

RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN POLICY

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1 NQS

QA5	5.1	Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.
	5.2	Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.

2 National Regulations

Regs	155	Interactions with children
	156	Relationships in groups

3 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.

4 Aim

Our Service aims to ensure that all educators form positive relationships with children that make them feel safe and supported in the service. Educators will encourage positive relationships between children and their peers as well as with educators at the service.

5 Related Policies

The Kids' Uni Policies and Procedures apply to Kids' Uni North, Kids' Uni South, Kids Uni CBD, Kids Uni iC.

Inclusion Policy (CHI-ADM-POL-003)

Education, Curriculum and Learning Policy (CHI-ADM-POL-016)

Enrolment and Booking Policy (CHI-ADM-POL-022)

Orientation for Children Policy (CHI-ADM-POL-041)

Physical Activity Promotion Policy (CHI-ADM-POL-045)

Guiding Children's Behaviour Policy (CHI-ADM-POL-070)

6 Interactions with Children

Our Service's statement of philosophy guides our interactions with children. Our view of children is that children are capable individuals, and this will be reflected in our practice and interactions with them.

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

- 6.1 Our service will provide a relaxed and happy atmosphere for children.
- 6.2 Our service will ensure mealtimes are relaxed and unhurried and educators take the time to sit and talk with children. There will be many opportunities for autonomy for children during routine times in our program.
- 6.3 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 educators and seek assistance as they take on new challenges and try to do things for themselves.
- 6.4 Educators will respond sensitively and appropriately to children's efforts to communicate and engage them in sustained conversations about their interests in a positive manner.
- 6.5 Educators will engage with children in a respectful manner where they are viewed as co-learners. Children will be encouraged to have their own opinions, ideas and comments. Educators should support children with this and let them know that their ideas are valued.
- 6.6 Our service will have in place predictable personal-care routines that are enjoyable experiences for babies and toddlers and where children are active participants in these routines. We strongly believe in doing things with children, rather than to children.
- 6.7 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.
- 6.8 Educators will be knowledgeable in the communication strategies and non-verbal cues of babies and toddlers, and staffing 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.
- 6.9 Educators will be physically positioned at the children's level to be emotionally available to children. They will delight in children and use welcoming body language when children come in to us.
- 6.10 Educators will engage in 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.
- 6.11 Educators will collaborate with children about routines and experiences. Children's voices will be evident across all areas of our curriculum and service operations.
- 6.12 Educators will use techniques such as sign language and other resources and tools to include children who need additional support.
- 6.13 Educators will use their interactions with children to support the child's culture and to respect the child's home language.
- 6.14 Educators will support children to build secure attachments with one, and then many, educators to help them feel secure in the service. Many children suffer a form of separation anxiety when

away from their families. Educators will reassure children, acknowledge their feelings and work with families in order to make the child feels safe and happy at the service.

- 6.15 Our service will ensure that there are many opportunities for babies and toddlers to experience relaxed physical contact and close interactions with familiar educators.
- 6.16 The Nominated Supervisor and educators will learn more about the histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child rearing practices and lifestyle choices of families using the service.
- 6.17 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.
- 6.18 Our service's staffing roster will be planned in a way that promotes continuity for children.
- 6.19 Our service will gather information from families through an extensive orientation process in order to be able to provide support for children while they settle into the service.
- 6.20 Our service 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.
- 6.21 Our educators will use their knowledge of Circle of Security to identify children who need further support at particular times of the day.
- 6.22 Our educators understand the importance of being emotionally available to children. They will make being available to children the priority within the routine. They will be conscious of slowing down the pace of the room to take time to enjoy meaningful moments and interactions with children.
- 6.23 Our educators will have an understanding of empathy, empathetic language and their interactions will come from a place of empathy, particularly when children are upset or need support.

7 Children's Relationships with Peers (*Relationships in groups*)

In order to encourage respectful and positive relationships between children, their peers and educators, our service will adhere to the following practices:

- 7.1 We 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.
- 7.2 Educators will engage children in ongoing group projects that involve research, planning, problem solving and shared decision making.
- 7.3 Educators will model strategies for children to initiate interactions and participate in group play and social activities. They will assist them when they have trouble understanding or communicating with each other. They will support children to develop play entry skills.
- 7.4 Our service will ensure that the children have many opportunities for peer scaffolding.
- 7.5 Educators will promote a sense of belonging in the service where children's voices are evident throughout the program and the environment.

- 7.6 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.
- 7.7 Educators will learn about children's shared interests and will use this information to plan further experiences that provide collaborative learning opportunities.
- 7.8 Educators will support children to manage conflict and to develop dispositions that will support them in social environments such as resilience, patience and collaborative strategies.
- 7.9 Our routines will include regular opportunities for children to engage in social play and group experiences for long uninterrupted periods.
- 7.10 Educators will refer to our Guiding Children's Behaviour policy when there is a need to support children with their behaviour and self-regulation.

8 Supporting Children through Difficult Situations and Trauma

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 A child's reaction to a stressful or traumatic situation will depend on factors such as their age, stage of development, genetic predispositions and impact of the event on people around them. Neuroscience tells us that a child's brain development can be impacted by trauma, both in the short and long term. A child may react in ways that you don't expect, or may not appear to react initially. Some reactions include:
 - i. Physical symptoms such as stomachaches and headaches.
 - ii. Anxiety – which can be seen through changes in behaviour.
 - iii. Suffering from separation anxiety.
 - iv. Having sleeping problems or nightmares.
 - v. Re-living the experience through drawing or play.
 - vi. Losing interest in activities.
 - vii. Loss of self-confidence.
 - viii. Regression in development, such as toileting regression
 - ix. Short-term memory loss
 - x. Low impulse control
- 8.3 Educators will be sensitive to the fact that when a child is distressed or anxious the higher order thinking part of their brain may not be functioning. The child might be in fight or flight and unable to reason or make good choices (*refer to research by Dr Stuart Shanker of the Mehrit Centre*). Educators hold a safe space for the child to express their emotions by removing judgement and considering what is driving the child's behaviour.
- 8.4 Educators understand that their own self-regulation is important when offering support. Educators can act as an external regulator for the child.

- 8.5 Educators will work closely with each child's family and any other professionals who may be supporting the child to establish the best way to offer consistent support. If it is deemed appropriate, our educators may need to engage in conversations with a child / group of children regarding a trauma. The ways our educators will approach this are:
- i. Reassuring the child/ren that Kids Uni is a safe place
 - ii. Being a sounding board for the child/ren, only if the child wishes to discuss their trauma. Educators actively listen to conversations and observe play to gain an understanding of how the child is processing their trauma.
 - iii. Providing opportunities for children to make choices for themselves in order to encourage and re-establish a healthy and age appropriate sense of control.
 - iv. Having regular age appropriate discussions with children about 'red brain' and 'blue brain' and how trauma and/or stress can change how we feel and how we can manage that (*refer to research by Dr Stuart Shanker of the Mehrit Centre*).
 - v. acts of mindfulness are embedded in every day practice to encourage a sense of self-awareness and to strengthen children's ability to read and respond to their body's cues.
- 8.6 The Nominated Supervisor and educators will liaise with support and government agencies as required and follow any recommendations made by these authorities. This includes meeting reporting requirements relating to child protection issues or regulatory requirements.
- 8.7 The Nominated Supervisor and educators will act as referral agents to guide families to appropriate support services in times of need. It is important that educators recognise their limitations in this area and seek appropriate professional support when this is needed by the child.
- 8.8 Working with children who have suffered from trauma can be difficult for educators. We will ensure that our educators are aware of vicarious trauma and its signs and symptoms. We will offer support to those educators who require it

9 Sources

National Quality Standard

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Early Years Learning Framework

Managing Highly Able Children's Behaviour, Elaine Hook, 2006

www.parentlink.act.gov.au

www.cyh.com Child & Youth Health

Victoria State Government Health <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/trauma-and-children-tips-for-parents>

The Mehrit Centre (Dr Stuart Shanker)

10 Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years and the review will include Management, Employees, Families and Interested Parties.

11 Version Control Table

Version Control	Date Released	Next Review	Approved By	Amendment
1	03/2012	03/2013	Michele Fowler Manager – Kids Uni	
2	03/2013	03/2014	Michele Fowler Manager – Kids Uni	Paragraph inserted re application of policies across all centres. Migrated into new QA format. This policy replaces: Working with Children who display extreme behaviours Policy, Positively Guiding Children’s Behaviour Policy, Inclusion Policy, Gender Equity, Code of Ethics Policy, Child Biting Policy, Anti-Bias Policy.
3	Mar 2014	Sep 2016	Michele Fowler Manager – Kids Uni	Policy reviewed with minor editorial changes. The review period changed to 2 years.
4	Jul 2018	Jul 2020	K.Grose - Children’s Services Manager	Added recent changes to philosophical perspectives around relationships with children and behaviour guidance including the Circle of Security approach. Clarified definition of bullying.
5	November 2019	Jul 2020	Nicole Bray - Director Kids Uni iC	Updated to reflect name changes to Kids Uni iC
6	September 2021	September 2023	K.Grose - Children’s Services Manager	Removed content relating to Guiding Behaviour and Inclusion and added this to these policies. Updated language and terminology Included research by Dr Stuart Shanker around trauma