Procedure SO:03.03
Guiding Children's Behaviour

Policy – Inclusion

Area – Service Operations

Document Control

Responsible Officer: General Manager, Children's Services	Procedure Number: SO:03.03
Contact Officer: Children's Services Manager	Policy: SO:03 Inclusion
Effective Date: 24 September 2018	Review Date: September 2020

Scope

This procedure, when read with the policy, provides a framework to guide all actions for the C&K Board, C&K staff, C&K Central, C&K branch services, C&K affiliate services*, children, parents, volunteers, contractors and visitors.

C&K associate members are excluded from the scope of this procedure.

*This procedure is optional for affiliate services.

Introduction

Guiding children's behaviour is integral to both the philosophy and curriculum of a service.
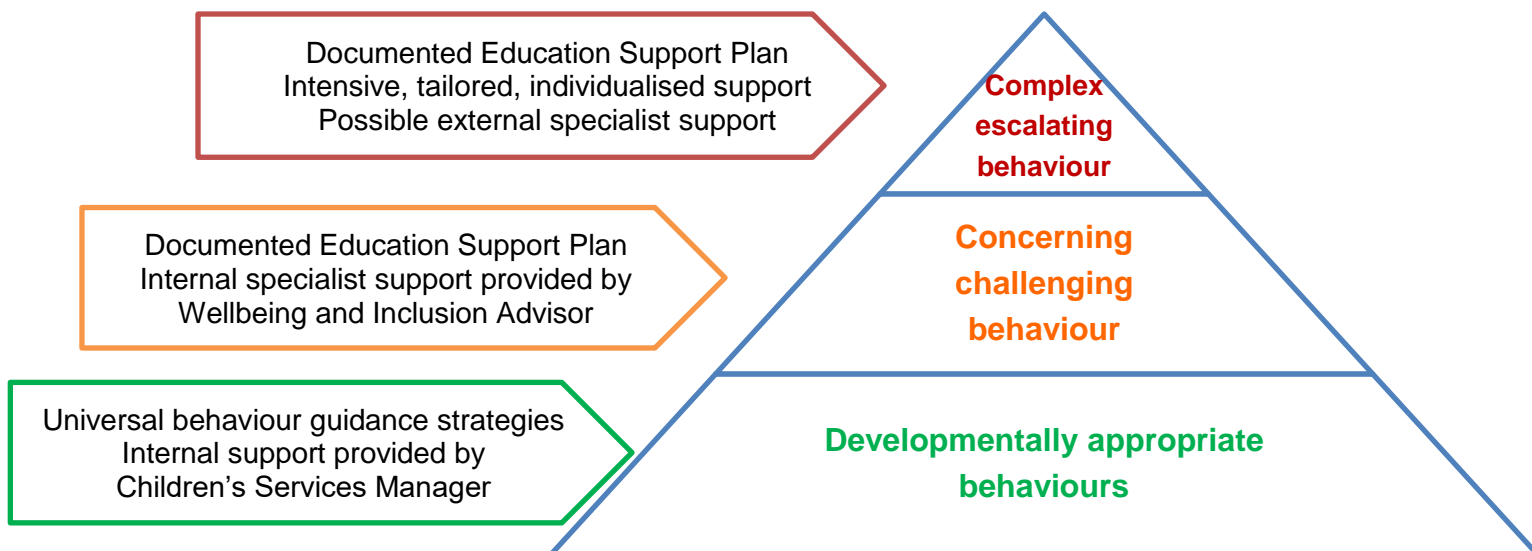
> *"Guidance will teach children self-regulation skills so that they acquire the ability to manage their impulses or emotions. In doing this, it will avoid imposing external controls on children as this deprives them of a fundamental human need for autonomy."*
> Porter, 2010

A behaviour guidance approach:

- Supports children to develop socially and emotionally within a learning community.
- Supports children to care for themselves and for others including developing empathy and kindness, understanding their emotions and those of others, and learning how to cooperate and be part of a group.
- Involves giving children a sense of agency and potency; a sense they can make a difference to themselves, their world and can act on their values.

Educators, who prioritise nurturing relationships and thoughtfully plan and consider the program and environment, provide children with the conditions to develop skills and understandings needed to interact positively with others. A positive behaviour guidance approach has a significant effect on children's learning.

C&K Behaviour Guidance Support Model

Documented Education Support Plan
Intensive, tailored, individualised support
Possible external specialist support

Complex escalating behaviour

Documented Education Support Plan
Internal specialist support provided by
Wellbeing and Inclusion Advisor

Concerning challenging behaviour

Universal behaviour guidance strategies
Internal support provided by
Children's Services Manager

Developmentally appropriate behaviours

Procedure

1.0 Parent / guardian responsibilities

- Maintain open and regular channels of communication with educators. Share relevant information about their child's social and emotional development, additional needs and / or behaviour at and throughout enrolment.
- When requested, attend and contribute to scheduled meetings with educators and relevant support professionals, to develop and review *SO:03.01.F2 Form Education Support Plan* strategies.
- When required and recommended by educators, seek external professional advice to support child's behaviour, social and emotional wellbeing within timeframes. This would be required where a *SO:03.01.F2 Form Education Support Plan* has been implemented and further support is required.

2.0 Educator responsibilities
2.1 Interactions with families

- Work collaboratively with families. Establish and maintain open channels of communication and consultation with parents / guardians at and throughout enrolment. Regularly discuss and share information regarding children's strengths, individual needs, and progress.
- Recognise and acknowledge family diversity by respecting social, cultural, lifestyle and parenting choices.
- Build trusting relationships with families and identify possible stresses that might be affecting a child's behaviour, social and emotional wellbeing.
- Support families in their parenting role. Provide relevant information regarding support agencies, training, specialists, counselling and / or funding to promote children's access, participation and learning.

2.2 Interactions with children

- Understand and acknowledge behaviour at all ages is an attempt to communicate.
- Implement positive strategies that are based on guidance. Refer appendix 1 for examples.
- Be non-judgmental and sensitive. There are multiple and diverse reasons why children behave in certain ways. Seek to understand, support and acknowledge children's emotions.
- Work collaboratively with children to provide a safe and supportive environment for all.
- Demonstrate an understanding of developmentally expected behaviours, as well as an understanding of individual needs and personality traits that may impact behaviour.
- View and respond to children's behaviour as a natural part of growth and development. With the guidance of supportive adults, children will continuously learn to manage their emotions and understand behavioural expectations.
- Where possible and when developmentally appropriate, discuss and agree on reasonable expectations with children. Outline expectations in a clear, reasonable, consistent, calm manner. Whenever possible, be in close proximity when communicating and providing directions and choices.
- Implement the *C&K Birth to Three Approach* to guide and support younger children.
- Support children to develop a sense of social responsibility, so they become aware of how their actions and behaviour impacts others.
- Support children when negotiating situations and peer conflict, and respond quickly when inappropriate behaviour is observed.
  - Listen and acknowledge children's accounts of a situation and keep an open mind.
  - Promote autonomy and self-regulation by providing children with time to make choices.
  - Model and encourage core values such as friendliness, acceptance, respect, empathy, kindness and tolerance.

- o Teach and reinforce conflict resolution skills by empowering children to use language and other forms of positive non-verbal communication strategies to express emotions.
- o Encourage and model safe behaviour.
- o Use positive language. For example, say *"We walk inside"* rather than "*No running".*

DO NOT:
- Use food rewards, stickers or stamps as a behaviour guidance strategy. Discuss any proposed practice deviations or modifications with Children's Services Manager / Wellbeing and Inclusion Advisor before implementation.
- Implement corporal punishment and actions that isolate or belittle children.
- Implement any physical contact that holds or restricts a child against their will to force compliance (also see Section 2.6.1).

2.3 Professional Practice
- Educators have a professional responsibility to lead, advocate and act in the best interests of children, families, themselves and others at all times.
- Undertake regular professional development to build understanding of guiding children's behaviour.
- Promote educator wellness and share behaviour guidance responsibilities with colleagues.
- Refer to the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics to support ethical decision making.
- Acknowledge and understand you may not have all the answers to guide a child's behaviour. When needed, seek prompt C&K advice and support through your Children's Services Manager and / or Wellbeing and Inclusion Advisor.

2.4 The physical environment
- Provide a responsive learning environment with children's input (where possible and when developmentally appropriate) and provide equipment and materials reflective of the children's emerging abilities and interests.
- Ensure the learning environment is arranged and maintained in a clutter free, organised manner with consideration of children's sensory needs.
- Provide opportunities for large motor movement and play. Children who are active are less likely to display challenging behaviours. For some children, an opportunity to choose between outdoors or indoors will support their active participation, wellbeing and engagement.
- To minimise frustrations, provide a sufficient amount of equipment and learning materials.
- Balance children's need for familiarity and variety, by making considered changes to the environment and availability of learning materials.
- Model and encourage the care and respect of equipment and learning materials.
- Carefully consider the arrangement of furniture, equipment and learning materials to maximise supervision and provide children with quiet spaces to withdraw or play independently, and spaces that encourage small or large groups.
- Implement effective supervision strategies to promptly respond to children's needs and behaviour. Refer to *SO01.24 Procedure Supervision*.

2.5 Routines and rituals
- The rhythm of the day in relation to routines, rituals, relationships and expectations can support an environment that promotes social learning and participation.
- Implement relaxed and unhurried routines and transitions. For example:
  - o Allow flexibility to respond to children's individual needs (e.g. opportunities for children to eat when hungry).
  - o Maximise choice (e.g. quiet activities for children who prefer not to sleep).

- o Provide large blocks of time for child initiated play.
- o Avoid large group activities that involve children sitting for long periods of time.
- o Refer to the *C&K Birth to three Approach* when working with babies and toddlers.

2.6 When a child displays concerning / challenging behaviours

- **Immediately** discuss concerns with the service Director and the child's parent / guardian. Consider and reflect upon the following questions:
  - o *What are the possible cause/s of the behaviour?*
  - o *Is the behaviour age / developmentally appropriate or related to learning a new skill?*
  - o *Are my expectations reasonable and are my interactions contributing to the behaviour?*
  - o *Are there identifiable triggers? Are there times or situations when the behaviour is more likely to occur?*
  - o *Am I taking a broader view recognising a child's feelings and lived experiences?*
- **Complete** *C&K Intranet Wellbeing and Inclusion Information Form* **for all children displaying concerning / challenging behaviours.**
- Document any concerning behaviour incidents as per *SO:01.05 Procedure Child incident reporting* or *HSW:01.05 Procedure WHS Incident Reporting.*

<p align="center">******All incidents involving children and educators must be documented and reported *****</p>

- In consultation with the child's parents / guardians, develop, document and maintain a *SO:03.01. F2 Form Education Support Plan.*
- When required, seek the support and information from external professionals. Before doing so, gain parental written permission via *SO03.01. F3 Form Permission - Accessing services to support inclusion.*
- Supporting children with concerning behaviours can be challenging. Take care of yourself and seek the support of colleagues and management. If needed, access the *Employee Assistance Program* (ICARE provide counselling services that may be of preference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees).

2.6.1 When a child's behaviour is complex and escalating

- Educators have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for children and adults at all times. When a child's behaviour escalates and the safety of children and educators is at risk, allow time and space for the child to calm down. For example, this may require moving the remainder of the children inside whilst the child demonstrating complex behaviour is outside, but within educator sight.
- Physical restraint is NOT a behaviour guidance strategy, but rather a response to protect the immediate safety of the child, other children and / or educators.
- Physical intervention is only appropriate where there is an immediate and high risk to a child's or adult's safety and all non-physical interventions have been exhausted. In all instances, the physical intervention must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary. If physical intervention is required only minimal force is to be applied for the shortest time needed, to receive desired result.
- In all instances where physical intervention is required, an incident record must be completed immediately as per *Procedure SO:01.05 Child incident reporting* or *Procedure HSW:01.05 WHS Incident Reporting*.
- When practical, immediately contact and seek support from your Wellbeing and Inclusion Advisor.
- When appropriate and where there is an ongoing significant risk to children's and educator safety, your Wellbeing and Inclusion Advisor will facilitate educator training relating to de-escalation and behaviour guidance strategies.
- Branch services - If the child's behaviour needs are rated 4 or 5 as per the C&K Risk Matrix, your Wellbeing and Inclusion Advisor will facilitate a Wellbeing and Inclusion

Advisory Group management meeting. This meeting must occur prior to the child's enrolment or immediately after diagnosis (of an enrolled child). This group includes the Regional Manager, the Children's Services Manager, the Education Wellbeing and Inclusion Manager, the Quality and Regulation Manager and the Workplace Health and Safety Manager.

- Branch services - If a service is unable to meet a child's education and care needs and there is an ongoing risk to the safety of the child, other children and / or educators, the matter may be escalated to the General Manager of Children's Services.

3.0 Children's Services Manager and Wellbeing & Inclusion Advisor responsibilities

- Observe children's behaviour and provide educators with appropriate support and advice.
- When required, work alongside educators and model behaviour guidance strategies.
- Sight and review *SO:03.01.F2 Form Education Support Plan*s.
- When required and appropriate, attend meetings with educators, parents / guardians and external professionals.
- Develop and facilitate appropriate training.
- When a child's behaviour is beyond the expertise of educators, promptly advise Regional Manager. When appropriate and approved, source appropriate external support.

Links to associated documents	
SO:03.01	*Procedure Supporting the wellbeing and inclusion of children with additional needs*
SO03.01.F3	*Form Permission - Accessing services to support inclusion*
SO:01.05	*Procedure - Child incident reporting*
SO:03.01.F2	*Form - Education Support Plan*
SO:01.24	*Procedure - Supervision*

Acknowledgements and references

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- C&K, 2011. *Building waterfalls: A guideline for children's learning and for teaching in kindergarten*. 2nd ed. Brisbane: C&K.
- C&K, 2011. *Building waterfalls: A guideline for educators living and learning with children aged birth to three years*. 2nd ed. Brisbane: C&K.
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- Govt of South Australia, Dept. of Education and Children's Services (2011). *Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people: guidelines for staff working or volunteering in education and care settings.* South Australia
- State Government Victoria, Dept. of Education & Early Childhood Development (2010) *Strategies to guide children's behaviour*

Revision Record					
Version	**Approval Date**	**Authorised by**	**Effective Date**	**Review Cycle**	**Next review date**
1.0	8 June 2012	S Bowles	8 June 2012		June 2014
2.0	17 August 2014	C Kyranis	2 Sept 2014	2 years	August 2016
3.0	21 Aug 2018	K Woods	24 Sept 2018		Sept 2020

Appendix 1 - Positive guidance strategies

Positive Strategy	Example
Focus on building strengths and positive aspects of behaviour	• Help children to feel good about themselves and to appreciate, care for and respect for others. *"Thanks Jack for putting the hammers/ nails back in their stand. Thank you for helping to keep your friends safe."*
Redirect	• Offer materials, equipment and experiences that engage their interests. *"I understand that you feel frustrated waiting, but xxxx is still playing with it. Shall we look for something else to do while you wait?"* • Offer choices and let children make decisions. *"Jack looks like he is feeling sad in this game. Do you think you can play a friendly game or would you prefer to do a quiet activity by yourself for a while?"*
Provide explanations and encouragement	• Help children to understand what is acceptable and what is not. *"It is OK to throw the ball outside but when inside we just roll it. That way, we won't accidently hurt a friend or spoil their game. Could you help xxxx to fix their building. S/he is feeling sad."*
Provide support and help through modeling	• Help children feel secure and communicate what they want and to express their feelings appropriately. *"Sally are you trying to play with Tom? Can you see Tom is unhappy as he ......could we try digging the hole together? Tom would you be happy if Sally helped?*