

INTERACTION WITH CHILDREN

QUALITY AREA 5 | ELAA version 1.1



PURPOSE

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines to ensure:

- the development of responsive, warm, trusting, and respectful relationships with children that promote their wellbeing, self-esteem, sense of security, and belonging at Denzil Don Kindergarten
- each child at Denzil Don Kindergarten is supported to learn and develop in a secure and empowering environment.



POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Denzil Don Kindergarten is committed to:

- maintaining the dignity, agency, and rights of each child at the service
- promoting fairness, respect, and equity
- encouraging children to express themselves and their opinions and to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem.
- considering the health, safety, and wellbeing of each child and providing a safe, secure, and welcoming environment in which they can thrive
- maintaining a duty of care (*refer to Definitions*) towards all children at Denzil Don Kindergarten
- considering the diversity of individual children at the service, including family and cultural values, age, gender, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child
- building collaborative relationships with families to improve learning and development outcomes for children
- encouraging positive, respectful, and warm relationships between children, families, and educators/staff at the service.

SCOPE

This policy applies to staff, students, volunteers, visitors, parents/carers, children, and others attending programs and activities at Denzil Don Kindergarten, including offsite excursions.

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teachers, educators, and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers, and students
R indicates legislation requirement and should not be deleted					
Developing and implementing the <i>Interactions with Children Policy</i> in consultation with stakeholders and ensuring that it reflects the philosophy, beliefs, and values of the service	R	√	√	√	√

Ensuring all stakeholders are provided with a copy of the <i>Interactions with Children Policy</i> and comply with it	R	√	√	√	√
Ensuring all staff are aware of the service's expectations regarding positive, respectful, and appropriate behaviour, acceptable responses, and warm, trusting, and reciprocal interactions when working with children and families (<i>refer to Code of Conduct Policy</i>)	R	√			
Ensuring children are adequately supervised (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) and that educator-to-child ratios are always maintained (<i>refer to Supervision of Children Policy</i>)	R	√	√		√
Ensuring the environment at the service is safe, secure, and free from hazards (<i>National Law: Section 167</i>) (<i>refer to Child Safe Environment Policy, Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Supervision of Children Policy</i>) and promotes the active participation of every child	R	R	√		√
Ensuring the size and composition of groups is considered to ensure all children are provided with the best opportunities for quality interactions and relationships with each other and with adults at the service (<i>Regulation 156(2)</i>). Smaller group sizes are considered optimal to promote intentional teaching strategies and responsive engagement opportunities.	R	√	√		√
Developing and implementing educational programs that are delivered under the guidance of an approved learning framework (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) are based on the developmental needs, interests, and experiences of each child and take into account the individual differences and strengths of each child (<i>refer to Inclusion and Equity Policy</i>)	R	R	√		√
Ensuring 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 (<i>Regulation 73</i>) (<i>refer to Curriculum Development Policy</i>)	R	√	√		√
Ensuring that the service provides education and care to children in a way that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> encourages children to express themselves and their opinion allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem maintains the dignity and the rights of all children at all times offers positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour has regard to the cultural and family values, age, and physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for (<i>Regulation 155</i>) 	R	√	√		√
Ensuring that Denzil Don Kindergarten provides children with opportunities to interact and develop positive relationships with each other and with the staff and volunteers at the service (<i>Regulation 156(1)</i>)	R	√	√		√

Recognising the importance of friendships and encouraging support from peers to help children and young people feel safe and be connected	√	√	√		√
Ensuring clear documentation of the assessment and evaluation of each child's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> developmental needs, interests, experiences, and program participation progress against the outcomes of the educational program (<i>Regulation 74</i>) (<i>refer to Curriculum Development Policy</i>) 	R	√	√		√
Ensuring processes are in place for effective communication with parents/carers to share information about children's learning, development, interactions, behaviour, and relationships	R	√	√		√
Supporting all staff to access resources and gain appropriate training, knowledge, and skills for the implementation of this policy, including promoting social, emotional, and wellbeing	√	√			
Ensuring that staff members working with children at Denzil Don Kindergarten understand that it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive (<i>National Law: Section 166</i>)	R	R	R	√	√
Promoting collaborative relationships between children/families and program support groups (if required) (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) to improve the quality of children's education and care experiences	√	√	√	√	√
Ensuring notifications of serious incidents (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) are made to the regulatory authority (DET) (<i>refer to Definition</i>) through the NQA IT System (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) as soon as is practicable but not later than 24 hours after the occurrence (<i>National Law: Section 174(2)(a), Regulations 176 (2)(a)</i>)	R	√			
Notifying DET within 24 hours of becoming aware of a notifiable complaint (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) or allegation regarding the safety, health, and/or welfare of a child at the service (<i>National Law: Section 174(2)(b), Regulations 176 (2)(a)</i>)	R	√			
Ensuring that where the service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child, the contact does not occur while the child is on the service premises	R	R	√		√
Ensuring all staff, volunteers, and contractors use positive and respectful strategies to assist children in managing their behaviour and responding appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others	R	√	√		√
Developing links with and referral pathways to services and/or program support groups (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) to support children experiencing social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties, as well as their families	√	√	√		√
Ensuring that there is a behaviour guidance plan (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) developed for a child if educators are concerned that the child's behaviour may put the child themselves, other children, staff, and/or others at risk	√	√	√	√	
Ensuring that parents/carers and program support groups (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) (as appropriate) are consulted if an individual behaviour guidance plan has not resolved the behaviour	√	√	√	√	

Working collaboratively with staff and program support groups (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) to develop or review an individual behaviour guidance plan for their child, where appropriate.	√	√	√	√	√
Setting clear timelines for review and evaluation of the behaviour guidance plan.	√	√	√		
Providing information, ideas, and practical strategies to families, educators, and staff on a regular basis to promote and support health and wellbeing in the service and at home	√	√	√		
Consulting with and seeking advice from DET if a suitable and mutually agreeable behaviour guidance plan cannot be developed	R	√	√		
Investigating the availability of extra assistance, such as Kindergarten Inclusion Support (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) or training, by contacting the regional Preschool Field Officer (<i>refer to Definitions</i>), specialist children's services officers from DET, or other agencies working with the child	R	√	√		
Ensuring that additional resources are sourced, if required, to implement a behaviour guidance plan	R	√			
Ensuring that service staff are provided with appropriate training to guide their actions and response to a child(ren) with challenging behaviour	√	√			
Informing staff of concerns, events, or incidents that may impact their child's behaviour (e.g., moving house, relationship issues, a new sibling)				√	
Maintaining confidentiality (<i>refer to Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i>)	R	√	√	√	√



BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

BACKGROUND

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is founded on respect for the dignity and worth of each individual, regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, opinions, wealth, birth status, or ability. When children experience nurturing and respectful, reciprocal relationships with educators, they develop an understanding of themselves as competent, capable, and respected. Relationships are the foundation for the construction of identity and help shape children's thinking about who they are, how they belong, and what influences them [Early Years Learning Framework, p. 20; Framework for School Age Care, p. 19]

'Constructive everyday interactions and shared learning opportunities form the basis of equitable, respectful, and reciprocal relationships between educators and children. Educators who are actively engaged in children's learning and share decision-making with them use their interactions during play, routines, and projects to stimulate children's thinking and enrich their learning. These relationships provide a solid foundation to guide and support children as they develop the self-confidence and skills to manage their behaviour, make decisions, and relate positively and effectively to others.' (*Guide to National Quality Framework – refer to Sources*)

Child Safe Standard 3 requires services to have strategies to empower children about their rights, ensuring children can participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously. When children feel respected and valued, they are much more likely to speak up about safety and wellbeing issues. Enabling and promoting empowerment and the participation of children within a service has multiple benefits in addition to enhancing the safety of children, including demonstrating a commitment to upholding the rights of children,

checking that what the service is doing is what children want, and building communication and leadership skills of children.

In developing an *Interactions with Children Policy*, early childhood education and care services must review and reflect on the service's philosophy, beliefs, and values, particularly regarding their relationships with children. The development of this policy should also be informed by the service's *Code of Conduct Policy*.

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au



DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. Refer to the Definitions file on the kindergarten website for regularly used terms.

Adequate supervision: entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times, including during toileting, sleep, rest, and transition. Services are required to always comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios. Supervision protects children from hazards during play, including risks created by the equipment.

Adequate supervision refers to constant, active, and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate supervision requires that educators are always able to observe each child, respond to individual needs, and intervene quickly if necessary. Variables affecting supervision include:

- number, age, and abilities of children
- number and positioning of educators
- current activity of each child
- areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility)
- developmental profile of each child and the group of children
- experience, knowledge, and skill of each educator
- need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies).

Behaviour guidance: a means of assisting children positively and effectively to help children gain understanding and learn skills that will help them learn to manage their behaviour.

Behaviour guidance plan: documents strategies to assist an educator in guiding a child with diagnosed behavioural difficulties or challenging behaviors to manage their behaviour. The plan is developed in consultation with all staff working with the child, the nominated supervisor, the child's family, and other professional support agencies as needed.

Challenging behaviour: behaviour that can be described as:

- infringes on the rights of others

- disruptive to others or causes disputes between children
- causes harm or risk to the child, other children, adults, or living things
- is destructive to the environment and/or equipment
- inhibits the child's learning and relationship with others
- a child presenting as shy, withdrawn, or excessively passive in a way that is inhibiting their learning and/or development
- is inappropriate relative to the child's developmental age and background.

Kindergarten Inclusion Support Program (KIS): supports funded kindergartens to plan and implement a program that is responsive to the individual abilities, interests, and needs of children with a disability, developmental delay, or complex medical needs.

Program Support Groups (PSG): brings together key people to support the inclusion of children with disability, developmental delay, or complex medical needs from enrolment at kindergarten until they move to school. The group may include:

- the early childhood teacher
- the child's parent/carer(s)
- early childhood intervention professionals
- a preschool field officer
- medical practitioners, therapists, or other allied health professionals
- a support person – if the child's parent/carer(s) chooses to use one.

Mental health: (in early childhood) a child's mental health is understood as a child's ability to 'experience, regulate and express emotions; form close and secure interpersonal relationships; and explore the environment and learn – all in the context of family, community, and cultural expectations for young children. Infant mental health is synonymous with healthy social and emotional development. <https://beyou.edu.au/>

Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) Program: supports the access and participation of children with additional needs in their kindergarten program. For more information, visit: www.education.vic.gov.au

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES



SOURCES

- Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Child Safe Standards: www.cryp.vic.gov.au
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics: www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au
- Guide to the National Quality Framework, ACECQA: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Inclusion Support Program: www.dese.gov.au
- Kids Matter, an Australian mental health and well-being initiative set in primary schools and early childhood education and care services: <https://beyou.edu.au>
- The Kindergarten Funding Guide (DET): www.education.vic.gov.au
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: www.unicef.org
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Victorian Inclusion Agency (VIA): www.viac.com.au

RELATED POLICIES

- Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing
- Code of Conduct
- Compliments and Complaints
- Curriculum Development
- Inclusion and Equity
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Privacy and Confidentiality

- Supervision of Children
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EVALUATION



To assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the approved provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
 - monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints, and incidents in relation to this policy
 - keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
 - revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle or as required
 - notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk ([Regulation 172 \(2\)](#)).
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ATTACHMENTS

- Nil
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AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Denzil Don Kindergarten on 15/11/2023.

REVIEW DATE: 15 / NOVEMBER / 2025

