**Interactions with Children Policy**

**Kindoo!/ Our ARK Pty Ltd**

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| **PURPOSE** | This policy will provide guidelines to ensure:   * The development of positive and respectful relationships with each child at Kindoo! * Each child at Kindoo! is supported to learn and develop in a secure and empowering environment. |
| **REQUIREMENT** | Mandatory – Quality Area |
| **REVIEW DATE** | This policy shall be reviewed in **April 2019**. |

# POLICY STATEMENT

## 1. VALUES

Kindoo! Is committed to:

* maintaining the dignity and rights of each child at the service
* encouraging children to express themselves and their opinions, and to undertake experiences that develop resilience, self-reliance and self-esteem
* considering the health, safety and wellbeing of each child, and providing a safe, secure and welcoming environment.
* Providing an environment where all children will be challenged to explore, investigate and discover.
* Building on a child’s natural desire to learn by providing experiences and routines that are open-ended and flexible.
* Maintaining a duty of care (refer to Definitions) towards all children at the service.
* Considering the diversity of individual children at the service, including family and cultural values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child
* Building collaborative relationships with families to improve learning and development outcomes for children; and
* Encouraging positive, respectful and warm relationships between children and educators/staff at the service

## 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Person in Day-to-Day Charge (PIDTDC), educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Kindoo! including during offsite excursions and activities.

## 3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) identifies secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships with children as one of the principles that underpin practice. Within an early childhood community, many different relationships are negotiated with and between children, educators and families. The way in which these relationships are established and maintained, and the way in which they remain visible, impacts on how the early childhood community functions as a whole. Relationships directly affect how children form their own identity, whether or not they feel safe and supported, and ultimately, their sense of belonging.

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. Developing responsive, warm, trusting and respectful relationships with children promotes their wellbeing, self-esteem and sense of security. Positive interactions between educators/adults and children can empower children to feel valued, competent and capable.

Regulation 155 of the National Regulations requires an Approved Provider of children’s services to take reasonable steps to ensure that the service provides education and care to children in a way that encourages them to express themselves, and develop self-reliance and self-esteem, maintains their dignity and rights, provides positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour, and respects their cultural and family values

Regulation 156 requires the Approved Provider to ensure that the service provides children with opportunities to interact and develop positive relationships with each other and with the staff and volunteers at the service.

“Having supportive relationships with the nominated supervisor, educators, co-ordinators and staff members enables children to develop confidence in their ability to express themselves, work through differences, learn new things and take calculated risks” (Guide to the National Quality Standard)

**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

## 4. DEFINITIONS

**Behaviour guidance:** A means of assisting children to self-manage their behaviour. It differs from traditional ’behaviour management’ or ‘discipline’ which generally implies that an adult is ‘managing’ children’s behaviour or using punishment to control children. Behaviour guidance applies to all forms of behaviour, not just behaviours labelled as ‘negative’.

## 5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

• Behaviour guidance practice note series (DET): <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>

• Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: <https://www.education.gov.au/>

• Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics: <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/>

• Guide to the National Quality Framework, ACECQA: [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)

• Inclusion Support Program (ISP), Department of Education and Training: <https://www.education.gov.au/>

• Kids Matter, an Australian mental health and well-being initiative set in primary schools and early childhood education and care services: <https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/>

• The Kindergarten Funding Guide(DET): <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>

• United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: <https://www.unicef.org/>

• Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework: http://www.education.vic.gov.au

**Service policies**

• Child Safe Environment Policy

• Code of Conduct Policy

• Complaints and Grievances Policy

• Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

• Supervision of Children Policy

# PROCEDURES

**Nurturing positive interactions with children**

* As each child arrives at the kindergarten they will be greeted by an educator/staff member.
* Educators will be supportive and encouraging and engage in one to one and small group communications with children in a friendly, positive and respectful manner.
* Educators create a relaxed and happy atmosphere in which children experience equitable, friendly and genuine interactions with all educators, the nominated supervisor/coordinator, and other staff members at the service.
* Educators instigate many playful social interactions with children including conversations, songs, rhymes, finger plays, sharing books or stories.
* Educators respect each child’s uniqueness, are attuned to and respond sensitively and appropriately to children’s efforts to communicate and will (where possible) use the child’s own language, communication styles and culture to enhance their interactions.
* Educators assist children to learn to communicate and interact positively and cooperatively with their peers through modelling appropriate communication and responding positively to children at all times.
* Educators encourage children to communicate their own ideas in a respectful and courteous way and will respond appropriately to children’s non-verbal cues.
* Educators show empathy, respect and understanding when communicating with children and model this in their interactions with adults.
* Educators are responsive to children’s feelings and support them to feel safe, secure and understood.
* Educators interact with children during meal times in a relaxed manner in which the enjoyment of foods and the social aspect of meal times is promoted.
* Educators are genuinely interested in each child’s own interests and needs and take the time to fully understand what children are doing or saying, listening to their responses and asking open ended questions.
* Children are encouraged to share their feelings or thoughts, and express different viewpoints about matters that affect them.
* Educators share humour with children and are playful and friendly in their interactions.
* Educators respect children’s desire not to engage in conversations or interactions at certain times or for particular reasons.

**The Nominated Supervisor, PIDTDCs and other educators are responsible for:**

* Creating a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere in which children experience equitable, friendly and genuine interactions with all Educators
* Using appropriate language and behaviour, educators will establish and promote themselves as appropriate role models
* Supporting children to be aware of their own feelings as well as the feelings of others
* Encouraging children to treat all children with respect as their friend
* Providing children with the opportunity to explore their dispositions for learning by expressing themselves and their opinions
* Assisting the children to build resilience and self-assurance through positive interactions
* Guiding children’s behaviour positively
* Respecting the rights of children
* Supporting children in the early childhood environment
* Speaking to children in a positive manner at all times, promoting respect, tolerance and empathy; this includes children using non-verbal cues
* Engaging in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life and the learning of children
* Respecting each child’s uniqueness, attuning to and responding sensitively and appropriately to children’s efforts to communicate and using the child’s own language, communication styles and culture to enhance their interactions
* Listening to children and taking them seriously; they will support and encourage children to use appropriate language in their interactions with adults and peers. Educators will extend upon children’s interests and ideas through questions and discussions, supported in observations, reflections and programming
* Communicating with children by getting down to their level, showing respect to the child whilst promoting effective communication and eye contact.
* Showing empathy to children
* Ensuring that the values, beliefs and cultural practices of the child and family are considered and respected
* Ensuring that no child is ever isolated for any reason other than illness, accident or pre-arranged appointment with parental consent. During this time they will be under adult supervision.
* Regularly reflecting on their relationships and interactions with children and how these can be improved to benefit each child

**Parents/guardians are responsible for:**

* Reading and complying with the Interactions with Children Policy
* Engaging in open communication with educators about their child
* Informing educators/staff of events or incidents that may impact on their child’s behaviour at the service (e.g. moving house, relationship issues, a new sibling)
* Informing educators/staff of any concerns regarding their child’s behaviour or the impact of other children’s behaviour
* Working collaboratively with educators/staff and other professionals/support agencies to develop or review an individual behaviour guidance plan for their child, where appropriate.
* Behaving and communicating in a manner that is respectful and appropriate towards staff, other children and other service families.
* Maintaining the privacy of their own and other children’s behaviour
* Raising behavioural concerns of any service children with staff rather than directly with families.

# EVALUATION

In order 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
* assess the ability of the Nominated Supervisor, PIDTDC, educators, staff, children and others to follow the policy and procedures
* keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
* revise the policy and procedures as part of Kindoo!’s policy review cycle, or as required by legislation, research, policy and best practice
* notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any change to this policy

# ATTACHMENTS

Nil