptance and empathy with respect for cultural and linguistic rights.

a) How will this be done?

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 must use 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 regulating children's conversations promotes active engagement. Respectful communication with families generates greater confidence in interacting.

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.

Role Modelling

Educators model positive interactions when they:

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

Guiding children's behaviour

River Region Early Education will take a positive approach to guiding children's behaviour. We recognise this builds children's confidence and self-esteem and is based on the development of caring, equitable and responsive relationships between educators and children.

b) Evaluation

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every 2 years.

Families and educators are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

c) Resources and References

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – www.acecqa.gov.au
- Child safe standards - Office of the Childrens Guardian
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Belonging Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (2009)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) Aarts, M. Marte Meo Basic Manual 2nd Edition (2008)

- Porter, L. Young Children's Behaviour: Practical Approaches for Caregivers and Teachers (3rd Edition) (2008)

6. Relevant Legislation, Regulations and Standards

Legislation - Education and Care Services National Law	
166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline
Education and Care Services National Regulation	
155	Interactions with children
156	Relationships in groups
National Quality Standards	
5.1.1	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
5.1.2	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.
5.2.1	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.
5.2.2	Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.
Child Safe Standards	
2	Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
4	Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account
Early Years Learning Framework Learning Outcomes	
1	Children have a strong sense of identity
2	Children are connected with and contribute to their world
3	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
4	Children are confident and involved learners
5	Children are effective communicators
Early Years Learning Framework Principles	
	Secure, respectful, and reciprocal relationships
	Respect for diversity
Early Years Learning Framework Practices	
	Responsiveness to children
	Cultural responsiveness

7. Related Documents

Doc #	Attachments

Interactions with Children Policy

Doc #	Intersections with other key documents
NQS7.45	Code of Conduct Policy
NQS5.38	Inclusion Policy

8. Document Control

Doc #	Doc Title	Version	Approved	Next Review
	Relationships and Interactions with Children Policy	1	October 2013	October 2015
NQS5.37	Interactions with Children Policy	2	July 2018	July 2020
NQS5.37	Interactions with Children Policy	3	June 2021	June 2024
NQS5.37	Interactions with Children Policy (minor changes due name change and new policy document format)	3a	January 2024	June 2024