

	<p>Enabling and promoting the participation of children within a service has multiple benefits in addition to enhancing the safety of children, including demonstrating a commitment to upholding the rights of children, giving children what they want, and building the communication and leadership skills of children.</p> <p>In developing an <i>Early Years Policy - Interactions with children</i>, early childhood education and care services must review and reflect on the philosophy, beliefs and values of the service, particularly with regard to the relationships with children.</p>
<p>Definitions:</p>	<p>Adequate supervision: Supervision entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the Service, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times including during toileting, sleep, rest, outdoor play and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play.</p> <p>Adequate supervision refers to constant, active and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate supervision requires that educators are always in a position to observe each child, respond to individual needs and immediately intervene if necessary. Variables affecting supervision levels include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number, age and abilities of children • number and positioning of educators • current activity of each child • areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility) • developmental profile of each child and of the group of children • experience, knowledge and skill of each educator • need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies). <p>Active engagement: staff interact with individual and groups of children, actively listening to ideas and using these to develop conversation, positive relationships, guide behaviour and scaffold learning. These interactions are used to document children’s learning, skills and needs and to inform the program. Staff use positive language to guide behaviour and ideas. Staff use open-ended questions to support children to develop understandings, concepts, emotions, social skills, communication skills etc.</p> <p>Behaviour guidance: a means of assisting children to self-manage their behaviour. It differs from traditional ‘behaviour management’ or ‘discipline’ which generally implies that an adult is ‘managing’ children’s behaviour or using punishment to control children. Behaviour guidance applies to all forms of behaviour, not just behaviours labelled as ‘negative’.</p> <p>Behaviour guidance plan: a plan that documents strategies to assist an educator in guiding a child with diagnosed behavioural difficulties to self-manage their behaviour. The plan is developed in consultation with the child’s teacher and co-educators, parents/guardians and families, and other professional support agencies as applicable. Staff provide the Nominated supervisor and Regional Team Leader with the behaviour guidance plans. Regional Team Leaders, Nominated supervisors and Educational Leaders support staff with training and guidance to develop skills to manage challenging behaviours.</p>

Challenging behaviour: behaviour that:

- disrupts others or causes disputes between children, but which is part of normal social development
- infringes on the rights of others
- causes harm or risk to the child, other children, adults or living things
- is destructive to the environment and/or equipment
- inhibits the child's learning and relationship with others
- is inappropriate relative to the child's developmental age and background.

Child's agency: allowing children to make choices for themselves.

Court orders: where there are Court orders or Intervention Orders in place for the child attending the service or for a parent of a child attending the service, the orders should be kept with the enrolment record. Copies will be provided to the Enrolment Officer. All staff should be aware of the particulars of these orders to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and families. Staff will work with families - both parents to ensure fair and equitable access to information and the service is available where appropriate. (e.g. shared custody)

Where a party is not to have access to the child or poses a threat to the child or family, staff will conduct a risk assessment and share this with team members. A copy will be kept with the court or intervention orders and a copy will be provided to the Nominated Supervisor and Regional Team Leader.

Inclusion support program: funded by the Commonwealth Government to assist services to build their capacity and capabilities to include children with additional needs in mainstream services; providing them with an opportunity to learn and develop alongside their typically developing peers.

Mental health: in early childhood, a child's mental health is understood as a child's ability to experience, regulate and express emotions; form close and secure interpersonal relationships; and explore the environment and learn – all in the context of family, community and cultural expectations for young children.

Notifiable complaint: the Regulatory Authority is required to be notified of a complaint that alleges :

- A serious incident has occurred or is occurring while a child is being educated and cared for by a service.

- The National Law and/or National Regulations have been contravened.

Complaints of this nature must be reported by the Approved Provider to the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of the complaint being made (*Section 174(2) (b), Regulation 176(2)(b)*). If the Approved Provider is unsure whether the matter is a notifiable complaint, it is good practice to contact DET for confirmation.

Notification of complaints must be submitted within 24 hours through either the NQA IT system portal: [HTTP://WWW.ACECQA.GOV.AU](http://www.acecqa.gov.au) or where this is not possible, the Regulatory Authority must be contacted directly.

Preschool field officer (PSFO) program: early intervention outreach services that are universally available within state-funded preschools for any child with developmental concerns. The primary role of the PSFO program is to support the access and participation of children with additional needs in preschool.

	<p>Serious incident: a serious incident (<i>regulation 12</i>) is defined as any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the death of a child while being educated and cared for at the service or following an incident at the service - any incident involving serious injury or trauma while the child is being educated and cared for, which <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o a reasonable person would consider required urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner, or o the child attended or ought reasonably to have attended a hospital e.g. a broken limb* - any incident involving serious illness of a child is being educated and cared for by a service for which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital e.g. severe asthma attack, seizure or anaphylaxis. <p>Note: In some cases (for example rural and remote locations), a General Practitioner conducts consultation from the hospital site. Only treatment related to serious injury or illness or trauma are required to be notified, not other health matters.</p> <p>Any emergency for which emergency services attended. NOTE: This means an incident, situation or event where there is an imminent or severe risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a person/s at an education and care service. It does not mean an incident where emergency services attended as a precaution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a child appears to be missing, cannot be accounted for at the service - a child appears to have been taken or removed from the service in a manner that contravenes the National Regulations - a child mistakenly locked in or out of the service premises or any part of the premises <p>Examples of serious incidents include amputation (e.g. removal of fingers), anaphylactic reaction requiring hospitalisation, asthma requiring hospitalisation, broken bone/fractures, bronchiolitis, burns, diarrhoea requiring hospitalisation, epileptic seizures, head injuries, measles, meningococcal infection, sexual assault, witnessing violence or a frightening event.</p> <p>If the Approved Provider is not aware that the incident was serious until some time after the incident, they must notify the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of becoming aware that the incident was serious.</p> <p>Notifications of serious incidents should be made through the NQA IT System portal (HTTP://WWW.ACECQA.GOV.AU). If this is not practicable, the notification can be made initially in whatever way is best in the circumstances.</p> <p>Supervision: see adequate supervision above.</p>
<p>References:</p>	<p><i>Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia:</i> HTTPS://WWW.EDUCATION.GOV.AU/</p> <p>Behaviour guidance practice note series (DET): HTTPS://WWW.EDUCATION.VIC.GOV.AU/</p> <p>Be You, Mental Health in Education Program and National Workforce Support Program: HTTPS://BEYOU.EDU.AU/</p> <p>Early Childhood Australia (ECA) <i>Code of Ethics</i> (2006): HTTP://WWW.EARLYCHILDDHOODAUSTRALIA.ORG.AU/</p> <p><i>Guide to the National Quality Standard, ACECQA</i></p>

	<p>WWW.ACECQA.GOV.AU</p> <p>Inclusion Support Program (ISP), Department of Education and Training: HTTPS://WWW.EDUCATION.GOV.AU/</p> <p>United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: WWW.UNICEF.ORG/CRC</p> <p>Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework: HTTP://WWW.EDUCATION.VIC.GOV.AU</p> <p>The Kindergarten Funding Guide (DET): HTTP://WWW.EDUCATION.VIC.GOV.AU</p> <p>Adequate/Active Supervision HTTP://WWW.LEARNALBERTA.CA/CONTENT/INSP/HTML/TEACHER/USINGACTIVESUPERVISION.PDF</p>
<p>Related Policies:</p>	<p><i>Early Years Policy - Supervision of children</i></p> <p><i>Early Years Policy - Child Safe environment</i></p> <p><i>Early Years Policy - Code of Conduct</i></p> <p><i>Privacy policy</i></p> <p><i>Complaints handling policy</i></p> <p><i>Occupational Health and Safety policy</i></p>
<p>Related Legislation:</p>	<p><i>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)</i></p> <p><i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic), as amended 2011</i></p> <p><i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic), as amended 2012</i></p> <p><i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015 (Vic)</i></p> <p><i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)</i></p> <p><i>Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Sections 166, 167</i></p> <p><i>Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 73, 74, 155, 156, 157, 168(2)(j)</i></p> <p><i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)</i></p> <p><i>National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children</i></p> <p>Standard 5.1: Respectful and equitable relationships are developed and maintained with each child</p> <p>Standard 5.2: Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships with other children and adults</p>

INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 5

SCOPE

This policy applies to the staff, students on placement at kindergartens, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of the Macedon Ranges Shire Council's Early Years Services.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Approved Provider and Persons with Management or Control are responsible for:

- developing and implementing this policy in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, other staff and parents/guardians, ensuring it reflects the philosophy of the Services and MRSC values
- ensuring parents/guardians, the Nominated Supervisor and all other staff have access of a copy of this policy and comply with its requirements
- ensuring the Nominated Supervisor and all other staff are aware of the Service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and interactions when working with children and families (refer to *Early Years Policy - Code of Conduct*)
- ensuring children are adequately supervised (refer to *Definitions*) and that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times (refer to *Early Years Policy - Supervision of Children*)
- consideration of the size and composition of groups to ensure all children are provided with the best opportunities for quality interactions and relationships with peers and adults at the Service (*Regulation 156(2)*)
- ensuring educational programs are delivered in accordance with an approved learning framework, based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child
- ensuring the educational program contributes to the development of children who have a strong sense of wellbeing and identity, and are connected, confident, involved and effective learners and communicators (*Regulation 73*)
- ensuring the Service provides education and care to children in a way which:
 - encourages children to express themselves and their opinions
 - allows children to undertake experiences which develop self-reliance and self-esteem
 - maintains the dignity and rights of each child at all times
 - offers positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour
 - has regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for (*Regulation 155*)
- ensuring children are provided with opportunities to interact and develop positive relationships with peers, staff and volunteers of the Service (*Regulation 156 (1)*)
- ensuring clear documentation of the assessment and evaluation of each child's:
 - developmental needs, interests, experiences and program participation
 - progress against the outcomes of the educational program (*Regulation 74*)
- supporting educators/staff to gain appropriate training, knowledge and skills for the implementation of this policy
- ensuring the environment of the Service is safe, secure and free from hazards for children (refer to *Early Years Policy - Child Safe environment, Occupational Health and Safety policy* and *Early Years Policy - Supervision of children*)
- ensuring the Nominated Supervisor and all other staff members at the Service who work with children are aware it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any unreasonable or excessive discipline (*National Law: Section 166*)

- promoting collaborative relationships between children/families and educators, staff and other professionals, to improve the quality of children’s education and care experiences
- referring notifiable complaints (refer to *Definitions*), or complaints which are unable to be resolved in a timely and appropriate manner to the CEO’s Office (refer to *Complaints Handling policy*)
- informing DET in writing, within 24 hours of receiving a notifiable complaint or serious incident (refer to *Definitions*) (*Section 174(4), Regulation 176(2)(b)*)
- ensuring where the Service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child, such contact does not occur while the child is on the Service premises
- ensuring educators and staff use positive and respectful strategies to assist children in self-management of behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others
- ensuring individual behaviour guidance plans are developed for children with diagnosed behavioural difficulties, in consultation with the educators, parents/guardians and families, and other professionals and support agencies (refer to *references - Behaviour guidance practice note series (DET)*)
- developing links with and referral pathways to services and/or professionals to support children experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and their families
- ensuring parents/guardians, other professionals and support agencies (as appropriate) are consulted if an individual behaviour guidance plan has not resolved the challenging behaviour
- consulting with and seeking advice from DET if a suitable and mutually agreeable behaviour guidance plan cannot be developed
- ensuring additional resources are sourced to implement a behaviour guidance plan
- ensuring educators/staff of the Service are provided with appropriate training to guide the actions and responses of children with challenging behaviour
- maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to *Privacy policy*)

The Regional Team Leader is responsible for:

- ensuring all staff are aware of the Services’ expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and reactions when working with children and families (refer to the *Early Years Policy - Code of Conduct*)
- providing support to teachers in developing and implementing educational programs, in accordance with an approved learning framework, which are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child
- providing support and guidance to ensure that educators provide education and care to children in a way which:
 - encourages children to express themselves and their opinions
 - allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
 - maintains the dignity and the rights of each child at all times
 - offers positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour
 - has regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for
- ensuring where the Service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child, a risk mitigation plan is completed by the teacher and circulated to all staff in the Service
- organising appropriate training for all staff to assist with the implementation of this policy and training needs of staff in the area of behaviour guidance
- overseeing procedures are in place for effective daily communication with parents/guardians to share information about children’s learning, development, interactions, behaviour and relationships
- providing support to teachers in developing individual behaviour guidance plans for children with diagnosed behavioural difficulties

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- implementing this policy at the Service, ensuring children are adequately supervised (refer to *Definitions*), that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times (refer to *Early Years Policy - Supervision of children*)
- ensuring the environment is safe, secure and free from hazards (refer to *Early Years Policies - Child Safe environment, Supervision of children and Occupational Health and Safety*)
- providing support to other teachers at the Service in ensuring:
 - their educational program contributes to the development of children who have a strong sense of wellbeing and identity, and are connected, confident, involved and effective learners and communicators
 - documentation of the assessment and evaluation of each child includes the child's developmental needs, interests, experiences and program participation and progress against the outcomes of the educational program (*Regulation 74*)
- ensuring all staff members of the Service who work with children are aware it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal, unreasonable or excessive punishment in the circumstances (*National Law: Section 166*)
- informing the Approved Provider of any notifiable complaints (refer to *Definitions*) or serious incidents (refer to *Definitions*) at the Service
- ensuring where the Service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child, such contact does not occur while the child is on the Service premises
- ensuring educators and staff use positive and respectful strategies to assist children to manage their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others
- supporting educators by assessing skills and identifying additional training needs in the area of behaviour guidance
- providing information, ideas and practical strategies to families, educators and staff on a regular basis to promote and support health and wellbeing in the service and at home

Teachers are responsible for:

- delivering educational programs
 - in accordance with an approved learning framework, that are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child
 - which develop a sense of wellbeing and identity, connection to community, and provide skills for lifelong learning in all children
- developing individual behaviour guidance plans for children with diagnosed behavioural difficulties that include the following:
 - consulting with educators, parents/guardians and families, and other professionals and support agencies (refer to *DET website in references*)
 - providing regular progress reports to the Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor on the implementation and effectiveness of the agreed strategies
 - setting clear timelines for review and evaluation of the plan
- investigating the availability of extra assistance, financial support or training, by contacting the regional Preschool Field Officer (refer to *Definitions*), specialist children's services officers from DET or other agencies working with a child
- informing the Approved Provider of any notifiable complaints (refer to *Definitions*) or serious incidents (refer to *Definitions*) at the Service
- completing a risk assessment and circulating it to the service team and regional team leaders when a child in their group has a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child

All staff are responsible for:

- assisting with the development, implementation and access of the *Early Years Policy - Interactions with children*

- complying with the requirements of the *Early Years Policy - Interactions with children*
- being aware of Service expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and reactions when working with children and families (refer to *Early Years Policy - Code of Conduct*)
- providing adequate supervision and active engagement with children at all times (refer to *Definitions and Early Years Policy - Supervision of children*)
- communicating regularly and working collaboratively with parents/guardians and families in relation to their child's learning, development, interactions, behaviour and relationships
- providing education and care to children in a way which:
 - encourages children to express themselves and their opinions
 - allows children to undertake experiences which develop self-reliance and self-esteem
 - maintains the dignity and the rights of each child at all times
 - offers positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour
 - has regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for
 - develops warm, responsive and trusting relationships with children that promote a sense of security, confidence and inclusion
- supporting each child to develop responsive relationships, and to work and learn in collaboration with others
- speaking to children in an encouraging and positive manner
- actively listening to children, offering empathy, support and guidance where needed
- using positive and respectful strategies to assist children in managing their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others
- documenting assessments and evaluations for each child to inform the educational program (*Regulation 74*)
- having awareness as to the legal offence by subjecting a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances
- undertaking relevant training, enabling the guidance of children who exhibit challenging behaviour
- documenting assessments and evaluations for each child to inform the educational program (*Regulation 74*)
- maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to *Privacy policy*)

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- reading and complying with the *Early Years Policy - Interactions with children*
- compliance with the Parent/Visitor Code of Conduct, MRSC Customer Service Charter and *Early Years Policy - Child Safe environment*
- engaging in open communication with educators about their child
- informing educators/staff of events or incidents that may impact on their child's behaviour at the Service (e.g. moving house, relationship issues, a new sibling)
- informing educators/staff of any concerns regarding their child's behaviour or the impact of other children's behaviour
- working collaboratively with educators/staff and other professionals/support agencies to develop or review an individual behaviour guidance plan for their child, where appropriate

Contactors, volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback regarding the policies' effectiveness

- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the Service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures