

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 affect how children form their own identity, whether or not they feel safe and supported, and ultimately, their sense of belonging.

Purpose

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.

Implementation

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

Children need positive relationships and interactions with Educators that are trusting and responsive to their individual needs. Through these experiences and interactions children will develop a positive understanding of themselves and feel a sense of belonging.

Management and Educators will:

- Create a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere in which children experience equitable, friendly and genuine interactions with all Educators
- Role-model appropriate language and behaviour
- Support children to be aware of their own feelings as well as the feelings of others
- Encourage children to treat all other children with respect
- 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, dignity and agency of children
- Support children in the early childhood environment
- Speak to children in a positive manner at all times, promoting respect, tolerance and empathy, including the use of non-verbal cues and communication
- Engage in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life and learning of children
- Respect each child's uniqueness, be attuned to, and respond sensitively and appropriately to children's efforts to communicate and use the child's own language, communication styles, and culture to enhance interactions
- Listen to children and take them seriously; 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 and made visible in observations, reflections, and programming.
- communicate with children by getting down to their level, using eye contact, and showing respect to the child whilst engaging in and promoting effective communication
- Show empathy to children
- Ensure that the values, beliefs, and cultural practices of the child and family are considered and respected
- Ensure that 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
- Facilitate children's individual development extending upon their strengths, interests and abilities

Interactions with Families

Effective communication is key to developing and maintaining positive interactions and relationships with others and helps to build trusting and respectful partnerships with families. Educators use positive and open communication with families in order to create a responsive and inclusive environment for children, staff and families.

Interactions with families help to inform educators' knowledge of each child's distinctive interests, skills cultures and abilities. This helps to build a positive experience and a safe learning environment that encourages children to expand their knowledge and understandings.

Management and Educators will ensure:

- All families are treated equitably without bias or judgement, recognising that each family is unique
- Families are provided with information and resources in their first language
- Families are asked to identify a preferred method of regular communication with the Centre (this may include utilising a translator service)
- Families and children are greeted upon arrival in a respectful manner
- They learn the names of family members and use these names when they greet them
- Two-way communication is established through leading by example and asking questions and a willingness to offer information about ourselves
- Common terminology is used when talking to parents regarding their child's development
- Privacy and confidentiality are respected at all times
- Information about another child or family information is never discussed with a parent or visitor
- They remain sensitive to cultural differences amongst families and encourage families to share cultural aspects with the children and educators at the centre
- The advice and opinion from other professional experts is requested, with parental permission, to assist educators develop and implement strategies to support the inclusion of children with additional needs
- They seek additional resources and professional support for families through a range of organisations such as Inclusion Support, and other specific health professional networks
- Verbal communication is always open, respectful and honest
- Families are provided with up to date centre information and notices through Daily Reports, newsletters, communal notice boards, and emails.
- They regularly reflect on parent input into the program and make changes where necessary that will best benefit the centre and children
- Connections between families is promoted and enhanced through inviting families to participate in routines and events at the centre.

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. Educators working within our 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 relationships and model the type of communication they want children to develop.

To Maintain Professionalism at all times, Educators will:

- Engage in professional communication in order to 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 image for families. Communication between staff and families ensures that important information is being passed on consistently.
- 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 and add to individual skills and knowledge
- Refer to the *Grievance Policy* if they feel a situation with another educator is not being handled with professionalism, respect, and fairness
- Recognise each other's strengths and value the contribution each person makes to different work roles
- 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 engage 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 use the experience to develop more effective methods of working together.

To Enhance Communication and Teamwork, Management will:

- Provide new educators with relevant information about the Centre and program through an educator handbook, induction, and daily communication
- Treat educators with respect
- Be sensitive to the feelings and needs of educators
- Provide constructive feedback to educators as part of their professional learning plan support
- Value the role and contribution of each educator
- Demonstrate commitment to ongoing collaboration and engagement to support staff wellness
- Provide opportunities for all educators to have input into the program development and evaluation
- Appreciate and utilise educator skills and interests
- Provide support, assistance and mentoring to educators
- Hold regular educator meetings to encourage and support professional growth and reflective practice
- Use appropriate conflict resolution techniques to solve problems
- Ensure policies and procedures are up to date regarding communication, expected behaviour and grievances
- Provide opportunities for professional development.

To Enhance Communication and Teamwork, Educators will:

- Maintain privacy and confidentiality
- Be respectful, caring and inclusive of all colleagues
- Be sensitive to the feelings and needs of other team members
- Support colleagues during difficult situations
- Provide constructive feedback to each other
- Trust each other
- Value the role and contribution of colleagues
- Appreciate and utilise colleague skills, strengths and interests regardless of qualification and experience
- 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 to pass on messages and record relevant information
- Use appropriate conflict resolution techniques to solve problems



- Engage in opportunities for professional development.

Supporting Children through Difficult Situations

When a child, family, educator or the centre as a whole experience 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 endeavour 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.



Source: Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014). Child Australia *Cultural Connections Booklet*. (2017). Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016). Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment (2009) *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017). Guide to the National Quality Standard-(2020) *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (Cth). Revised National Quality Standard. (2018). Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (2011) Melbourne Graduate School of Education *Evidence Paper Practice Principle 5: Respectful relationships and responsive engagement* <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/edcare/respectrelns.pdf>

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National Quality Standard – NQS		
Quality Area 5 : Relationships with children		
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
Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnership with families and communities		
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
Education and Care Service National Regulations		
155	Interactions with children	
156	Relationships in groups	
157	Access for parents	
Early Years Learning Framework		
Learning Outcome 1 - Children have a Strong Sense of Identity		
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.	
Learning Outcome 2 - Children are Connected with and Contribute to their World		
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.	

