



COMMUNICATION & CONSULTATION

# Positive Guidance Policy and Procedure

 KAL Child Care Management

## Policy Statement

Our service is committed to supporting children's behaviour in a way that is positive and constructive and which promotes confidence and self-regulation. Our team want to empower children with strategies for life. We believe that children should always be treated with respect and empathy.

## Background and Guiding Principles

"The approved provider, nominated supervisors, co-ordinators and educators have responsibility for supporting the health, protection, safety and wellbeing of all children. In exercising their responsibilities, they must take reasonable care to protect children from foreseeable risk of harm, injury and infection." ACECQA Guide to the National Quality Framework

The approved Learning Frameworks acknowledge self-regulation as an important contribute to the elements, principles, and outcomes for children. We understand that each child will react differently in similar situations and take an approach of understanding that behind every emotion is a reason.

"An important aspect of children's 'belonging, being and becoming' involves them learning how their behaviour and actions affect themselves and others and developing the skills to regulate these independently. Educators can support children to develop these skills by guiding children's behaviour as a mediator and helping children to negotiate their rights in relation to the rights of others.

When guiding and supporting children to learn about self-regulation, it is important that educators acknowledge that these skills develop gradually and on

a continuum. Children's capacity to apply these developing skills can often change. This may depend on their mood, health, family circumstances and situations they find challenging.

### **Empowering Children**

An important part of supporting children to manage their behaviour is giving them some responsibility. This begins with having appropriate expectations. Talk with them about their behaviour. Let them know that you trust them. It is important to acknowledge children as individuals with a range of skills, emotions and experiences both at home and at the service that may impact on how they cope being part of a group setting on any given day. Help them learn to self-regulate, for example, to take themselves away from the group to have some quiet time when they need it. Encourage them to help others and remind others of rules and limits. But let them know that you are always there to help. Creating a caring and respectful environment assists everyone to feel part of the group and to take responsibility for the wellbeing of others.

### **The Circle of Security**

The Circle of Security is an intervention initiative based on research that secure children exhibit increased empathy, greater self-esteem, better relationships with parents and peers, smoother transition to school, and an increased capacity to handle emotions more effectively when compared with children who are not secure. This model highlights the importance of adults being at children's level and available for children as a support, and to provide a secure base for children as needed (see diagram below)."[\[1\]](#)

[\[1\]](#) "Supporting children to manage their own behaviour" ACECQA National Quality Standard Information Sheet Oct 2016





Children can exhibit a range of behaviour in response to a range of emotions or feelings ranging from excitement to anger. Children under 5yrs are still navigating how to regulate these emotions and require support from trusted adults who demonstrate compassion and understanding. One behaviour which is both common and distressing for educators, families and children alike is biting.

### **Biting**

Biting is generally a temporary problem, occurring during the toddler stage, and rarely continues past the age of three. It can't be eradicated instantly and requires the skill, understanding and ongoing attention of educators and parents. It is important to understand and inform parents that punishment won't eliminate biting episodes, and that any punishment is detrimental to the child's development and well-being.

Most commonly biting occurs in groups of children aged between one and three years. Across this age span, children experience very significant and rapid social, emotional, physical and intellectual development and gain a wide range of new skills. This can result in a period of challenging behaviours such as biting, scratching, hair pulling, hitting or simply refusing to do anything they are asked.

Development factors which may cause a child to bite include:

- frustration from failure to communicate their needs and wants
- teething
- oral exploration
- limited self-regulation or self-control (because they are still gaining these skills)

Environmental factors which may cause a child to bite include:

- congestion in any one area – too many children in too small a space
- competition for toys or for a favourite toy
- overstimulation (too much colour, noise, activity)
- limited or no quiet areas
- boredom
- stress

Engagement factors which may cause a child to bite include:

- insecurity
- competition for adult attention
- insufficient adult attention
- frustration from failure to communicate their needs and wants” [1]

Further information for families and educators can be found in the document “When Children Bite: A resource for Early Childhood Educators”, Child Professional Support Coordinator Australia, 2012 [https://childaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/woocommerce\\_uploads/2017/05/When-Children-Bite.pdf](https://childaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/woocommerce_uploads/2017/05/When-Children-Bite.pdf)

### **Responding to behaviours**

The following are some examples of inappropriate discipline which may constitute a serious breach of the National Law and/or National Regulations and could potentially be considered criminal matters:

- hitting, pushing, slapping, pinching or biting a child
- force-feeding a child
- yelling at or belittling a child
- humiliating a child
- physically dragging a child
- locking children away (or isolating them)
- depriving a child of food or drink

- unreasonable restraining of a child (this may include restraint in a high chair)
- excluding children from events
- consistently moving children to the office or other space
- away from the play areas
- moving children to another room as punishment
- verbally or physically threatening a child.

**Other examples of inappropriate practice are:**

- negative labelling of child or family
- criticising a child's actions or behaviours
- discouraging a child from taking part in activities
- blaming or shaming a child
- making fun of or laughing at or about a child
- using sarcastic or cruel humour with or to a child
- excessive use of negative language to a child, such as, "no" "stop that!" "don't..." "you never..."

**Cool down**

A cooling down period is a time when a child that is having a difficult moment is encouraged to find a space, near an educator, to 'cool down' and regain self-control. This strategy can be used as an opportunity for educators to support children to regulate their own behaviour, and can be an example of appropriate discipline or behaviour guidance.

The difference between 'cool-down time' and 'time out' is that an educator stays with the child and reassures and supports them to regulate their emotions during cool-down time. It is viewed as a learning opportunity, not as punishment.

**Restraint**

Occasionally, there may be circumstances where a child becomes a risk to themselves or others and may need to be removed from the situation or physically restrained to prevent harm to themselves or others. Children should

be physically restrained only in emergency situations. Examples of emergency situations include when a child is:

- in a clearly unsafe situation, for example, attempting to scale a fence or run onto a road
- physically threatening other children or adults
- behaving in ways that are destructive to themselves, other people or the environment.

These situations may require the supportive holding of children. This means that children are only held long enough to be removed from the situation, and the emergency situation has been addressed or subsided.

This approach should only be used when there is an immediate danger of the child being hurt or hurting others and when other strategies to guide the child's behaviour have not worked. If a service has taken a child away from other children to help them cool down or physically restrained the child in any way, the service should inform the child's parent or guardian of the circumstances of the event and record accordingly." [2]

### **Instances of repetitive inappropriate behaviour that poses a risk to safety**

In instances where a child's behaviour is continually posing a risk to the safety and wellbeing of other children and educators, the Nominated Supervisor/Approved Provider will arrange a meeting with the family in the hope of working together to resolve the situation. Where this does not result in improvements in behaviour and there is a significant risk of harm to other children or educators the Nominated Supervisor/Approved Provider may choose to reduce days of attendance or end the enrolment, allowing the family to seek alternative arrangements that may better suit the needs of the child.

## **Procedures and Responsibilities**

Supporting children's responses to emotions and feelings takes a team approach. The best outcomes are achieved when families and educators work together to support and guide children in a positive, calm and reassuring way.

### **Leadership and Management Responsibilities, including Approved Providers, Nominated Supervisors and Responsible Persons will:**

- Positively and clearly communicate all aspects of the policy and take a zero-tolerance approach to compliance.
  - Understand and comply with all aspects of this policy and related legislation and support team members to do the same.
  - Lead a culture of reflection and regular review of policies, seeking feedback from educators, families, children and other community agencies and professionals as appropriate.
  - Support educators and encourage use of the “checklist for responding to biting in early childhood settings” which is located in the resource “When Children Bite: A resource for Early Childhood Educators”, Child Professional Support Coordinator Australia, 2012 [https://childaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/woocommerce\\_uploads/2017/05/When-Children-Bite.pdf](https://childaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/woocommerce_uploads/2017/05/When-Children-Bite.pdf)
  - Communicate honestly with all families in relation to biting, guidance and a sample letter can be found in the resource “When Children Bite: A resource for Early Childhood Educators”, Child Professional Support Coordinator Australia, 2012 [https://childaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/woocommerce\\_uploads/2017/05/When-Children-Bite.pdf](https://childaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/woocommerce_uploads/2017/05/When-Children-Bite.pdf)
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- Work collaboratively to develop individual behaviour guidance plans or Strategic Inclusion Plans for children in consultation with families, other professionals, and support agencies.
  - Conduct family meetings to discuss behaviour, share successful strategies and set agreed goals. Be respectful and understanding and seek first to support and improve the current status.
  - Take all reasonable steps to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of all children and educators at the service which may include requesting the collection of the child after an event or the suspension, reduction or termination of care where an unacceptable risk is identified and current strategies are not successful.
  - Maintain regular communication with families and where a child’s behaviour has posed a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of themselves, another child or educator, request immediate action such as collection. Take fair and reasonable steps and consult with the Approved Provider when considering suspension, reduction, or termination of care.
  - Provide educators with guidance on using ‘cool down’ strategies instead of ‘time out’ and when it may be appropriate to restrain a child in an emergency situation.
  - Monitor educator response to big emotions and behaviours to ensure they use appropriate discipline including cool time and supportive responses.
  - Ensure a family is notified when ‘cool down’ or restraint is used and explain the circumstances leading to that and that a record is maintained.



## **Educators and Other Team Members will:**

- Be proactive in fulfilling the requirements of this service policy and related legislative requirements.
- Seek further guidance where required to fulfil your requirements.
- Report any concerns or non-compliance immediately to the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider.
- Participate in the review of documents and provide constructive feedback to the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider.
- Seek to understand the feelings and emotions behind the behaviour.
- Seek support in a professional way from other educators and leaders.
- Report concerning or repetitive behaviours to the Nominated Supervisor.
- Communicate in a caring and honest manner with families. Use Behaviour Reporting Forms with families where behaviours are strong or repetitive.
- Work collaboratively to develop individual behaviour guidance plans or Strategic Inclusion Plans for children in consultation with families, other professionals, and support agencies.
  
- Participate in family meetings to discuss behaviour, share successful strategies, and set agreed goals. Be respectful and understanding and seek first to support and improve the current status.
  
- Communicate with other educators to ensure consistency contributes to positive behaviours.
- Consistently reflect on their practice and implement changes where identified including:
  - in relation to their own beliefs, attitudes, and experience and how that influences guiding behaviour
  - how they manage situations where they experience challenges in relation to guiding the behaviour of a child or group of children
  - strategies used to support children's self-regulation and implement changes as needed.
  - how the environment may impact on the behaviours and interactions of children and adults.
  - what opportunities the educator provides to children to make decisions about rules, expectations, and outcomes in relation to their own and other's behaviour.
- Provide children with opportunities to 'cool down' where an educator stays with the child and reassures and supports them to regulate their emotions during cool-time time.
- View 'cool down' time as a learning opportunity not as punishment.



- Only restrain a child in an emergency situation for example when a child is:
  - In a clearly unsafe situation, for example attempting to scale a fence or run onto a road
  - Physically threatening other children or adults
  - Behaving in ways that are destructive to themselves, other people or the environment.
- Report immediately to the Nominated Supervisor any times when 'cool down' was used or where a child was restrained. Families must be notified of these occasions.

### **Support children by:**

- viewing children as capable and competent
- setting clear, consistent, and simple limits and expectations
- approaching situations from a strengths-based perspective
- focussing on the behaviour not the child
- providing choices
- ensuring they feel secure and letting them know that you are there to help and support them
- providing positive reinforcement
- allowing time for children to respond
- seeking to understand the feelings and emotions behind the behaviour
- using positive, respectful language, including body language and tone
- encouraging children to seek help and express their needs
- encouraging a strong sense of identity and pride in themselves
- helping them to develop a sense of empathy for others
- using positive and respectful strategies for guiding children's behaviour
- helping children to negotiate their requests with others
- involving families and other educators and team members
- using intentional teaching moments to discuss feeling, emotions, and responses
- prompting and supporting them to remove themselves from situations where they are experiencing frustration, anger, or fear
- listening empathetically to children when they express their emotions and reassure children that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions at times
- providing choices and allowing children to experience the consequences of these where there is no risk of physical or emotional harm to the child or another person
- ensuring spaces, resources and routines are arranged to minimise times when children are likely to experience stress or frustration, ensure ample

- resources are available for sharing
- using knowledge of children to pre-empt potential conflicts or challenging behaviours
- using redirection as a strategy for resolving conflict and provide children with choices when redirecting
- encouraging children to reflect on and consider the impact of their behaviour
- responding promptly to childrens' disruptive behaviour by acknowledging their feelings, spending time with them and suggesting alternative ways of responding
- ensuring learning environments and programs are exciting, stimulating and engaging to reduce boredom-related behaviours or behaviours that arise through frustration or confusion
- Ensuring active supervision of all children in all areas of the service at all times.

### **Educators must never:**

- Isolate children for any reason other than illness, accident, or a pre-arranged appointment with parental consent
- Use words which are negative, disrespectful, or hurtful
- Engage in inappropriate physical contact including, but not limited to, dragging, or hitting a child
- Use time out as a strategy (use cool down instead)
- Use food as a reward or punishment.

### **The role of the environment**

Educators will ensure that environmental factors support children and foster positive relationships including:

- providing adequate space and a balance of activities, that provide for challenge and inspire a sense of wonder
- organising intentional grouping of children in small groups throughout the day based on their rhythms, interests and routines
- implementing a flexible routine, where educators respond and adjust to children's needs
- minimising transitions and ensuring they are planned and considered to reduce anxiety and stress
- offering a variety of materials, equipment and experiences that engage their interests, are culturally relevant and create a sense of belonging and security
- insuring lighting and noise levels that are calming.

## Additional strategies for biting

- The following strategies are to be used by educators to manage incidents of biting:
  - use their understanding and knowledge of each child and 'shadow' children who are biting to try and pre-empt future occurrences
  - provide families with information about biting which is sourced from recognised authorities
  - be mindful of times of the day where biting may be more likely to occur such as during transition times
  - If a child does bite another child, educators will give first aid first (wash with warm soapy water; ice; dress if the skin is broken)
  - complete an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Form for the child that was bitten and communicate with families reassuring them that steps are being taken to prevent further occurrences, remembering to maintain confidentiality
  - notify the family of the child who has bitten, if this has been a reoccurrence then a Behaviour Reporting Form should also be completed and communicated to families
  - seek to understand the trigger for biting is important to support the child
  - look critically at the environment and practices:
    - reflect on the program, routines and how the environment is set up
    - reduce factors which increase the likelihood of a child biting such as over or under-stimulation, competition for toys and sudden changes
    - reflect on supervision and placement
- Educators can use the "checklist for responding to biting in early childhood settings" which is located in the resource "When Children Bite: A resource for Early Childhood Educators"
- Educators and Nominated Supervisors should communicate honestly with all families in relation to biting, guidance and a sample letter can be found in the resource "When Children Bite: A resource for Early Childhood Educators"

## Families are asked to:

- Fulfil responsibilities under this policy and related legislative requirements.
- Understand that the service must take steps as required under legislative requirements and follow advice from recognised authorities.

- Participate in the review of documents and provide constructive feedback to the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider.
- Discuss any questions with the Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person in charge.
- Share information with the service to support children's emotions and responses.
- Participate in family meetings to discuss behaviour, share successful strategies and set agreed goals. Be respectful and understanding and seek first to support and improve the current status.
- Understand that it is the responsibility of the service to take all reasonable steps to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of all children and educators at the service which may include requesting the collection of the child after an event or the suspension, reduction or termination of care where an unacceptable risk is identified and current strategies are not successful.
- Follow through with agreed strategies which may include the collection of children after unsafe events.

### **Children are asked to:**

- Be safe, kind, gentle and caring with their friends and teachers.
- Listen to adults and try hard to work through emotions and make safe choices.
- Support other children who have big emotions with empathy

## **Communication**

- Educators and Families will have access to this policy at all times.
- Information will be included in induction for new educator and be included in service handbooks
- Educators and families will be provided with opportunities to be involved in the review of this policy.
- Educators and families will be provided with information from this policy at the time of employment and orientation.
- Changes to this policy and procedure document will be shared with families and educators.

# Enforcement

The failure of any person to comply with this policy in its entirety may lead to:

- Termination or modification of child enrolment
- Restriction of access to the service
- Performance management of an employee which may lead to termination

## Related Policies and Forms

- Service handbooks
- [Interactions with Children Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Supporting Children's Individual Needs Policy and Procedure](#)
- Behaviour Reporting Form
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Form
- [Supervision Policy and Procedure](#)
- Strategic Inclusion Plan

## Legislation, Recognised Authorities and Sources

- "When Children Bite: A resource for Early Childhood Educators", Child Professional Support Coordinator Australia, 2012 (accessed on-line Feb 2021) [https://childaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/woocommerce\\_uploads/2017/05/When-Children-Bite.pdf](https://childaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/woocommerce_uploads/2017/05/When-Children-Bite.pdf)
- "Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics – third version Feb 2016" Early Childhood Australia 2016
- "Supporting children to manage their own behaviour" ACECQA National Quality Standard Information Sheet Feb 2018 (accessed on-line Feb 2021) [https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-01/QA5\\_Supporting\\_children\\_to\\_regulate\\_their\\_own\\_behaviour.pdf](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-01/QA5_Supporting_children_to_regulate_their_own_behaviour.pdf)
- "Inappropriate Discipline" ACECQA Information Sheet April 2020 (accessed on-line April 2021) <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-06/inappropriate-discipline.pdf>
- "The approved provider, nominated supervisors, co-ordinators and educators have responsibility for supporting the health, protection, safety and wellbeing of all children. In exercising their responsibilities, they must

- take reasonable care to protect children from foreseeable risk of harm, injury and infection.” ACECQA Guide to the National Quality Framework
- “Guide to the National Quality Framework” Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority September 2020
  - Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (version February 2021)
  - Education and Care Services National Regulations (version Oct 2020)
    - 155 Interactions with children
    - 168 Education and care service must have policies and procedures
    - 170 Policies and procedures to be followed
    - 171 Policies and procedures to be kept available
    - 172 Notification of change in policies or procedures affecting ability of family to utilise service
  - National Quality Standards
    - 1.1.1 Approved learning framework
    - 1.1.3 Program learning opportunities
    - 1.2.3 Child directed learning
    - 3.1 Design
    - 4.2 Professionalism
    - QA5 Relationships with children
    - 6.1.3 Families are supported

[1] “When Children Bite: A resource for Early Childhood Educators”, Child Professional Support Coordinator Australia, 2012 [https://childdustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/woocommerce\\_uploads/2017/05/When-Children-Bite.pdf](https://childdustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/woocommerce_uploads/2017/05/When-Children-Bite.pdf) (accessed on-line Feb 2021)

[2] “Inappropriate Discipline” ACECQA Information Sheet April 2020 (accessed on-line April 2021) <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-06/inappropriate-discipline.pdf>

## Review Information

Review Date	Review Changes
May 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated to new format including defined responsibilities</li> <li>• Updated sources and references</li> <li>• Clarification around steps of suspension, reduction of days or exclusion from care outline in responsibilities.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inclusion of information on using 'cool down' strategies and when it may be appropriate to restrain a child in an emergency situation.</li><li>• Ensure a family is notified when 'cool down' or restraint is used and explain the circumstances leading to that and that a record is maintained.</li><li>• Never use time-out – use 'cool down' instead as a way learning experience not punishment.</li></ul>
Oct 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Replaced "Behaviour Guidance" and "Biting" policy</li></ul>