

5.4 INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

INTRODUCTION

A positive atmosphere and the wellbeing of children within the Lindfield Montessori Preschool setting is promoted through attentive care and quality interactions with children. Emotional development and social relationships are enhanced through thoughtful and sophisticated approaches to conversation, discussion and promotion of children's language and communication. This is done through our understanding and respect of the child from our Montessori training.

Children who experience relationships that are built on respect, fairness, cooperation and empathy are given the opportunity to develop these qualities themselves. When children have positive experiences of interactions, they develop an understanding of themselves as significant and respected, and feel a sense of belonging.

PURPOSE

Educators at Lindfield Montessori Preschool will:

- be responsive to children's strengths, interests, abilities;
- provide opportunities to become age-appropriate dependant and develop self-esteem;
- uphold children's dignity, rights, and agency;
- provide positive guidance and support towards self-regulation;
- promote a safe, secure and nurturing environment;
- be authentic and responsive;
- be based in fairness, acceptance and empathy with respect for cultural and linguistic rights;
- follow the Montessori philosophy to guide child interactions.

STRATEGIES

Children's Rights, Family and Cultural Values

Interactions within Lindfield Montessori Preschool is greatly enhanced when children's rights and family and cultural values are given due consideration and respect. Administrative procedures, initial conversations, documentation and ongoing communication with children and families are a reference point for interactions and a foundation for authentic and respectful communication.

Listening

Educators and staff must use listening as a foundation for interactions. Listening is based on observation and in leaving spaces in conversations and communication, suspending judgement and in giving full attention to children as they communicate. Truly attending to children's communication promotes a strong culture of listening.

Children and Families

A culture of respectful interaction is promoted when children's attempts to communicate are valued. Turn taking and regulating children's conversations promotes active engagement. Respectful communication with families generates greater confidence in interacting.

Reflection and Consideration

Time is dedicated to reflecting upon interactions with children.

Reflections should consider how to spend extended periods engaged in interactions with children that comprise communication and listening.

Role Modelling

Educators model positive interactions when they:

- Show care, empathy and respect for children, educators and staff and families;
- Learn and use effective communication strategies.

Principles for Behavioural Management

Staff respect individual children's needs and differences in age, ability and experience regarding issues surrounding behaviour and they are happy to discuss individual family expectations with parents. There may be times when staff will need to negotiate strategies with parents to suit the needs of individual children.

- Wherever possible, children and staff will negotiate and determine boundaries and rules.
- Rules will be reasonable considering the age, development and individual characteristics of the children.
- Rules will be consistently enforced.
- Children will be encouraged for desirable behaviour.
- It is the behaviour that is praised or addressed, not the child.
- Staff present a good example through positive role modelling.
- Children are encouraged to make appropriate choices.

The Role of the Staff

In response to challenging behaviour, staff:

- recognise certain reactions as understandable behaviour, a reflection of communication and social development;
- redirect the child or remove the child from the situation if necessary;
- advise children of the consequences of continuing with the behaviour;
- remind children of appropriate behaviour through grace and courtesy lessons;
- explain to children how behaviour results in consequences.

- Actively listen to children’s feelings and discuss the rules.
- Help children to return to play.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Approved Provider

- Ensure all staff have access to relevant professional development.
- Ensure the educational program contributes to the development of children who have a strong sense of wellbeing and identity, and are connected, confident, involved and effective learners and communicators.
- Ensure that the Nominated Supervisor and all staff members at Lindfield Montessori Preschool who work with children are aware that it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances (National Law: Section 166, Regulation 73).
- Inform the Regulatory Authority in writing, within 24 hours of receiving a notifiable complaint (National Law Section 174(4), Regulation 176(2)(b)).
- Inform the Regulatory Authority in writing within 24 hours of a serious incident occurring at Lindfield Montessori Preschool (National Law Section 174(4), Regulation 176).

Nominated Supervisor

- Guide professional development and practice to promote interactions with children that are positive and respectful.
- Establish practice guidelines that ensure interactions with children are given priority and those interactions are authentic, just, and respect difference.
- Ensure all staff are aware of Lindfield Montessori Preschool’s expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and reactions when working with children and families.
- Consider the size and composition of groups to ensure all children are provided with the best opportunities for quality interactions and relationships with each other and with adults at Lindfield Montessori Preschool.
- Develop and implement educational programs, in accordance with the Early Years Learning Framework, that are based on the developmental needs, interests, and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child.
- Ensure that staff provide education and care to children in a way that encourages children to express themselves and their opinions, and allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem.
- Under Section 166 of the Education and Care National Law, a staff member, nominated Supervisor and Approved Provider may receive a penalty for up to \$10,000 (and up to \$50,000 in the case of an Approved Provider) for subjecting a child to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances.

Educators

- Act in accordance with the obligations outlined in this policy.
- Acknowledge children's complex relationships sensitively intervene in ways that promote consideration and alternative perspectives and social inclusion.
- Respect children's agency and encourage them to express themselves and their opinions.
- Maintains the dignity and the rights of each child at all times.
- Have regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for.
- Offer positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour.
- Genuinely seek children's input, respect their idea and take their suggestions on board.
- Form warm relationships with each child.

Families

- Reading and complying with this policy.
- Engage in open communication with staff about their child.
- Inform staff of events or incidents that may impact on their child's behaviour at Lindfield Montessori Society (Eg. moving house, new sibling)
- Inform staff of any concerns regarding their child's behaviour or the impact of other children's behaviour.
- Work collaboratively with staff to develop or review an individual behaviour guidance plan for their child, where appropriate.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every 18 months.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Relevant Legislation	Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. Reg. 73, 74, 155, 156, 157, 168(2)(j) Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010 Section 166, 167 Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998 Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
Related to NQS QA	5.1, 5.2, 7.1.2
Related Policies	Student Discipline Policy Behaviour Management Policy Child Protection Policy Providing a Child Safe Environment Procedure for Managing Inappropriate Behaviour
Sources & Further Reading	Policy adapted from Community Early Learning Australia Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority - acecqa.gov.au United Nations Convention on the rights of the child - unicef.org.au The supporting young children's rights - statement of intent (2015-2018) - earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au Australian Human Rights Commission - humanrights.gov.au

POLICY REVIEWED	MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE
June 2021	Checked regulations, updated copy	2022