



Little Ladybird Creche & Montessori

Policy #11

INTERACTIONS

Introduction

The nature and extent of adult interactions with children are vital factors in supporting and extending development.

‘Very young children are just formulating a sense of themselves and an understanding of what the rest of the world is all about. Their interactions with parents and caregivers significantly influence the life-long conclusions children draw from their experiences. If parents’ and caregivers’ interactions are supportive, this shapes children’s perceptions of themselves as capable, trusted, and trustworthy human beings.’ High/Scope

Relationships between caregivers and children are crucial in quality childcare. It is through close relationships with caring adults (including caregivers) that children flourish, discover their world and learn who they are.

Positive interactions between staff members are essential in creating an environment and atmosphere in which children feel emotionally safe, secure and happy. The way in which staff members interact with colleagues, children’s families and others will be observed and imitated by children.

Definitions/Glossary

Interactions in this policy refers to the everyday interactions between staff members and children; children and other children; staff members and children’s families; as well as interactions with all others who visit or are associated with the service.

Policy Statement

We recognise that:

- Children are learning whenever they are interacting – with each other, with adults and with objects in their environment.
- Adults are models for children’s behaviour. It is very important that adults are good participants, are flexible and curious and have a sense of adventure and a love of learning.
- It is important that children see adults who are flexible, who problem-solve rather than blame and who are cheerful and genuine.

We will help children to develop communication skills for interacting positively and getting on well with each other.



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We will give children tasks to encourage them to co-operate with adults and each other, encourage them to talk about what they are doing and thinking, to express different points of view and to reach agreements with their peers through discussion.

We encourage effective interactions by really listening to children in order to understand their individual needs, perceptions and interests.

Staff members are expected to communicate effectively and to demonstrate respect and trust for all as they are acting as role models for children in developing effective, inclusive relationships.

Children are encouraged to feel safe in communicating their needs and wants, to develop relationships with staff and the other children, and to explore their environment

Children are facilitated to know their feelings are accepted and that adults will listen and help them work towards a solution.

All adult visitors to the *Service/Centre* are expected to interact positively and respectfully with the children and adults in the *Service/Centre*.

Staff will aim to ensure that no children, staff, parents/carers or visitors behave offensively or in a discriminatory way towards anyone else.

Procedures & Practices

Interactions with children

Caregivers' development of attachment relationships with infants in their care is especially important for children's emotional and social development.

Staff members should engage infants in many one-to-one, face-to-face interactions, talk in a pleasant soothing voice and make frequent eye contact.

They should listen and respond to sounds that infants make, imitate them and respect these sounds as their communication.

Children's feelings about separation must be acknowledged.

Interactions with children are most helpful when they are positive, playful, understanding and cued by the children, e.g. follow children's cues about the content and direction of play.

Staff should strive to form positive, reciprocal relationships with children – relationships in which encouragement is the key. Cuddle, hold, play and talk with children in a warm, unhurried, give-and-take manner.

In daily interactions, staff members will:

- Interact frequently and positively with children.
- Be available and responsive to children.
- Speak to children in a calm, friendly, positive, respectful manner.
- Treat all children, regardless of race, religion, family background, culture, gender or ability, with respect and consideration.



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- Encourage independence in children as they are ready.
- Allow children enough time to do things for themselves.
- Acknowledge children's efforts, achievements and feelings by sincere encouragement leading to growth in self-esteem and self-discipline.
- Keep children generally comfortable, relaxed, happy and involved in play and other activities.
- Recognise and encourage pro-social behaviours among children.
- Keep expectations for children's social behaviour developmentally appropriate – take children's level of understanding and maturity into account.
- Encourage children to verbalise feelings and ideas.
- Encourage language development by listening to children and patiently answering their many 'why' questions.
- Encourage families to comment on children's reactions to discipline (See definition of Discipline in the Behaviour Guidance and Discipline Policy)
- Model appropriate behaviour and plan activities that help children learn about right and wrong.
- Never humiliate or segregate children or withhold food.
- Distract children from unwanted behaviour.
- When behaviour is unacceptable explain why simply to the child/children.
- Encourage children to play together and to share. Allow for playing alone and do not expect the child to share favourite items.
- Give children opportunities to develop social skills such as cooperating, helping and talking to solve problems.
- Help children to find solutions to conflict.
- Give positively worded directions not just 'No' or 'Don't' (See Guidance and Discipline Policy).
- Establish a psychologically safe environment, where children's initiatives are regarded as purposeful rather than misbehaviour or a nuisance for adults.
- Try to see things from the child's point of view – encourage rather than interfere with children's efforts and communications.
- Take cues from children rather than impose your own ideas, and assume a problem-solving approach to children's interpersonal conflicts rather than punish children or solve their problems for them. (High/Scope)
(See Guidance and Discipline Policy)
- Encourage children to feel safe in communicating their needs, interests, wants, perceptions and ideas, to develop relationships with staff and to explore their environment.

Staff need to maintain an awareness of the verbal language they use and the body language they employ in their communications.

It is important to be active and responsive and take cues from each child to know when to expand on the child's initiative, when to guide, when to teach and when to intervene.

Staff should:

- Allow children adequate time to respond to questions or requests.
- Let children know in advance when the daily schedule will change (See Transitions Policy).
- Allow children to make their own decisions.
- Allow children to make mistakes.
- Give children many opportunities to solve problems without pressure.



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- Be responsive and alert to signs of stress in each child's behaviour and respond with appropriate stress-reducing activities and techniques.
- Continuously facilitate the development of self-esteem by respecting and accepting children, regardless of their behaviour (See Guidance and Discipline Policy).
- Join the children while they eat and ensure that mealtimes are occasions for social interaction and learning about texture, taste and colour.

Interactions with families

The session/day should begin and end with warm interaction between children, their families and staff.

Welcome and support new people of all ages into the service and in this way demonstrate and guide children in accepting and making new children feel at home.

Staff members who show they respect and value the children's families and others who visit the *Service/Centre*, guide children in developing positive attitudes to the different backgrounds and abilities of others. In this way, we also show children that we expect them to treat others with respect and fairness.

Staff members should ensure that parents/carers feel welcome and included, comfortable and confident whenever they visit, even if their visit is unexpected.

Value and take account of parents' knowledge and views of their child's development, interests and personality. Give parent's enquiries careful consideration and always deal with them as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Ensure that parents'/carers' privacy is respected and confidentiality is maintained by providing them with a private space to discuss private matters.

*Relate this section to your service's **Parent/Carer Involvement Policy**.*

Interactions with colleagues

Staff members who are sensitive, respectful, courteous and patient with each other will create an atmosphere that is relaxed and happy.

All staff members are expected to use calm and friendly voices and to support one another in their work.

Communication Plan

All parents/carers are to be informed of the policy and procedures regarding Interactions on registration. Staff members will check with parents/carers that they have read and understood the policy and provide any assistance needed.

A summary of this policy will be included in the parent handbook. This policy will also be included in staff induction and annual staff training.

A copy of all policies will be available during all hours of operation to staff members and parents/carers in the Policy Folder located in the main office

Parents/Carers may receive a copy of the policy at any time upon request.

Parents/Carers and staff will receive written notification of any updates.



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Review Date

Date:

Person Responsible:

Related Policies, Procedures and Forms

- Arrivals and Departures Policy
- Guidance and Discipline Policy
- Equality and Non-Discrimination Policy (See **Every Child Matters** Barnardos, 2004 for a comprehensive model policy and **Diversity and Equality Guidelines for Childcare Providers** Barnardos, The Office of the Minister for Children, 2006)
- Key Person Policy
- Parent/Carer Involvement Policy
- Transitions Policy
- Professional Development Policy (See **Staff Development Handbook for Childcare Providers** Barnardos, 2005)
- Grievance Policy (See **Grievance and Disciplinary Handbook for Childcare Providers** Barnardos, 2006)
- Communication Policy (See **Personnel Practice in Early Years Services 2nd Ed.** Barnardos, 2005)
- Staff Support and Supervision Policy (See **Personnel Practice in Early Years Services 2nd Ed.** Barnardos, 2005)
- Health and Safety Policy (See **Health and Safety in Childcare** Barnardos and BCCN, 2006)

References/Supporting documents/Related Legislation

- High/Scope
- The National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) Australian Government
- **Siolta** – The National Framework for Quality in Early Childhood Education
- Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community: Nurturing Children U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- **Supporting Quality: guidelines for professional practice in early childhood services (3rd edition)** by Geraldine French. Barnardos' Training and Resource Service, 2008

Contact Information

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Policy Created

Date:

Signatures

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