

Procedure Title:	Behaviour Management
Effective Date:	December 2010
Review Date:	As necessary under the Policy and Procedure Development Policy

The following are some techniques of behaviour management:

Prevention

- Try to get to know the children – they are more likely to respond to your expectations if they sense you know and like them.
- Change the environment to facilitate considerate movement. Set up a child friendly environment that is safe, where children can be independent and provide appropriately programmed experiences to keep the children stimulated.
- Be aware of the need to settle or redirect play at the beginning and/or end of activities – ie. transition times.
- Plan patterns of active and restful activities – prevent overexcitement.
- Provide good modeling behaviour – children learn through imitation
- Give attention to good behaviour with specific praise
- Remember a child's developmental needs, abilities and behaviours
- Remember also, when children are not yet sure of you they may act inappropriately to get your attention.

If prevention doesn't work

- Try first to distract or diffuse a situation, giving children a release.
- Use DOs rather than DON'Ts and give brief explanations
- Respond in a calm but firm manner, indicating what you expect from the child and what choice they have.
- Help the child to realise the consequences of their actions.
- Follow through with the consequences. When it is all over it is essential to restore a positive relationship between you and the child, before either of you go home.

What To Do When...

One child bites another

Attend first to the victim to comfort them and assess the situation.

1. Apply First Aid. First Aid must be applied by a permanent staff member. Wash areas with soap and water, apply a cold compress for 10 to 20 minutes to reduce swelling. Cover with band aid if skin is broken.
2. While attending to the victim (or immediately after) draw in the biter. Explain the situation and the consequences of his/her action in language the biter can understand. Younger children need to see disapproval (facial expression) while older children may be drawn into a more complex explanation. Encourage the biter to help with first aid so s/he is then touching the hurt child in a gentle and positive way. With an older child you may be able to talk about how and why the situation occurred and encourage the biter to verbalise their feelings.
3. Write an accident report. Generally staff do not tell parents who has bitten their child, for fear of the biter being labeled or victimised by others. If the biting is an ongoing concern staff and parents will follow this up further.
4. If biting is an ongoing concern with a particular child the parents should be informed and strategies developed that are consistent between home and the Centre. (Refer to the Biting Prevention Policy).

Points to remember:

- Correct the behaviour not the child. Afterwards involve the biter in a positive experience to show that you still like them as a person.
- Prevention is the key issue, be aware of children likely to bite, when this occurs and why.
- Recognise why children bite – remember developmental stages.
- Remember in most cases – ‘time-out’ is not the answer. Children need to talk to you about what happened and help them reach appropriate solutions. This one-to-one communication between carer and biter needs to occur immediately after the bite has occurred.

Children swear:

0 – 2 year olds

Ignore the swearing. In most cases with children of this age they are experimenting with words and language. If you show a strong reaction to a swear word it is likely you will reinforce the effect swear words have.

Redirect the child’s language by questioning them about their play, what they are doing and things around them, etc.

2 – 5 year olds

As children get older they learn the effects of using swear words. Assess the situation: remember there is usually a reason why the child is swearing. Deal with the issue which has lead to the child swearing. Encourage children to talk about what has happened and develop solutions to work through the problem.

Teach children to use appropriate language to express how they feel., eg. "I'm angry because Andy pushed me." Model appropriate language skills. Tell children that we don't like those words at the Centre and tell them what sorts of words they can use here. Children may say "But my Mum says that" or "I can say that at home". You can reply by saying: "That's OK but you can't use that word at the Centre."

If swearing is an ongoing problem with a particular child talk to the child about how it makes you and the other children feel when s/he uses those words, talk about why s/he uses those words and talk about words the child can use instead of swearing. Talk to the parents of the child if swearing is an ongoing problem. Devise methods of dealing with swearing that are consistent between home and the Centre.

Dealing with Temper tantrums:

It is important to realise that most children reach a stage in their development where they are becoming independent yet need to feel secure. The world is exciting and invites exploration, yet can be frustrating and temper tantrums are beginning. Tantrum behaviour includes; stamping feet, throwing themselves on the ground, screaming and whinging.

1. Assess the situation:
 - Why has the tantrum occurred? Usually a child will tantrum because they have been denied something they want to have or something they want to do.
 - Is the child likely to hurt themselves or another child? If so it may be necessary to clear a space free from objects and "onlookers".
2. Ignore the behaviour:
 - don't look
 - don't touch
 - don't say anything AND
 - don't give in!
3. Reason with the child after they have calmed down. It is important to talk about what has happened. Children are beginning to learn ways of expressing how they feel and often can be shocked by the force of their own emotions (especially if it is the first time they have had a tantrum). They need to know you still like them as a person but didn't like what they just did. By talking and reasoning with children we believe it teaches them that it is OK to feel angry, frustrated or upset while helping them express these emotions in an appropriate way.

- For a young child this may simply be a cuddle while giving them something else to do.
- For an older child it is important to verbalise what has happened, talk about other ways of dealing with the situation, explaining why they couldn't do what they wanted to do (eg. it's dangerous). By doing this you are showing the child that you still like them and are restoring a positive relationship with the child.
- Help the child rejoin the play.
- If in a difficult situation with a child, ask for help from another staff member if you need it. Staff need to respect how another staff member is dealing with a situation; offer help, but check first that the other staff member wants or needs help.

Children have a Toilet Training Accident:

It is important to remember that toilet trainers need to be taken to the toilet regularly to prevent them from wetting or soiling. Toilet training is like any other learning process. Children learn through trial and error, through their own mistakes. Children need lots of positive reinforcement when they do successfully use the toilet. If a child wets or soils don't get angry. They are learning to master this new and complicated skill so...

- Be patient and remember often children get upset or embarrassed when they have a toileting accident.
- Wear disposable gloves and take off the child's wet clothes and put them in a plastic bag and into the child's bag.
- Take the child to the toilet, even if they don't do anything it is important for the child to develop a cognitive connection between wetting or soiling and actually using the toilet. Stay with the child when they are on the toilet.
- Provide positive feedback and praise for the child.

If it is an older child who has had an accident help them to clean themselves up and get changed. It is common for children to regress in their toilet training so it is important to assess the situation. Is it a one-off accident or is the child wetting regularly? Note any changes in behaviour as a pattern may be evident.

Routines and Transitions Which Require Negotiation:

Packing Away; When Children Do Not Want To Help:

- Inform children in advance that soon it will be time to pack away, this gives them the chance to finish what they are doing. For example: "in 5 minutes we'll be packing away, so start finishing with what you're doing now."
- Model appropriate behaviour.
- Have appropriate expectations of what children can do.
- Assign children to an area to pack away and do it with them, explaining why they need to pack away; for example, "because we need to put the tables out for lunch".

- Provide lots of positive reinforcement to children when they pack away, verbal labeled praise or a non-verbal sign such as a hug, etc. Thank them and let them know you appreciate their help.
- Make packing away enjoyable and a game. For example, "Let's count how many blocks we can carry to the shelves."
- Explain to children who are resisting packing away the consequences of their actions. Eg. "We can't go outside until we have packed these dolls away."

Eating or Not Eating/Playing With Food:

See the Nutrition Policy.

Resisting Bedtime:

If children resist having a sleep on a one-off occasion they are probably using sleep time to test their independence. Avoid placing too much emphasis on "sleep". Tell the children that they need to have a quiet rest on their bed before they can go outside to play. Be firm and matter of fact without drawing too much attention to the situation. Pat the child or give them a back-rub, this may help them to relax and settle. If it becomes an ongoing problem, assess the situation:

- Talk with the child's parents
- Does the child need a daytime sleep or are they growing out of it? How does the child behave in the afternoon if they haven't had a sleep? What are the parents' views on the matter?

For children who do not have daytime sleep explore alternatives for rest time:

- reading books, quiet activities or story tapes and relaxation in a quiet corner in the room

It is important to meet the needs of the child as an individual and this includes recognising that not all children sleep in the day and so providing alternate experiences for these children.

A Note About Crying:

Children (and adults) cry for many reasons, mostly from distress of some kind. For babies, it can be the only way of drawing adult attention to unmet needs. While it is hard caring for a group of children while one cries, the needs and distress of that child should be respected. A crying child needs and deserves attention and confirmation that it is OK to express their distress in tears and other children develop empathy for this. Sometimes a baby is fed, dry, clean and comfortable but still cries. This baby may need the release of crying and it is important to give the baby attention and affection and comfort so they feel secure enough to stop crying.