

Relationships with Children



Policy Objective

To ensure that the children being educated and cared for by Hawthorn Child Care Centre are provided with opportunities to develop respectful and positive relationships with peers, educators, staff, volunteers and students. To ensure that respectful and positive relationships are the basis for guiding children's behaviour.

Implementation

Regulatory Requirements

In line with the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, Hawthorn Child Care Centre will take reasonable steps to provide education and care to children in a way that:

- encourages children to express themselves and their opinions
- allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
- always maintains the dignity and rights of each child
- gives each child positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour
- has regard to the family and cultural values, age, and physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for by the service

Please see the service's policies on *Educational Program and Practice* and *Promoting Children's Abilities* for further information on how Hawthorn Child Care meets these requirements of the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

Relationships with Children and the Hawthorn Child Care Centre Philosophy

The Hawthorn Child Care Centre philosophy outlines our commitment to the development of secure, respectful, and reciprocal relationships with children. As a Centre we believe in:

- recognizing, respecting, and supporting the rights of all children in the Centre
- ensuring children have their voice heard and reflected in our practices
- providing children with a nurturing environment
- the full inclusion of every child in our service
- recognizing the importance of our relationships with children to the children in our care

Guiding Children's Behavior

Hawthorn Child Care Centre supports children to recognize, manage, and learn from their behaviors, and express their emotions in positive, non-threatening, and productive ways. The Centre recognizes that behavior guidance and support is a process that needs to focus on the whole child, recognizing that each child is an individual with a range of needs and life experiences. When considering a child's behavior educators will consider the child's:

- age and stage of development
- level of familiarity with the Centre's routines and expectations
- general health and wellbeing
- family situations and relationships
- relationships with peers, educators, staff, volunteers, and students

Educators will also consider other factors including:

- play and learning environments including the physical environment, the weather, and time (time of day, time of year)
- education and care strategies which are in place
- external factors such as changes in the community and community events (both local and global)

Educators will endeavor to create play and learning environments which support positive behaviors including:

- sufficient space
- adequate numbers of resources and equipment
- resources and equipment which are stored in a way that allows children to initiate play and access resources independently
- planning experiences which promote shared learning, cooperation, and helping others
- planned and well communicated routines and transitions

The Centre recognizes the importance of respectful and positive relationships between children and educators, staff, volunteers and students when working with children to guide their behavior. Educators, staff, volunteers, and students will work towards developing and maintaining secure, respectful, and reciprocal relationships with all children in our care, providing a nurturing environment in which positive behaviors and language are role modeled for children. Each child will be included in our service, with their voices heard and reflected in our practices.

Hawthorn Child Care Centre also recognizes the importance of positive guidance and support in the development of children's understanding of how to manage their behaviors This includes:

- maintaining the dignity and rights of the child during each interaction
- understanding and respecting each family's parenting beliefs
- acknowledging and showing appreciation for children's positive and appropriate behaviors as they occur so that children know when they have acted appropriately
- working with children to express their emotions in a positive and developmentally appropriate way
- listening to children's needs and emotional expressions and supporting children to work with these emotions
- assisting children to understand the impact of their behavior on those around them
- working with children, families, and educators to set, understand, and adhere to acceptable behaviors

Hawthorn Child Care Centre follows a clear process for guiding children's behavior, based on current recognized approaches and with a focus on respect for, and the rights of, the child:

Address the problem: Educators will talk to the child about their behavior and choices, providing the child with the opportunity to express their needs and emotions and to gain an understanding of the impact of their behavior on those around them. The child will be given the opportunity to choose to move to another activity. Educators will label the negative behavior and not the individual child so that it is the behavior being addressed not the child.

Warning: If the child continues with the addressed behavior the child is to be given a warning. Educators will explain to the child that if they continue with the behavior they will be re-directed to another experience.

Re-direction: If the child continues with the behavior they will be re-directed to another activity by the educator. If the behavior is occurring during group time the child will be moved to another area in the group. Re-direction will be done in a positive manner, with the child's positive choices and behavior recognized and acknowledged by the educator/s.

Quiet time: If the child's behavior continues the child will spend time 'cooling off'. This may take the form of sitting at an activity with an educator; listening quietly to soothing music; or being left alone if requested by the child (but under visual supervision of an educator). A child must never be excluded or left in isolation.

Reflection: Educators will reflect on the child's behavior and consider the reasons why the child's behavior has occurred, and what strategies or practices can be put in place

The use of exclusion or isolation; physical, verbal, or emotional punishment; restraint; or punishment and practices that demean, humiliate, frighten, or threaten a child are prohibited.

Respectful Language

Hawthorn Child Care Centre recognizes the role of language in developing respectful and positive relationships between children and educators, staff, volunteers and students. Educators, staff, volunteers and students are to utilize positive and language and phrasing when communicating with children including:

- speaking to all children respectfully and equally
- never using negative or derogatory language which 'puts down' a child
- addressing children by their correct names or using family-preferred 'nick-names'
- never comparing children, their behavior, play, or work to another child's
- never speaking negatively about another child, family, educator, staff member, volunteer or student in front of others
- never raising voices at children in anger or frustration. Educators are to explain to children how their behavior is making them feel
- never using inappropriate language, such as swearing, in front of children and families
- never using language which is discriminatory, negative, or derogatory based on an individual's ability, gender, sexuality, age, economic status, family structure, lifestyle, ethnicity, religion, language, culture, or national origin

If a child uses language which is inappropriate, such as swearing, discriminatory, or derogatory language, educators will address the child's language use, explaining why such language is not appropriate and redirecting the child's language towards more positive language. If a child continues to use language which is inappropriate the issue will be raised with the child's family by the child's room team leader. If appropriate, a behavioral support plan will be put in place.

Managing Extreme or Persistent Behavioral Challenges

If a child is engaging in aggressive or dangerous behavior that is a direct risk to themselves and/or others, educators will act immediately to prevent the danger and then address the problem with the child.

If a child is consistently displaying unacceptable behavior educators will ensure:

- the expectations of the child's behavior are realistic and appropriate to the child's developmental level
- the child understands what are considered to be acceptable behaviors at the service
- the child's needs are being met
- the child is not copying observed behavior
- the responses to behavior are appropriate and effective
- behavior guidance strategies are consistently followed by all educators, staff, volunteers, and students working with the child

When a child exhibits recurring behavioral challenges the team leader, Centre management, and the child's family will work together to develop a behavioral support plan. The plan will include:

- background information about the child
- the target behavior/s
- the known warning signs of behavior/s
- the known triggers of the behavior/s
- preventative strategies and techniques
- behavior recognition (what does the child respond well to that can be used to encourage positive behavior)
- responses to the behavior

Where appropriate, the service will seek input and guidance from external agencies.

Managing Specific Behaviors – Biting

Biting can be a normal behavior in the development of children, usually influenced by the stage of the child's verbal communication skills. If a child bites another child the following steps will be taken:

- Educators will attend to the bitten child to comfort the child and assess their injuries. First aid will be applied as per the Centre's *Incident, Illness, Injury and Trauma* policy
- Once the bitten child has been attended to the educator will address the problem with the biting child
- The child which has been bitten will have an Incident, Illness, Injury and Trauma form completed. The family of the child who has been bitten will not be told who bit the child
- If biting becomes a regular behavior of a child then the family of the child will be informed and a behavioral support plan put in place

Changes to Existing Policy

No changes made.

Regulations

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2019

National Quality Standards 5

Sources

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority

Child Care Centre Desktop

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2019

Supporting Documentation

Behavioural Support Plan

Review Date: July 2020

Next Review Date: July 2021