



Respectful Relationships with Children Policy

Purpose:	The objective of this policy is to protect, support and sustain emotional and social wellbeing in children. It also aims to be compliant with the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority Guide to the National Quality Standard Quality Area 5 – Relationships with Children. It sets out the requirements for the respectful relationships and inclusion of all children.		
Scope:	Management, Children, Staff, Visitors and Families		
Status:	Approved	Supersedes: All previous <i>Respectful Relationships with Children</i> Policies	
Authorised by:	Dee Farquharson	Date of Authorisation: September 2021	
References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Act 1999 • Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) 2011 • Education and Care Services National Regulations • The Early Years Learning Framework • Quality Area 5 in the National Quality Standard (NQS): Relationships with Children (ACECQA, 2020) • Early Childhood Australia • Community Early Learning Australia • Australasian Journal of Early Childhood • RIE - Resources for Infant Educators • RIE – Short Video • Kids Matter • Magda Gerber Video 		
Review Date:	Annually	Next Review Date: September 2022	
Policy Owner:	AMEL Board		



RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships are the foundations for the construction of identity – “Who am I?” “How do I belong?” and “What is my influence?” (EYLF, DEEWR, 2009, p.20)

Within early learning services, many different relationships are negotiated with and between children, educators and families. The way in which these relationships are recognised and sustained, and the way in which they remain visible impacts on how children form their own identity, whether or not they feel safe and supported, and ultimately, their sense of belonging.

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) (DEEWR 2009) highlights educators’ relationships with children as central to supporting their learning. Principle 1 in the EYLF is about secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships.

Quality Area 5 in the National Quality Standard (NQS): Relationships with Children (ACECQA, 2020) focuses on two related areas:

- Educators developing and maintaining respectful and equitable relationships with each child (Standard 5.1) and;
- Educators supporting children to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships (5.2)

For these reasons and so many more, we aim to encourage and support educators and staff of their services to develop and maintain respectful relationships with children.

POLICY INTENTION

The River School Early Childhood Centre have a Neo Humanist approach towards caring for and educating children. We encourage each service to embrace the Restorative Conversation, Glasser’s Choices Theory and, Resources for Infant Educators (RIE) principles of Respect, Authenticity, Trust, Sensitive Observation, Child Involvement, Safe, Challenging and Predictable Environments, Uninterrupted Opportunities to Play and Explore and, Consistency.

We expect educators to display trust in each child to be an initiator, an explorer, and a self-learner.

IMPLEMENTATION

Relationships between educators and children have significant impacts on the learning that occurs in the early childhood education and care setting and on children’s future interactions with other people in different settings. When educators follow the techniques set out through our centre philosophy and other behavioural approaches as previously mentioned, their relationships with children become more about belonging and inclusiveness, which are essential elements in creating a positive sense of individual and community wellbeing.

Basic Principles Guiding Educators Interactions with Children

- **Respect** – Educators are expected to not only respect children but demonstrate respect every time they interact with them. Respecting a child means treating even the youngest infant as a unique human being, not as an object.
- **The Authentic child** – An authentic child is one who feels secure, autonomous, competent, and connected. When educators facilitate a child feeling secure, feeling appreciated, feeling that “somebody is deeply, truly interested in me”, just by the way they look at and listen to them, they influence that child’s whole personality; the way that child sees life.

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- **Trust in the child's competence** – Educators should have a basic trust in the child to be an initiator, to be an explorer eager to learn what they are ready for. Because of this trust, we provide the child with only enough help necessary to allow that child to enjoy the mastery of their own actions.
- **Sensitive Observation** – Our method, guided by respect for the child's competence, is observation. We observe carefully to understand their communications and needs. The more we observe, the more we understand and appreciate the enormous amount and speed of learning that happens in the early years. We become more humble, we teach less, and we provide an environment for learning instead.
- **Caregiving times: Involving the child** – During caregiving activities (nappy changing, feeding, bathing, dressing etc.), we encourage even the youngest child in our care to become an active participant rather than a passive recipient of the activities. Educators create opportunities for interaction, cooperation, intimacy and mutual enjoyment by being wholeheartedly with the child during the time they spend together.
- **A safe, challenging, predictable environment** – The role of an educator is to create an environment in which the child can best do all the things that the child would do naturally. The more predictable the environment is, the better it is for the child to learn.
- **Time for uninterrupted play and freedom to explore** – Educators offer the child plenty of time for uninterrupted play. Instead of trying to *teach* children new skills, they should be appreciating and admiring what they are actually doing.
- **Consistency** – Educators establish clearly defined limits and communicate their expectations to develop discipline. Adapted from Magda Gerber © 1998.

Just as is true in adult lives, children's relationships build and grow stronger over time through everyday encounters.

PROMOTING RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN

Practices that educators can use to promote relationships include:

- Showing warmth and welcome; demonstrate to children that you are happy to see them, sharing a laugh with them
- Respecting each child's uniqueness and communicating that respect to the child
- Deepening their own knowledge and understanding of all children in their care
- Providing inclusive environments where all children can participate in educational activities and experiences
- Actively looking for each child's strengths and sharing your appreciation of those with the child's family and colleagues
- Showing children that you know them well, for example by helping them to identify their feelings and offering assistance and support to deal with feelings when required or requested
- Creating and taking full advantage of one-on-one times, even if brief ones, with each child
- Trying hard to understand children's communication – verbal and non-verbal – and responding appropriately
- Responding respectfully and authentically to encourage children to ask questions and share their thoughts
- Remembering something a child told you and mentioning it later
- Keeping promises

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- Being available, accessible and interested – for example, sitting nearby, watching and listening and delighting in the child when they invite you into their play
- Encouraging independence while communicating that you are available to help
- Helping children form relationships with other children and other educators
- Showing children you understand that learning to relate and interact with other children and manage behaviour is hard
- Guiding child behaviours positively, and looking beyond their behaviour to try to figure out what it means

Educators use these strategies to guide positive relationships and behaviours in ways that promote each child's agency, dignity, and rights. Where any individual concerns are noted, staff will collaborate with families to develop a broader understanding of the child's development level, home circumstances and approaches the family use, which may be influencing the child's emotional state and behaviours being displayed.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

To be read with Enrolment Form, Parent and Employee Handbooks, Medical Management Risk Minimisation and Communication Plans, Educational Program Policy, Behaviour Support Meeting, Behaviour Support Plan A and Behaviour Support Plan B

COMPLIANCE

Created with reference to Education and Care Services National Regulations
Regulation 56 155
National Quality Standards
Quality Area 5

VARIATIONS

The River School Early Childhood Centre reserves the right to vary, replace or terminate this policy from time to time.

VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date	Owner	Responsibility	Change Description	Review Date
1	8/7/2021	River School Board AMEL	Nominated Supervisor, Centre Director, Early Childhood Teachers and Educators	Replaces all current policies	05/07/2022

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