



Interactions with Children

Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children

Policy Statement

A positive atmosphere and the wellbeing of children within an education and care setting are promoted through 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 they develop an understanding of themselves as significant and respected and feel a sense of belonging.

Goals – what are we doing?

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, community and the individual.

Strategies – How will it be done?

The Nominated Supervisor and Educational Leader shall:

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

Educators and staff will:

- Respond to children's communications in a just and consistent manner;
- Respond sensitively to children's attempts to initiate interactions and conversations;
- Initiate one to one interactions with children during daily routines and conversation with each child;
- Support children's efforts, assisting and encouraging as appropriate;
- Support children's secure attachment through consistent and warm nurturing relationships;
- Support children's expression of their thoughts and feelings;

- Encourage children to express themselves and show an interest and participate in what the child is doing;
- Encourage children to make choices and decisions;
- Acknowledge children's complex relationships and sensitively intervene in ways that promote consideration and alternative perspectives and social inclusion. Guidance strategies should be reflective of this approach;
- Acknowledge each child's uniqueness in positive ways;
- Respect cultural differences in communication and consider alternative approaches to own.

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. Administration 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 compromise 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;

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

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.

Statutory Legislation & Considerations

- Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Sources

- DEEWR (2009). Belonging Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia www.deewr.gov.au