

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) identifies secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships with children as one of the principles that underpin practice. Within an early childhood community many different relationships are negotiated with and between children, educators and families. The way in which these relationships are established and maintained, and the way in which they remain visible impacts on how the early childhood community functions as a whole. Relationships directly effect how children form their own identity, whether or not they feel safe and supported, and ultimately, their sense of belonging.

We aim to build positive relationships with children, families and educators through collaboration and interactions, which is reflective in our Centre philosophy and the Early Years Learning Framework. Educators will encourage positive relationships between children and their peers as well as with educators and families at the Centre, ensuring children feel safe and supported.

In order to build and maintain positive and respectful relationships with children, families and Educators our Centre will adhere to our philosophy and code of ethics to guide:

## **Interactions with Children**

To maintain positive interactions with children our centre will ensure that all educators form positive relationships with children that make them feel safe and supported in the Centre. Educators will encourage positive relationships between children and their peers as well as with educators and volunteers at the Centre.

Children need positive relationships with Educators that are trusting and responsive to their needs.

### *Management and Educators will:*

- Create a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere in which children experience equitable, friendly and genuine interactions with all Educators
- Use appropriate language and behaviour will be role modelled by Educators
- Support children to be aware of their own feelings as well as the feelings of others
- Encourage children to treat all children with respect as their friend
- Provide children with the opportunity to explore their dispositions for learning by expressing themselves and their opinions
- Assist the children to build resilience and self-assurance through positive interactions
- Guide children's behaviour positively
- Respect the rights of children
- Support children in the early childhood environments
- Speak to children in a positive manner at all times, promoting respect, tolerance and empathy; this includes children using non-verbal cues
- Engage in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life and learning of children
- Respect each child's uniqueness, are attuned to and respond sensitively and appropriately to children's efforts to communicate and will use the child's own language, communication styles and culture to enhance their interactions
- Listen to children and take them seriously; they will support and encourage children to use appropriate language in their interactions with adults and peers. Educators will extend upon children's interests and ideas through questions and discussions, supported in observations, reflections and programming
- Communicate with children by getting down to their level, showing respect to the child whilst promoting effective communication and eye contact.
- Show empathy to children
- Ensure that the values, beliefs and cultural practices of the child and family are considered and respected



- No child is ever isolated for any reason other than illness, accident or pre-arranged appointment with parental consent. During this time they will be under adult supervision
- Regularly reflect on their relationships and interactions with children and how these can be improved to benefit each child
- Challenge children's individual development

### **Group Relationships**

In order to encourage respectful and positive relationships between children and their peers and educators our centre will adhere to the following practices:

- Our centre will encourage children to participate in enjoyable interactions with their peers, respond positively to ideas, negotiate roles and relationships, contribute to shared play, and develop friendships.
- Our educators will engage children in ongoing group projects that involve research, planning, problem solving and shared decision making.
- Our educators will model strategies for children to initiate interactions and participate in group play and social activities and assist them when they have trouble understanding or communicating with each other.
- Our centre will ensure that the children have many opportunities for peer scaffolding.
- Our educators will promote a sense of community in the centre.
- Our centre will coordinate the staffing and grouping arrangements to support positive relationships between children.
- Our educators will support and promote children's interpersonal relationships and support the inclusion of children from diverse backgrounds and capabilities in group play, projects and experiences.
- Our educators will learn about children's shared interests and will use this information to plan further experiences that provide collaborative learning opportunities.
- Our educators will pre-empt potential conflicts or challenging behaviours by monitoring children's play and supporting interactions where there is conflict and guide children's behaviour positively
- Our centre will ensure that the program and routines of the centre will include regular opportunities for children to engage in social play and group experiences.
- Our centre will ensure that food is being used appropriately and not as a reward or punishment.
- Our centre will ensure that corporal punishment is not used as part of behaviour guidance or any other aspect of our interactions with children. Corporal punishment is never to be used in our centre.

### **Supporting Children through Difficult Situations**

When a child, family, educator or the centre as a whole experiences a stressful or traumatic situation such as a bushfire, car accident, sudden illness or death, crime or violent situation it is important to provide appropriate support so they can recover from the ordeal. A child's reaction to a stressful or traumatic situation will depend on factors such as their age, stage of development and impact of the event on individuals around them. A child may react in ways that you don't expect and sometimes will act normally at first but be wary of a delayed reaction. Some reactions include:

- Physical symptoms such as stomach aches and headaches.
- Being anxious or clingy.
- Suffering from separation anxiety.
- Having sleeping problems or nightmares.
- Re-living the experience through drawing or play.
- Losing interest in activities.
- Loss of self-confidence.
- Regressing to "babyish" activities.

Our educators will talk with a child about the event to bring any issues out into the open. The ways our educators will approach this are:

- Reassuring the child that they are safe, but only if they really are.
- Talking to the child about what happened in a way that they will understand and without going into frightening or graphic detail. Our educators will not leave out important information though, as children will fill in the gaps.



- Ensuring the child hasn't jumped to conclusions. Some children will think they are to blame in a tragic event; our educators will make sure they know this isn't so.
- Talking about the event with appropriate individuals (for example, all children if the event has affected the whole centre or the children that have been affected) and letting everyone have their say including children.
- Talking to the children about how individuals react to stressful or traumatic situations and that the feelings they are feeling are normal.

### **Coping Mechanisms**

Some strategies that our educators will use to help children cope in these situations are:

- Giving children a sense of control of their environment and life. Letting the child make minor decisions, such as what to eat for lunch, what to wear or what toy to play with will make the child feel more in control.
- Allowing the children plenty of time to play and to do physical exercise; this will help the child burn off stress chemicals and allow for more sleep.
- Helping the children physically relax with story times and cuddles.

It is important to remember how you respond to the stressful or traumatic event will affect your child's response. Children look to their families and educators to find ways to deal with a situation they probably don't understand. Children need their family members (and other adults who are close to them) to help them understand the situation and their emotions and also offer comfort and support. If adults are distressed about a situation it is important for them to seek help for themselves.

At the centre, we wish to help in whatever way we can if your family has undergone a tragedy. Talk to educators (or confidentially to the Nominated Supervisor) and we will endeavor to work with families and children to support all parties through the situation.

Should it be required, educators will liaise with appropriate authorities, such as the Department of Education and Children's Services, and follow any recommendations made by these authorities.

### **Interactions with Families**

Effective communication is the key to developing and maintaining positive interactions and relationships with others. Educators working within or centre are required to demonstrate mutual respect towards each other and value the contributions made by each educator. This enables our Centre to maintain positive relations and model the type of communication they want children to develop. Educators also need to use positive communication with families and children in order to create a responsive and inclusive environment for all.

*Management and Educators will ensure:*

- All families are treated equitably without bias or judgement; recognising that each family is unique
- Families and children are greeted upon arrival
- Two way communication is established through leading by example and asking questions
- Common terminology is used when talking to parents regarding their child's development
- Never to discuss another child or family information with a parent or visitor
- Remain sensitive to cultural differences amongst families and are to encourage families to share cultural aspects with the children and Educators at the Centres
- Always endeavour and seek the advice and opinion from experts with family permission, to help with regards to a child with additional needs or support a family through resources available from such support agencies as KU Inclusion Support Agency, Area Health or the private sector
- Endeavour to recognise and implement several different ways to communicate with families in their preferred chosen way
- Ensure verbal communication is always open, respectful and honest
- Provide families with up to date centre information and notices through Daily Reports, Newsletter, communal signs, emails and sign-in sheets



- Regularly reflect on parent input into the program and make changes where necessary that will best benefit the centre and children
- Ensure children are treated and programmed for as individuals.

### **Interactions with Staff and Educators**

The Centre recognises that the way Educators interact with each other has an effect on the interactions they have with children and families.

#### *Maintain Professionalism at all times, Educators will:*

- Preserve professional communication in order create an effective work environment and to build a positive relationship with Educators, Children and Families. Communication amongst colleagues creates a positive atmosphere and a professional Centre for families. Communication between staff and families ensures that important information is being passed on and that consistency occurs.
- Collaborate together as a team sharing room roles and responsibilities through the use of a roster where necessary
- Be respectful when listening to each other's point of view and ideas
- Maintain effective communication to ensure that teamwork occurs
- Use staff meetings to communicate their professional reflections and ideas for continuous improvement as a team
- Attend In-service training to update and refresh individual skills and knowledge
- Refer to the Staff Grievance Policy/Procedure if they feel a situation with another Educator is not being handled with professionalism, respect and quality
- Recognise each other's strengths and valuing the different work each does
- Work collaboratively to reach decisions which will enhance the quality of the Education and care offered at the Centre
- Welcome diverse views and perspectives
- Work together as a team and engaging in open and honest communication at all times
- Respect each other's positions and opinions.
- Develop and share networks and links with other agencies
- Resolve differences promptly and positively and using the experience to learn more effective methods of working together

#### *Enhance Communication and Teamwork, Educators will:*

- Provide new educators with relevant information about the Centre and program through an Educator handbook, induction and daily communication
- Maintain confidentiality
- Treat each team member with respect
- Be sensitive to the feelings and needs of other team members
- Provide constructive feedback to each other
- Trust each other
- Value the role and contribution of each educator
- Provide opportunities for all educators to have input and evaluate the program
- Appreciate and utilise educator skills and interests
- Provide support and assistance to each other
- Share responsibilities
- Have a flexible attitude towards team roles and responsibilities
- Greet each other by name
- Show genuine interest in the other person by using active and reflective listening
- Communicate ideas and opinions clearly and professionally
- Use a communication book or daily diary to pass on messages and record relevant information
- Hold regular educator meetings
- Use appropriate conflict resolution techniques to solve problems



- Ensure policies and procedures are up to date regarding communication, expected behaviour and grievances
- Opportunities for professional development

Source: National Quality Standard, Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, Early Years Learning Framework, Respectful Relationships <http://www.cscentral.org.au/Resources/Publications/respectful-relationships.pdf>

Date Implemented: 16/04/2012

Review Completed: 29/04/2019

Schedule for Review: 29/04/2020

National Quality Standard – NQS		
<b>Quality Area 5 : Relationships with children</b>		
5.1	Relationships between educators and children	Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child
5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained
5.2	Relationships between children	Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships
5.2.1	Collaborative learning	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other
<b>Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnership with families and communities</b>		
6.1	Supportive relationships with families	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role
6.1.1	Engagement with the service	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
6.1.2	Parents views are respected	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing
6.1.3	Families are supported	Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing
<b>Education and Care Service National Regulations</b>		
155	Interactions with children	
156	Relationships in groups	
<b>Early Years Learning Framework</b>		
<b>Learning Outcome 1 - Children have a Strong Sense of Identity</b>		
1.1	Children feel safe, secure, and supported.	
1.2	Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency.	
1.3	Children develop knowledgeable and confident self identities.	
1.4	Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.	
<b>Learning Outcome 2 - Children are Connected with and Contribute to their World</b>		
2.1	Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation.	
2.2	Children respond to diversity with respect.	
2.3	Children become aware of fairness.	
2.4	Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment.	

