

Positive Behaviour Guidance Policy

Date: July 1995, Revised - March 2001, revised - September 2004, reviewed June 2008, reviewed 29/07/11, reviewed 14/02/14, reviewed 12/05/17, reviewed 9/4/19

Adopted by Management Committee: _____ **Dated:** _____

Aim:

To support each child to understand how their actions affect others and assist staff in engaging children in the program, to maintain a proactive, consistent, fair and responsive approach to the guidance of child behaviour in order to provide a happy, safe and secure environment in which learning can occur.

Rationale:

Adults perform a significant role as a model for the behavioural education of children. Children learn to behave in a socially acceptable way through the role modelling and positive reinforcement of adults. Children learn from observation.

Positive Behaviour Guidance teaches children to be self-disciplined and to have an understanding of how their actions affect themselves and more importantly, others around them. When expectations are clear and understood, children feel safe and secure in their environment resulting in happy, confident children which positively improves self-esteem.

At University Preschool and Child Care Centre, we take a preventative and positive approach as opposed to a reactive response to behaviour guidance, endeavouring to minimise occasions where guidance is required. Research suggests that positive approaches are most effective in minimising challenging behaviours. A behaviour guidance policy ensures that all staff (permanent and relief) are clear and consistent about what behaviours are important for children to learn, for the protection and safety of themselves and others.

What is Positive Behaviour Guidance?

Behaviour Guidance is an adult teaching/showing a child:

- * What is appropriate or not appropriate to do
- * What is safe
- * What angers or hurts
- * What pleases
- * Why

It is essential that at all times, behaviour guidance is a positive experience for all involved. This occurs when behaviour guidance:

- * Does not damage self-esteem, but allows children to feel capable, competent and a pleasure to others
- * Takes into account the child's developmental understanding and abilities - recognising that needs and behaviours change as children grow
- * Praises attempts and acknowledges caring, cooperative, desirable behaviour
- * Is expressed positively - i.e. 'walk inside' – rather than 'don't run inside'
- * Provides simple explanations and offers alternatives so that a child can make judgments/choices for themselves and in time learn to make more appropriate choices
- * Shows what to do - not just what not to do
- * Is consistent
- * Is based on self-control - not coercion
- * Leads to self-discipline - recognising this is a long-term process
- * Is considered as a learning experience and consequently a normal part of a child's development.

Strategies: [\(Refer also Strategies for helping children resolve conflict\)](#)

In order for positive behaviour guidance to be effective, it is important that the environment at the centre is organised in such a way that we prevent as far as possible, a situation occurring where guidance is required. University preschool and Child Care centre's approach to positive behaviour guidance is child led and adult guided. A constructivist approach develops children's critical thinking as to how their behaviour can impact others, to manage their own behaviour and fosters a sense of agency in children.

Prevention Techniques to be used by staff include:

- Establishing trust and respect with all children - children are more likely to respond positively if they have a good relationship with them.
- Ensuring that all children are treated equally being especially aware of those children who regularly display positive behaviours and who don't require disciplinary intervention, as well as those with challenging behaviours.
- Clear consistent routines and expectations are set. When children understand what is expected of them, they are supported to be more able to make appropriate choices.
- Ensuring that the centre is set up so as to minimise 'disruptive' behaviour, e.g. enough and varied equipment offered to cater for each age level, clear traffic flows are used etc.
- Planning a pattern of quiet and active activities to prevent over-excitement or over-tiredness.
- Being alert to settle or redirect play at the beginning or ending of an activity (transitions times). Give sufficient notice that a change of activity is about to occur.
- Model behaviours that we expect the children to use e.g. providing examples of caring and cooperative behaviour, speaking appropriately to children and other staff members, listening to what children are saying, taking each other's feelings/opinions into account etc.
- Be sure to give attention to appropriate behaviour with specific praise e.g. 'You waited so patiently for your turn'; 'That was very kind of you to help Libby find her shoe'.
- Using positive language, avoiding using 'Don't' and 'No,
- Constantly taking into account the child's developmental needs, abilities, and behaviours, considering their background and possible reasons for behaviour.
- Spending time teaching acceptable behaviours in small group times.
- Provide adequate opportunities for children to express themselves through Arts and other mediums.

When Prevention doesn't work.

It is inevitable that there will be times when children behave in an inappropriate way and intervention is necessary.

- Try first to distract/diffuse a situation – provide the child with choices to develop agency. e.g. child is resisting sitting down... (pat chair) Come sit down, who would you like to sit with?' Or if a child is throwing sand.... "Let's fill the dump truck, then we can tip it over".
- Use 'do's' instead of 'do not's' giving a simple, brief explanation so that the child can make sense of them and later, apply them independently, e.g. 'It's fine to run, but outside. Inside - there are too many games on the floor and you could slip and hurt yourself or spoil someone's work'.
- Use a firm, calm manner indicating what you expect from the child - presenting it to the child as a choice wherever possible, e.g. "You can stay in the sandpit and play sensibly, or you can ride a bike - and come back to the sandpit when you feel calmer".
- Be clear about the consequences for the child when behaviour differs from this explanation, e.g. Removal from the situation, help clean up the mess, time in.
- Follow through with the consequences - If a child responds 'I don't care'- affirm that YOU do, e.g. 'I care - I don't want to see another child unhappy'. Proceed to direct that child from the situation, direct to another space or activity; when the child has calmed down, return to the child and talk it over - if the child is very angry, offer to sit with the child, or tell them you will give them a little longer before returning, reassure you are available if they need.
- Let the child know why their behaviour was not appropriate, allow the child to come up with their own alternatives if this situation occurs again, provide the child with strategies, reassure you are here to help them if they need.
- WHEN IT'S OVER...it is essential to restore a positive relationship between you and the child before either of you goes home, e.g. Read a story, comment on a positive behaviour you observe the child carrying out.
- Cool Down Time/Time - In certain instances it is appropriate that children are given cool down time, to enable the situation to calm down, the child to calm down or other children to be protected. At UPCCC "Cool-Down Time" is a time to calm down, gain control of their emotions and reflect. It does not involve removing the child from the room or other area that they are using. It refers to using distraction and if required, inviting the child to move away from the activity or group of children they are with at the time the behaviours occurred to break the behaviour from being ongoing or escalating. I.e. The child may be asked to engage in an activity with a staff member or directed to a quiet place in the room to ensure the child/children

has the time and support to gain composure before re-joining play with peers. Depending on the developmental stage of the child, they may gain more from increased one on one time with an educator strengthening relationships and building the skills required. Children are encouraged to reflect as part of the learning process. In order to be effective, cool down time must be kept short. As a guide the length of time could be determined by the child's age i.e. one (1) minute for each year of the child's age. (Max. 5 mins.) after which time the child is asked to communicate which activity they'd like to participate in or what the appropriate behaviour is. Ensure that the child carries out the nominated activity. At times, 'Cool-Down Time' is more time one on one with an educator to support the child to gain

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENTAL LEVELS ARE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT AT ALL TIMES.

Restrictive Practices which limit the free movement of a child is only to be used as a last resort, in the least restrictive way and for the shortest period possible in the circumstances when the safety of children is involved. Any restrictive practice must be reported to the Director.

Confidentiality:

At no time are specific children to be discussed in front of other children or adults (visitors, parents etc.) as general classroom discussion. This is to be kept for an area that is private such as the staffroom, office, or non-contact time rooms. Information concerning a child's behaviour is not to be conveyed to parents in front of a child. The child is to be removed from the situation or a time organised for a private discussion.

Specific Inappropriate Behaviours (Refer also [Procedure for persistent inappropriate behaviour](#))

1. **Hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, attacking, throwing things...**
 - Give attention to the hurt child (Call another staff member if necessary)
 - Kneel and talk to the child engaged in the inappropriate behaviour directly. Identify and explain what the unacceptable behaviour is and why. eg. 'Please be gentle with Tim, hitting hurts...'
 - If child is thrashing etc., direct other children away. Stand nearby and when child has calmed, reassure the child that it will be all right.
 - Praise for calming down.
 - Use cool down time or time in, to allow child to calm down or think about actions.
 - If ongoing, a closer look may need to be taken at the child's overall behaviour and a Positive behaviour support plan may be required. Refer 'Procedure for Persistent Inappropriate Behaviour'.
2. **Biting** (Refer also [Procedure for Dealing with Repeated Biting Incidents](#))
 - Comfort hurt child - call another adult if necessary. Attend to hurt child and engage them in another activity
 - 0 – 3 year old children:
 - Break contact
 - Use verbal explanation, using simple words e.g. 'Biting hurts... no biting... look Sam is sad... it hurts'
 - 3 – 5 year old children
 - Cool down time
 - Explanation of why behaviour is not acceptable - 'Biting hurts, you can tell Sam you were reading the book instead of biting...'
 - Encourage child to reflect on more appropriate strategies for dealing with the situation
 - Calming activity – Redirection
 - Comfort hurt child
 - Reinforce acceptable behaviour
 - If ongoing, a closer look may need to be taken at the child's overall behaviour and a Positive behaviour support plan may be required. Refer 'Dealing with Repeated Biting Incidents.'

3. **Swearing**

- * Let child know those words are not appropriate for school e.g. 'We don't use those words here.'

Spitting

- * Stop child from spitting and say 'If you have to spit, do it in the toilet or a tissue, ie. Tell them where they can spit, but that they cannot spit at people. Explain that this may spread germs. Older children can help clean up and disinfect the area.'

5. **What to do when children refuse to join in activities.**

- * Assess situation, as Educator, what are your goals here. Is this a safety issue?
- * At UPCCC, we encourage children to have choice in whether they choose to participate. Educators can continue to encourage by providing choices and explain reasoning why they would like them to participate to support understanding. Eg. "You can sit with Sarah or there is a spot next to Molly?"
- * Simply accept this. Move on with an air of gentle control. Make it clear you will help if the children want help, but do not force them. The children will usually respond when you say 'If you want to watch for a while, that's okay...and if you need help or want to talk, I'll be right here (or) you can join in when you're ready'. Do not let this take away from the rest of the group.

Characteristics of Children

Babies

Behaviour Guidance begins at birth, along with other teaching and learning. Teachers must be ready to distract, guide, re-direct attention and interest, and remove temptation.

Toddlers

Toddlers are egocentric - the world revolves solely around them. They have little regard for other's needs, rights and feelings therefore when they hurt or offend others, they usually do not understand fully what they have done. They can at times do terrible things with good intentions! e.g. A two year old gives a toy to a crying baby by dropping it on his head. Toddlers are exploring their world through hands on experience - poking, jabbing, pulling etc. Therefore, they don't need to be stopped from interacting with other children but shown how to do it gently.

It is characteristic for under 3's to lack willpower or self-control (they simply cannot stop themselves). Many acts that are labelled aggressive or impulsive are due to the child's inability to inhibit or stop.

THEREFORE...We should not expect them to share, play together or cooperate. We can avoid conflict by distracting children from a situation and ensuring that enough resources are available. Disapproval of behaviour should come through the teacher's tone of voice and manner and kept for situations that really matter, when safety or a child's wellbeing is at risk. E.g. biting, hurting someone - not necessarily taking things from other children.

Preschool children 3-5 years

Preschool aged children are less egocentric than younger children and have more advanced cognitive skills. They know more about appropriate ways of behaving, have more self-control and begin to recognise their own triggers.

Are fairly skilled in the use of language and can understand language well.

THEREFORE...We can reasonably expect them to share, deal with situations using language rather than physical force, respond to requests from both peers and adults, make choices and be responsible for their own actions by accepting the consequences, as well as be empathetic towards other children and adults.

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University Preschool & Child Care Centre, *Mission Statement, Philosophy & Centre Aims*

Date for Review: April 2021



Strategies for Helping Children to Resolve Conflict

How do children learn to resolve conflicts? Their biggest influences is both our attitude and our response. As we are primary role models, they learn by observing us deal with our own conflicts, and most profoundly by our interactions with them. These core lessons, instilled early on, become part of our psyche and can overrule everything we absorb intellectually later in life.

They also develop their conflict resolution skills through early interactions with siblings and peers. Through trial and error, children discover how to achieve the desired results, which might be expressing their feelings or defining personal boundaries without undoing their connection to the people involved.

Conflict resolution is an art rather than a science, because each situation presents so many unique variables. Each individual's temperament, perceptions, baggage, etc. all come into play. Should they fight it out? Insist? Give in? Or just walk away? There's no one-size-fits-all approach.

So children can all use as much practice as they can get, especially young children. Beyond exposing our children to everyday social situations — how else can we help children learn to manage and resolve conflict?

In short, by allowing them to experience it with our support. Providing this support means learning when and how to intervene. Here are some do's and don'ts:

1. Don't resolve conflicts for them - It's a big challenge to let go of our adult wish to tie a neat bow around our children's disagreements and avoid their emotional outbursts. But our interventions can prevent children from learning much of anything other than that they are dependent on us to fix these situations and that they are incapable of handling conflicts themselves.

Resolving it for them includes demanding that toddlers share or take turns, as well as offering ideas and suggestions like, "How about you both hold onto the bucket and carry it together? There you go!" The challenge is to allow children to safely engage in conflict and resolve it their way, rather than letting our discomfort or impatience get the better of us. The more we say and do for our children in these situations, the less they will learn to handle themselves. Trust and patience must precede learning. However, depending on the age of the child, these other strategies do need to be scaffolded to be drawn on later.

2. Don't neglect to protect - Some misinterpret "respectful discipline" as simply telling children not to hit, bite, etc., rather than physically intervening. Children need both. They need us to be ready to prevent these harmful behaviours if possible, blocking or calmly shadowing children who have demonstrated these behaviours in the past (or seem in an out-of-sorts mood that day).

3. Don't shame or lecture by pointing out the obvious - One of our goals should be to help children build confidence to deal with conflicts, but much of the expert advice commonly given strips confidence away. Here's an example:

Saying things like – "look at Jonny's face, he is hurt, do you see how he looks? Do you see how your actions hurt Jonny?"

For very young children they may not have the cognition to understand this of others yet. Generally, these are momentary impulses beyond a young child's control, and our job is to help children with these impulses.

4. Don't yell or use an angry tone or expression

Again, this creates shame, wears away confidence and fuels the undesirable behaviour by giving it negative attention.

5. Don't take sides - Taking sides creates "bad guys" and "helpless victims".

6. Do make "remain neutral"

7. Do acknowledge both sides

8. Do protect children by preventing hitting, pushing or repetitive toy talking calmly and confidently, and shadow a child who seems to be having a difficult day.

If children seem to be caught in a pattern of hitting, biting, pushing (or other limit-pushing behaviour), they need our help and protection. They might be:

- Tired
- Hungry
- Seeking the firm limits they are not getting at home

- Angry, frustrated, overwhelmed
- Releasing stress
- Feeling over-excited, overstimulated, out of control

If we don't catch the behaviour in time to prevent it, firmly and matter-of-factly remind the child, "You want that toy, but I won't let you hit" or model "Can I please have a turn?" Leave it at that.

4. Do let infants and toddlers take toys, because this is on their short list of "playing together" possibilities. Only intervene to protect an older toddler's more elaborate projects or when a child seems stuck in a pattern of toy taking.

5. Do keep an open mind – This means allowing children to do it their way, which will be different from our way most of the time. Trust is our biggest challenge.

6. Do wait rather than putting a time limit on conflict, even if it seems intense. If no one's getting hurt, it is healthy for children to release these feelings.

Aim:

To provide a clear set of guidelines to be followed by staff in cases where a child's disruptive behaviour persists over a period of time and may result in harm to other children and/or staff of the Centre.

Explanation:

These behaviours include aggressive behaviours such as hitting, biting, kicking, swearing and may be a result of a developmental stage that a child is going through, or of environmental, psychological or emotional influences on the child.

This procedure is in addition to our Behaviour Guidance Policy and is used when inappropriate behaviours persist after the usual strategies outlined in our Behaviour Guidance Policy have been implemented.

Implementation: -

1. A Positive Behaviour Support Plan will be created to support, staff, families and the child.
2. *AT ALL TIMES THE INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENTAL LEVELS OF THE CHILDREN WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT*
3. *CONFIDENTIALITY WILL BE MAINTAINED AT ALL TIMES*
4. Educators will consider what is in the best interests of the individual child and the other children in the group and will offer ongoing support to the parents.
5. Educators will ensure that the child's parents are kept informed of any behavioural and developmental issues relating to their child.
6. Staff will attempt to modify the behaviours as per our Behaviour Guidance Policy and with consideration to the individual developmental stages of the child and the needs of the other children in the group.
7. If the behaviour is ongoing the child should be observed and instances of the inappropriate behaviour recorded to try and establish a pattern or cause. These observations should be signed by the person making the observation. Room staff should also notify the Director of the nature of the behaviour and, where known, possible reasons or causes for the behaviour.
8. The Director will contact the parents of the child and organise a meeting between them, the Director, the Group Leader and other staff involved in the care of the child as considered necessary. This meeting will need to take place within two weeks of the Director being notified. During this discussion input will be sought from the parents as to any background information they can supply that may help with establishing possible reasons for the behaviour. Appropriate strategies for dealing with the behaviour will also be discussed to ensure that management of the behaviour is consistent between the Centre and home. These strategies may include seeking additional support and resources from external referral agencies, ie. [Parentline](#) ACT. At this meeting a follow-up meeting will also be organised to occur in approximately 3 weeks.
9. Once staff and parents have agreed on strategies for dealing with the behaviour all staff that care for the child will be informed of the situation. To ensure consistency of practice between UPCCC and the home environment, the agreed strategies will then be implemented by all staff while the child is in attendance at UPCCC and by the parents when the child is with them. Staff will continue to monitor the child's behaviour and record instances of inappropriate behaviour. This will indicate whether instances of the behaviour are becoming less frequent. It is important that similar strategies are followed consistently between home and UPCCC to enable accurate monitoring of their effect. If the parents are experiencing difficulties in implementing these in the home environment they should discuss this with the Room Leader or Director as soon as possible and prior to the second meeting.
10. If at any time the child is deemed by staff to be a danger to themselves, the staff or other children, the family will be contacted and asked to take the child home for that day. Before this action is taken a written and signed observation of the behaviour and agreement by two staff members will be necessary.
11. If by the second meeting with the parents there has been no progress it may be necessary to consider other alternatives. These may include referring the child for assessment with another agency or Paediatrician, to determine if there are any underlying health/medical reasons for the behaviour; and/or considering the benefits to the child of alternate care arrangements for all or some of the days that they attend UPCCC.
12. Continued follow-up meetings and monitoring of the child's behaviours will be organised. If at any time during this process it is felt that the child's parents are not fully cooperating in the process and the child's behaviours are not seen to be improving UPCCC may decide to reassess the child's ongoing enrolment.

Background:

Biting is fairly common amongst young children and it is one of the things that worries parents and staff most in a child care environment. Biting is the way that infants explore the world. They put everything into their mouths. There are different types of biting, experimental, frustration, exercising power and biting under stress. The response to frustration, exercising power and biting under stress are our concern here. There are things we can do to deter children from biting as a means of meeting their emotional needs and expressing feelings and to protect children from being bitten either randomly or in response to an interaction with another child. Altering a child's impulsive responses to a situation requires time for change. Both staff and parents can feel angry, guilty and disempowered when a spate of biting occurs in a play environment and need support. Even the best supervision, unless it is one to one, will not prevent some children from getting a quick bite. In a child care setting we are unable to provide one to one supervision and therefore cannot give a guarantee that biting will not occur.

Aim:

To ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent or minimise biting.

To ensure that when a child is biting or bitten staff keep parents well informed of the practical steps they are taking to:

- Protect children from being bitten successively or unwittingly provoke a child to bite them.
- Support the biting child to understand his/her feelings and teach him/her how to manage feelings differently.
- Ensure the play environment and daily routines allow for minimal opportunity for biting to occur especially in the toddler sections.
- Monitor recurring biting.
- Enable staff to feel supported in their role as educators and teachers when dealing with changing behaviour.

Scope:

This procedure applies to staff and parents attending the centre.

Linked Policies

Behaviour Guidance Policy

Behaviour Guidance – Persistent Inappropriate Behaviour

Implementation – For Educators:

1. A Positive Behaviour Support plan may be required.
2. Plan ahead when possible to avoid situations where you know a child might bite. Respond promptly, firmly and calmly to biting.
3. Show your disapproval, distract or guide the child away from the situation and help them find another outlet for expressing their feelings.
4. Give the child positive attention every day to build self-esteem.
5. Try to find out what is causing the stress, frustration or triggering the biting behaviour and cut down the situation to one the child can cope with.
6. Watch for situations where two children might want the same toy and step in first to distract them.
7. Supervise known 'biters' closely and acknowledge their feelings, "You were very upset when Peter took your truck". "If you feel angry tell me and I will help you". "Biting hurts".
8. Support and comfort the bitten child and include the biting child into the situation to develop empathy – show them the hurt.
9. If a child bites or is bitten an Accident/Incident report should be filled out and discussed with the parents to inform them of the steps you are taking.
10. If the situation becomes serious – more than three successive biting incidents, inform the Director.
11. The Director or the Room Leader will contact the parents and if they require, arrange a time to discuss the factors contributing to the biting incidents and a plan of action for future management.

12. For Parents

13. If your child has shown signs of biting in the home situation please inform their Educators so that they are aware that they may attempt to bite a child while at UPCCC.
14. If your child is biting at home or other situation outside of UPCCC discuss with Educators appropriate strategies to follow to ensure consistency between home and UPCCC.
15. If you receive an accident/Incident report from us that your child has bitten another child please talk with their Educators to find out the circumstances and what steps they are taking to reduce the likelihood of it happening again.

16. If the biting continues to be a problem, we will contact you to organise a time to discuss the factors contributing to the biting incidents and a plan of action for future management.

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