

Interactions and Relationships with Children

RATIONAL

A positive atmosphere and the wellbeing of children within an education and care setting is promoted through attentive care and quality interactions with children. Emotional development and social relationships are enhanced through thoughtful and sophisticated approaches to conversation, discussion and promotion of children's language and communication.

Children who experience relationships that are built on respect, fairness, cooperation and empathy are given the opportunity to develop these qualities themselves. When children have positive experiences of interactions they develop an understanding of themselves as significant and respected, and feel a sense of belonging.

KAZ Early Learning Centre staff, in their role as Early Childhood Educators, have the responsibility of modelling positive interpersonal skills whilst encouraging children to develop and gain the confidence and skills to explore their environment. It is the responsibility of staff to treat all children with respect and dignity allowing them to feel confident to explore their environment and become active learners within the service and wider community.

AIMS

For educators/staff to interact with children in a way that shows respect, and facilitates positive interpersonal skills amongst children.

For all interactions to promote a positive learning environment that encourages children's development.

Interactions with children will:

- promote a safe, secure and nurturing environment;
- be authentic and responsive;
- be based in fairness, acceptance and empathy with respect for culture, rights, community and the individual.

PROCEDURE

The Nominated Supervisor and Educational Leader shall:

1. Guide professional development and practice to promote interactions with children that are positive and respectful;
2. Establish practice guidelines that ensure interactions with children are given priority and those interactions are authentic, just and respect difference.

Educators and staff will:

1. Respond to children's communication in a just and consistent manner;

2. Respond sensitively to children's attempts to initiate interactions and conversations;
3. Initiate one to one interactions with children, during daily routines and conversation with each child;
4. Support children's efforts, assisting and encouraging as appropriate;
5. Support children's secure attachment through consistent and warm nurturing relationships;
6. Support children's expression of their thoughts and feelings;
7. Encourage children to express themselves and show an interest and participate in what the child is doing;
8. Encourage children to make choices and decisions;
9. Acknowledge children's complex relationships and sensitively intervene in ways that promote consideration and alternative perspectives and social inclusion. Guidance strategies should be reflective of this approach;
10. Acknowledge each child's uniqueness in positive ways;
11. Respect cultural differences in communication and consider alternative approaches to own.
12. Ensure that children's rights are respected and maintained at all times by treating all children with respect and dignity and encouraging children to do so.
13. Continually encourage children to express themselves appropriately and voice their opinions.
14. Provide activities that will encourage children's independence enabling them to become self-reliant and develop positive self esteem.
15. Use positive guidance techniques when guiding children's behaviour (refer to *Guidance of Child Behaviour Policy*).
16. Respect all children's family and cultural backgrounds and will be realistic in their expectations of children's behaviour, skills and development.

Children's Rights, Family and Cultural Values

Interactions within the setting are greatly enhanced when children's rights and family and cultural values are given due consideration and respect. Administrative procedures, initial conversations, documentation and ongoing communication with children and families are a reference point for interactions and a foundation for authentic and respectful communication.

Listening

Educators and staff must use listening as a foundation for interactions. Listening is based on observation and in leaving spaces in conversations and communication, suspending judgment and in giving full attention to children as they communicate. Truly attending to children's communication promotes a strong culture of listening.

Children and Families

A culture of respectful interaction is promoted when children's attempts to communicate are valued. Turn taking and regulating children's conversations promotes active engagement. Respectful communication with families generates greater confidence in interacting.

Reflection and Consideration

Time is dedicated to reflecting upon interactions within children. Reflections should consider how to spend extended periods engaged in interactions with children that comprise communication and listening.

Role Modelling

Educators model positive interactions when they:

- Show care, empathy and respect for children, educators and educators/staff and families;
- Learn and use effective communication strategies;

Remember - quality interactions increase children's knowledge and understanding of themselves, each other as unique individuals and develop the skills and understandings they need to interact positively with others.

Evaluation

Interactions between educators and children are genuine, positive and responsive and based on respect, fairness, acceptance, co-operation and empathy. This is evident in conversations, communication, pedagogy, and planning for children and families.

KAZ Early Learning Centre Related Policies and Procedures:

Guidance of Child Behaviour Policy
Education and Development Policy

Appendices:

N/A

Legislative Requirements:

Education and Care Services National Law 2010
Education and Care Services National Regulations

Sources:

Louise Porter: (2008) *Young Children's Behaviours- Practical Approaches for Caregivers and Teachers (3rd Edition)*
Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. DEEWR (2009)
www.education.gov.au

REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed annually. Review will be conducted by management, employees, parents/guardians and any interested parties.