

GUIDING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Contents

1	NQS	2
2	National Regulations	2
3	EYLF	2
4	Aim	2
5	Implementation - Overarching commitments, beliefs and principles	3
6	Implementation – Prevention	5
7	Guiding behaviour and self-regulation in every day interactions	9
8	Supporting children when behaviour is escalating regularly	9
9	Supporting children who display extreme behaviours	11
10	Bullying	13
11	Biting	13
12	Building resilience to support all children when their peers are displaying challenging behaviours	14
13	Building Relationships and Developing Partnerships with Families	15
14	Sources and Resources	17
15	Review	18
16	Version Control Table	18

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
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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 become socially responsible and show respect for the environment.

This policy applies to Kids' Uni North, Kids' Uni South, Kids Uni CBD, Kids Uni iC.

Related Policies

Inclusion Policy (CHI-ADM-POL-003)

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

Relationships with Children Policy (CHI-ADM-POL-050)

4 Aim

We aim to use practices and strategies to guide children's behaviour and support children in building the foundational skills in order for them to begin to develop self-regulation. Our practices and strategies will be based on current research, they will include all stakeholders and support children to feel safe and secure.

5 Implementation - Overarching commitments, beliefs and principles

- 5.1 Our responses to children's behaviour are drawn from evidence-based practice and we understand the importance of remaining current in our knowledge and skills in this area.
- 5.2 We understand that when educators create high quality social and physical environments that it helps to prevent children's behaviour from escalating in the first instance.
- 5.3 When we observe challenging behaviour in children we will view this as an opportunity to reflect on ourselves as educators, our teaching strategies, our relationships and the environments that we are offering.
- 5.4 We will use our knowledge of Circle of Security© to identify where children sit on the Circle and adjust our practices to respond to their needs on the Circle. We understand it is a important to support exploration on top of the circle to support co regulation and self-regulation.
- 5.5 We will view behaviour as communication. We will ask ourselves "What is this child telling us? What do they need"? We will identify the function of the behaviour.
- 5.6 We will use our professional knowledge and experience, for example, our knowledge of child development, to differentiate our approach in each situation with each individual child.
- 5.7 We acknowledge Brene Brown and Dan Siegel's work around empathy, and will use empathy to be present with children when they are experiencing overwhelming emotions they cannot control. Once a child is calm we will acknowledge these feelings for children to show them that we are trying to understand their feelings.
- 5.8 We understand the basic principles of the neuroscience outlined by Dr Stuart Shanker and Dr Bruce Perry. This understanding will influence the way that we support children's behaviour. Importantly, we will remember that teaching cannot occur until a child is calm. Calming a child is always the priority when behaviours have become concerning.
- 5.9 In relation to children on the Autism spectrum, the Early Start Denver Model (ESDM) will guide our practice by identifying goals and objectives for the child and employing the teaching strategies.
- 5.10 Our educators will guide all children's behaviour in ways that are focused on preserving and promoting children's self-esteem. Through co-regulation we will support children to develop confidence and skills to work towards self-regulation of their behaviour.
- 5.11 We acknowledge socio-cultural theory in our approach to working with all children and in particular, children who need additional support. We will work with families, support agencies and significant others in each child's life to establish understanding, consistency and common goals for each child.
- 5.12 Our responses and interactions with children will align with the practices and principles outlined in the *Early Years Learning Framework* that we know to be best practice. We will use this framework in our approach to engage children who need support to self-regulate, including as a model to build rapport and create rich and meaningful interactions.
- 5.13 We acknowledge that young children who experience trauma are at particular risk because their rapidly developing brains are very vulnerable. Early childhood trauma has been associated with reduced size of the brain cortex. This area is responsible for many complex functions including memory, attention, perceptual awareness, thinking,

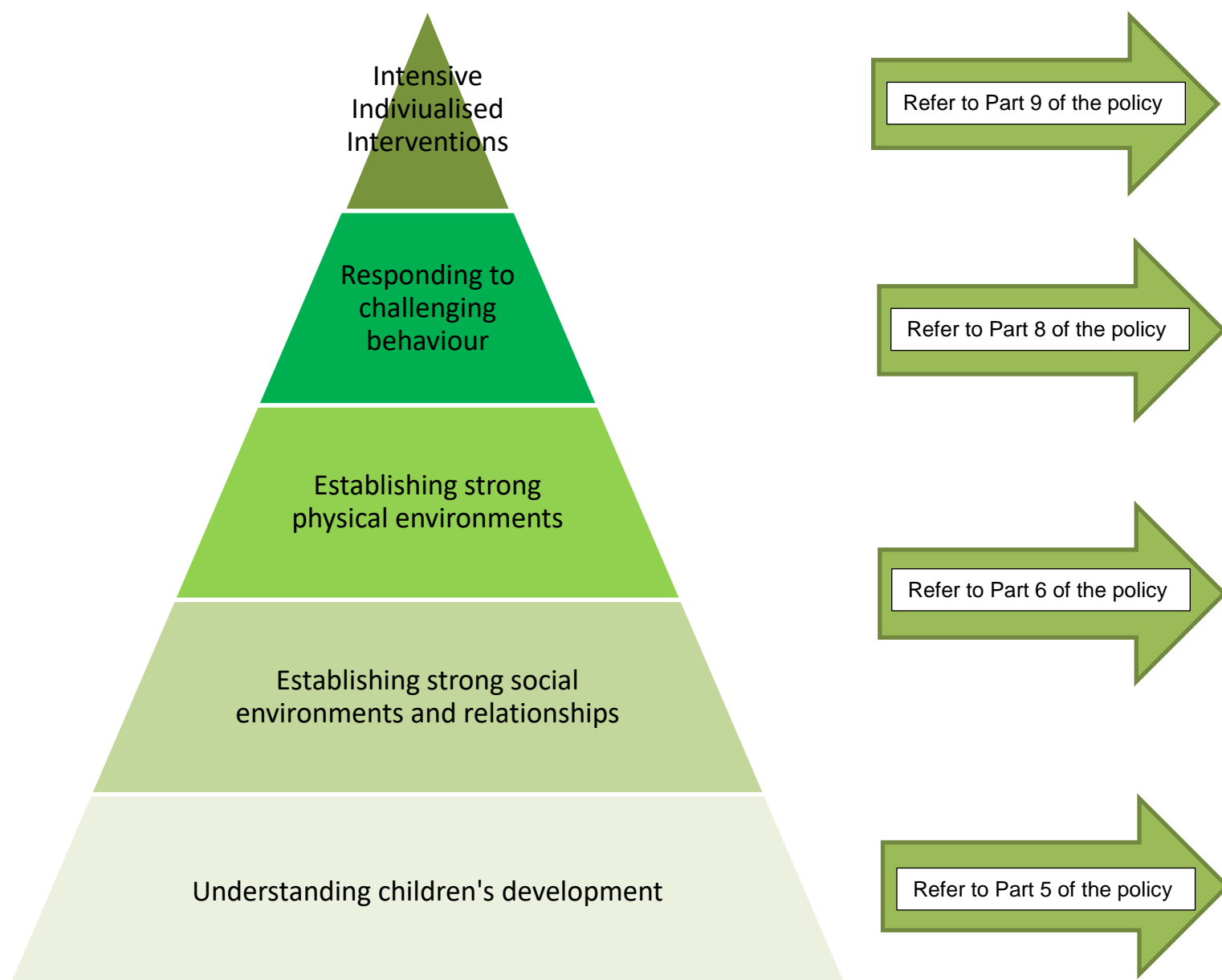
language, and consciousness. These changes may affect the ability to regulate emotions, and the child may become more fearful and may not feel as safe or as secure.

5.14 Based on the above, our approach is always to:

- 1) Regulate – calm the child
- 2) Relate – connect first
- 3) Reason – and then teach

These approaches will be outlined below in more detail in this policy.

5.15 The following model encapsulates our approach to guiding behaviour. When we get the foundational elements right, that is, understanding child development and creating strong social and physical environments, children will display less challenging and extreme behaviours.



Adapted from: Fox, L., Dunlap, G., Hemmeter, M.L., Joseph, G.E., & Strain, P.S. (2003). The teaching pyramid: A model for supporting social competence and preventing challenging behaviour in young children. Young Children, July 2003, 48-5

6 Implementation – Prevention and proactive strategies

6.1 Our aim is always to prevent behaviour from escalating in the first place. We do this through the ongoing provision of high quality social and physical environments for children.

6.2 High quality social environments:

Any time that there is an interaction, we are creating a social environment.

Our high quality social environments will include:

- i. Educators being emotionally available to children, sitting at their level and engaging with them in play and conversation. This means that educators prioritise time with children first and foremost.
- ii. Educators understanding where children are sitting on the Circle of Security:
 - knowing which children need guidance to come in for support for educators
 - knowing which children need support to go out and explore their world.
- iii. Educators having a strong understanding of child development and not placing unrealistic expectations on children and their behaviour. Educators know, that just as children learn to walk, talk and develop cognitive concepts at different ages, social skills will also develop at different ages for children. Some children will need more support in this area than others.
- iv. Educators making strong attachment a priority. We know that children will not feel safe and secure until they have developed an attachment with educators. The work of neo-scientists and Psychiatrists such as Dr Stuart Shanker, Dr Bruce Percy and Dr Dan Siegel tell us that children cannot learn until they feel safe, secure and calm. Therefore, this is our first priority.
- v. Educators knowing children and their families well. This will start with orientation meetings and continue to develop over time. By knowing individual children well Educators can identify which children need support and when for example support to enter play, or support to take turns. Educators will know triggers for behaviour for individual children and be able to pre-empt these.
- vi. Educators being confident to 'take charge' in moments when children need adults to be stronger and wiser (*language adapted from Circle of Security model*). This means that there are times when adults need to set boundaries for children. For example:
 - around routines, which are critical for children to feel safe and secure.
 - to keep children safe
 - to avoid behaviour escalating
- vii. Predictable and consistent routines, educators and expectations.
 - environments will remain consistent and changes will occur in consultation with children.
 - staffing rosters will be developed with a priority around consistency for children.
 - educators will meet regularly and have written plans in place when needed to ensure that our approaches to working with each individual child are consistent.

- our expectations of children are underpinned by the developmental perspective. This means that our expectations of each child may vary depending on their developmental level.
- ix. Educators understanding that behaviour is a form of communication. When children shout, push, run away, or display other forms of challenging behaviour, they are trying to communicate. The two main functions of behaviour are to communicate a need to seek something, or a need to avoid something.
- x. Explicit, play based teaching, both spontaneous and intentional about emotions and emotional responses.
 - teaching children to recognise and label emotions.
 - using social stories to explore emotions and managing big emotions.
 - talking with children, in a calm moment, about appropriate ways to recognise and express frustration or anger.
- xi. Educators being engaged in play with children so that these moments are used to teach children how to play and to model social skills and play skills which will ultimately prevent challenging behaviour.
- xii. Considered staffing arrangements, such as one floating educator who guides children back into the 'hands' of educators who are emotionally available at the children's level and engaged in play.

Children's voices:

Educator: "What can we do for children who need help with big feelings?"

Lily: "Help them by being funny and making them laugh".

6.3 High quality physical environments

We acknowledge that:

- The environment will act as another important Educator, a 'third teacher' in our programs.
- Investment into the physical environment is a key strategy for minimising challenging behaviours.
- Our educators need to be engaged in play in our environments to model appropriate use of the environment.

Our high quality physical environments will include:

- i. Spaces that create a sense of belonging, security and safety, where the children's voices, and children and their family's experiences, work and cultures are evident.

In practice this might look like:

- *Photos of children and their family on display or in an album easily accessible to children.*
- *Learning stations responding to, and extending on, children's particular interests*
- *Welcoming spaces fostering interactions between children, between children and adults and between adults. Adult and child sized bench seats outside, child sized armchairs, tables clearly set up for 2 or 4 or 6 children.*
- *Smaller spaces for privacy or interaction with just one other child. Tents, cosy coves, cubbies, nooks, soft toys and furnishings. Comfortable places to play in. (Note that supervision must be maintained at all times).*
- *Resources and experiences are/can be adapted to meet the developmental levels and inclusion of all children*
- *Thoughtful objects, items or pictures reflecting the local community and cultures within it.*
- *Children's work is on display in an uncluttered and aesthetically pleasing way. Children are involved in the decision making process of whose work is on display.*

- ii. Resources providing rich, interesting and diverse opportunities for exploration, experimentation, play based learning, problem solving, creativity, collaboration and social engagement

In practice this might look like:

- *Adequate quantities of particular resources – preventing frustration over turn taking and enabling shared learning experiences*
- *Quality resources that are well maintained and ready to be used e.g. no missing puzzle pieces, no ripped books, sharpened pencils, balls pumped up etc.*
- *Well-resourced learning stations exploring particular subject matter and offering opportunities for intentional teaching.*
- *Open ended materials allowing for use in multiple ways. Just a few examples are paper, loose parts, blocks, boxes and natural items such as pods, cones, shells, flowers, leaves, sand, water.*
- *Developmentally appropriate resources that are to a large extent, in line with the children's age or stage of development encouraging competence and a sense of self worth.*
- *A variety of resources enabling children to express themselves in many different ways. For example through creative arts, construction, movement, technology, conversation etc.*
- *An environment that changes in response to the children and their interests, it will be evolving with resources added or removed based on the educators observations and analysis of learning.*

- iii. Spaces that communicate and send messages to children around the expectations for use.

In practice this might look like:

- *Well-defined learning spaces and learning stations that are well organised and planned encouraging children to behave in a particular way.*
- *Four chairs at a table – this tell children that four people in this space is enough.*
- *Wide open areas offering the opportunity for big movements of running, jumping, leaping etc. eg. A basket of balls here says throw, roll, kick!*

- iv. Spaces and resources that are safe, clean, well maintained, organised and presented in aesthetically pleasing ways.

In practice this might looks like:

- *A system for allowing Educators time to re-set, clean and sanitise, repair replace or discard resources.*
 - *Small groups of Educators and children working together on resetting and organising spaces.*
 - *Educators discussing among themselves and with children – what do we think makes for a beautiful place to be?*
- v. Spaces, time and resources that offer access to natural materials and environments, light and fresh air. Research demonstrates that access to the outdoors and to nature increases children's sense of well-being, a key strategy for reducing challenging behaviour.

In practice this might look like:

- *Outdoor and indoor time are equally valued in the daily schedule.*
 - *Outdoor and indoor environments equally support all aspects of children's learning.*
 - *Natural resources are incorporated into the provisions for learning. Gardens, plants, trees, sand, mud and water for example. This fosters an appreciation for the natural environment.*
- vi. A balance of active, passive and sensory experiences are on offer in both the indoor and outdoor environments.

In practice this might look like:

- *Spaces for large muscle movement, exercise and expression*
- *Developmentally appropriate gross motor equipment offering a balance of mastery (I can do this!) and challenge. A complex obstacle course incorporating up, down, under, over, through and around.*
- *Some open space within the indoor environment with large cushions to roll and crash.*
- *Well resourced learning stations reflecting children's interests in both the indoor and outdoor environments.*
- *Educators adding and subtracting sensory input from the environment to support children's regulation and arousal levels (eg. Weighted items, swings, pillows, lycra, trampolines).*

Children's voices:

Nathan: "I like it when you talk to me. Just about any old things, funny things, super hero things. Or maybe a hug when I am sad. When I am angry, um, just give me some space".

7 Guiding behaviour and self-regulation in every day interactions

Every moment is a teaching and learning moment for children and educators. The development of self-regulation, emotional control and social skills is an important part of Early Childhood Education and many moments will occur throughout the day that will provide opportunities for teaching and learning in these areas.

All children will, at some time, have difficulty with self-regulation, they may throw equipment, cry, yell, lash out or make hurtful comments to peers or educators. In these moments educators will:

- Address safety first if needed - remove the child from the situation if they are causing harm to themselves or others.
- move close to the child, say 'not safe'
- move other children away from the situation if needed

a) Regulate / Calm

- Take a 'safety' breath – calm yourself first. Reduce your own level of arousal.
- Begin by calming the child in the first instance.
- Use minimal to no words in this moment, the child cannot process receptive language when they are in a heightened state.
- Different strategies may be needed to calm individual children in different circumstances
Use your tool box (Appendix 1)



b) Relate

- Wait for a cue that the child is ready to relate to you eg. Eye contact, their body relaxing into yours, the child initiating conversation.
- Relate to the child – acknowledge their emotions, label them.
- Part of relating is engaging in something together.
- Approach the child and the situation with a sense of empathy and understanding.

c) Reason

- This is the time for the teaching moment.
- Discuss what happened, work through strategies that could be implemented next time eg. Verbal communication with peers, seeking support from an educator.

8 Supporting children when behaviour is escalating regularly

When educators are observing that a child's behaviour is escalating regularly it is viewed as an opportunity to reflect on our practices and the child's responses.

a) Address safety first if needed

- remove the child from the situation if they are causing harm to themselves or others.
- move close to the child, say "Not safe".
- move other children away from the situation if needed



b) Regulate / Calm

- Take a 'safety' breath – calm yourself first. Reduce your own level of arousal.
- Begin by calming the child in the first instance.
- Use minimal to no words in this moment, a child cannot process receptive language when they are in a heightened state.
- Different strategies may be needed to calm individual children in different circumstances

c) Relate

- Wait for a cue that the child is ready to relate to you eg. Eye contact, their body relaxing into yours, the child initiating conversation.
- Relate to the child – acknowledge their emotions, label them.
- Part of relating is engaging in something together
- Approach the child with a sense of empathy and understanding.

d) Reason

- This is the time for the teaching moment.
- Discuss what happened, work through strategies that could be implemented next time eg. Verbal communication with peers, seeking support from an educator.

e) Look further into the reason for the behaviour:

- Every behaviour has a function – either to avoid something or to seek/ gain something.
- Analysing behaviours enables us to develop theories about what the function of the behaviour is, what the child is trying to achieve
- When we understand the function of the behaviour we can teach a replacement behaviour, a new skill to achieve the purpose in an effective and more appropriate way.

Begin with gathering data and information related to the circumstances around, and of, the behaviour.

An Antecedent, Behaviour, Consequence (ABC) chart enables patterns to be identified.
(Appendix 3)

Antecedent – What happened just before the behaviour? Was there a change, a trigger, a potential provocation? This can include physical or social cues, sensory information or demands and expectations building up over time.

Behaviour – What, exactly, did the child do? What was the action you observed?

Consequence – What happened after the behaviour? How did the child respond? How did the Educators respond?

Function - With these observations ask: 'What is the goal of this behaviour?' 'What is the child trying to avoid or seek?'

Replacement – What could the child do instead? Is it a developmentally appropriate strategy?

There are other data gathering charts that are helpful in determining patterns of behaviour:

- A behaviour frequency chart, noting the times of the day a challenging behaviour is occurring will identify patterns across the day. (Appendix 4)
 - An arousal level chart – identifying low, medium (optimum) or high arousal levels across the day's activities is also helpful. (Appendix 5)
- f) Bring stakeholders together
- At this time it is important to start conversations with all stakeholders
 - A room meeting with the Director needs to take place
 - An ongoing conversation with the child's family should also be taking place each time the child is in the service. This could also be a communication book, or Kinderloop conversations.
 - If there are other professionals working with this child, they should also be included in your decisions and strategies to provide consistency for the child.
- g) An Individual Behaviour Support Plan (IBSP) may be beneficial at this stage (refer to Appendix 6)

9 Supporting children who display extreme behaviours

Individual Support Plans will be created for any child who displays extreme behaviours. That is, where a child regularly has difficulty with self-regulation, and / or they are causing harm to themselves or others.

a) Address safety first if needed

- remove the child from the situation if they are causing harm to themselves or others.
- move close to the child, say 'Stop' and/or 'Not safe'
- move other children away from the situation if needed

b) Regulate / Calm

- Take a 'safety' breath – calm yourself first. Reduce your own level of arousal.
- Begin by calming the child in the first instance.
- Use minimal to no words in this moment, a child cannot process receptive language when they are in a heightened state.
- Different strategies may be needed to calm individual children in different circumstances

c) Relate

- Wait for a cue that the child is ready to relate to you eg. Eye contact, their body relaxing into yours, the child initiating conversation.
- Relate to the child – acknowledge their emotions, label them.
- Part of relating is engaging in something together
- Approach the child with a sense of empathy and understanding.

d) Reason

- This is the time for the teaching moment.
- Discuss what happened, work through strategies that could be implemented next time eg. Verbal communication with peers, seeking support from an educator.



- e) An Individual Behaviour Support Plan (IBSP) is compulsory at this stage (refer to Appendix 6). The intention of this plan is to bring all stakeholders together to ensure a clear and consistent approach for the child. Strategies for the plan will be drawn from this policy – above in 8(e).
- f) A Behaviour Emergency Action Plan may be needed at this stage if the child is at risk of harming themselves or others. The intention of this plan is to document how we will physically move a child or move other children to safety if needed. It is about keeping all children and educators safe when a child is displaying extreme behaviour (refer to Appendix 7).
- g) The Children's Services Manager and the Inclusion Support Teacher must be notified at this point if they have not already been involved in the conversations.
- h) Self-care for educators increases at this stage. The Director will set up a regular debrief for educators, this could be in the form of online or face to face meetings.
- i) The team will be required to meet weekly and to bring stakeholders into this meeting regularly as required.
- j) The service may need to seek external support from a behaviour support practitioner or therapist. The cost of this measure may need to be covered by the child's family.
- k) It is always our approach to be inclusive of all children, including children who are still learning how to regulate their behaviour. There may be extreme situations where our environment is not suited to a child and / or we are not able to keep a child, or other children, safe. In this instance we may need to consider changes to a child's attendance, or terminating the child's enrolment. The UOW Pulse CEO must be informed if this action is being considered.

While we recognise that in this instance every child, family and situation will be unique, the following actions will be considered:

- Seeking referral pathways, including consultation with the Department of Education, to access care arrangements that are more suited to the child.
- Attempting to link the child and family to support services that will assist the child to transition into new care arrangements and offer long term intervention.
- There will be consideration of the best interests of the child and risk to the child. We will follow the procedures in our Child Well Being Policy to make necessary reports as mandatory reporters if we believe that the child is at risk, or there are risk factors for the child that are contributing to the behaviour

Children's voices:

Orlando: "Be kind. Help and just make me feel better".

Educator: "What can make you feel better?"

Orlando: "Just a hug sometimes, or going to my secret hideout".

10 Bullying

Bullying is defined by the *Australian National Centre Against Bullying* as "an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm".

Bullying is not:

- single episodes of social rejection or dislike
- single episode acts of nastiness or spite
- random acts of aggression or intimidation
- mutual arguments, disagreements or fights.

While these behaviours still require an intentional response from educators, they do not constitute bullying and they will be responded to in line our Relationships with Children policy and / or the strategies outlined above in this policy.

If it is determined that bullying is occurring in our service, we will refer to sections 8 and 9 of this policy.

11 Biting

11.1 Educators recognise that at times, some children, for a variety of reasons, attempt to bite other children. Biting is quite a common among young children. Biting occurs for various reasons with children of all ages and circumstances, there would commonly be more than one trigger for this behaviour.

Some reasons a child may bite are:

- i. *Infants* – Experimental, to meet sensory needs, teething, feeling unsafe or insecure, over stimulation
- ii. *Toddlers* – Frustration, fatigue, communicating a need for connection, confined spaces, inability to express themselves using language, feeling unsafe or insecure, over stimulation, attempting to enter play
- iii. *Older Children* – Frustration, inability to express themselves using language, feeling unsafe or insecure, seeking connection from an educator or peer, over stimulation, attempting to enter play

11.2 If biting occurs educators will follow this policy and respond in line with the strategies listed

in sections 7, 8 and 9. This will include observing and analysing and responding to the behaviour, and engaging in clear communication with families.

12 Building resilience to support all children when their peers are displaying challenging behaviours

When young children have experienced challenging behaviours, either as the target of them, witnessing them or by using them inappropriately to communicate their needs, they are likely to have experienced stress.

Resilience can be defined as: “the speed at which you recover after an adverse event or period of adversity”. Children with more resilience are better able to manage stress, reducing the risk of other conditions such as anxiety and depression. Resilience is necessary for coping with life’s inevitable obstacles and one of the key ingredients to success.

While research into resilience continues, it is established that resilience:

- Is something that can change over time
- Is something that everyone can learn
- Develops through a process of interactions between temperament (character, personality) of the individual and environmental factors such as family relationship or social demographics, supportive adults
- Includes skills such as coping skills, positive thinking and self-confidence.

The Early Years Learning Framework discusses resilience:

‘Wellbeing is correlated with resilience, providing children with the capacity to cope with day-to day stress and challenges. The readiness to persevere when faced with unfamiliar and challenging learning situations creates the opportunity for success and achievement’. pg 33

ECEC settings that provide positive encouragement and positive relationships build resilience in young children. Our teaching can focus on:

- Developing prosocial skills (behaviours with intent to benefit others) such as helping, sharing and cooperating
- Developing empathy – the ability to see something from another person’s perspective
- Teaching/learning positive coping and problem solving skills
- Learning self regulation skills
- Developing a sense of agency, or a feeling of control, over actions and their consequences
- Learning to reflect and think about actions and behaviour.

In practice this might look like:

- *Letting children experience their emotions – acknowledge how they, and others, are feeling and help them put words to feelings. ‘Sad’, ‘I can see you’re feeling sad/angry/frustrated’. ‘That’s big smile, he’s feeling happy’.*
- *Listening attentively when children speak about what worries them*
- *Setting up opportunities for children to participate in healthy risk-taking*
- *Suggesting helpful, positive self-talk, ‘growth mindset’. For example: ‘it might be hard but I will be able to do it’, ‘I didn’t give up, I kept trying and I did it’, ‘This is tricky – it’s so good that you are trying’,*
- *Providing opportunities for positive, successful experiences.*

- *Using role-plays or puppets to model and practice how to handle difficult situations.*
- *'Think aloud' teaching – talking through the process of identifying the problem and exploring solutions*
- *Reading stories with characters who are having a difficult time, ask children how they would feel if they were experiencing the same things.*
- *Include mindfulness, breathing activities or other relaxation methods into the routine of the day. E.g. Three breaths in and slowly out at the beginning of story time*

Children's Voices:

Eva: "When I feel sad and angry, make me feel better. Hugs are best".

13 Building Relationships and Developing Partnerships with Families

Recognising and respecting the central role of families in children's lives is an important underlying value that Educators need to hold in developing non-judgemental, collaborative respectful and supportive relationships with families and communities. These values are also the guiding principles for the National Quality Standards (Quality Area 6).

Because children benefit when the significant people in their lives work together, finding the best way to communicate with each family opens the way towards developing partnerships with the common goal of the best care, development and education for individual children.

For the development of high quality relationships and partnerships with families Educators will:

- Follow the Kids Uni Orientation policy for strategies to support children and families during periods of change and transition.
- Create welcoming, belonging and inclusive settings that encourage families to contribute to the learning environment. Some adult chairs or outdoor benches can help along with a welcoming smile and acknowledgement of both child and adult.
- Understand that first impressions matter and that interacting in a collaborative style from the beginning, and in a consistent way is important
- Develop and use a range of communication skills to share information - both verbal (face to face and by phone) and non-verbal, (email, kinderloop, a communication book) to share information. Different styles will work for different families.
- Understand empathy – the ability to see something from the perspective of another.
- Understand respectful interactions - be as willing to listen as you are to speak

- Develop skills of active listening where you make a conscious effort to hear not only the words that another person is saying but, more importantly, the complete message being communicated. Consider that 'we hear to listen' and not always 'hear to respond'.
- Ask families for their perspective and understandings of their child and for their input into your growing understanding of what the child is like at home.
- Share the child's positive, successful and fun experiences with families regularly. If you need to have a more difficult conversation at some stage you will have already established a positive image of the child with the child
- If there are struggles and challenges with behaviour offer solutions and share what's working for you and the team. Delivering a message of just the challenges with no solutions, ideas, suggestions or a plan for a way forward does not help the child or the family. Be purposeful and deliberate when sharing information. Consider: Am I sharing this because I had a hard day with their child or because I want to work together to support the child?
- Understand that consensus with all families is not always possible and be open to compromise, respect and diverse ideas.
- Adhere to the Early Childhood Code of Ethics and use this framework to guide decision making
- Learn about children's family background, cultural needs and other factors that impact on the home environment
- Engage in professional learning about developing relationships and partnerships with families to develop a clear philosophy statement as these relationships underscore the values of the service.

Having difficult conversations with families

When you are noticing a change in a child's behaviour, or if you are concerned they are not meeting developmental milestones it is important to talk this through with families.

First:

- Source observations from the other team members, have they noticed a change or are they wondering about development?
- Think through the questions and conversation you will have with the family – some planning is essential to ensure we are clear in our intent and that we have considered how to make the family comfortable first.
- Consult with the Centre Director for support and planning.
- Focus on what you actually see and hear of the child's behaviours, the observable actions, rather than what you think or feel about it
- Consider frequency of the concerning behaviour– How often is it happening? Use the behaviour analysing tools in this policy to guide you.
- Think about how you will start the conversation – one of the best ways is asking the family to tell you what their child is like at home or by sharing a concern you've observed. 'We've noticed, have you noticed this too or do you have any concerns?'

- Consider family personality and communication style – think about how you will approach individual families.
- Assure families you are always open to further discussions.

It is essential that these are professional and supportive conversations. Educators will not complain to families about their child's behaviour, or make judgemental comments, but rather take an approach of supporting families to get the best outcomes for their child.

14 Sources, Resources and Acknowledgements

National Quality Standard

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Early Years Learning Framework

KU Children's Services (2013). Guiding Children's Behaviour: Promoting relationships and responding positively to challenging behaviour (3rd Edition).

National Centre Against Bullying

Early Start Denver Model (2010) Sally Rogers and Geraldine Dawson

Building Resilience in Early Childhood <https://healthyfamilies.beyondblue.org.au/healthy-homes/building-resilience>

Relationships with Families

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/202101/BuildStrongPartnershipsWithFamilies.PDF>

Circle of Security Introduction Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1wpz8m0BFM8>

Early Start Denver Model Introduction Video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5m_cJQQVieU

The Mehrit Centre – Dr Stuart Shanker Self Regulation <https://self-reg.ca/>

BeYou – Preparing for Difficult Conversations with Families <https://beyou.edu.au/resources/news/preparing-for-difficult-conversations-with-families>

Australian Childhood Foundation <https://professionals.childhood.org.au/resources/>

Special acknowledgement of Lily, Orlando, Nathan and Eva, children enrolled in our services, for their insight and contribution to our policy.

15 Review

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

16 Version Control Table

Version Control	Date Released	Next Review	Approved By	Amendment
1	Aug 2021	August 2023	K.Grose – Children's Services Manager Sally Wilson, Inclusion Support Teacher	New policy – previously included in Relationships with Children Policy
2	August 2023	August 2025	K.Grose,- Head of Early Education. K.Norman – Inclusion Support Teacher	Reviewed with no change

Appendix 1 - What is in our toolbox and when do we use each tool? *(What strategies could we use to help a child to regulate?)*

Before we can decide which strategy might be suitable, we need to understand where the child is sitting with regard to their regulation. This can be observed in the child's body language, tone of voice, speed of play, interactions and level of engagement.

The Child

The Educator's Response

I cannot control my emotional and physical responses at this time.
I am anxious, upset or angry and I need your help.

- Using mirror neurons and co-regulating.
- Offering a safe space
- 4 step approach
- 'Time In' with an educator

My behaviour is escalating.
I am starting to feel agitated or frustrated.

- Using mirror neurons and co-regulating
- Moving to a quiet space
- Offering a sensory experience
- Offering two choices
- Redirection
- Offering time in with an educator
- Use of humour

I am calm and happy

- This is when preventative strategies should be implemented *(Part 6 of this policy)*.
- This is the time to teach and role model social and play skills. Child is ready to learn, play and engage.

Use of humour:

- “Oh oh! Let’s try that again!”
- “Oooooops! Did you just forget to ... ask for a turn? Use a kind voice?”
- “Whoops – it goes in the basket not on the floor!”

Offering ‘Time In’ with an Educator (being close):

- “Need a break? Come on let’s read a book together.” “Let’s do a painting with” “Let’s go and see what ... (Educator) is doing”.
- Bring the child in close, offer a hug.
- When a child’s behaviour has escalated, time in with an educator might not include using words, just being present to support and keep the child safe.

Redirection to another experience with educator support:

- “I’ll help you with a puzzle”.
- Educator engaging child in play by being fun and enticing.

Offering two choices: It can be helpful for some children if you show them the choices

- “Would you like to paint or climb?”
- “Would you like to read a book or build with the lego?”
- “Playdough or drawing?”

Offering a sensory experience:

- Pull a resistance band,
- squishing playdough,
- playing catch with a large ball
- Push down the walls (push against the wall)
- Step up and jump down

Offering the space to be on their own:

- Quiet book space
- Tent with cushions and basket of books or duplo

Mirror Neurons and co-regulating:

- Breathing in and out together eg 5 star breathing
- Drink some water together
- Use of quiet calm voice, gentle tone and slow intentional body language

Offering a safe space – perhaps to run or just to calm down safely away from other children

- “I will help you to move somewhere safe.”
- “Let’s go to your cubby”
- “Let’s go outside so that you can run / be safe”

4 Step Approach – (refer to Appendix 2)

Appendix 2 - What is the 4 step approach?

This is an approach that is intended to reduce sensory input and offer a 'way back' for a child who is not able to regulate.

If behaviour has escalated and no one is at risk of being hurt this approach could be appropriate

Although we are removing our interaction with the child it's important to stay close, so the child knows you are there for them.

This strategy may not work for all children in all situations, it is important to get to know what will be of interest to the child and to have more than one item ready to use. This will work best when you have moved the child to a quiet space away from other children.

The 4 – Step Approach:

- Do not make eye contact
- Do not engage verbally
- Engage playfully with something you know is of great interest to the child. You may need to try more than one activity. Use very few, if any, words.
- When the child comes to join you, reinforce this action by welcoming them into play.

Appendix 3 – Observing and reflecting on behaviour

Antecedent, Behaviour, Consequence (ABC) chart

Sample

Date & Time	Antecedent What happened before the behaviour?	Behaviour What behaviour did you observe?	Consequence What happened after the behaviour? What did the child do? What did the Educator do?	Function What was the child trying to achieve? Seek something? Avoid something?	Replacement Behaviour What can we teach this child to do instead? What are they capable of doing and learning?
23/2/21 11:15am	Example 1: Child noticed the vehicle another child was playing with	Child reached to grab the toy pushing another child over in the process	Child with toy protested loudly, Educator intervened to work through resolution	Seeking an immediate turn with the vehicle	Wait for a turn (Educators will reflect on environment e.g. is there more than one of the objects?)
23/2/21 2:10 pm	Example 2: Child was approached by Educator and requested to pack away the dinosaurs	Child yelled loudly and ran across the room	Educator followed and requested again for help with pack away	Avoiding finishing playing with dinosaurs or avoiding pack away task	Finish play and pack away (Educators will reflect on support strategies e.g. forewarning of end, use of timer etc)

Antecedent, Behaviour, Consequence (ABC) chart template

Date and Time	Antecedent What happened before the behaviour?	Behaviour What Behaviour did you observe?	Consequence What happened after the behaviour? What did the child do? What did the Educator do?	Function What was the child trying to achieve? Seek something? Avoid something?	Replacement Behaviour What can we teach this child to do instead? What are they capable of doing and learning?

Appendix 4 - Behaviour Frequency Chart

Child's Initial _____

Dates: Start _____ Finish _____

Attendance Days: M T W T F

Use Codes e.g. B = Bite, H = Hit or Tally Marks for one behaviour only.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Comments
8-8:30											
8:30-9											
9-9:30											
9:30-10											
10-10:30											
10:30-11											
11-11:30											
11:30-12											
12-12:30											
12:30-1											
1-1:30											
1:30-2											
2-2:30											
2:30-3											
3-3:30											
3:30-4											
4-4:30											
4:30-5											
5-5:30											
5:30-6											

Appendix 5 – Arousal level chart templates

Date:	Bite	Verbal Aggression (screams, profanity)	Other Physical Aggression (hit, scratch)	Resource Destruction
Arrive				
Indoor / Outdoor play				
Toilet + wash hands				
Morning tea				
Indoor / outdoor play				
Acknowledgement of country				
Tidy yard				
Group time				
Toilet + wash hands				
Lunch				
Rest time				
iPad				
Table activities				
Toilet + wash hands				
Afternoon tea				
Indoor / outdoor play				
Home				

Tracking: Use a tally to record behaviour.

'0' for no behaviour 'X' for not documented

	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:
Arrive									
Indoor / Outdoor play									
Toilet + wash hands									
Morning tea									
Indoor / outdoor play									
Acknowledgement to country									
Tidy yard									
Group time									
Toilet + wash hands									
Lunch									
Rest time									
iPad									
Table activities									
Toilet + wash hands									
Afternoon tea									
Indoor / outdoor play									
Home									

Use a coloured mark to indicate

Green – calm, body moving moderately, voice is moderate, engaging in play

Yellow – escalating, body moving fast, voice is loud, defensive towards others

Red – heightened, body and voice out of control, displaying aggressive behaviour

Appendix 6 – Individual Behaviour Support Plan (IBSP)

Child's Name: _____ Date of Birth _____

Date Plan Generated: _____ Review Date: _____

Service name: _____

Contextual Information (e.g. Diagnosis, Family Situation, Therapies, History of Trauma)
When is the child most settled and engaged?
What are the child's interests and strengths?
What and when are the child's struggles? What frustrates the child?
Who are the child's preferred peers and educators?
Do you have information about the child's sense of self? Their beliefs about themselves, the world, and / or their relationships?
What are the behaviour concerns and what is the function of the behaviours <i>(use various observation and reflection tools provided in this policy appendix)</i>

Preventative Strategies: (Social environments, physical environments, staff arrangements, sensory opportunities)

Teaching Strategies: What skills have been identified as needing to be taught? How will I be intentional in teaching these?

Early warning signs: What might the child do that indicates the behaviours are likely to escalate? Consider the child's body responses. What can you see, hear and sense in the child at this time?

Interaction, Play and Connection Strategies – when I am calm

Samples:

- *Give me a good start to my day – connect with me as soon as I arrive. Engage with me for at least 10 mins to settle me in.*
- *Make my day predictable, give me warning about change or transition.*
- *Engage in play with me, follow my lead.*
- *Check in with me regularly when you cannot be directly with me.*
- *'Hand me over' to another educator when you leave the room – "Sally will be here to look you while I go to lunch".*
- *Use this time for teaching moments – conversations and intentional teaching to support me with my self-regulation, connection with peers and behaviour.*
- *Take time to set up environments so that they fully resourced - this will avoid you having to leave me to attend to other tasks when I need you.*
- *Ensure your expectations are based on your knowledge of my development. I might not be able to share or take turns yet. This is something that I am still learning.*
- *Use interactions during play to role model appropriate use of the environment, how to enter play, how to manage conflict.*
- *Transitions are tricky for me, try to offer a free flowing routine when you can.*
- *Use visual prompts to remind me of routines and expectations and to create predictability.*

Support and Preventative Strategies – when I show early warning signs

Regulate - Relate - Reason

Samples:

- *Move physically close to me so that I know you are there and available.*
- *Help me to co-regulate using mirror neurons – stay calm, slow and quiet.*
- *Move me to somewhere quieter with less children, noise, stimulus.*
- *Offer me two choices – things that you know I really like.*
- *Stay with me and engage in play, be fun and enticing so that I want to stay with you.*
- *Acknowledge the good things that I am doing at this time. “Oh you can balance the blocks!”*
- *Once I am calm, support me to re-enter play*

Intensive Individualised Intervention – when my behaviour has escalated

Regulate - Relate - Reason

Samples:

- *Help me to co-regulate using mirror neurons – stay calm, slow and quiet.*
- *Hold my hand and move to an area where I have space / and area where I can calm (eg. Outdoors to run, a ‘cubby to remove stimulus’, a sensory experience)*
- *Consider the 4 Step approach if the environment is suitable*
- *Work as a team – other educators to move other children away so that you can help me and you can keep everyone safe.*
- *Maintain consistent boundaries during this time – offer me two choices and follow through on these.*
- *Implement BEAP if behaviour continues to escalate.*
- *Stay with me and support me to re-enter play once I am calm.*

What resources and support do you need as an educator to implement this plan?

I acknowledge that I have read this plan and will support its implementation:

Parent Name and Signature:

Date:

Parent Name and Signature:

Date:

Educator Name and Signature:

Date:

Educator Name and Signature:

Date:

Educator Name and Signature:

Date:

Educator Name and Signature:

Date:

Educator Name and Signature:

Date:

Director Name and Signature:

Date:

Appendix 7 – Behaviour Emergency Action Plan (BEAP)

Service and Room:

Child's Name:

Child's Date of Birth:

Child Attendance Pattern:

BEAP commencement date:


BEAP review date:
(generally 2 weeks, not more than one month)




BEAP developed in consultation with the following contributors:

Rationale (Why is BEAP required?)

BEAP is to be implemented if the following behaviours are observed:

Implementation:

One Person Protective Intervention Hold	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage core muscles 2. Place child sideways on your lap 3. Place one arm around the child's back, securing the child's outside arm at his/her side 4. If necessary, hold both child's hands in their lap with your other hand 5. Maintain your own emotional balance, role model deep, slow breaths. When the child starts to come down provide emotional support by saying "I know you are upset. I am going to hold you until you feel better". 	

Two Person Protective Intervention Lift	
<p>1. Engage core muscles. Stand on either side of the child and grasp underneath their elbow using your inside hand.</p> <p>Position your outside hand underneath the child's thigh. Move into a half-lunge position with your outside leg forward.</p>	
<p>2. Keep your back straight and tuck your child to your chest.</p> <p>Grasp the other adult's wrist. One educator should lead the lift, verbalising the movements to be made and call 1, 2, 3 lift. Keep core muscles engaged.</p>	
<p>3. On the command lift, straighten your legs to complete the lift. Keep your back straight throughout the lift.</p> <p>Lead educator needs to verbalise steps to lower the child down. Educators must support the child to be lowered safely. Once child is on the ground, step back to avoid child striking out with feet or hands.</p>	

Consent:

I agree to the implementation of this BEAP at Kids Uni for my child

Child's Name:

DOB:

For the period from:

To:

Review Date:

Family

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Service

Children's Services Service Manager:

Signature:

Date:

I agree I have been trained in correct techniques to implementing the Two-Person Protective Intervention Lift and One Person Protective Intervention Hold. I will implement these techniques as required following this BEAP.

Director:

Signature:

Date:

Educator:

Signature:

Date:

Educator:

Signature:

Date:

Educator:

Signature:

Date:

Educator:

Signature:

Date:

Educator:

Signature:

Date:

Educator:

Signature:

Date:

Educator:

Signature:

Date:

Record of Implementing BEAP

Date	Time	Staff involved	Comments

[illegible]

Appendix 8 - Checklist of best practice when responding to challenging behaviour

Have We:

- Considered the behaviours and our expectations from a Developmental Perspective?
- Created a safe, positive, social and emotional environment?
- Considered the impact of the physical environment on children's behaviours?
- Communicated openly with the family to collaboratively understand and respond to the behaviours?
- Communicated as a team, endeavouring to understand the behaviours?
- Reflected on our responses to the behaviours – are the responses working or are they causing an escalation of behaviours?
- Reflected on how the behaviours are making us feel and determining how we need to feel to be helpful?
- Consulted with therapists who may be involved in supporting the child?
- Observed and reflected on the behaviours to determine the function of the behaviours?
- Determined what new skills the child needs to learn?
- Determined the teaching strategies to support the new skill development?
- Developed a behaviour support plan (IBSP) and communicated the plan to all Educators?
- Set a review date for the IBSP to determine effectiveness and make relevant changes and updates.