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		EASTWOOD HEIGHTS OOSH POLICY		
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Written By Nominated Supervisor	Reviewed By EHOOSH COMMITTEE	Approved By EHOOSH COMMITTEE	Supersedes Version 1.0	Effective Date November 2021


Eastwood Heights OOSH

Interactions with Children Policy

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1.0	June 2018	Endorsed by OOSH executive committee
1.1	October 2021	Edited and reviewed
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1. POLICY STATEMENT

Eastwood Heights OOSH (the Service) aims to develop responsive, warm, trusting and respectful relationships with each enrolled child by taking the time to talk with and genuinely listen to children and their families. Educators and staff relate to children, their families, and to each other, in a friendly, caring and sensitive manner. They value all individuals and the unique contribution each makes. The Service aims to create an environment in which children feel they are valued members of the community, and in which their sense of belonging and well-being is supported.

Developing responsive, warm, trusting and respectful relationships with children promotes their well-being, self-esteem and sense of security. Positive interactions with children convey to them that they are valued as competent and capable individuals, assisting them to develop confidence in their ability to express themselves, manage their feelings, learn new skills and take risks to extend their capabilities. Older children benefit from the support of educators who help guide their interactions with others as they explore their identity and develop more complex social skills and relationships.

Educators need to support each other and reflect on ways to improve relationships and interactions with children and their families. In order to do this educators need:

- access to training and resources on effective communication
- an organisational culture that supports and encourages open and trusting interactions
- time to actively engage with children.

The *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* and associated Regulations requires OOSH Services to have a policy on interactions with children. The National Quality Standard requires that the rights and interests of children are paramount, while the approved learning frameworks identify the development of secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships as one of the key principles reflecting contemporary theories and research on children's learning and early childhood pedagogy.


2. PROCEDURE

2.1 Nurturing positive interactions with children

As each child and family arrives at the Service they will be greeted by an educator. Educators will be warm, supportive and encouraging of children and build genuine relationships with each child in their care. They will respect each child's uniqueness and be attuned to and respond sensitively and appropriately to each child's efforts to communicate. Educators will use children's individual names and position themselves at their eye level when communicating directly with children, all the while ensuring that their interactions are both meaningful and personal.

Educators will endeavour to create a relaxed and happy atmosphere at the Service in which children experience equitable, friendly and warm interactions. Educators will assist children to learn to communicate and interact positively and cooperatively with their peers through modelling appropriate styles of communication with others and responding positively to children at all times. They will encourage children to communicate their own ideas in a respectful and courteous way, and will respond appropriately to children's non-verbal cues. Educators will use humour with children and be playful and friendly in their interactions.

Children will never be singled out or made to feel inadequate at any time. Educators will comfort children who are upset, or are showing signs of distress, and help them to feel safe, secure and understood. During meal times, educators will interact with children in a relaxed, unhurried manner, in which the enjoyment of foods and the social aspect of meal times are promoted.

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Educators are genuinely interested in each child's own interests and needs. They will take the time to fully understand what children are doing or saying, asking open-ended questions and listening carefully to their responses. Educators need to find out what really interests each child so that they can connect with them through this interest.

Educators will endeavour to give children their full attention as they arrive at the Service after school and invite children to chat about their day and to share their news. Children will always be encouraged to share their feelings or thoughts, and express their viewpoints about matters that affect them. However, educators will also respect children's desire not to engage in conversations or interactions at certain times or for particular reasons.

2.2 Involving children in decision making

Educators will genuinely seek out children's input, respect their ideas and suggestions. They will follow children's lead on:

- what experiences are included in the learning program
- what experiences they will participate in
- the friends they choose to spend time with
- appropriate rules or boundaries
- setting up the environment
- the introduction of hobbies or clubs.

2.3 Encouraging Families to share information about children


Educators will use information provided by families to enhance their interactions with children and build their sense of well-being and belonging. They will encourage families to share important information about their child through:

- initiating regular, ongoing communication with families in a manner that promotes the development of strong relationships based on mutual respect, trust and understanding
- encouraging families to share their thoughts, ideas, questions and concerns, and promoting supportive partnerships between families, educators and the Service
- treating all families equitably without bias or judgment
- recognising that each family is unique and valuing this uniqueness.

2.4 Educator/staff communication with each other

The Service recognises that the way educators interact with each other has an effect on the interactions they have with children and families. Educators will role model warm and supportive interactions in their dealings with one another. Educators will convey mutual respect and recognition of each other's skills and contributions through:

- recognising each other's strengths and valuing the different work each colleague does
- working collaboratively to reach decisions that will enhance the quality of the care provided
- welcoming diverse views and perspectives
- working together as a team and engaging in open and honest communication at all times
- respecting each other's feelings
- developing and sharing networks and links with other agencies
- resolving differences promptly and positively and using the experience to learn more effective methods of working together
- using calm, friendly voices and positive body language towards each other.

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Statutory authority

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Regulation 74, 155, 156, 166)
- National Quality Standard (Standard 5)

Service policies

- Behaviour Management Policy
- Bulling Policy
- Educational Programming Policy
- Embracing Cultural Diversity Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Maintenance of Safe Environment Policy

National frameworks

- Framework for School Age Care in Australia, “My Time, Our Place”
http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/my_time_our_place_framework_for_school_age_care_in_australia.pdf

Further references

- Network of Community Activities
<http://networkofcommunityactivities.org.au/>