

INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN POLICY

Children thrive through trusting, responsive relationships with educators. These interactions support their sense of self, safety, and belonging. Our service promotes a respectful, child-safe culture where children are heard, empowered to participate, and protected from harm. All educators are responsible for responding to concerns and reporting any signs of abuse, neglect, or ill-treatment.

PURPOSE

We aim to build positive, respectful relationships with children, families, and educators through collaboration and meaningful interactions, guided by our Service philosophy and the Early Years Learning Framework. Educators foster connections between children, their peers, families, and employees to ensure every child feels safe, supported, and valued. We recognise the vital role educators play and equip them with the knowledge and skills to promote positive, respectful interactions that support children’s wellbeing, dignity, and development. Regular reflection ensures our practices continue to enhance quality outcomes in children’s education and care.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisors, Educators, Employees, Students, Volunteers and Visitors

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND REGULATIONS (WA)

S165	Offence to inadequately supervise children	R 118	Educational Leader
S166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline	R 123	Educator to child ratios-centre-based services
S167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards	R 168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
S169	Offence relating to staffing arrangements	R 115	Premises to facilitate supervision
R 73	Educational Program	R 117A	Placing a person in day-to-day charge
R 126	Centre-based services	R 145	Staff Record
R 84	Awareness of child protection law	R 155	Interactions with children
R 156	Relationships in groups	R 170	Policies and procedures to be followed
R 174	Time to notify certain circumstances to Regulatory Authority	R 175	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority

THE APPROVED PROVIDER WILL ENSURE:

Systems, policies, and resources are in place to support safe, respectful, and lawful interactions with children, including compliance with Section 166 of the Education and Care Services National Law prohibiting corporal punishment and unreasonable discipline. They will maintain adequate staffing, qualifications, and training to enable educators to foster welcoming, inclusive, and nurturing environments that uphold children’s rights, dignity, and emotional wellbeing. The Approved Provider will ensure all employees complete mandatory child protection training and are supported to implement trauma-informed practices, while regularly reviewing policies to reflect equity, empathy, and current best practices.

NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL ENSURE:

The implementation and monitoring of this policy by guiding educators in positive behaviour guidance and ensuring employees comply with legal responsibilities, including child protection and mandatory reporting. They will support educators to build respectful, culturally inclusive relationships with children, promote group sizes and compositions that encourage positive interactions, and oversee ongoing professional development and access to external support services. The Nominated Supervisor will ensure no child is isolated except for medical reasons, maintaining dynamic supervision at all times to uphold children’s rights, dignity, safety, and emotional wellbeing.

EDUCATORS AND EMPLOYEES WILL:

Create a safe, welcoming, and emotionally supportive environment by building genuine, respectful relationships with children based on trust and empathy. They will model appropriate behaviour and language, guide children to understand and manage emotions, and encourage respectful interactions. Communication will be positive, culturally sensitive, and tailored to each child's developmental level, respecting their individual backgrounds and languages. Educators will use proactive, respectful positive behaviour guidance strategies that prioritise children's dignity, safety, and rights, avoiding exclusion or punishment. They will actively listen to children, support their agency and development, respond to feedback, ensure effective supervision, and comply with mandatory reporting obligations promptly. Reflection and documentation of observations will inform ongoing support for each child's growth.

INAPPROPRIATE DISCIPLINE

Under no circumstances is inappropriate or unreasonable discipline permitted. Any behaviour management strategies must uphold the dignity and rights of the child. The following actions are considered serious breaches of the National Law and are strictly prohibited:

- Physical punishment or force (e.g., hitting, slapping, pinching, pushing, dragging, or biting)
- Yelling at, threatening, humiliating, or belittling a child
- Force-feeding or depriving a child of food or drink
- Isolating or locking a child away from others
- Unreasonable physical restraint (e.g., restraining a child in a highchair or pram as punishment)
- Excluding a child from group activities or events
- Moving a child to another room or consistently relocating them away from the group as a form of punishment

Any instance of inappropriate discipline will be treated as a serious breach of professional conduct and reported in accordance with regulatory requirements.

USE OF RESTRAINT

Physical restraint is only permitted in rare, immediate emergencies where a child risks harm to themselves or others, such as attempting to leave the service into danger, posing a physical threat, or engaging in unsafe behaviour. Supportive restraint may be used solely to remove the child from danger, applied for the shortest time necessary and in the least restrictive way, openly communicating with the child the reasons behind the restraint. Restraint must never be used as punishment or behavioural management.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

RESOURCES	POLICIES	PROCEDURES
REED Wellbeing and Behaviour Guidelines Positive Behaviour and Wellbeing Plan Template Child Safe Referral Form	Positive Behaviour Guidance Policy Inclusion Policy Child Protection Policy Mandatory Reporting Policy	Positive Behaviour Guidance Procedure Child Protection Procedure Mandatory Reporting Procedure

SOURCE

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority.

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. Inappropriate discipline. (2020).

www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-06/inappropriate-discipline.pdf

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment. Belonging, Being and Becoming- The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia V2

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment. Inclusion Support Program Guidelines.

<https://docs.education.gov.au/node/53374>

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

Child Safe Organisation National Principles - <https://chilsafe.humanrights.gov.au/>

The Convention on the Rights of the Child - <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text-childrens-version>

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	MODIFICATIONS	NEXT PLANNED REVIEW DATE
October 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modification of template Revision of content (succinct and explicit) 	October 2027