

BEHAVIOUR INTERVENTION & SUPPORT POLICY

PURPOSE:

For staff to use a positive, developmentally appropriate approach regarding behaviour management and allow parents to be aware of the strategies used whilst their child is attending the centre.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Behaviour Management involves the teaching and learning of self control. It is also the way we teach children to respect the rights and feelings of others. By guiding children's behaviour we help children to learn socially acceptable ways of how to express their feelings, how to act assertively in social situations (i.e., to say no, to request what they want) and how to deal with all kinds of life's situations - both pleasant and unpleasant.

GOALS:

- * To know children's developmental stages and associated behaviours.
- * To guide children so they know what is appropriate and socially acceptable behaviour and what is unacceptable.
- * To consult with parents regularly on behaviour management issues and seek constructive solutions to any differences in values.
- * To show sensitivity to varying expectations for children related to family background, but encourage children to treat others with respect.

OBJECTIVES:

- * to involve children in discussions about dealing with conflict;
- * to encourage children to show empathy for others who are experiencing difficulties;
- * to supervise carefully and act to divert problems before they occur;
- * to have realistic expectations of what children at different stages can understand; and
- * to involve preschool aged children in the setting of the rules where these are simple and can be easily understood.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

It is the belief at Elder Street Early Childhood Centre that behaviour management must always encourage the individuality and confidence of children and never lower or jeopardise their self-esteem.

Indirect Behaviour Management: Indirect guidance comes from a well planned, developmentally appropriate program and environment. For all rooms from infants to preschool, sufficient materials need to be provided so children can play, with as little adult intervention as possible. For example, ensuring in a toddler group that if the transport toys are planned for play, that there is at least 6 trucks for the group to be able to play with. Anticipating, planning and intervention will help maintain a friendly atmosphere. Staff should plan activities which will challenge and interest children.

Direct Behaviour Management: Presenting children with clear alternatives helps them develop the ability to make decisions and direct them. Each room has clear limits (see below) which the children are made aware of and these limits are consistently reinforced by each staff member. The presence and attention of a staff member helps children concentrate on an activity. Staff are better able to demonstrate, to guide and intervene if a child is close by. It may be necessary, if another child or adult is being put at risk of injury, to remove a child from a situation.

THESE CENTRE LIMITS ARE:

- ~ Always walk when inside
- ~ We only sit on the chairs
- ~ Be gentle with other children and adults
- ~ Use toys and equipment appropriately
- ~ Toys and objects are not for throwing eg. sand
- ~ Balls are to be kicked outside only
- ~ Wash your hands before eating
- ~ Sit down to eat and drink
- ~ Flush the toilet and wash hands after going to the toilet
- ~ Respect other children's property
- ~ Use only appropriate language
- ~ Drawing and painting only on specified materials, eg paper, cardboard.

Verbal Behaviour Management: This is used immediately to redirect a child's behaviour. Language used by caregivers is positive, clear and appropriate to the development of the child. Requests for the desired behaviour should be given.

For example, if a child was standing on a table staff could say; "Please hop off the table", rather than "Don't stand on the table".

Emotional Behaviour Management: Emotional guidance - especially approval - aids the development of a positive self-concept in a child. Approval can be conveyed in many ways such as praise, friendly words and smiles, holding and hugging, simple rewards such as stickers or stamps and by encouraging a child's efforts to achieve. Expressing approval of children without discrimination between them will heighten their self-esteem.

STRATEGIES FOR SPECIFIC BEHAVIOURS:

Certain behaviours are common to children of different ages whilst in their early childhood years. Children behave and react to different situations in different ways. At times aggressive behaviour can be exhibited which staff try to deal with in the most positive way practical. The following information relates to this kind of behaviour and how the staff will deal with it.

Shouting, screaming or hurting others: The strategy used for these type of behaviours would be to remove the child from the group in a positive way. The child would be given a warning (see strategies for Preschoolers) and then finally the child will be gently removed from the situation. This strategy is only used for older children who are at a developmental stage where this would be

an effective means of behaviour management. It is used when verbal strategies and warnings do not work. A staff member will take a child out of the group for a short period (maximum of 5 minutes) and explain why this is being done. We encourage children to make the decision themselves to rejoin the group when they feel they can act appropriately.

Biting: Reasons for biting and ways for dealing with it differ with under 3's and over 3's. Over 3's usually have more understanding of how hurtful and disapproved of biting is, and they should be able to control their urges to bite. Under 3's may bite because:

- *they are teething
- *they may bite impulsively
- *they have been bitten by older children and are passing on the same behaviour frustration through biting.

A good way to stop biting is supervision. This can be done through distraction, and by setting up an appropriate environment that encourages both the sharing of toys as well as individual experiences, which will reduce frustration. Any child that is biting consistently needs to have a plan of action completed by staff in consultation with parents. The process for this is similar to what is described in "Process of resolving difficult behaviour". If certain children are being targeted by the child who is biting, the families of the victim will need to be advised of the measures being taken to stop their child being bitten. It is very important to convey to these families that staff will make all attempts to keep their child safe and also that a plan of action is underway with staff and parents of the child who is biting.

INFANT/TODDLERS

Behaviour management starts at birth, along with other teaching and learning. It begins with meeting infants needs. A secure start for a child fosters a much greater capacity in the child to give, wait and share. When infants start moving and exploring their environment we provide:

- * Carers who are ready to distract, guide, re-direct attention and interest and remove temptation;
- * Carers who give lots of attention when babies are happy, talkative, playful, as well as when they are crying.
- * Carers are sensitive to infant's limitations, changing the situations according to their needs.

It is important that the number of situations in which caregivers have to redirect is minimised through the restructuring of the environment.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR THE NURSERY

1. If a child hurts another child, the child who is hurt or upset needs to be comforted first. Then in a calm tone of voice talk to the other child about what has happened and model appropriate behaviour;

".....(name of child) be gentle, lying on the children hurts"

“.....(name of child) be gentle, that hurts when you do that

The child would then be redirected to an activity.

2. If the behaviour is repeated soon after the child has been re-directed, a carer will model gentle and appropriate behaviour to the child who is hurting others, repeat the above statement and then engage the child in another activity.

3. If the child is very young and does not understand the impact of their actions, ie, waving arms about shaking a toy near others whom may be hit, carers will simply move the child away so that no one is hurt by their play.

With older babies in the nursery, over 18 months, the strategies described in toddler procedures will be implemented also.

TODDLERS

Toddler Developmental Levels:

- Has a limited but developing concept of sharing
- Can accept limited shared attention
- Desire for autonomy impels them to test limits
- Has strong positive or negative reactions to situations
- Shows some aggression in interactions
- Toddlers have several characteristics which influence their interaction with other people. The developmental stage that toddlers are at needs to be considered when choosing a method of behaviour management.

Level of understanding: Toddlers sometimes do hurtful things to other children when playing and exploring, without understanding that they hurt. Their primary objective is to explore the world, as they are in the process of learning that their actions have a cause and effect. This may mean that they push a child with the intention of seeing the effect of their action without an understanding of the hurt they are causing.

Good intentions, bad execution: Toddlers sometimes do negative things with good intentions. eg. a two year old gives a toy to a crying baby by dropping it on his head. Toddler's first expression of interest in one another is through hands-on experience - poking, jabbing, pulling. What toddlers need is not to be stopped from interacting with the child but shown how to do it gently and appropriately.

Level of self control: It is characteristic for under 3's to lack willpower or self control (they simply can't stop themselves). Many acts that are labeled aggressive or impulsive are due to the child's inability to inhibit or stop.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR THE TODDLERS

1. If a child's actions will not injure them or another child, the **behaviour** is ignored. We do stress that it is important to remember to ignore the behaviour, not the child.

2. If inappropriate behaviour continues and a child gets hurt, we give the injured child lots of attention and cuddles. The child who is misbehaving will be re-directed to another activity followed by an explanation.

3. If negative behaviour continues, the carer should look further into the reasons behind the behaviour looking to identify the function of the behaviour and aim to work out what the problem, remembering that all behaviour is communication, e.g. is the child bored, wanting attention, in discomfort?

PRESCHOOLERS

Wallabies (3-6 years) developmental levels:

- * Understands some appropriate ways of behaving
- * Has some self control
- * Are fairly skilled in the use of language
- * Can understand language well
- * Are less egocentric than younger children

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR PRESCHOOLERS

Ignoring Behaviour: Where it is felt a behaviour is innocent or attention seeking, staff will ignore the occurrence of this behaviour. In situations where children are squabbling over toys or having a confrontation, staff use their discretion in deciding when to intervene. If the children are both safe and communicating, staff try to allow the children to use their problem solving skills and enjoy the accomplishment of dealing with a situation on their own.

For children who are less assertive and in situations where it is obvious that a child is not coping with the issue, then staff will step in and facilitate ways for both children to sort out the issue. This technique is used only if the behaviour is not harmful to themselves, other people or objects in a physical, emotional or social manner.

Warning: A verbal warning, with consequences if direction is not followed through, is given, E.g. "John, you need to sit quietly with the group, or I will have to ask you to move away". If direction is not followed the consequence is actioned. The child is encouraged to rejoin the group when they feel ready to behave appropriately. "Would you like to come and sit and listen to our story now John? You can come back whenever you are ready".

Removing the Child from a Situation: In a positive manner the child is verbally told that the behaviour is not acceptable and another activity is found to occupy the child's attention. This is in an environment suitable to the mood of that child. ie. quieter, away from particular children or activities. Children are advised to come back and join in when they are ready to "play gently, share with their friends, talk in a soft voice" etc.

Positive Reinforcement: Children are given positive reinforcement or tasks for displaying positive behaviours. ie. stickers, stamps, helper to staff for a period of time, helping with afternoon tea etc. Verbal praise is given to the children all day. By ignoring the bad as much as practically possible and praising the good, children soon come to discover that they are important and capable individuals. Children who have had their behaviour managed

positively in their early childhood years, will feel confident by the time they are of school age to play and learn whilst making decisions on how they will manage their own behaviour.

PROCESS OF RESOLVING DIFFICULT BEHAVIOUR:

Following are the steps that would be taken if staff at the centre have decided after much consideration, that the behaviour management strategies that have been put in place for a child, are not effective. Indicators for this would be that the child, staff and entire group are not enjoying a quality child care environment and program due to issues relating to a particular child's behaviour.

1. Team leader consults outside the immediate group for an objective point of view on the child's behaviour and seeks some ideas for different strategies and advice. This is done confidentially with another team leader or Director.
2. Team leader advises the Director of the issue at hand and the steps that have been initiated to resolve the child's behaviour issues so far.
3. Families are consulted about the Behaviour Intervention Strategies & Support plans that the staff would like to implement. Reach an agreement of techniques that will be used by both staff and families at home when particular behaviours are displayed by the child.
4. When the strategies and plan have been drawn up, show the plan to other staff members and explain the importance of all staff following the same strategies with this child so there is consistency at all times.
5. Implement the plan for a 2-3 week period.
6. If the behaviour is reported to be continuing either at home or the centre, meet again with the families and discuss issues at hand. Staff to then advise parents that advice from resources available outside the centre may be necessary for further assistance with the child. Obtain permission from families to take this next course of action.
7. Contact one of the behaviour management resources available to the centre – Ann Porter, Ruth Davies – Special Education Unit, Newcastle University and enlist their services. Set dates for meetings in consultation with families and strongly encourage families to attend the meeting.

With new information, start the process of implementing any further action plans and behaviour management strategies for the child at home and the centre.

EXPULSION FROM THE CENTRE

In the unfortunate situation, where a child's behaviour is such that it hinders staff from providing proper care for any other children and constantly places

staff and children under physical or emotional stress, the centre is within its rights to terminate enrolment for that child. We believe that if parents are not willing to accept that their child's actions are causing due stress and strain on staff, and assist staff as proposed in our Process for Resolving Difficult Behaviour, that the centre has no alternative but to discontinue the placement for their child. We aim to assist children and families that are experiencing behaviour difficulties, but will only do so with full cooperation from the family.

CARER BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT EVALUATION

Before choosing a course of action to take with a child who you believe is displaying challenging behaviour – Consider the following:

- * Why is the child engaging in that behaviour? Are they communicating that they are frustrated, unhappy, bored, in discomfort, wanting attention, curiosity, fun, anger, frustration?
- * Is the behaviour of the child really unacceptable?
- * Is the behaviour dangerous?
- * Will they hurt themselves or others?
- * Will it be OK if I wait? Could I be overreacting?
- * Am I uptight, tired?

What options do I have?

- * ignore the behaviour;
- * distract by offering something else to do;
- * re-direct the child to another activity or topic;
- * do not allow the child to continue doing what they are doing, and give a clear and simple reason why not.

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Reviewed: 26 June 2006 by M Duffy-Fagan (see Policy Review table attached)
Source: "Children are People Too", Dr Louise Porter, Early Childhood Educator.
NCAC Accreditation Principles
Behaviour Management Inservice with Ruth Davies
Newcastle University.