

## Introduction

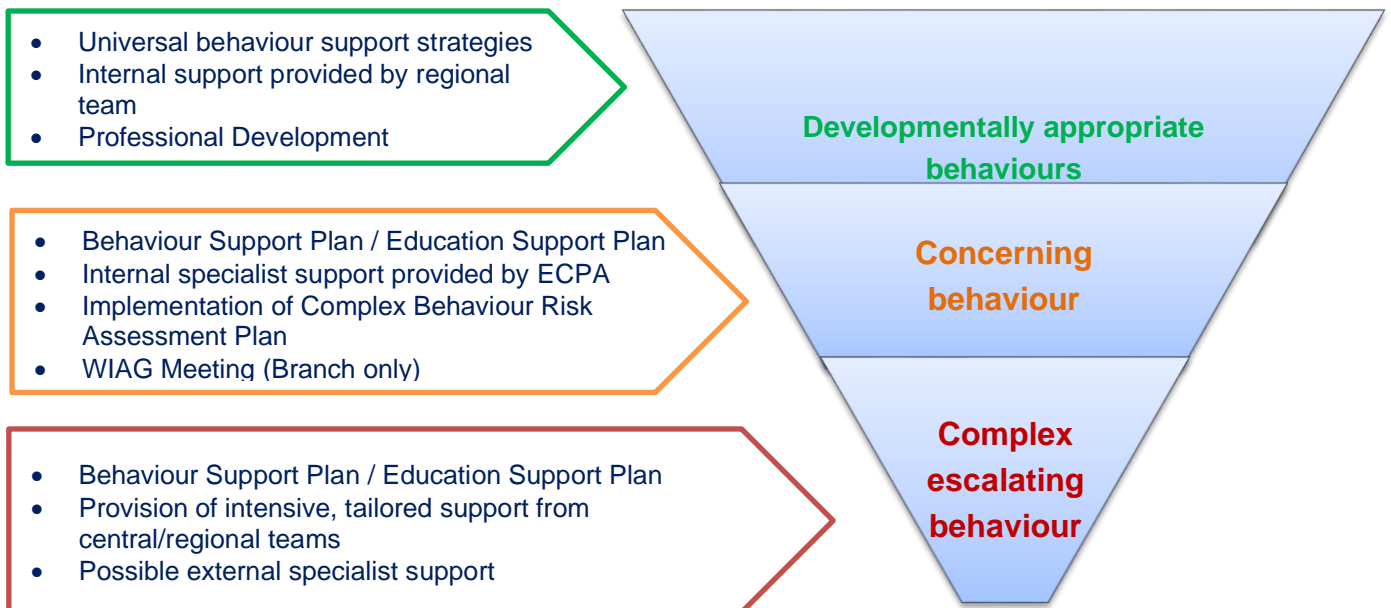
*“Educators play an important role in supporting children to regulate their own behaviour. Positive, respectful daily interactions with children can support them to learn about interdependence and to become considerate citizens. These relationships provide a solid foundation from which to guide and support children as they develop the self-confidence and skills to manage their own behaviour, make decisions and relate positively and effectively with others.” (ACECQA Quality Area 5 worksheet)*

C&K centres implement a behaviour support approach that:

- Is culturally safe and trauma informed.
- Is positive and strengths based.
- Considers individual developmental capabilities.
- 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.

Teachers/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 support approach has a significant effect on children's learning.

## C&K Behaviour Support Model



## Parent/guardian responsibilities

- Maintain open and regular channels of communication with teachers/educators.
- Share relevant information about your child's social and emotional development, additional needs and/or behaviour upon and throughout enrolment.
- When requested, meet with teachers/educators and relevant support professionals, to develop and review a [Behaviour Support Plan](#)/ [Education Support Plan](#)
- Work collaboratively with C&K and your child's teachers/educators.
- When required, seek external professional advice to support your child's behaviour, social and emotional wellbeing.

## Teacher/Educator responsibilities

### Interactions with children

- Understand and acknowledge all behaviour is an attempt to communicate. Recognise challenging behaviour is an indication of a child's unmet need. Be non-judgmental and sensitive. Seek to understand, support, and acknowledge children's emotions.
- Implement positive strategies that are consistent and based on support. Refer to Appendix 1 for examples.
- Regularly acknowledge and encourage children's behaviour that shows care, empathy, and respect.
- 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 how individual experiences, needs and personality traits may impact behaviour e.g., cultural, trauma.
- 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 regulate 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, and calm manner. Whenever possible, be in proximity when communicating and providing directions and choices.
- Support children to develop a sense of social competence, 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.
  - Teach and reinforce conflict resolution skills by empowering children to use language and other forms of positive non-verbal communication strategies to express emotions.
  - Encourage and model safe behaviour.
  - Use positive language. For example, say *"We walk inside"* rather than *"No running"*.
- Support children to manage their behaviour:

#### DO

- ✓ View children as capable and competent and approach situations from a strengths-based perspective.
- ✓ Ensure children feel secure and know that you are there to help and support them.
- ✓ Provide positive reinforcement, encouraging a strong sense of identity and pride in themselves.
- ✓ Encourage children to use a range of communication strategies to express needs, wants and feelings.
- ✓ Help children deal with conflict constructively and develop a sense of social responsibility, so they become aware of how their actions and behaviour impact others.

#### DO NOT

- ✗ Use foods, rewards, stickers, or stamps as a behaviour guidance strategy.
- ✗ Implement corporal punishment and actions that isolate or belittle children.
- ✗ Implement physical contact that holds or restricts a child against their will to force compliance unless there is an immediate threat to children's and teacher's/educator's safety.

### Interactions with families

- Work collaboratively and establish and maintain open channels of communication with families. Regularly discuss and share information with parents/guardians regarding their child's strengths, individual needs, and progress.
- When required, email [inclusion@candk.asn.au](mailto:inclusion@candk.asn.au) for access code to arrange a TIS interpreter ([131450/tis@homeaffairs.gov](mailto:131450/tis@homeaffairs.gov)). Free service for kindergarten programs.
- Recognise and acknowledge family diversity by respecting social, cultural, lifestyle, and parenting choices.
- Build trusting relationships with families to collaboratively identify possible challenges that might be affecting a child's ability to engage with the education program.

- Share relevant information regarding support agencies, training, specialists, counselling and/or funding to promote access, participation, and learning. For example:
  - Family and Child Connect – 13 32 64
  - Child Health Nurse – 13 HEALTH Complex Care
  - Autism Queensland
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service Hub – 07 3240 8900
  - BUSHkids referrals - <https://www.bushkids.org.au/individual-referral-form/>
  - Family Child Health Hubs

### Professional practice

- Lead, advocate, and act in the best interests of children, families, themselves, and others.
- Undertake regular professional development to build understanding of supporting children's behaviour.
- Promote teacher/educator wellness and share behaviour support 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 advice and support through your C&K Early Childhood Pedagogy Advisor (ECPA).
- Document and implement a [Risk Assessment- Complex Behaviours](#) to support children who may display complex and/or escalating behaviours.

### The physical environment

- Provide a responsive learning environment with children's input.
- Provide equipment and materials reflective of the children's emerging abilities and interests.
- Arrange and maintain the learning environment in a clutter free, organised manner with consideration to children's sensory needs and safety.
- 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.
- Minimise frustrations by providing sufficient 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 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.
- In consultation with your Early Childhood Education Manager/Committee, consider if lowering the educator to child ratio, an alternative room/group or a smaller group size might better support the needs of children.

### Routines and rituals

- Recognise the rhythm of the day in relation to routines, rituals, relationships, and expectations impact social learning and participation. Most children respond well to the predictable structure of routines that help them understand what happens in each part of the day, creating a sense of safety.
- Implement relaxed and unhurried routines and transitions. For example:
  - Allow flexibility to respond to children's individual needs e.g., opportunities for children to eat when hungry.
  - Maximise choice e.g., quiet activities for children who prefer not to sleep.
  - Provide large blocks of time for child-initiated play.
  - Avoid large group activities that involve children sitting for long periods of time.

### When a child displays concerning behaviours

- **As soon as possible**, discuss concerns with the centre Director and the child's parent/guardian in a private and scheduled meeting as per to the *Communicating with Families Procedure*. Consider and reflect upon the following questions:
  - *What are the possible causes of the behaviour?*
  - *Is the behaviour age/developmentally appropriate or related to learning a new skill?*
  - *Are my expectations reasonable and are my interactions contributing to the behaviour? Be aware of the extent to which your mood and energy levels affect children's behaviour.*
  - *Are my responses consistent and support children to understand expectations and identify boundaries?*

# NQS5 Relationships with children

## Procedure

### Supporting Children's Behaviour

- *Are there identifiable triggers? Are there times or situations when the behaviour is more likely to occur?*
- *How is the child likely to be feeling? Behaviours do not always mean the same thing to a child as an adult. Putting yourself in their situation can offer solutions to the best way to respond to a child's behaviour.*
- If a child displays concerning behaviours AND requires additional support to participate in the program:
  - **Kindergarten** complete an online *C&K KISS Inclusion Form* Refer to [KISS Guidelines](#).
  - **Childcare** seek Inclusion Development Fund (IDF) support- managed in QLD by [KU](#). Eligibility assessed case by case. Create a [Strategic Inclusion Plan \(SIP\)](#) identifying barriers, possible strategies, and actions. Communicate through out process with ECPA and ECEM and KU Inclusion Professional (if child IDF eligible).
- Document concerning incidents via [Child Behaviour Record](#).
- In consultation with the child's parents/guardians, develop, document, and maintain a [Behaviour Support Plan](#).
- When required and with the parent/guardian's consent (via [Permission to access services to support inclusion Form](#)), seek support and information from external professionals.
- Supporting children with concerning behaviours may 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).

#### When a child's behaviour is complex and escalating

- Teachers/educators have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for children and adults. When a child's behaviour escalates and the safety of children and teachers/educators or others is at risk, allow time and space for the child to calm down. This may require moving the remainder of the children inside whilst the child demonstrating complex behaviour is outside, but within teacher/educator sight and supervision.
- Physical restraint/intervention is NOT a behaviour support strategy, but rather a response to protect the immediate safety of the child, other children and/or teachers/educators. Physical intervention is only appropriate where there is an immediate and high risk to a person's safety and non-physical interventions have been exhausted. Any physical intervention must be reasonable, proportionate, and necessary. If physical intervention is required, minimal force only is to be applied for the shortest time needed to maintain safety.
- In all instances where physical intervention is required, an [Child, Centre Incident Record](#) must be completed. The child's parents/guardians must be informed within 24hrs of the incident occurring.
- When practical, immediately contact and seek support from your ECPA.

#### Branch centres only:

- If a child's behaviour needs are rated HIGH as per the C&K Risk Matrix, your ECPA will initiate a Wellbeing and Inclusion Advisory Group (WIAG) management meeting. This meeting must occur prior to the child's enrolment or immediately after diagnosis (of an enrolled child) or presenting complex/challenging behaviour. WIAG includes the Regional Manager and/or ECEM, the centre Director, ECPA, Wellbeing and Inclusion Manager, the Quality and Regulation Manager, the Workplace Health and Safety Manager and a member of the Legal, Risk and Governance team.
- If a centre 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, teachers/educators or others, the matter may be escalated to the Chief Operations Officer.
- To support teacher/educator wellbeing, contact ECPA or WHS team to apply for professional supervision.

#### Early Childhood Education Manager and Early Childhood Pedagogy Advisors

- Observe children's behaviour and provide teachers/educators with appropriate support and advice.
- When required, work alongside teachers/educators and model behaviour support strategies.
- Sight, review and provide input and feedback on *Behaviour Support Plans*.
- When required and appropriate, attend meetings with teachers/educators, parents/guardians, and external professionals.
- Develop and facilitate appropriate training.
- When a child's behaviour is beyond the expertise of teachers/educators, promptly advise Regional Manager. When appropriate and approved, source appropriate external support.

## Acknowledgements and references

- ACECQA (2018) *Supporting children to regulate their own behaviour*
- Australian Government: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace, 2009. *Belonging, being and becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. 1st ed. Canberra: Australian Government.
- Australian Government: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace, 2011. *My time our place: Framework for school age care in Australia*. 1st ed. Canberra: Australian Government.
- Porter, L. (2010). *A guidance approach to discipline: Practitioner workbook*. Brisbane: Small Poppies International.
- 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*

## Appendix 1 - Positive support strategies

When responding to a child's behaviour it is important to do so in a way that maintains their rights and dignity. Where possible, take the time to reflect on the best way to respond, rather than to simply react. However, in some situations, educators may need to respond quickly if safety is an issue.

Positive Strategy	Example
<b>Focus on building strengths and positive aspects of behaviour</b>	<p>Help children to feel good about themselves and to appreciate, care for and respect for others.</p> <p><i>"Thanks, Jack for putting the hammers/ nails back in their stand. Thank you for helping to keep your friends safe."</i></p>
<b>Redirect</b>	<p>Offer materials, equipment and experiences that engage their interests.</p> <p><i>"I understand that you feel frustrated waiting, but Sam is still playing with it. Shall we look for something else to do while you wait?"</i></p> <p>Offer choices and let children make decisions.</p> <p><i>"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?"</i></p>
<b>Provide explanations and encouragement</b>	<p>Help children to understand what is acceptable and what is not.</p> <p><i>"It is OK to throw the ball outside but when inside we just roll it. That way, we won't hurt our friends or spoil their games. Could you help xxxx to fix their building. S/he is feeling sad."</i></p>
<b>Be firm when you need to be</b>	<p>Children need adults to set reasonable boundaries and help them organise their feelings and responses.</p> <p><i>"It is not OK to hit xxxx with the spade. Please put it back in the basket and go get a drink of water. When you come back, we can talk about why you are feeling angry and how you could manage those feelings another time, so that a friend doesn't get hurt."</i></p>
<b>Provide support and help through modeling</b>	<p>Help children feel secure, communicate what they want and express their feelings appropriately.</p> <p><i>"I know this is hard for you, but I will help you."</i></p> <p><i>"Sally are you trying to play a game with Tom? Can you see that he looks sad? I don't think he likes being splashed! Perhaps you could hold the container while Tom fills it up with water? Tom would it be O.K. if Sally helped?"</i></p>
<b>Avoid encouraging 'hollow' gestures</b>	<p>We want children to develop empathy and care for others, but it is of no value to insist on "I'm sorry!" without genuine feeling. Rather, challenge them to think about how their actions have made the other child feel.</p> <p><i>"I understand that you are angry because you didn't win the game, but it is not O.K to throw all the pieces on the floor! Isla and Jess were still playing and now they are feeling upset! I wonder what you could do to help, so that they can finish their game."</i></p>
<b>Avoid power struggles</b>	<p>In situations where there are strong feelings and direct conflict, work to make some concessions for the child.</p> <p><i>"We did agree that your time would be up in 5 minutes, but I can see how frustrated you are feeling. Caitlin has been waiting for her turn, but perhaps she will let you finish that little bit first. Would that be O.K. Caitlin? Caitlin is very patient to wait, but when the timer goes off, it will be her turn, and we can find a new game for you to play. O.K?"</i></p>