



Interactions with Children Policy



Policy Number	QA 5/2	Title	Interactions with Children Policy
Revision	2.0	Written By	Nominated Supervisor
Reviewed By	EHOOSH Management Committee	Approved By	EHOOSH Management Committee
Supersedes	Version 1.2	Effective Date	July 2024

1. Policy Statement

Eastwood Heights OOSH (the Service) aims to develop responsive, warm, trusting and respectful relationships with each enrolled child by taking the time to talk with and genuinely listen to children and their families. Educators and staff relate to children, their families, and to each other, in a friendly, caring, and sensitive manner. They value all individuals and the unique contribution each makes. The Service aims to create an environment in which children feel they are valued members of the community, and in which their sense of belonging and well-being is supported. Eastwood Heights OOSH will always take reasonable steps to ensure that the service provides care for children in a way that encourages the children to express themselves and their opinions. The service will strive to allow children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem whilst always maintaining the dignity and rights of each child. Eastwood Heights OOSH will always give each child positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour while having regard to the family and cultural values, age, and physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child at the service. Furthermore, Eastwood Heights OOSH will always ensure that children have opportunities to interact and develop respectful and positive relationships with each other and with educators, staff, and volunteers. In providing these opportunities, the size and composition of groups of children must be considered.

In order to do this, educators need:

- Access to training and resources on effective communication.
- An organisational culture that supports and encourages open and trusting interactions.
- Time to actively engage with children.

The Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 and associated Regulations requires OOSH Services to have a policy on interactions with children. The National Quality Standard requires that the rights and interests of children are paramount, while the approved learning frameworks identify the development of secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships as one of the key principles reflecting contemporary theories and research on children's learning and early childhood pedagogy.

2. Background

This policy allows us to:

Comply with Regulatory Requirements: The Education and Care Services National Regulations (specifically Regulations 155 and 156) mandate that services must have policies and procedures in place that promote positive interactions and respectful relationships between educators, children, and their peers.

Guide Educators in Supporting Positive Behaviour: This policy equips educators with the tools to guide children's behaviour through positive reinforcement, empathetic communication, and appropriate conflict resolution strategies.

Promote Children's Well-being: The policy provides a framework that supports children's emotional and social development by fostering positive, nurturing, and respectful relationships.

3. Procedure

3.1. Nurturing Positive Interactions with Children

As each child and family arrives at the Service they will be greeted by an educator. Educators will be warm, supportive and encouraging of children and build genuine relationships with each child in their care. They will respect each child's uniqueness and be attuned to and respond sensitively and appropriately to each child's efforts to communicate. Educators will use children's individual names and position themselves at their eye level when communicating directly with children, all the while ensuring that their interactions are both meaningful and personal.

Educators will endeavour to create a relaxed and happy atmosphere at the Service in which children experience equitable, friendly and warm interactions. Educators will focus on the child's current emotional state to help guide positive behaviour, using calm tones and empathetic language. This will be done as educators will first connect emotionally with the child, identifying emotions and modelling assertive commands by utilising a calm but confident tone. Educators will also assist children to learn to communicate and interact positively and cooperatively with their peers through modelling appropriate styles of communication with others and responding positively to children at all times. They will encourage children to communicate their own ideas in a respectful and courteous way and will respond appropriately to children's non-verbal cues. Educators will use humour with children and be playful and friendly in their interactions.

Children will never be singled out or made to feel inadequate at any time. Educators will comfort children who are upset, or are showing signs of distress, and help them to feel safe, secure and understood. During mealtimes, educators will interact with children in a relaxed, unhurried manner, in which the enjoyment of foods and the social aspect of mealtimes are promoted.

Educators are genuinely interested in each child's own interests and needs. They will take the time to fully understand what children are doing or saying, asking open-ended questions and listening carefully to their responses. Educators need to find out what really interests each child so that they can connect with them through this interest.

Educators will endeavour to connect with children as they arrive at the Service after school and invite children to chat about their day and to share their news. Children will always be encouraged to share their feelings or thoughts and express their viewpoints about matters

that affect them. However, educators will also respect children's desire not to engage in conversations or interactions at certain times or for particular reasons. Educators will use strategies such as safe spaces / composure corners to support self-regulation. These areas allow children to take a break, manage intense emotions, and return to a calm state before re-engaging with their peers or activities.

3.2. Involving Children in Decision Making

Educators will genuinely seek out children's input, respect their ideas and suggestions. They will follow children's lead on:

- What experiences are included in the learning program.
- What experiences they will participate in.
- The friends they choose to spend time with.
- Setting up the environment.
- The introduction of hobbies or clubs.

3.3. Encouraging Families to Share Information About Children

Educators will use information provided by families to enhance their interactions with children and build their sense of well-being and belonging. They will encourage families to share important information about their child through:

- Initiating regular, ongoing communication with families in a manner that promotes the development of strong relationships based on mutual respect, trust and understanding.
- Encouraging families to share their thoughts, ideas, questions and concerns, and promoting supportive partnerships between families, educators and the Service.
- Treating all families equitably without bias or judgment.
- Recognising that each family is unique and valuing this uniqueness.

3.4. Educator/Staff Communication with Each Other

The Service recognises that the way educators interact with each other has an effect on the interactions they have with children and families. Educators will role model warm and supportive interactions in their dealings with one another. Educators will convey mutual respect and recognition of each other's skills and contributions through:

- Recognising each other's strengths and valuing the different work each colleague does.
- Working collaboratively to reach decisions that will enhance the quality of the care provided.
- Welcoming diverse views and perspectives.
- Working together as a team and engaging in open and honest communication at all times.
- Respecting each other's feelings.
- Developing and sharing networks and links with other agencies.
- Resolving differences promptly and positively and using the experience to learn more effective methods of working together.
- Using calm, friendly voices and positive body language towards each other.

3.5. Principals

Positive Educator-Child Interactions:

- At Eastwood Heights OOSH, we believe that positive interactions between educators and children are essential for ensuring quality outcomes in children's education and care. Every interaction is an opportunity to build trust, foster emotional well-being, and support the child's development.

4. References

4.1. Statutory Authority

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Regulation 74, 155, 156, 166)
- National Quality Standard (Standard 5)

4.2. Relevant Service Policies

- *Behaviour Management Policy*
- *Bulling Policy*
- *Educational Programming Policy*
- *Embracing Cultural Diversity Policy*
- *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*
- *Maintenance of Safe Environment Policy*

4.3. National Frameworks

- ACECQUA website: <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-agenda-it-system>
- Framework for School Age Care in Australia, 'My Time, Our Place'
<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-02/MTOP-2022-V2.0.pdf>

5. Legislative Requirements

Section 165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
Section 166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline
Section 168	Offence relating to staffing arrangements
Regulation 73	Educational program
Regulation 84	Awareness of child protection law
Regulation 115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
Regulation 117A	Placing a person in day-to-day charge
Regulation 118	Educational leader
Regulation 123	Educator to child ratios – centre-based services
Regulation 145	Staff record
Regulation 155	Interactions with children
Regulation 156	Relationships in groups
Regulation 168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
Regulation 170	Policies and procedures to be followed
Regulation 171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
Regulation 172	Notification of change to policies or procedures

Revision Chronology

Version Number	Date	Reason for Change
1.0	June 2018	Endorsed by OOSH executive committee
1.1	October 2021	Edited and reviewed
1.2	November 2021	Endorsed by OOSH executive committee
2.0	July 2024	Edited and reviewed