

13.0 Interactions with Children Policy

Policy Rationale

MakerDojo will ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to maintain a safe, welcoming environment for children and that staff members interact with children in a positive and supportive manner. Children will be encouraged to develop positive, respectful relationships with others, express their opinions, make sound choices and develop a variety of learning outcomes. Staff members and children establish agreed behaviours at the start of each program. These agreements are displayed at the program and positively reinforced on a daily basis. Positive behaviour management relies on effective communication between all parties (children, parent/guardians, staff and management).

Procedures

Children's Behaviour

MakerDojo reserves the right to send any child home from the program where the child:

- Acts in such a way that threatens the physical and or emotional health of any child, staff member or themselves
- Repetitively or deliberately does not follow the instructions given by staff
- Consistently absconds or leaves the premises without adult supervision or permission
- Has an illness or other health related issue that may be dangerous to other children, staff members or themselves
- Deliberately damages any property or belongings

Where a child's behaviour is not appropriate, program staff will involve parents/guardians to positively manage the behaviour.

If the inappropriate behaviour persists, the Director will be informed to determine a further course of action. This may include a meeting with the child's parents to further determine if the program is still appropriate for the child in question.

Guiding Children's Behaviour in a Positive Way

To implement a proactive behaviour management strategy, it is important to consider the adult role, program content and environment. All of these need to be considered before the behaviour occurs.

Adult role

- All behaviour has meaning.
- Look past the words or the behaviour to get to the meaning/feelings behind it.
- Staff should respect and acknowledge the feelings of the children – active listening

Put the behaviour in context:

- What might the child be thinking/feeling?
- Time of day, food and water intake, and energy levels.
- Is this behaviour normal for this child?

Ensure that your expectations are appropriate:

- Is the behaviour hurting anyone?
- What age and stage is the child at?
- Does it really matter?
- Is it safe?

Adults must remember that they are a role model – model positive behaviour. There are a number of elements which influence interactions with children. The elements listed below should be considered by staff members in order to provide appropriate interactions with children at all times.

Ensure that the program:

- Promotes children's choice in both experiences and with children's interactions with each other
- Is open ended
- Encourages staff members to interact directly with children to support their learning and development
- Has an approved framework to follow
- Has the choice for children to be on their own
- Enables the children to have some control over the program
- Supports the theory that 'process is just as important as product'

Environment

- The environment should show that the children have a say in the development and implementation of the program.
- There should be choice of activities and choice within activities.
- Choose the activity and then choose how to do it (quietly, tidy up, give everyone a turn, etc)

Agreed behaviours

For this policy to be successful, staff must ensure that:

- Children are involved in the process of establishing agreed behaviours (This is done at the start of each holiday program)
- Agreed behaviours are positively reinforced on a daily basis
- Talk to the children about behaviour in a way they are likely to understand. Some examples: 'Care for the feelings of others', 'Respect yourself and others', 'Follow instructions from staff,' 'Look after equipment', 'Use equipment responsibly'.

Active listening

*"Listening looks easy, but it's not simple. Every head is a world."
(Cuban proverb)*

- Try to work out the reasons behind a child's behaviour rather than focusing on the behaviour.

Example: A 6-year-old is asked to stop playing the Play Station and pack up. The child turns to the adult and says, "I hate you".

The child probably does not actually hate the adult; he just doesn't want to pack up.

All staff members, volunteers and students should be aware that no child is to be subjected to a) any form of corporal punishment, b) any discipline that is unreasonable under the circumstances.

References

- ACECQA National Quality Framework Resource Kit (2012)
- Quality Area 1 – Educational program and practice.
- Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety
- Quality Area 5 – Relationships with children Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011), R 155 & 156

Version control date: December 2019

To be reviewed: December 2020