

Bridgewater Day Care Centre Behaviour Management Policy

The basis of the Bridgewater Day Care Centre's behaviour management policy is for all adults and children to follow the three "R"s.

Respect ourselves Respect each other Respect our environment

1. PREVENTION

Environment - Programming plans should reflect the individual needs and interest of the children. The classroom arrangement should be appropriate for the age group. Adequate toys and equipment should be provided to avoid long wait times.

Interaction - Staff should ensure that they are positioned around the classroom, playground and/or gym to ensure that they can supervise the whole area and join in the children's play. AVOID SITTING IN ONE PLACE. Positive adult involvement with the children will avoid many behaviour issues. When you have to intervene in a discipline situation, which is not causing immediate danger to anyone involved, approach in a respectful way. Do not shout at the child from across the room. Walk over, get down to the child's level, establish eye contact (when appropriate) and use a calm, controlled voice tone. A calm controlled voice tone and non-threatening body language can assist in diffusing a discipline situation rather than escalating it.

Routine- The routines need to be flexible but consistent so the child knows what to expect and can follow along. Moving from one activity to the next is difficult for children. Make sure that you give them plenty of warning prior to the end of one activity and the start of another. Avoid lengthy transitions and wait times within the routine of the day.

Expectations - Know the children's limitations. Plan your program so children can succeed. Do not be afraid to stop or alter an activity that is not going well.

Staff Training - Staff should have the advantage of educational opportunities, which focus on positive discipline techniques. A good reference booklet is Meeting The Challenge, by Barbara Kaiser and Judy Sklar Rasminsky. New employees and volunteers will review the entire Behaviour Management policy with the Director or designate upon appointment. Annually thereafter employees and volunteers will indicate they have reviewed the Behaviour Management Policy.

Model and Encourage - Children learn a lot by watching what is going on around them. If you want children to exhibit pro-social behaviour, you must model it in the classroom; ex. Speaking in low, respectful tones. When children do exhibit behaviours which are appropriate, encourage them by telling them how their positive behaviours affect others around them.

Body Language - How we present ourselves to the children may trigger negative behaviours from them. A relaxed, smiling, happy face will welcome children, versus an angry, arms crossed, frazzled one.

2. SOLUTIONS FOR ALL CHILDREN

Attitude - Staff must have a positive attitude towards all children which includes enjoyment and respect for the children as individuals. Telling children what to do, rather than what not to do, reinforces for children what behaviour is acceptable and decreases the likelihood that they will respond defensively. Also reminding them every once in a while, reflects an attitude of understanding on the adult's part. Show the children the correct way for activities or rules, etc. in a positive way without demeaning them. Use positive verbal statements - "Don't do that" should have been "Can I show you another way to do that?"

Focus on the Behaviour - In a discipline situation, focusing on the child's character tends to produce feelings of guilt and shame for the child and ultimately lowers self-esteem. On the other hand, focusing on the behaviour, preserves the child's dignity as well as provides information for correcting the behaviour.

Setting Limits - Staff should define limits in the classroom as well as out in the playground and gym. These limits should reflect age appropriateness, group dynamics, and seasonal conditions. Adults can use their own discretion and comfort levels when setting limits as well. Note, it is NEVER acceptable to withhold food as a consequence of a child's behaviour, or to use food to reinforce desired behaviour. Remind the children during group times and class room displays the three "R"s Respect ourselves, Respect each other , Respect the environment.

Physical Contact - Under certain circumstances staff may want to use physical contact to guide behaviour. If allowed by a child, an adult's touch during a frustrating situation may have a calming effect on them.

Giving Choices - Make sure children are given attainable choices. Give choices you are ready to back up and follow through on. This will allow the children to feel a little more in control over their daily activities.

Redirection - When appropriate, redirecting a child from a disruptive behaviour to another activity, can avoid power struggles and confrontations.

Problem Solving- Offer children a chance to problem solve. Know when to intervene on different situations. Eg. A known biter squabbling over a toy (Intervene) Two school age children arguing over a book (See if they can work it out.) When intervening with a conflict make sure that you acknowledge the feelings of the child and or children involved. Then begin the process of helping the children find solutions. Begin by stating what the problem is, "it looks to me like you both want the bike." Ask the children what they think they can do about the problem. If they don't have any suggestions, provide some choices for them. The adult's job is largely to facilitate, clarify information verbally and largely to ensure that no further physical contact occurs. Try to remember that adults should not solve the problem for the children. The end result of this may be that so much time is spent on social problem solving that no one gets to use the bike! The adult can help the children anticipate this outcome by verbally reminding them of the time using a matter of fact voice tone. Remember this a teachable moment where valuable negotiation skills can be learned by the children.

Ignoring Inappropriate Behaviours - Adults who work with young children need to have realistic expectations for what a child care environment will be like. They must learn to develop a tolerance for a certain amount of noise, clutter, and attention-seeking behaviour. As long as children's behaviours are not compromising their safety, the safety and rights of others and the safety of the environment it may be best not to intervene.

Getting the Child's Attention - When intervening in a discipline situation, approach in a respectful way. Do not shout at the child from across the room. Walk over, get down to the child's level, establish eye contact and use a calm, controlled voice tone. A calm, controlled voice tone and non-threatening body language can assist in diffusing a discipline situation rather than escalating it.

Break Time - A brief period of break time away from an activity or classroom area may be acceptable at times, this would be done within the presence of a staff member and never in isolation. When the child is ready to return from a "break", the adult should assist with any transition needed to achieve success. Adults must have an understanding that young children should not be expected to self-regulate emotionally, and will require the presence of an adult to assist them. Once confident that the child's original behaviour will not be repeated, acknowledge him/her for showing you that they have changed their behaviour and then leave the play situation. Time out is not a strategy used within the Centre, especially for children 18 months and younger. Children of any age will not be made to sit out in direct sun light.

Taking Responsibility for Behaviour - Children should try to make amends for their behaviours before going on to another activity. It is not acceptable to force a child to apologize, but rather have them seek out the child to make sure they are all right.

Parent Communication - Parent communication is key to positive relationships within the Centre. When parents are asking about their child's day, recall activities and events that the children were involved in. Should a behaviour occur in which regular solutions do not work and would be described as disruptive (see below), Staff may need to use gentle physical guidance or holding to prevent self injury or injury to others. In such cases, staff will complete an incident report for parents/guardians to sign at the end of the day. Parents will at this time be asked to set up a meeting to determine how further incidents will be handled by Centre staff.

3. DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR

In the event that a child exhibits behaviours such as hitting, harming self or others, throwing objects, etc. which may impact the health and safety of the child, his/her peers or staff, interventions beyond those typically practiced in child care facilities may be implemented. Such practices may include, but are not limited to: gentle physical guidance or holding or external professional referrals. To determine if such practices are necessary and more clearly defined, the child's team, including parents and or guardians will meet and collaborate to create a Behaviour Guidance Plan. The plan will define how to support the child through difficult situations when the typical behaviour strategies are not effective. All parties on the team must be given the opportunity for input and agree to the plan. The signed plan will then be submitted to the Centre's Early Childhood Development Consultant for consideration and approval. The plan will be kept on the child's file until such time as it requires revision and /or the child leaves the child care facility.

Biting- Biting may occur with young children due to lack of communication skills. Especially when children are frustrated or excited. In very young children, attempts at kisses can also turn into bites. When an incident of biting occurs, staff will do the following; Comfort the child which has been bitten and provide first aid (cold cloth, or bandage). Contact will be made with the bitten child's parent so they are aware of the incident, and can ask staff relevant questions. Staff will not indicate who the biter is, but can share information such as health status of the biter, especially if the bite has broken the skin membrane. The parents of the child which has bitten will also be notified, this will normally occur in an incident report for them to sign at pick up time. Depending on the age of the child, a behaviour guidance plan may or may not be established. Staff will provide resources to parents on biting upon request.

4. PRINCIPLES

The goal of positive discipline is to help children build their own self control, in a respectful manner. Not to have them behave through adult imposed control.

Any behavioural program will be applied in such a way that it will enhance the child's self esteem.

All consequences for a negative behaviour must immediately follow the inappropriate action/behaviour.

Consequences for a behaviour must be age appropriate and should be relevant to the negative behaviour.

If at any time the behaviour is suspected to be related to possible child abuse the employee is required to follow the Protocol For Staff Working In Regulated Early Childhood Care Settings And Child Welfare Agencies.

The following forms of punishment shall not be used under any circumstances - Corporal punishment including but not limited to the following: striking a child directly or with any physical object. Shaking, shoving, spanking, or other forms of aggressive physical contact and requiring or forcing a child to repeat physical movements. Harsh, humiliating, belittling or degrading responses of any form including verbal, emotional, or physical . Confine or isolate a child. Deprive a child of basic needs, including food, shelter, clothing and bedding.