

Guiding Children's Behaviour

Legislation:

Education and Care Services National Law (WA): 171
Education and Care Services National Regulations: 155
National Quality Standard for Early Years Education and Care: 1.1.1, 1.1.5, 1.1.6, 1.2.1, 3.1, 5.1, 5.2.2, 5.2.3

Sources:

Early Childhood Australia website – www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au
PSC Alliance - www.pscalliance.org.au
Department for Communities - www.communities.wa.gov.au

Policy Statement:

Unicare will provide a secure, loving and stimulating environment which encourages children to co-operate, enhances their self-esteem and encourages positive interactions with others, and where acceptable behaviour is promoted and any recriminations are kept to a minimum. Educators will endeavour to build relationships with children based on mutual respect and trust and guide children's behaviour in positive ways.

Strategies for Implementation:

- Clear guidelines about acceptable behaviours will be developed with input from children, families, educators and management.
- Limits to behaviour will be clearly expressed in positive terms and reinforced consistently in a developmentally appropriate way.
- Educators will create environments with sufficient space and resources; children will have easy access to resources to promote positive social interactions.
- Children will be encouraged to express their feelings in acceptable ways and to settle their differences in a peaceful manner.
- Educators will demonstrate acceptable behaviours during the course of their interactions with all children and each other. Their role modelling will encourage positive and responsible socially acceptable behaviour
- Educators will show their respect by using normal tone and volume when interacting with children; allowing older children greater freedom and responsibility in recognition of their developmental stage; and work co-operatively with children to solve problems. Positive behaviours will be encouraged by diverting children to more appropriate activities,

showing appreciation for appropriate behaviour and building on each child's strengths and achievements.

- **Non-enrolled children** in the company of their families will be **required to conform to** Unicare policy on **acceptable behaviour**. Parents/Guardians who wish to discipline their own children whilst at Unicare will not at any time use any form of corporal punishment or unacceptable language. If a parent is not able to control their non-enrolled child's behaviour they will be asked to remove the child from the centre.
- Unicare believes that developing a supportive relationship with the children encourages them to learn skills in self-control. Punishing a child stops the negative behaviour for a while but does not teach the child self-restraint. The consequences of unacceptable behaviour will be discussed with the child and will be consistently followed through. No punishment will be given and the child will be reminded in positive terms of the expected behaviour.
- A "cooling off" period may be needed so the child can calm down before discussing what happened and sharing their feelings with the educator. Educators will always talk to the child quietly and respectfully, and preferably away from the rest of the group. Time away to cool down will vary from child to child and may include: listening quietly to soothing music, sitting quietly with the Educator, doing something physical i.e. kicking a football, sitting quietly with a book, talking to a close friend, being left alone (but not out of sight). No child will be isolated for any reason other than illness or accident.
- Where a dispute or conflict occurs Educators will talk to all the children involved, be calm, fair and positive in their assessment of the situation. Wherever possible the children will be involved in deciding on the appropriate course of action to follow. Educators will model appropriate behaviour at all times. If an Educator feels they are unable to control their behaviour in a particular situation, they will ask for assistance while they remove themselves from the incident to cool down.
- Biting and hitting are normal behaviours in the development of many children, usually caused by lack of verbal communication skills. If a child bites or hits another the following procedures will apply:
 - Educators will attend first to the victim to comfort the child, assess their injuries and apply first aid.
 - While attending to the victim (or immediately afterwards) the educator will talk about the incident with the biter/hitter, explaining the consequences of his/her action, in words they will understand. The educator will show their disapproval for the child's actions using tone of voice and facial expressions, and encourage the child to "help" make the victim feel better through positive and gentle interactions. Educators will suggest an alternative action to biting or hitting i.e. encourage the child to say "My turn please", and will follow this up by encouraging the biter/hitter to ask for a turn and making sure he/she does have a turn.
 - An accident report will be written. Parents of victims do not need to know who bit their child.
 - A record of what happened will be made including: how the situation arose and why the child bit or hit. This information will help educators to prevent a repeat incident.
 - If biting or hitting is an on going concern with a particular child his/her parents should be informed and strategies developed that are consistent between home and the Centre.

- If a child's behaviour places him/herself or another child in danger, educators will act immediately to prevent the danger, and then talk through the problem with the child or children concerned.
- Where children exhibit recurring unacceptable behaviour the nominated/certified supervisor, educators and family may develop a behaviour management plan to be followed consistently between Unicare and home.
- If children consistently display unacceptable behaviour the Educators in the child's room will ensure:
 - The expectations of the child's behaviour are realistic and appropriate to their developmental level.
 - The child understands the limits.
 - They work together with families to ensure there is no conflict between Unicare and home expectations.
 - The child's needs are being met ie. adequate storage for personal belongings, adequate nutritional snacks provided, centre set up to encourage independence.
 - The child has no impediments which may cause the unacceptable behaviour.
 - The child isn't copying observed behaviour.
 - Consequences of the behaviour do not encourage it to persist.
 - Strategies are consistently followed by all Educators in contact with the child.
- The Director/Co-ordinator is available to discuss and assist with any concern a parent may have in respect of their child's behaviour or participation in the program.
- If the unacceptable behaviour persists the Director/Co-ordinator will jointly with the parent seek advice from an appropriate agency or professional.
- After all of the above principles have been followed and depending on the severity of the behaviour the following steps will apply:
 1. The Director will write to the family regarding the child's unacceptable behaviour. The child will be given reasonable time to respond positively to new strategies and the family will be supported.
 2. If there is insufficient improvement in the child's behaviour the Director will write to the parent to advise them of this, and to explain that the child's attendance at Unicare is suspended for the next 2 weeks in order to give the child time to modify his/her behaviour away from the Centre. After this time the child may return to the Centre and will be given reasonable time to display a positive change in behaviour.
 3. If the child does not demonstrate a positive change in behaviour on their return to the Centre, the Director will write to the parent to explain that the child's attendance at the Centre will be suspended until such a time as the behaviour is corrected.
- After the child has been given every opportunity to respond positively and if all methods fail to result in an improvement in behaviour, the Director will discuss alternative care with the family, in consideration of the health and safety of the other children.
- In the case of severe behaviour which threatens self harm or bodily harm to educators or other children, the parent will be informed that the child will be suspended or dismissed immediately.