

Relationships with Children Policy

NQS

QA5	5.1.1	Each child's health needs are supported.
	5.1.2	Steps are taken to control the spread of infectious diseases and to manage injuries and illness, in accordance with recognised guidelines.
	5.1.3	Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.
	5.2.1	Each child is supported to work with, learn from and help others through collaborative learning opportunities.
	5.2.2	Each child is supported to manage their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.
	5.2.3	The dignity and the rights of every child are maintained at all times.

National Regulations

Regs	155	Interactions with children
	156	Relationships in groups

EYLF

LO1	Children feel safe, secure, and supported.
	Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency.
	Children develop knowledgeable and confident self identities.
	Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.
LO2	Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation.
	Children respond to diversity with respect.
	Children become aware of fairness.
	Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment.

Aim

Montessori Children's Centre aims to ensure that all educators form positive relationships with children that make them feel safe and supported in the Service. Educators will encourage positive relationships between children and their peers as well as with educators and volunteers at the Service.

Related Policies

Additional Needs Policy
Continuity of Education and Care Policy
Enrolment Policy
Orientation for Children Policy
Physical Activity Promotion Policy

Implementation

Interactions with Children

Montessori Children's Centre's statement of philosophy will guide our interactions with children as follows:

The Montessori Method of Education underpins the policies, procedures and practices of all aspects of our work with young children at Montessori Children's Centre.

The Montessori Method Of Education was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori (1870 –1952)

The Montessori methodology has long enjoyed worldwide acceptance as a respected alternative educational approach.

In December 2011, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) recognised the Montessori National Curriculum as an alternative national curriculum framework to be included on ACARA's Recognition Register.

The Montessori Method of Education provides an educational framework for children from pre-school to university age with principles and practice guidelines for educational environments for the four planes of development Dr. Montessori identified children pass through on their journey to adulthood.

The Montessori approach is supported by three distinct components.

- A Philosophy Of Education
- A Methodology To Guide Educators
- A Set Of Materials To Support The Translation Of The Theory Into Practice

At Montessori Children's Centre educators follow the principles and practices Montessori developed for Plane 1 of development and use the many different Montessori materials which correspond to this age group to provide inspirational environments for young children. They see education as an "aid to life" as the natural development and interests of each child informs their interactions with young children.

The Early Years Learning Framework educational principles of Being, Belonging and Becoming are embedded in the practice of all educators at our Centre as holistic environments are prepared for, and professional practice reflected upon, in collaborative partnerships with families and children.

Montessori Children's Centre is committed to honouring and respecting the cultural diversity of all the families in the service

The Montessori methodology is well documented and supported by scientific research which has validated the insights made by this remarkable woman over a century ago.

'The child is both the hope and promise of mankind.'

References: The Montessori Method. M. Montessori (1912)

Montessori Australia Foundation <http://montessori.org.au/montessori/approach.htm>

Our Mission

Montessori Children's Centre is dedicated to providing inspiring learning environments based on the Montessori philosophy and principles of learning which encourage independence, develop confidence and respect while guiding and nurturing each child's individual development.

We acknowledge and honour the sense of belonging to the family children from all cultures bring to their pre-school experience and nurture and develop this sense of belonging to embrace the children's pre-school and wider social community.

We recognise that children come to us with individual strengths, capabilities, learning styles and interests and build on these by developing collaborative learning environments.

We create prepared inside and outside learning environments where children freely explore their natural sense of wonder and choose their own work with enthusiasm and interest.

We respect children's individual emergent skills by providing them with opportunities which allow for autonomous learning.

We provide an environment and guidance which encourages the children's development of kindness, courtesy and self-discipline.

Montessori Children's Centre embraces a community of children, families and early childhood educators who work together to build and maintain a culture of caring where respect, integrity and tolerance are created and nourished.

In order to maintain positive interactions with children Montessori Children's Centre and educators will maintain the following:

- Montessori Children's Centre will provide a relaxed and happy atmosphere for the children.
- Montessori Children's Centre will ensure mealtimes are relaxed and unhurried and educators take the time to sit and talk with children.
- Our educators will encourage children to initiate conversations about their experiences inside and outside the service as well as what is happening around them, express their ideas and feelings, share humour with the nominated supervisor, educators, coordinators and educators and seek assistance as they take on new challenges and try to do things for themselves.
- Our educators and coordinators will respond sensitively and appropriately to children's efforts to communicate and engage them in sustained conversations about their interests in a positive manner.
- Our educators will talk with children in a two-sided manner. That is, encourage children to have their own opinions, ideas and comments. Educators should support children with this and let them know that their ideas are valued.
- Montessori Children's Centre will have in place predictable personal-care routines that are enjoyable experiences for toddlers and will respond to toddlers when they practice their verbal communication skills.
- Our routines, as well as planned and spontaneous experiences will be organised to maximise opportunity for meaningful conversations between children and educators and the service will ensure that all children have equal opportunity to engage in one to one and small group conversations with educators.
- Our educators will be knowledgeable in the communication strategies and non verbal cues of toddlers and staffing and grouping arrangements within the service will support the development of trusting relationships between educators and toddlers to allow them to feel secure in the service.
- Our statement of philosophy and policy on interactions with children will be visible.
- Our educators will participate in children's play using children's cues to guide their level and type of involvement while always maintaining a positive approach when responding to children and offering assistance.
- Our educators will model reasoning, prediction and reflection processes and language.
- Our educators will collaborate with children about routines and experiences.
- Our educators will use techniques such as sign language and other resources and tools to support children with additional needs.
- Our educators will engage in give and take communication by adding to interactions initiated by toddlers by describing objects and talking about routine activities with them.
- Our educators will use their interactions with children to support the maintenance of home languages and learning English as an additional language.

- Our educators and coordinators will use information from their observations of interactions with children to extend the children's thinking and learning.
- Our educators will also support children to build secure attachments with all educators. Most toddlers suffer a form of separation anxiety when away from their families. Educators need to reassure the toddler and work with the toddler's family in order to make the child feel safe and happy at the Service.
- Montessori Children's Centre will ensure that there are many opportunities for toddlers to experience relaxed physical contact and close interactions with familiar educators.
- Our nominated supervisor, educators and coordinators will learn more about the histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child rearing practices and lifestyle choices of families using the service.
- Our educators will frequently talk with families to get an idea of the non-verbal forms of communication used by their children in order to convey messages such as hunger, needing the toilet, tiredness and emotions.
- Our educators will allow time to talk to parents about their children. This allows educators to gain insight into their home life.
- Montessori Children's Centre will implement strategies to assist all children to develop a sense of belonging and confidence through positive interactions between the children and educators.
- Montessori Children's Centre's roster will be planned in a way that promotes continuity for children.
- Montessori Children's Centre will gather information from families in the enrolment form in order to be able to provide support for children during the settling in process.
- When children have special needs Montessori Children's Centre will consult with other professionals or support agencies that work with children to gather information that will guide our interactions with these children. This information will be recorded in the child's file.
- Montessori Children's Centre's approach to equity and inclusion will be documented in our statement of philosophy.
- Montessori Children's Centre will ensure that educators document the knowledge gained about children, through their interactions, in the child's file for reference for other educators and will continually review the experiences that are planned for children in light of this information.

Group Relationships

In order to encourage respectful and positive relationships between children and their peers and educators Montessori Children's Centre will adhere to the following practices:

- Montessori Children's Centre will encourage children to participate in enjoyable interactions with their peers, respond positively to ideas, negotiate roles and relationships, contribute to shared play, and develop friendships.
- Our educators will engage children in ongoing group projects that involve research, planning, problem solving and shared decision making.
- Our educators will model strategies for children to initiate interactions and participate in group play and social activities and assist them when they have trouble understanding or communicating with each other.
- Montessori Children's Centre will ensure that the children have many opportunities for peer scaffolding.
- Our educators will promote a sense of community in the service.
- Montessori Children's Centre will coordinate the staffing and grouping arrangements to support positive relationships between children.
- Our educators will support and promote children's interpersonal relationships and support the inclusion of children from diverse backgrounds and capabilities in group play, projects and experiences.
- Our educators will learn about children's shared interests and will use this information to plan further experiences that provide collaborative learning opportunities.
- Our educators will pre-empt potential conflicts or challenging behaviours by monitoring children's play and supporting interactions where there is conflict.
- Montessori Children's Centre will ensure that the program and routines of the service will include regular opportunities for children to engage in social play and group experiences.
- Montessori Children's Centre will ensure that food is being used appropriately and not as a reward or punishment.
- Montessori Children's Centre will ensure that corporal punishment is not used as part of behaviour guidance or any other aspect of our interactions with children. Corporal punishment is never to be used in Montessori Children's Centre.

Behaviour Guidance

The behaviour guidance we provide children with will be guided by the following practices:

- Montessori Children's Centre will encourage children to engage in cooperative and pro-social behaviour and express their feelings and responses to others' behaviour confidently and constructively, including challenging the behaviour of other children when it is disrespectful or unfair.
- Our educators will support children to explore different identities and points of view and to communicate effectively when resolving disagreements with others.
- Our educators will discuss emotions, feelings and issues of inclusion and fairness, bias and prejudice and the consequences of their actions and the reasons for this as well as the appropriate rules.
- Our educators will encourage children to listen to other children's ideas, consider alternate behaviour and cooperate in problem solving situations.
- Our educators will listen empathetically to children when they express their emotions, reassure them that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions and guide children to remove themselves from situations where they are experiencing frustration, anger or fear.
- Our educators will support children to negotiate their rights and rights of others and intervene sensitively when children experience difficulty in resolving a disagreement.
- Our educators will learn about children's relationships with others and the relationship preferences they have and use this knowledge to support children manage their own behaviour and develop empathy.
- Our educators will work with each child's family and, where applicable, their school, to ensure that a consistent approach is used to support children with diagnosed behavioural or social difficulties.
- Montessori Children's Centre will gather information from families about their children's social skills and relationship preferences and record this information in the child's file. Our educators will use this information to engage children in experiences that support children to develop and practice their social and shared decision making skills.
- Montessori Children's Centre will collaborate with schools and other professionals or support agencies that work with children who have diagnosed behavioural or social difficulties to develop plans for the inclusion of these specific children. These will be kept in the individual child's file.
- Montessori Children's Centre will ensure that children are being allowed to make choices and experience the consequences of these choices when there is no risk of physical or emotional harm to the child or anyone else.
- Montessori Children's Centre will ensure that children are being acknowledged when they make positive choices in managing their behaviour.

- Our educators will use positive language, gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice when redirecting or discussing children's behaviour with them. They will also remain calm, gentle, patient and reassuring even when children strongly express distress, frustration or anger.
- Our educators will guide all children's behaviour in ways that are focused on preserving and promoting children's self esteem as well as supporting children to develop skills to self-regulate their behaviour.
- Our educators will respond positively to toddlers' exploratory behaviour.
- Montessori Children's Centre will have in place strategies to enable educators and co-ordinators encourage positive behaviour in children while minimising negative behaviour. We will also have strategies in place to involve children in developing behaviour limits and the consequences of inappropriate behaviour. Strategies will also be put in place for the nominated supervisor, educators and co-ordinators to manage situations when a child's behaviour is particularly challenging and when families have different expectations from the service in relation to guiding children's behaviour.
- Montessori Children's Centre will support educators and co-ordinators to enhance their skills and knowledge in relation to guiding children's behaviour.
- Montessori Children's Centre will use the Montessori Method of behaviour guidance. When challenging behaviours present themselves educators will look at the environment first, the educator second, and the child third. Educators will subscribe to the Montessori behaviour management plan: the gift of limits.
- The gift of limits and other behaviour management strategies are available to parents upon request.

Inclusion

Australia is a pluralistic society regardless of specific regional variations in cultural profiles. In order to reduce bias and ensure that no child is excluded, Montessori Children's Centre will abide by the following practices:

- Montessori Children's Centre will promote and value cultural diversity and equity for all children, families and educators from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds;
- Montessori Children's Centre will recognise that children and adults from all cultures have similar needs and that each person is unique and valuable;
- Montessori Children's Centre will develop a positive self concept for each child and adult in the group by exploring the cultural backgrounds of each family and child;
- Montessori Children's Centre will endeavour to provide a foundation that instills in each child a sense of self identity, dignity and tolerance for all people;
- Montessori Children's Centre will increase the knowledge and understanding each child has about his or her own cultural ethnic heritage in partnership with their family, educators and community and other children in the Service;
- Montessori Children's Centre will explore family compositions, customs and lifestyles of children and families in many cultures;
- Montessori Children's Centre will assist, in partnership with parents, extended family and the community in exploring their own "roots" as they involve children in the culturally diverse environment of the Service;
- Montessori Children's Centre will provide support for fostered or adopted children to develop a sense of heritage and belonging;
- Montessori Children's Centre will avoid common stereotypes and recognise individual differences within a cultural or ethnic group;
- Montessori Children's Centre will assist wherever possible families who are new to Australia with a transition to a new and different culture.
- Our educators will become aware of their own beliefs, attitudes, cultural backgrounds, their relationship with the larger society and their attitudes to people;
- Our educators will acknowledge that they too have been influenced by their own background prejudices and their points of view;
- Our educators will accept that all children can learn and that differences in lifestyles and languages does not mean ignorance;
- Our educators will broaden their own cultural and ethnic group awareness and help children to understand themselves in relation to their family, community and other cultures;
- Our educators will be actively involved in the development of appropriate resources, support and implement an anti bias, cross cultural program throughout the Service environment which is reflective of all families/children and the diversity present in Australian society and network with community agencies involved with cross cultural issues wherever possible;
- Our educators will be actively involved with children, showing respect, sharing ideas and experiences and asking questions.

- Our educators will access and make available resources and information supporting the delivery of anti bias concepts in the program and attend regular training courses as required. Such resources will be integrated into the daily program and be made available to families.
- Our educators will reflect on the service’s philosophy and ensure that practices and attitude concur with the philosophy.
- Our educators will work with families to encourage positive attitudes to diversity and an anti-bias ethos.
- Our educators will ensure that casual workers or visitors to the service are aware of these practices and respect these values.
- Children will listen to records and practice singing songs in different languages;
- Children will learn words and phrases in a language not native to children in their group;
- Children will talk to other children using the words from their culture;
- Children will be encouraged to become independent wherever possible and be actively involved with their peers.
- Children will explore with foods from other cultures (eg. have family members from different home cultures come in and cook, to have “food tasting” parties);
- Montessori Children’s Centre will encourage children to bring in real objects and artifacts used by their families that may be historical or typical of that child’s/family’s cultural group including food;
- Montessori Children’s Centre will help children to develop ease with and have a respect for physical, racial, religious and cultural differences.
- Montessori Children’s Centre will encourage children to develop autonomy, independence, competency, confidence and pride.
- Montessori Children’s Centre will provide all children with accurate and appropriate material that provides information about their own and other’s disabilities and cultures.
- Montessori Children’s Centre will not isolate a child for any reason other than illness, accident or a prearranged appointment with parental consent.

Supporting Children through Difficult Situations

When a child, family, educator or the service as a whole experiences a stressful or traumatic situation such as a bushfire, car accident, sudden illness or death, crime or violent situation it is important to provide appropriate support so they can recover from the ordeal. A child's reaction to a stressful or traumatic situation will depend on factors such as their age, stage of development and impact of the event on people around them. A child may react in ways that you don't expect and sometimes will act normally at first but be wary of a delayed reaction. Some reactions include:

- Physical symptoms such as stomach aches and headaches.
- Being anxious or clingy.
- Suffering from separation anxiety.
- Having sleeping problems or nightmares.
- Re-living the experience through drawing or play.
- Losing interest in activities.
- Loss of self-confidence.
- Regressing to "babyish" activities.

Our educators will talk with a child about the event to bring any issues out into the open. The ways our educators will approach this are:

- Reassuring the child that they are safe, but only if they really are.
- Talking to the child about what happened in a way that they will understand and without going into frightening or graphic detail. Our educators will not leave out important information though, as children will fill in the gaps.
- Ensuring the child hasn't jumped to conclusions. Some children will think they are to blame in a tragic event; our educators will make sure they know this isn't so.
- Talking about the event with appropriate people (for example, all children if the event has affected the whole service or the children that have been affected) and letting everyone have their say including children.
- Talking to the children about how people react to stressful or traumatic situations and that the feelings they are feelings are normal.

Coping Mechanisms

Some strategies that our educators will use to help children cope in these situations are:

- Giving children a sense of control of their environment and life. Letting the child make minor decisions, such as what to eat for lunch, what to wear or what toy to play with will make the child feel more in control.
- Allowing the children plenty of time to play and to do physical exercise; this will help the child burn off stress chemicals and allow for more sleep.
- Helping the children physically relax with story times and cuddles.
- Limiting stimulants like chocolate, lollies etc.

It is important to remember how you respond to the stressful or traumatic event will affect your child's response. Children look to their families and educators to find ways to deal with a situation

they probably don't understand. Children need their family members (and other adults who are close to them) to help them understand the situation and their emotions and also offer comfort and support. If adults are distressed about a situation it is important for them to seek help for themselves.

At the service, we wish to help in whatever way we can if your family has undergone a tragedy. Talk to educators (or confidentially to the Nominated Supervisor) and we will endeavour to work with families and children to support all parties through the situation.

Should it be required, educators will liaise with appropriate authorities, such as the Department of Education and Children's Services, and follow any recommendations made by these authorities.

Bullying

In order to overcome bullying in Montessori Children's Centre, our educators will be aware of the following information and maintain the following practices:

Our educators will be aware of the following characteristics in children who bully -

- Children of all backgrounds can bully
- Preconceived notions of children who bully should be avoided
- The child who bullies may also be the victim of bullying
- The child who bullies will often think that they are innocent, and that the child being bullied is somehow deserving of this negative experience.
- Recent research demonstrates that aggressive behaviour and bullying inclinations begin in some children as early as two years old, which highlights the importance of children's services educators in effectively responding to children who bully.

Our educators will be aware of the following characteristics of victims of bullying -

- Children of all backgrounds can fall victim to bullying
- Preconceived notions of children who fall victim to bullying should be avoided
- Boys are victims of bullying more than girls.
- Victims may have low self-esteem, lack of confidence, lack social skills or be viewed as unpopular.
- It is important to remember that victims are often sensitive and easily hurt, and feel incapable of preventing such negative experiences.

Our educators will implement the following strategies to overcome bullying -

- Our educators will practice all-encompassing and socially inclusive care.
- Daily programs will recognise, value and reflect the social and cultural diversity of our community.
- Our educators will role model and actively encourage appropriate behaviours.
- Our educators will form a close relationship with family members in order to work cooperatively to overcome instances of bullying.
- Our educators will empower children by giving them responsibilities that will make them feel valued.

- Our educators will help children deal with their anger. This includes offering alternative dispute resolution techniques that are socially acceptable.
- Our educators will seek the support of children's services professionals when it is necessary.
- Our educators will respond promptly to children's aggressive or bullying behaviour.

Biting

All individuals involved in the care of a child need to recognise that at times, some children, for a variety of reasons, attempt to bite other children.

Some reasons a child may bite are:

- Infants – Experimental, Sensory Pleasure, Teething
- Toddlers – Frustration, fatigue, attention seeking, confined spaces.
- Older Children – Aggression, deliberate.

In the event of a biting incident, educators will abide by the following procedure:

- Check for broken skin.
- Clean all bites, regardless of whether the skin is broken or not.
- Apply a cold compress to the bitten area
- Our educators will contact the families of the child who has bitten and the child that has been bitten as soon as possible. Families are then responsible for any follow up medical treatment.
- If the biter is a known infectious disease carrier, or can be seen to have facial herpes and the victim's skin is broken, the Nominated Supervisor or Authorised Supervisor will convey this information to the family.
- Should the behaviour continue, our educators will work in conjunction with families and, if necessary, external agencies, to develop a Behaviour Guidance plan for the child who is biting.
- Our educators will complete an incident report for any occasion where a child bites and submit to the Nominated Supervisor.
- Monitor the behaviour of the child who has bitten and use distraction techniques to prevent the child reaching the point where the child feels the need to bite.

Sources

**National Quality Standard
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
Early Years Learning Framework**

Review

The policy will be reviewed annually.

Review will be conducted by:

- Management
- Employees
- Families
- Interested Parties

Reviewed:6/7/2012

Date for next review: 6/7/2013