

Positive Behaviour Guidance Policy and Guidelines

Approved: April 2016 Reviewed: April 2018

Policy Statement

The Whitney Child Centre believes that the foundations for learning are:

Belonging - staff cultivate authentic and caring relationships and connections with children and their families.

Well-Being - staff understand child development and nurture healthy development and well being in all children.

Engagement - staff are committed to creating environments that support exploration, play and inquiry.

Expression - staff foster communication and expression in all forms.

Introduction

The Centre believes that understanding child development and behaviour, including the development of self-regulation is critical to implementing effective positive behaviour guidance. Providing the four basic foundations of learning sets the stage for healthy growth and development of children in all areas, including the ability to guide children positively. We believe children are entitled to quality care in a safe and healthy, secure and loving environment. We believe children are curious and capable learners and need the opportunity to explore their environment and discover their skills and strengths. This involves testing their limits and experimenting with social interactions; it is this testing and experimentation that often results in behaviour that adults find unacceptable. The first step to understanding children's behavior is creating an authentic connection with each child. Staff at the Centre establish rules, routines and structure so that they can create an environment where each child can develop emotionally, mentally, physically and socially, according to their abilities. Appropriate limits are set so the child can explore their world in a safe and respectful setting where they will develop sensitivity for others, respect for property, self-respect and self-regulation. It is vital that staff work as a team and provide a consistent approach, and that families are involved and consulted.

Role of the Teacher

For children to become happy, secure members of society, they must learn how to successfully deal with problems in interpersonal relationships. This involves identifying and labeling feelings, emotions and actions. It involves developing self-regulation and learning self-discipline and inner control as well as positive and constructive ways to interact with other people and to problem solve. It is the role of the teacher to support a child's sense of well-being and self-esteem and individuality, while providing opportunities for the child to learn appropriate ways to interact with others. The teacher acts as a positive role model and sets clear limits and expectations for each child. To ensure a child's safety and well being, and to foster social and emotional development, it is necessary at times to impose

limits or to set standards of acceptable behaviour. Staff are guided by their knowledge and understanding of child development, as well as an understanding of the individual child. Staff always work as a team and must be consistent when enforcing limits and expectations.

Staff avoid power struggles and understand that consequences do not teach appropriate behaviour and punitive discipline is not acceptable. If team conflicts arise regarding approaches to a situation or behaviour the Supervisor must always be consulted to assist with decision-making.

Intervention: A Problem-Solving Approach

The development of self-regulation and social skills follows a sequence from birth to adult. Within this process, infants and toddlers require more adult intervention and closer supervision and guidance. As children grow older, they are able to exercise more self-control and have a greater understanding of concepts such as safety, health and respect for others and for property. Children are by nature problem-solvers, so it is important that intervention strategies used should reflect a problem-solving approach.

The goal of the problem-solving approach is to guide children to think about the problem and solution, rather than solving the problem for them. The process of problem solving with children involves asking children to identify their feelings, to identify the problem, to think about the options, to predict consequences, and to make decisions. Staff look for the cause of the problem and create a plan of approach.

Contravention of the Positive Behaviour Guidance Policy and Guidelines

Legislation

Staff must be familiar with the Child Care and Early Years Act 2014. Part II, Program for Children, Section 48 states prohibited practices. This provision forbids physical punishment and other harmful disciplinary practices to protect the emotional and physical well being of children.

Prohibited Practices

The following are not permitted and constitute contravention of this policy:

- Any form of corporal punishment, including, but not limited to: hitting, spanking, grabbing, kicking, squeezing, pushing, pulling, shaking, pinching or biting.
- Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the use of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is only used as a last resort and only until the risk of danger is no longer imminent.

- The deprivation of a child's basic needs including, food, drink, sleep, toilet use, shelter, clothing, or bedding.
- The use of harsh or degrading measures or threats, or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self worth.
- Locking the exits of the Centre for the purposes of confining a child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures.
- Inflicting any bodily harm on children, including making children eat or drink against their will.

Procedures for Contravention

Any persons engaging in any of the behaviours listed and prohibited in Section 48 of the Child Care and Early Years Act 2014, will be suspended from work, pending an investigation. Engaging in these behaviours may result in termination of employment. ECE staff who have been found to have engaged in such behaviour will be reported to the College of Early Childhood Education.

It is the responsibility of every adult (staff, volunteer, student) to read and understand the Centre's Program Statement, including the Positive Behaviour Guidance Policy and Guidelines, prior to commencing work with the Centre, and to carry these policies out. Failure to do so may result in dismissal.

Any adult (staff, volunteer, student) observed to be using disciplinary measures that contravene the Program Statement which includes the Positive Behaviour Guidance Policy and Guidelines shall be immediately reported to the Supervisor. The Supervisor will inform the President of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring that there is an investigation and disciplinary action is taken where appropriate.

If the Supervisor is seen contravening the Program Statement and Positive Behaviour Guidance Policy and Guidelines he/she shall be immediately reported to the Assistant Supervisor and the Assistant Supervisor will report to the President of the Board of Directors. The President will investigate and meet with the Supervisor to discuss the incident; any disciplinary action will be monitored by the Board of Directors.

Guidelines for Disciplinary Action re: Contravention of the Positive Behaviour Guidance Policy and Guidelines

Any alleged contravention of the Program Statement which includes the Positive Behaviour Guidance Policy and Guidelines by an employee, the Supervisor or a volunteer or student must

be taken to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring that there is an investigation into such allegations.

The following steps are to be used as guidelines in the event of disciplinary action:

- a) identify what happened and the reasons for the alleged occurrence;
- b) discuss the implications with respect to the child;
- c) discuss positive guidance techniques;
- d) document the discussion and have all parties sign; and
- e) a copy of the signed transcript will be kept in the employee's file (or student or volunteer's file, as applicable).

There will be a trial period set in which the employee/volunteer/student is to improve his/her skills, and the Supervisor will monitor. Further discussions will continue, in which the results are again committed to in writing and signed by all parties. If no improvement has been demonstrated over the set period of time, the employee, student or volunteer will be terminated.

If, in the Supervisor's opinion the employee/volunteer/student is not fit to continue the shift, he/she shall be sent home.

If in the opinion of the Supervisor the employee is unfit to return at all, the President of the Board of Directors will be informed immediately. Documentation will be kept and filed at each step.

All staff volunteers and students must report any contravention of this policy to the Supervisor or her designate. In the event the complaint is regarding the Supervisor, the complaint is directed to the Assistant Supervisor and to the President of the Board.

Behavioural Guidelines

General

- When behavioural issues occur, staff will examine the cause of the behaviour, looking at the environment, developmental needs of child, what triggered the behaviour, what occurred?

Staff response is related to the nature of the troublesome behaviour, and appropriate to the developmental level and individual needs of the child.

- Each child deserves individual consideration, since no two personalities necessarily respond to the same types of intervention.
- The goal of intervention is to assist the child to develop self regulation, understand what happened and how it made them feel; to develop empathy and understanding, and have the child problem solve to resolve the problem.
- Intervention should occur immediately, or as soon as possible after the incident or troublesome behaviour.
- A plan of action will be developed and implemented consistently. The plan will be reviewed and assessed regularly to ensure effectiveness.

Specific Techniques

The Do's

- Be patient and calm in your behaviour towards the child.
- State suggestions positively.
- Anticipate problems and intervene positively before they happen.
- Provide directions when appropriate without interfering with the learning process.
- Assist the child if he/she needs help in following directions.
- Model appropriate behaviour at all times.
- Set clear limits, and maintain them consistently.
- Allow the child choices when possible.
- Discuss your follow-up with other staff involved in the child's day.
- Re-direct a child by suggesting activities that are related to his/her own interests, whenever possible.
- When speaking to a group allow some time for issues to be absorbed and allow for group discussion as follow up.
- Body language reinforces verbal language.
- Be constantly alert and aware of both the group as a whole and of the individual child.
- If you must restrain a child, do it calmly, gently and respectfully. Restraint should only be used if a child is in danger of hurting herself or others. (*See volatile situations*)
- If frustrated by a situation, call for another member of staff to help/support.
- Inform the Supervisor of serious or difficult situations, and discuss any problems with the Supervisor. Serious situations are recorded.
- Ensure parents are informed and involved, always with a prior discussion with the Supervisor.

The Don'ts

- Do not try to change behaviour by methods which lead to loss of self-respect, i.e. shaming or labelling behaviour as bad or naughty.
- Do not compare one child's behaviour to another child's.
- Do not give a choice when no real choice is available to the child.
- Do not deal with issues publicly. Always deal with situations quietly and with discretion to avoid humiliation and embarrassment.
- Use direction rather than correction, avoid 'no', 'don't', stop.
- Staff voices are never raised or angry.
- Remember consequences do not teach desirable or appropriate behaviour.

Prevention of Problems

- Close observation helps to anticipate and avoid problems.
- State clear expectations of desired behaviour and check that the children understand them.
- Use clear language.
- Forewarn children of changes to routines or activities.
- Adapt schedules and programmed activities when necessary to meet the needs of the child or group of children.
- Give extra time, encouragement and affection if a child is experiencing frustration or difficulty.
- Remember the child is not giving you a hard time. They are having a hard time.
- Involve children in a discussion of the importance of rules and limits. Do not just tell them something is against the rules. Older children may help decide on the rules and limits that apply to the group. They may also be involved in setting the consequences that result from breaking these rules, and in intervening and problem solving when difficult situations occur, i.e. 'peace keepers'.
- Give audible attention to those who are performing as expected.
- Activities are varied, stimulating, of interest to the child and age appropriate.
- Activities are planned and set up in advance.
- Transitions and waiting periods are kept to a minimum. Stories, music, songs, props and games can be used during waiting periods. Children transition in smaller groups.
- Plan ahead. Be prepared to modify program plans and schedules, if planned activities or routines are not successful.
- Encourage the use of language to enable verbal expression rather than physical.
- Use humour to diffuse a situation, and do not dwell on a situation for a long period of time.
- Build positive relationships with the child and parent. Develop an authentic connection with each child.
- Discuss concerns with the Supervisor. Use staff meetings to discuss and problem solve.
- All staff is responsible for ensuring that goals and expectations are consistent throughout the entire team of staff.
- Encourage children to tell you what their needs are so that they will learn to analyze their own situation realistically, and not be embarrassed or afraid to ask for help; knowing you are willing to help when needed.

- Look for true cause of problem. Target one behaviour at a time.
- Assist the children in identifying feelings and emotions.
- Ensure room is well set up, with no problem areas, i.e. congestion, 'run-ways'.
- Intervene in group dynamics in a calm, friendly and positive manner.
- Do not have unrealistic expectations or expect immediate improvement in response or behaviour.

- Provide natural and logical consequences for inappropriate behaviour. Do not make claims which you cannot follow up on.
- Plan as a team, implement strategies as a team.
- Take time to stand back and observe and record positive behaviour and strengths of the child having difficulty.
- Involve families in problem solving and discussion regarding solutions.
- Ensure parents hear positive anecdotes about their child, not only negative feedback.

Volatile Situations

Physical restraint is only used in situations where a child is in imminent danger of compromising his/her own safety or that of other children or adults in the program.

In the event that a child needs to be restrained physically, the staff member involved with the child should always call for another staff member to be present in the room. This staff will be present as an observer and/or for relief or assistance. If possible a third staff should be called to remove the other children from the area. It is important to remember that the other children in the program must be supervised at all times.

When the child has become calm the staff will supportively reintroduce him/her back into the program and observe closely until he/she has become settled into an activity.

The staff who had to restrain the child will document the incident, sign it and submit it to the Supervisor. The Supervisor and staff member will meet with the child's parents and discuss the incident and determine strategies which may be utilized should a similar situation occur. Parents will sign off on the incident report and on the strategies. Should the child allege to have been injured, the Centre must comply with the Child Abuse Reporting Policy and the Serious Occurrence Policy. The child's parents will receive up-to-date reporting on the child's progress by a mutually agreed method. The Centre will also review the strategies with the parents and revise as necessary.

If the child continues to experience challenging behaviour the Centre will, with permission from parents, call in a consultant for further assistance, guidance and support. The child's parents must consent to this in writing.

The Centre will follow the Inclusion Policy should the behavioural problems not resolve.

Monitoring and Recording

The Supervisor and Board of Directors will review and approve the Program Statement, including the Positive Behaviour Guidance Policy and Guidelines annually.

At the beginning of each school year the Program Statement and Positive Behaviour Guidance Policy and Guidelines will be reviewed with all staff, and staff will sign to confirm this review has occurred. This record must be kept on file for a minimum of 3 years.

The Supervisor or Assistant Supervisor will review the Program Statement, including the Positive Behaviour Guidance Policy and Guidelines with each supply staff, student and volunteer prior to employment or placement, and annually thereafter if applicable, recording their signatures on file, after the review. Records will be kept for a minimum of three years.

The Supervisor will monitor and assess the effectiveness the Centre's Positive Behaviour Guidance Policy and Guidelines and staff performance as it relates to the Policy by:

- Evaluating the climate and atmosphere of each classroom environment.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of routines and transitions.
- By soliciting staff feedback individually or in team or staff meetings.
- By listening to parent feedback, both formal and informal.
- By reviewing accident reports, looking for patterns or issues.
- By observing staff.
- By reviewing positive guidance skills and performance during the annual staff review process.

The Supervisor will ensure:

Positive behaviour guidance is an item on each staff meeting agenda. Staff are able to share, discuss and problem solve.

The Supervisor will ensure staff are supported by having access to research and education on both child development and positive guidance strategies, including education and training.

Access to training is provided for all staff as necessary. Coaching will be provided to staff who are experiencing difficulty.

With parental permission, resource personnel will be consulted for any child who has additional or special needs, in order to support the staff, child and families.

As part of each staff's annual review, staff will sign the WCC Monitoring Prohibited Policies & Practices and the Program Statement and Positive Guidance Monitoring Form. These records will be kept for a minimum of 3 years.

Self-Regulation Information

Basic Concept – Self-regulation

Self-regulation allows children to manage their energy, emotions, behaviour and attention in ways that are acceptable in social situations and that support the achievement of positive goals; this ultimately supports positive relationships, learning, and their overall wellbeing.

Self-regulation allows children to effectively deal with stressors (e.g. noise, light, movement or scary situations) that deplete energy. The depletion of each child's energy reserve in stressful situations is unique to each child (some children will have to work harder than others to perform the same task) (Shanker, 2009, 2010, in press).

Children need the opportunity to explore their environment and discover their capabilities. This involves testing limits and experimenting with social interactions. This experimentation often

results in behaviour that adults may find unacceptable because they exceed set rules, or endanger the safety of the child or others. Given that these situations will occur, we have appropriate strategies for enabling children to redirect their behaviour through self-regulation.

Five Aspects of Self-Regulation

Children's biological temperament and social skills play a factor in how well they can self-regulate. The following five aspects come together to play a significant role in children's ability to self-regulate:

- 1. Biology (Temperament)**
- 2. Emotion-regulation**
- 3. Cognitive factors:**
 - Display effortful control
 - Sustained attention; not easily distracted
 - Attention switching; able to transition between tasks
 - Inhibit impulses
 - Able to deal with frustration, delay, distractions
- 4. Social:** able to develop and use socially-desirable behaviours
- 5. Moral:** the development of empathy and values (Shanker, 2009, 2010, in press)

1. Rationale:

“Early years programs play an important role in supporting children's learning, development, health and well-being. Evidence from diverse fields of study tells us that children grow in programs where adults are caring and responsive. Children succeed in programs that focus on active learning through exploration, play, and inquiry” (Ontario, 2014, p. 4).

For children to become happy and secure members of society, they must learn how to successfully deal with problems in interpersonal relationships. As well as learning self-discipline and inner control, they must also learn positive constructive ways to interact

with other people. As noted by Dr. Stuart Shanker, “self-regulation has been identified as a key factor in wellbeing, learning and development”, (Shanker, 2009, 2010, in press). The role of the educator is to support the child’s sense of being a worthwhile person while providing opportunities for the child to learn appropriate ways to interact socially and with objects. This partnership between the child and the caregiver, vital especially during early childhood, allows for development of flexible self-regulation skills that support change and exploration. Flexible self-regulation stems from the process of internalizing prior patterns observed by the child during caregiver-supported regulation (Goulet, 1998, p. 28).

The goal is to allow children to think out problems rather than to solve problems for them. The problem-solving approach focuses on teaching children morality, over obedience; in teaching morality they become self-disciplined, accountable and considerate. They are able to decide whom to trust and to be influenced by, rather than simply obeying authority, which may come from corrupting sources (Markham, 2014). The process of problem-solving with children involves having children go through the following process: identify their problems, think of alternatives, predict consequences and make decisions. This process must be geared to the developmental level of the individual child. The development of problem-solving skills can and should be encouraged from a very young age.

To ensure the child’s safety and well-being, and to foster social and emotional development, it is necessary at times to impose limits or to set standards of acceptable behaviour. Adults should be guided by their knowledge and understanding of the child’s growth and development, as well as an understanding of the individual child.

As in all areas of child development, the development of self-control and social skills follows a sequence from birth to adulthood. Within this sequence, infants and toddlers require more adult intervention and closer supervision and guidance. As children grow older they are able to exercise more self-control and have a greater understanding of concepts such as health, safety, and respect for others and property. Therefore, external controls can gradually be removed as children develop a sense of responsibility for their own behaviour.

Standard IV: B.4 from the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice reinforces the expectation of educators to “set goals, make decisions, resolve challenges, decide on developmentally responsive activities and experiences, provide behaviour guidance and work collaboratively in the best interest of the children under their professional supervision” (College of Early Childhood Educators, 2016, p. 9).

2. How to Enhance Self-Regulation:

In collaboration with the MEHRIT Centre, Dr. Shanker provides resources for guiding self-regulation including the following five-step method:

1. Read the signs of stress and reframe the behaviour.
2. Recognize the stressors.
3. Reduce the stress.
4. Reflect.

5. Respond (College of Early Childhood Educators, 2016, p. 8).

The strategies below can be used alongside the five-step method to ensure that the steps are used effectively:

Problem Solve: Understand each child's stressors, to help ensure they stay calm and aware.

Exercise: When a child is stressed, exercising their deep muscles is effective.

Planned Programming: By using analogies educators can help children understand their own state of arousal and help them learn how to calm down (e.g. the car analogy, my engine is running too fast, too slow or just right).

Play Based Curriculum: When children are engaged in meaningful experiences (based on their interests), they are focused. This allows the child to define their own thinking and the perspective of others. Through play children communicate their needs and wants, and establish connections between objects, people and ideas (Shanker, 2009, 2010, in press).

3. Strategies for Incorporating Self-Regulation into Curriculum:

Self-Regulation strategies are effective only within the context of the entire curriculum. Ensuring that all curriculum components are of a high quality encourages self-regulation. Within the components of educators, environment, program, parent involvement, and evaluation there are strategies that can be used to encourage self-regulation. Some strategies are outlined below:

Educators

- i) Establishing a positive relationship with the children.
- ii) Having reasonable expectations and communicating them to the children.

Environment

- i) Ensuring health and safety standards are met.
- ii) Appropriate use of space.

Program

- i) Planned daily routine with limited transition times.
- ii) Variety of developmentally appropriate activities.

Parent Involvement

- i) On-going information sharing with parents.
- ii) Opportunity for parent meeting and sharing of resources.

Evaluation

- i) Regular review of guidelines and regulations.

On-going discussion regarding specific situations