

SECTION 1 CHILDREN'S PROGRAM POLICIES

1.1 Self-Regulation Policy

Aim: To provide a secure and nurturing environment where children feel safe and accepted, and where children learn to and are able to express their emotions in appropriate ways.

Rationale:

In everyday life children are exposed to new events and experiences such as their first day at childcare or kindy, moving to a new house or the birth of a sibling. Babies and young children may be frightened and upset by these new experiences and express their distress in a number of ways such as crying, withdrawing, or clingy behaviour. When parents and educators respond in a caring way, for example with a calm tone of voice, holding, rocking and gentle touch, children learn they can feel comfortable and safe again. They learn that others will be available to help them notice and understand their feelings and behaviours and provide comfort when needed. As a child learns to self-regulate, skills such as concentrating, sharing, and taking turns also develop. This enables a child to move from depending on others to beginning to manage by themselves. Most children at some stage will struggle to manage their feelings and behaviours, particularly when they are tired, hungry, or facing new experiences. When this happens, they might become upset, sulky, or angry. This is all part of being a young child and is not necessarily cause for concern.

Process:

Everyday practise at The Gums requires that Educators are:

- Helping children with the words to label how they are feeling, i.e. instead of saying "you're ok", label or ask how they are feeling, "I can see you are sad...."
- Encouraging children to talk about their feelings and listening to their needs
- Providing children with opportunities to work through their emotions independently, being aware of age appropriateness.
- Acknowledging children's attempts to deal with their emotions as they begin to develop the skills to manage these appropriately
- Building relationships with children that are safe, and secure and convey respect, i.e. when changing nappies/wet clothes, giving children choices, and respecting their privacy at change times.
- Promoting children's participation in decision making, such as setting play limits and behaviour expectations, talking to children about limits, staying alongside the situation until an appropriate outcome has been reached.
- Giving children choices in managing their own behaviour
- Planning experiences and environments which challenge and strengthen children's skills as they learn about their emotions and social interactions
- Establishing routines and limits which meet children's needs and level of understanding.

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- Regularly reviewing rules to ensure they are appropriate for the children in that particular group.
- Regularly reviewing that education practices are appropriate for the group of children.

In practice, this looks like:

Inappropriate behaviour – Such as snatching a book/toy from another child.

Under 2 years of age: “That is not ok Jake, it is Janes book at the moment, would you like this book instead?” – giving book back to Jane with support from Educator & comforting as necessary.

2 years of age: “Jake did Jane have that book first? Can you please give it back to Jane? If you would like to read it then you could ask Jane if you could read it next? We need to ask before we snatch it away.” Help the child to return the book. Support child while they wait for their turn.

3 years of age: “Jake did Jane have the book first? Can you please give it back to Jane? How do you think you would feel if Jane took a book from you? I think you would feel sad too.” If the child refuses to give the book back, refer below.

4-5 years of age: “Jake I think Jane had that book first, could you please pass it back to her? How do you think you would feel if Jane took a book from you? I think you would feel sad too. What do you think you could do now to help Jane feel better?” If the child refuses to give the book back, refer below.

Options for 3-5-year old’s, when not listening to the first instruction:

- Child to be asked to choose a quiet space to move to, until they are ready to communicate and solve the problem.
- Educator to be in constant eye -contact with the child and be down at their level
- Once the child has calmed down educator to talk to the child about their emotions and the persons emotions that they have hurt / not listened too and what they could do next time to regulate their own behaviour.
- Before moving away give the child something positive to take with them, in a hug, a smile, a “let’s have fun”

Self-regulation difficulties:

Self-regulation of feelings can be the most challenging part of emotional development. As a child grows they must be able to self-regulate many different feelings in ‘real-life’ situations. Children will experience difficulties in regulating their feelings and behaviours as they are still developing these skills. Self-regulation difficulties can be broken down into two broad types:

1. Externalising Behaviours – For example: tantrums, fighting with peers, not following directions. When these behaviours occur, a child will need others to help them to regain control of their feelings and behaviours and get back into balance.
2. Internalising Behaviours – For example: worry, anxiety, sadness, becoming easily upset. A child who internalised their emotions still experiences strong feelings but keeps them

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inside instead of expressing them. In this situation the child will need help from others to express their feelings and experiences.

GUIDELINES FOR BEHAVIOUR THAT ENDANGERS OTHERS

1. If a child is aggressive /violent towards other children and educators or themselves, their parent / caregiver will be called and asked to pick them up within the hour. While the child is waiting to be picked up, they will be offered a quiet space away from the other children to calm down, either in one of the rooms or in the office. An Educator will be within eye-contact at all times. A meeting will be scheduled, and a specific action plan will be developed before the child can return to care.

INAPPROPRIATE FORMS OF DISCIPLINE

Our policy does not permit the use of the following forms of discipline:

- Corporal punishment
- Emotional punishment, including ridicule, embarrassment, or humiliation
- Punishing a child for lapses in toilet training habits
- Withholding food, light, warmth, clothing or medical care
- Physical restraint, other than the restraint necessary to protect a child or others from harm

APPROPRIATE WAYS TO HELP CHILDREN SELF REGULATE

- We model healthy emotional self-management by resisting our own little tantrums – such as yelling. When we yell, they learn to yell.
- talk aloud to the children about how you're feeling.
- Provide structure and predictable environments to alleviate too much change on children too often.
- When we notice children getting dysregulated, we need to reconnect. When children feel that we are delighted with them, they want to cooperate.
- Try to surround your impulsive child/educators with less impulsive educators/children.
- Accepting a Child's feelings. When empathy becomes our "go to" response, our child learns that they may not feel good, but we accept them.
- Redirect your Child's needs with appropriate words and actions in a productive and helpful way.
- Guide behaviour but resist the urge to punish. Instead of punishing, help your child stay on track with positive guidance, help processing emotions and scaffolding.
- Think of the whole picture, not just about the behaviour displayed.
- Teaching children that we don't usually have a choice about what we feel, but we always have a choice about how we act.
- Intentionally teach emotions and expressions, using correct body language alongside these.

Relates to Quality Area 5: Relationships with children, 5.2.2 - Self-regulation. Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others, and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.

Relates to the Education and Care Services National Regulations. **Section 166** - Offence to use inappropriate discipline. **Regulation 155** - Interactions with children.

Regulation 156 - Relationships in groups

Source: Kids Matter – 'Exploring Self-Regulation'. Source: Florez, I.R (2011) Developing Young Children, p.51.

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