



Relationships with Children Policy

NQS

QA5	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.
	5.2.1	Collaborative learning - Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.
	5.2.2	Self-regulation - Each child is supported to manage their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.

National Regulations

Regs	155	Interactions with children
	156	Relationships in groups

EYLF

LO1	Children feel safe, secure, and supported.
	Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency.
	Children develop knowledgeable and confident self identities.
	Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.
LO2	Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation.
	Children respond to diversity with respect.
	Children become aware of fairness.
	Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment.

Aim

Seaford District Community Children's Centre aims to 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, staff and students at the centre

Related Policies

Additional Needs Policy

Continuity of Education and Care Policy
Enrolment Policy
Orientation for Children Policy
Physical Activity Promotion Policy

Implementation

Interactions with Children

Our Service's statement of philosophy will guide our interactions with children as follows:

Seaford District Community Children's Centre Philosophy

Vision

Seaford District Community Children's Centre: the leading innovative learning community in the southern region.

Mission

Seaford District Community Children's Centre is a child focused service working collaboratively with families, professionals and the community, building capacity for lifelong care and education.

Core Values

Seaford District Community Children's Centre identified core values are Care, Trust, Respect, Quality and Equity.

Centre Philosophy

At the Seaford District Community Children's Centre we provide care and education that meets the interests and needs of children, families and the community. This is underpinned by our identified core values of Care, Trust, Respect, Quality and Equity.

We believe a program should create a caring and educational environment which encourages learning, thereby providing:-

Children

- A safe, caring and stimulating environment.
- Opportunities for physical, emotional, imaginative, creative, social and intellectual development.
- Recognising each child's individual potential.
- Developmentally appropriate activities encouraging problem solving, self help skills and the development of self esteem and independence.
- A nurturing environment which develops and extends children's abilities.
- A balance between stimulation and relaxation.
- An awareness and respect for ourselves, others and our environment.
- Opportunities for consistent, caring relationships with adults and children.
- A challenging, responsive and child focused program.

Parents, Guardians and Families

We aim to support parent/guardians and families in their roles as primary caregivers and educators by:-

- Welcoming them into our centre in a genuine and sensitive manner.
- Recognising, respecting and supporting the different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds of our families.
- Creating, encouraging and supporting opportunities for their involvement and participation.
- Encouraging an exchange of information and co-operation with parents/caregivers about their children.
- Providing information about other services for children and families.

Staff

To ensure provision of quality care and education for children, our staff:-

- Recognise and respect children as individuals working in partnership with families and the community to develop an understanding of their needs.
- Will promote an awareness and appreciation of other cultures which will be reflected in the centre's program.
- Provide a caring, inviting, aesthetically pleasing environment.
- Will be sensitive to the needs of families and the community, and be responsive to these needs through open communication.
- Work as a member of a team displaying flexibility and initiative.
- Approachable professional staff
- Our staff will maintain confidentiality.
- Listening to and respecting the needs and feelings of others.
- Will abide to the Centre's policies and guidelines

Our Centre is committed to providing:-

- Encouragement and access of all staff to continuing training and professional development.
- Opportunities to be involved in decision making.
- Environment which is supportive of the individual worker.
- Opportunities for staff members to communicate and enhance team work skills.

Community

Our Centre will:-

- Be sensitive to the range of social economic and cultural contexts within the community.
- Will advocate an awareness and knowledge of the need for and value of quality care and education for children.
- Provide accessible, high quality services in response to community needs.
- Participate with other community groups, agencies and services to share resources and information and develop a support network.
- Be aware of and respond to, where possible, the changing needs of the community.

In order to maintain positive interactions with children our service and educators will maintain the following:

- Seaford District Community Children's Centre will provide a relaxed and happy atmosphere for the children.
- Seaford District Community Children's Centre will ensure mealtimes are relaxed and unhurried and educators take the time to sit and talk with children.
- Our educators will encourage children to initiate conversations about their experiences inside and outside the service as well as what is happening around them, express their ideas and feelings, share humour with the nominated supervisor, educators, coordinators and educators and seek assistance as they take on new challenges and try to do things for themselves.
- Our educators and staff will respond sensitively and appropriately to children's efforts to communicate and engage them in sustained conversations about their interests in a positive manner.
- Our educators will talk with children in a two-sided manner. That is, encourage children to have their own opinions, ideas and comments. Educators should support children with this and let them know that their ideas are valued.
- Our centre will have in place predictable personal-care routines that are enjoyable experiences for babies and toddlers and will respond to babies and toddlers when they practice their verbal communication skills.
- Our routines, as well as planned and spontaneous experiences will be organised to maximise opportunity for meaningful conversations between children and educators and the service will ensure that all children have equal opportunity to engage in one to one and small group conversations with educators.
- Our educators will be knowledgeable in the communication strategies and non verbal cues of babies and toddlers and staffing and grouping arrangements within the service will support the development of trusting relationships between educators, babies and toddlers to allow them to feel secure in the service.
- Our statement of philosophy and policy on interactions with children will be visible
- Our educators will participate in children's play using children's cues to guide their level and type of involvement while always maintaining a positive approach when responding to children and offering assistance.
- Our educators will model reasoning, prediction and reflection processes and language.
- Our educators will collaborate with children about routines and experiences.
- Our educators will use techniques such as sign language and other resources and tools to support children with additional needs.
- Our educators will engage in give and take communication by adding to interactions initiated by babies and toddlers by describing objects and talking about routine activities with babies and toddlers.
- Our educators will use their interactions with children to support the maintenance of home languages and learning English as an additional language.
- Our educators and coordinators will use information from their observations of interactions with children to extend the children's thinking and learning.
- Our educators will also support children to build secure attachments with one and then many educators and use a favourite toy or comfort item to help them feel secure in the service. Most toddlers suffer a form of separation anxiety when away from their families.

Educators need to reassure the toddler and work with the toddler's family in order to make the child feel safe and happy at the Service.

- Our centre will ensure that there are many opportunities for babies and toddlers to experience relaxed physical contact and close interactions with familiar educators.
- Our directors, educators and staff will learn more about the histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child rearing practices and lifestyle choices of families using the service.
- Our educators will frequently talk with families to get an idea of the non-verbal forms of communication used by their children in order to convey messages such as hunger, needing the toilet, tiredness and emotions.
- Our educators will allow time to talk to parents about their children. This allows educators to gain insight into their home life.
- Seaford District Community Children's Centre will implement strategies to assist all children to develop a sense of belonging and confidence through positive interactions between the children and educators.
- Our centre's roster will be planned in a way that promotes continuity for children.
- Our centre will gather information from families in the enrolment form in order to be able to provide support for children during the settling in process.
- When children have special needs our service will consult with other professionals or support agencies that work with children to gather information that will guide our interactions with these children. This information will be recorded in the child's file.
- Our service's approach to equity and inclusion will be documented in our statement of philosophy.
- Our centre will ensure that educators document the knowledge gained about children, through their interactions, in the child's file for reference for other educators and will continually review the experiences that are planned for children in light of this information.

Group Relationships

In order to encourage respectful and positive relationships between children and their peers and educators our service 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 service.
- Our service 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.
- Our service will ensure that the program and routines of the service will include regular opportunities for children to engage in social play and group experiences.
- Our service will ensure that food is being used appropriately and not as a reward or punishment.
- Our service 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 service.

Behaviour Guidance

Positive Behaviour

Educators, staff and volunteers will model positive behaviour and guide children’s behaviour in ways that promote their self esteem by:

- encouraging children to be cooperative and helpful, to express their feelings and responses to others’ behaviour confidently and constructively, and to respectfully guide the behaviour of other children when it is disrespectful or unfair
- supporting children to explore different identities and points of view, to negotiate their rights and the rights of others in a positive, respectful way and to communicate effectively when resolving disagreements
- discussing emotions and issues of inclusion and exclusion, fairness and bias
- encouraging children to listen to other children’s ideas, consider alternate behaviour and co-operate to solve problems
- using positive language, gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice when redirecting or discussing children’s behaviour with them, and remaining calm, gentle, patient and reassuring even when children strongly express distress, frustration or anger
- using their knowledge of children’s personalities and friendships to help them manage their own behaviour and develop empathy
- using information from families about their children’s social skills and relationship preferences to engage children in experiences that support their social development
- speaking in comforting tones and holding babies to soothe them when they are distressed, and responding positively to babies’ and toddlers’ exploratory behaviour
- intervening sensitively when children have difficulty resolving a disagreement, and helping them remove themselves from situations where they are experiencing frustration, anger or fear
- interacting with children and teaching them how to play in different ways: movement play, object play (understanding and solving problems), imaginative play (emotional resilience, creativity and empathy), social play (friendship and belonging, rough and tumble play,

celebrations and ritual play), storytelling (my world, myself and where I fit in), creative play (new behaviours and thoughts) role play

- promoting children's agency by allowing them to be as independent as possible, to try things they see for themselves and experience the consequences of their choices while considering the risk and benefit to others. This may include teaching children how to use things
- ensuring curriculum is mainly based on children's ideas and interests rather than being led by educators
- setting up rooms and environments to foster positive behaviour eg room is interesting but not cluttered, defined and obstacle free walkways, resources are attractively displayed. The environment may include mirrors to help children focus and provide interest, contains photos of where resources belong
- ensuring activities are of interest to children eg are visual, smelly, have patterns,
- supporting children with strategies to deal with their raw emotions eg anger, fear, panic and being patient when children revert to old behaviour if they are stressed, tired, hungry etc. This includes listening empathetically to children when they express their emotions and reassuring them that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions
- ensuring children's basic needs are met eg they aren't hungry or tired
- supporting children who appear to be insecurely attached by sensitively building relationships with the child and family
- allowing children to have uninterrupted play where they can continue their engagement in learning as they explore and improvise (one of the ideas behind progressive morning teas), and not interrupting a child who is actively engaged in an activity, or forcing a child to share when they are engaged with a resource. Simple strategies may be reducing unnecessary transitions or introducing progressive morning snack or mealtimes.
- providing explicit instruction for routines and learning
- understanding that children's comprehension of vocabulary concepts or instructions may require support such as visuals, key word signing, two step instructions or allowing time for a child to process the instruction or information. This may be as simple as waiting three seconds after speaking to the child so they can process what has been said
- understanding that children may not be able to interpret or understand some words. For example 'sharing' may not be understood where as taking turns may be.

Inappropriate Behaviour

Educators and staff understand that inappropriate behaviour is a child's way of saying they need support. Educators will reflect on the reasons for the child's behaviour and develop strategies or a plan with the Director and or the Assistant Director which can be implemented by all educators to ensure consistent responses to the child's behaviour at the service.

Children's behaviour may be inappropriate for a variety of reasons. Some of these include:

- insecure attachment to educators or families
- emotional immaturity
- insufficient language skills to express their needs and wishes
- used to gaining attention from negative behaviour
- condition or number of toys, resources and equipment
- a diagnosed or undiagnosed spectrum disorder.

Depending on the reason for the behaviour, some strategies for dealing with inappropriate behaviour may include:

- ignoring the negative behaviour and praising the positive behaviour (while ensuring the safety of all children), and ensuring all body language is consistent with actions and words
- building strong social bonds through a focus on attachment theory and Circle of Security approaches
- using key words with signing and objects or visuals to help children with communication difficulties
- using minimal steps in directions then allowing time for a child to understand eg 3-5 seconds
- using terminology that children understand such as 'my turn' 'your turn' rather than assuming children understand eg children may not understand what it means to "share" or that saying "sorry" does not mean they can repeat the behaviour
- allowing children to develop their reasoning and emotional knowledge by helping them to reflect on their actions eg "Tommy, what are you doing?" "I saw you" "What were you about to do with ...?"
- not telling a child to do something but asking the child a question eg "What do we have to do so we can have lunch," rather than "pack up"
- talking with children about the consequences of their actions, our rules and why we have them
- adjusting the menu and the time that certain foods like fruit which are high in natural sugar are provided
- providing sufficient opportunities for exercise including running which can calm anxious or agitated children through the production of certain brain chemicals
- intentionally teaching behaviours like walking inside, never assuming children know how to do things or behave, and reaffirming those and other positive behaviours
- using empathy and putting themselves in the child's position to try and understand where the behaviour came from (rather than yelling at the end result of the behaviour)
- documenting incidences of inappropriate behaviour and when they are occurring and developing a behaviour plan with parents and if relevant other professionals
- appointing one person (eg Director, Assistant Director or Team Leader) as a contact point for parents

Educators will not isolate, intimidate or subject children to corporal punishment to guide behaviour.

Parents will:

- work in partnership with educators where concerns are raised about the behaviour of their child
- consent in writing where educators believe liaising with relevant professionals to support the learning and development of their child and apply for funding to do this where necessary
- agree to work with educators to minimise risk where the child's behaviour is a danger to children and educators. This may include seeking professional support from, for example a paediatrician, speech pathologist or family support services, or reducing the hours of care until the child's behaviour is supported and risk to others is minimised.

If parents do not comply with these requirements, the Director may suspend or terminate the child's enrolment after providing two weeks' notice. The Director may, however, suspend or terminate a

child's enrolment without providing two weeks' notice if he or she believes the child's behaviour poses an unacceptable risk to the welfare and safety of other children and educators.

Inclusion

Australia is a pluralistic society regardless of specific regional variations in cultural profiles. In order to reduce bias and ensure that no child is excluded our service will abide by the following practices:

- Our service will promote and value cultural diversity and equity for all children, families and educators from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds;
- Our service will recognise that children and adults from all cultures have similar needs and that each person is unique and valuable;
- Our service will develop a positive self concept for each child and adult in the group by exploring the cultural backgrounds of each family and child;
- Our service will endeavour to provide a foundation that instills in each child a sense of self identity, dignity and tolerance for all people;
- Our service will increase the knowledge and understanding each child has about his or her own cultural ethnic heritage in partnership with their family, educators and community and other children in the Service;
- Our service will explore family compositions, customs and lifestyles of children and families in many cultures;
- Our service will assist, in partnership with parents, extended family and the community in exploring their own "roots" as they involve children in the culturally diverse environment of the service;
- Our service will provide support for fostered or adopted children to develop a sense of heritage and belonging;
- Our service will avoid common stereotypes and recognise individual differences within a cultural or ethnic group;
- Our service will assist wherever possible families who are new to Australia with a transition to a new and different culture.
- Our educators will become aware of their own beliefs, attitudes, cultural backgrounds, their relationship with the larger society and their attitudes to people;
- Our educators will acknowledge that they too have been influenced by their own background prejudices and their points of view;
- Our educators will accept that all children can learn and that differences in lifestyles and languages does not mean ignorance;
- Our educators will broaden their own cultural and ethnic group awareness and help children to understand themselves in relation to their family, community and other cultures;
- Our educators will be actively involved in the development of appropriate resources, support and implement an anti bias, cross cultural program throughout the service environment which is reflective of all families/children and the diversity present in Australian society and network with community agencies involved with cross cultural issues wherever possible;
- Our educators will be actively involved with children, showing respect, sharing ideas and experiences and asking questions.
- Our educators will access and make available resources and information supporting the delivery of anti bias concepts in the program and attend regular training courses as required. Such resources will be integrated into the daily program and be made available to families.

- Our educators will reflect on the service’s philosophy and ensure that practices and attitude concur with the philosophy.
- Our educators will work with families to encourage positive attitudes to diversity and an anti-bias ethos.
- Our educators will ensure that casual workers or visitors to the service are aware of these practices and respect these values.
- Children will listen to records and practice singing songs in different languages;
- Children will learn words and phrases in a language not native to children in their group;
- Children will talk to other children using the words from their culture;
- Children will be encouraged to become independent wherever possible and be actively involved with their peers.
- Children will explore with foods from other cultures (egg. have family members from different home cultures come in and cook, to have “food tasting” parties);
- Our service will encourage children to bring in real objects and artifacts used by their families that may be historical or typical of that child’s/family’s cultural group including food;
- Our service will help children to develop ease with and have a respect for physical, racial, religious and cultural differences.
- Our service will encourage children to develop autonomy, independence, competency, confidence and pride.
- Our service will provide all children with accurate and appropriate material that provides information about their own and other’s disabilities and cultures.
- Our service will not isolate a child for any reason other than illness, accident or a prearranged appointment with parental consent.

Supporting Children through Difficult Situations

When a child, family, educator or the service 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 people 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 work with families in relation to the best way to help children through a difficult situation. We may, for example, provide families with information about child psychologists or social workers, and be guided by the suggestions or plans these professionals put in place.

Educators will also implement the indicators under the EYLF learning outcomes which show what educators can do to promote learning, particularly learning outcome 1.1 safe secure relationships in consultation with families. 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 people (for example, all children if the event has affected the whole service or the children that have been affected) and letting everyone have their say including children.
- Talking to the children about how people react to stressful or traumatic situations and that the feelings they are feelings 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.
- Limiting stimulants like chocolate, lollies etc into the centre environment

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 Seaford District Community Children's Centre , we wish to help in whatever way we can if your family has undergone a tragedy. Talk to educators (or confidentially to the Director or Assistant Director) 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.

Bullying

In order to overcome bullying in our service, our educators will be aware of the following information and maintain the following practices:

Our educators will be aware of the following characteristics in children who bully -

- Children of all backgrounds can bully
- Preconceived notions of children who bully should be avoided

- The child who bullies may also be the victim of bullying
- The child who bullies will often think that they are innocent, and that the child being bullied is somehow deserving of this negative experience.
- Aggressive behaviour and bullying inclinations begin in some children as early as two years old. Physical aggression peaks at around 30 months and then decreases. If adults do not intervene, there is a risk that physical aggression may shift to indirect aggression ie verbal aggression and social exclusion. Research shows that intervention to reduce aggression and promote positive behaviour is most likely to be effective when children are between 3 and 8 years of age. This highlights the importance of educators' role in effectively responding to this type of behaviour.

Our educators will be aware of the following characteristics of victims of bullying -

- Children of all backgrounds can fall victim to bullying
- Preconceived notions of children who fall victim to bullying should be avoided
- Boys are victims of bullying more than girls.
- Victims may have low self-esteem, lack of confidence, lack social skills or be viewed as unpopular.
- It is important to remember that victims are often sensitive and easily hurt, and feel incapable of preventing such negative experiences.

Our educators will implement the following strategies to overcome bullying -

- Our educators will practice all-encompassing and socially inclusive care.
- Daily programs will recognise, value and reflect the social and cultural diversity of our community.
- Our educators will role model and actively encourage appropriate behaviours.
- Our educators will form a close relationship with family members in order to work cooperatively to overcome instances of bullying.
- Our educators will empower children by giving them responsibilities that will make them feel valued.
- Our educators will help children deal with their anger. This includes offering alternative dispute resolution techniques that are socially acceptable.
- Our educators will seek the support of children's services professionals when it is necessary.
- Our educators will respond promptly to children's aggressive or bullying behaviour.

Biting

All individuals involved in the care of a child need to recognise that at times, some children, for a variety of reasons, attempt to bite other children.

Some reasons a child may bite are:

- Infants – Experimental, Sensory Pleasure, Teething
- Toddlers – Frustration, fatigue, attention seeking, confined spaces.
- Older Children – Aggression, deliberate.

In the event of a biting incident, educators will abide by the following procedure:

- Check for broken skin.
- Clean all bites, regardless of whether the skin is broken or not.
- Apply a cold compress to the bitten area
- Our educators will contact the families of the child who has bitten and the child that has been bitten as soon as possible. Families are then responsible for any follow up medical treatment.
- If the biter is a known infectious disease carrier, or can be seen to have facial herpes and the victim's skin is broken, the Director will convey this information to the family.
- Should the behaviour continue, our educators will work in conjunction with families and, if necessary, external agencies, to develop a Behaviour Guidance plan for the child who is biting.
- Our educators will complete an incident report for any occasion where a child bites and submit to the Director.
- Monitor the behaviour of the child who has bitten and use distraction techniques to prevent the child reaching the point where the child feels the need to bite.

Sources

National Quality Standard

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Early Years Learning Framework

Young children, aggression, bullying and what to do - Bullying. No Way! Safe and Supportive School Communities Working Group.