



INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN POLICY

P4.0340.3

INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN POLICY

DIVISION: Sport, Community and Activation

BRANCH: Community Outcomes - Family Day Care

CATEGORY: 3

PART 1 – INTRODUCTION

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The *Education and Care Services National Regulations* require approved providers to ensure their Family Day Care (FDC) service has policies and procedures in place in relation to interactions with children.

1.2 Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included. 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, co-operation, 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.

2. OBJECTIVE

2.1 A positive atmosphere and the wellbeing of children within an education and care setting is promoted through attentive care and quality interactions with children.

3. SCOPE

3.1 This policy applies to:

- Camden Council FDC Service.
- Staff
- Educators
- Children enrolled in an FDC Service and their families
- Residents.

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1 **Approved Provider** means a person who holds a provider approval (*Education and Care Services National Law*). A provider approval authorises a person to apply for one or more education and care service approvals and is valid in all jurisdictions. The Approved Provider for the purposes of this policy is Camden Council.

- 4.2 **Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)** means the independent national authority that assists governments in administering the National Quality Framework including the provision of guidance, resources, and services to support the sector to improve outcomes for children.
- 4.3 **Co-ordination Unit** means the Camden Council FDC principal office and main faculty for running the Service from which Camden FDC employees work.
- 4.4 **Co-ordinator** means a member of the Co-ordination Unit employed by the Approved Provider to monitor and support the FDC educators registered with the service.
- 4.5 **Educator** means an individual suitably qualified and registered by Camden Council FDC to provide education and care and can refer to the FDC educator as the business owner, educator assistant or relief educator.
- 4.6 **Family Day Care (FDC)** means a type of education and care service that is run from the educator’s own residence or an approved venue for the purpose of educating and caring for small groups of children aged 0-12 years.
- 4.7 **FDC Service** means the FDC education and care business of each individual educator or reference to Camden Council FDC service.
- 4.8 **Nominated Supervisor** means a person appointed by the Approved Provider and who has given consent to be appointed to be in day to day charge of a service and must be contactable during the hour’s educators are providing education and care.
- 4.9 **Resident** means any person aged 18 years or over who resides, or intends to reside permanently, or temporarily resides for more than three weeks, at the educator’s FDC Residence.
- 4.10 **Staff** means employees of Camden Council FDC.
- 4.11 **Wellbeing** means a positive emotion that results from the satisfaction of basic needs, the need for tenderness and affection; security and clarity; social recognition; to feel competent; physical needs; and for meaning in life. It includes happiness and satisfaction, effective social functioning and the dispositions of optimism, openness, curiosity, and resilience.

PART 2 - POLICY STATEMENT

5. PRINCIPLES

- 5.1 Positive educator to child interactions are central to ensuring quality outcomes for children’s education and care. Interactions are based on fairness, acceptance, and empathy with respect for culture, rights, community, and the individual.
- 5.2 We will equip educators with the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them to interact positively with the children and promote relationships.
- 5.3 Our educational program encourages children’s self-expression, promotes self-reliance, maintains their dignity and rights, gives positive guidance, and recognises their culture, values, and abilities. We regularly reflect on and refine the program as needed in this regard.

6. CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Considerations for the rights of children, family, and cultural values:

6.1.1 Interactions within the FDC 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.

6.2 Considerations for listening:

6.2.1 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 judgement and in giving full attention to children as they communicate. Truly attending to children's communication promotes a strong culture of listening.

6.3 Considerations for children and families:

6.3.1 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.

6.4 Considerations for reflection and consideration:

6.4.1 Time is dedicated to reflecting upon interactions with children.

6.4.2 Reflections should consider how to spend extended periods engaged in interactions with children that comprise of communication and listening.

6.5 Considerations for role modelling:

6.5.1 Educators model positive interactions when they:

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

6.6 Considerations for supporting behaviour:

6.6.1 The service promotes a collaborative approach to guiding children's behaviour and encourages involvement between families, children, educators, Co-ordinator's and other professionals.

6.6.2 Educators will promote positive guidance techniques and provide an environment where children are helped to learn about their own rights and to develop a respect for the rights of others and skills to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

6.6.3 Educators respect individual children's needs and differences in age, ability and experience regarding issues surrounding behaviour.

6.6.4 Educators are happy to discuss individual family expectations with parents. There may be times when educators will need to negotiate strategies with parents to suit the needs of individual children.

6.6.5 Wherever possible, children and educators will negotiate and determine boundaries and form agreements in relation to expectations for how they treat each other and the service.

- Agreements will be reasonable considering the age, development, and individual characteristics of the children.
- Agreements will be consistently enforced and reflected on to evolve, along with children's developing skills and self-regulation competence.
- Children will be encouraged to understand the boundaries, agreements and expectations and build their skills to interact with each other within these.

6.6.6 It is the child's skill development in relation to their behaviour that is praised or addressed. Children are never shamed.

6.6.7 Educators acknowledge that they are there to support and teach skills that build children's self-control and regulation and always present a good example through positive role modelling, compassion and understanding.

6.7 Considerations for educators and staff:

6.7.1 In response to challenging behaviour, educators will:

- Recognise the situation as an opportunity to help the child develop skills, including their language and communication, attention and working memory, emotion, and self-regulation, cognitive flexibility, and social thinking skills.
- Recognise certain reactions as understandable behaviour, a reflection of communication and social development.
- Be responsive to children's strengths, interests, abilities.
- Provide opportunities to become self-reliant and develop self-esteem.
- Uphold children's dignity, rights, and agency.
- Provide positive behaviour support.
- Promote a safe, secure, and nurturing environment.
- Be authentic and responsive.
- Be fair, accepting, and empathetic with respect for cultural and linguistic rights.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Approved Provider

- Ensure that obligations under the *National Quality Framework* are met.
- Ensure that the service provides education and care to children in a way that:
 - Encourages the children to express themselves and their opinions.
 - Allows the children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem.
 - Maintains at all times the dignity and rights of each child.
 - Gives each child positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour.
 - Has regard to the family and cultural values, age, and physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child.
- Ensure that the service provides children with opportunities to interact and develop respectful relationships with each other and with educators.
- Ensure the service meets minimum educator and staff requirements, such as qualifications and educator to child ratios taking into account educators' own children.
- Ensure that educators are at least 18 years old, are suitably qualified, have adequate knowledge of education and care, and are 'fit and proper' persons.
- Ensure all educators and service staff have undertaken current child protection legislation training, including for the mandatory reporting requirements.
- Ensure that no child is subjected to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or inappropriate in the circumstances.
- Ensure all staff and educators establish and maintain relationships with children in a responsive and respectful manner to promote a sense of security and belonging.
- Ensure that interactions with children are positive, respectful, and unbiased.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators, staff, and students follow the *Interactions with Children* policy and procedures.
- Ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, coordinators, educators, staff, students, and families, and available for inspection.

- Notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will affect the fees and charges and/or significantly impact the service's education and care of children or the family's ability to utilise the service.

7.2 Nominated Supervisor

- Implement this policy and its related procedures.
- Devise methods to lead the development and implementation of quality practices across the service that ensure that the requirements of the *Education and Care National Regulations* are met.
- Support educators to promote quality practice approaches to interactions with children.
- Ensure minimum educator and staff requirements are met, such as qualifications and educator to child ratios including educators' own children.
- Ensure all educators and staff have undertaken current child protection legislation training, including for the mandatory reporting requirements.
- Ensure that no child is subjected to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances.

7.3 Co-ordination Unit Staff

- Implement this policy and procedures.
- Support educators to promote quality practice approaches to interactions with children.
- Ensure educators are up to date with child protection training.
- Support educators to guide children's behaviour in positive ways.
- Support and mentor educators in their planning and implementation of the educational program and individual learning plans for children.
- Role model positive interactions with children and educators and develop positive relationships.
- Ensure educators are aware of their obligation as mandatory reporters and support them in reporting child protection concerns.

7.4 Educators

- Contribute to the development of, and implement, quality practices that ensure that the requirements of the *Education and Care National Regulations* are met.
- Promote quality practice approaches to interactions with children.
- Be aware of current child protection legislation, including the mandatory reporting requirements and obligations.

- Monitor and maintain staff to child ratios to ensure adequate supervision of children.
- Support children in line with the *National Quality Standards* and *Quality Area 5 Relationships with Children Information Sheet*.

7.5 Families

- Reading and complying with this policy.
- Engage in open communication with educators about their child.
- Inform educators of events or incidents that may impact on their child's behaviour at the service (e.g. moving house, a new sibling).
- Inform educators of any concerns regarding their child's behaviour or the impact of other children's behaviour.
- Work collaboratively with educators and others to develop or review an individual behaviour guidance plan for their child, where appropriate.

8. INDUCTION AND ONGOING TRAINING

- 8.1 Induction and ongoing professional development will be implemented for all educators and FDC staff, focusing on this policy and related procedures.
- 8.2 Information will be shared with relief educators and educator assistants on induction and as relevant to the environments that they are working in, their shift responsibilities and the children in their care.

9. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

- 9.1 This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this policy every three years.
- 9.2 Families, educators, and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.
- 9.3 In accordance with Regulation 172 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

10. SOURCES AND RESOURCES

- [ACECQA Guide to the National Quality Framework](#)
- [ACECQA Inappropriate Discipline](#)
- [ACECQA Relationships with Children](#)
- [ACECQA Supporting children to regulate their own behaviour](#)
- [Australian Human Rights Commission](#)
- [UNICEF](#)

□ * * *

RELEVANT LEGISLATIVE INSTRUMENTS: *Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW)*
Education and Care Services National Regulations
National Quality Standard | Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)

RELATED POLICIES, PLANS AND PROCEDURES: Educator and child interactions procedure
Enrolment and orientation policy
Governance and management policy
Incident, injury, trauma, and illness policy
Providing a child safe environment policy
Supervision procedure
Supporting child to child interactions procedure

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR: Director Sport, Community and Activation

APPROVAL: General Manager through the Executive Leadership Group.

HISTORY:

Version	Approved by	Changes made	Date	EDMS Number
1			Feb 2012	
2			Sept 2019	
3	ELG	Major amendments. Name changed from Inclusion and interactions with children	19/05/2022	22/221242