

24. MANAGING BEHAVIOUR

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Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 ([Síolta Standard 5: Interactions](#)) ([National Standard 3: Working in Partnership with Parents/guardians or Guardians](#), [National Standard 9: Nurture and Well-Being](#), [National Standard 10: Behaviour](#)) Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.

Statement of Intent:

We will work with the children to ensure they receive positive guidance, support, and encouragement to finding positive solutions to manage their own behaviour. The service sets realistic expectations of behaviour in accordance to the age and stage of development of the child. We apply rules and expectations fairly and consistently to all children. We do not use any form of physical punishment. We encourage children to respect themselves, others and the environment. We facilitate children to make positive decisions and choices about their own learning and development to develop a positive sense of self. We aim to facilitate a happy, caring environment with stimulating activities for all children. In the case of a particular incident, or persistent unacceptable behaviour, we will *always* discuss ways forward with the parent(s)/Guardian of the child.

We will NEVER inflict corporal punishment on a child.

General Procedures for Promoting and Nurturing Positive Behaviour:

- During the induction period, all new staff are introduced to the behaviour policy and are asked to sign the policy to say they have read it, and agree to implement the policy.
- Staff will adopt a reciprocal and positive relationship with the child.
- Staff will act as a role model and adopt a confident approach to encourage and support positive behaviour.
- Staff will work in a respectful manner and in partnership with other practitioners, children and parents/guardians.
- Staff are role models for the children and should treat one another with respect, use appropriate tone of voice and body language to one another and the children
- Observation and recording will be used to inform and support staff to decide on appropriate methods and strategies of dealing with behaviour problems.
- The person in charge is the person designated as the resource person for staff support on behaviour management issues.
- At an age appropriate level, children will be encouraged and supported in resolving their own disputes.
- Each child should be positively supported and recognised as an individual.
- Staff will practically engage children in resolving their conflicts using age appropriate methods. In doing this, children can explore their feelings and conflicts in a safe controlled way. Staff will positively support children in doing this.
- Training will be provided for Staff where necessary.

Rewarding Positive Behaviour:

- Staff will acknowledge and praise positive behaviour as it occurs.
- Children are not rewarded with food, sweets or treats and all staff understand how to support positive behaviour, and how to encourage and facilitate it effectively.
- Positive language will be used rather than negative and statements made. Rather than saying 'no' for example:
 - Say: *"I would like you to sit back down on the chair please John, because you will fall off and hurt yourself". Or "We are inside and we don't climb on furniture or equipment inside". Or "I would like you to sit back down on the*

chair please, do you remember we only climb on things when we are outside”,

- Rather than: *Don't stand on the chair”*
- While encouraging positive behaviour, the child's self-esteem should not be negatively impacted. The child should not be labelled through the use of certain words for example bold, naughty.

In anticipating occasional inappropriate behaviour, we follow these guidelines:

- Staff will provide a calm, safe and stimulating environment which is age appropriate and of interest to all children present within the group.
- Children are involved where appropriate in the planning of activities and developing the curriculum.
- A routine and rhythm which is practical and beneficial to the age range of children should be developed and sustained.
- Staff will ensure rules are applied consistently to all children within the setting and are aware expectations regarding the children's behaviour.
- Correct Child: Adult ratio's will be implemented according to the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 at all times.
- Children have regular daily access to the outdoor play area.
- Children are kept informed of what is happening and what is expected of them.
- We ensure there are enough suitable age appropriate and activities and equipment for children.

Implementing Positive Steps to Supporting Positive Behaviour:

- Children should be made aware of the expectations and their responsibility
 - *No hurting bodies*
 - *No hurting feelings*
- Positive behaviour should be supported and encouraged from all children consistently throughout the day by all staff.
- Incidents should be dealt with immediately by the staff who witnesses it.
- Staff should not speak about the child, or their behaviour in front of other parents/guardians, children or the child.
- The child should not be labelled by staff.

- Positive behaviour should be consistently encouraged to **all children**.
- Correct Child: Adult ratios should be implemented at all times.
- Positive behaviour should be implemented within the curriculum throughout various themes. Age appropriate activities, prompts and materials should be provided to children to explore their feelings and emotions throughout the year.
- The staff, where possible, should have a quiet area where children can retreat if they are experiencing negative feelings for example a quiet corner.
- At an age and developmental appropriate level, when the child is calm, the staff should explore the behaviour with the child using prompts for example I noticed you got [feeling] when you were at the [area].....what could you do the next time you feel.....Do you know what I do when I am [emotion]...

Procedures for Supporting Positive Behaviour:

ABCD: Action Behaviour Choice Decision

Minor Behaviour Problems:

In these type of situations, the child may have caused no issue and all day and suddenly their behaviour changes.

Minor behaviour problems are behaviours in line with the child's age and stage of their development (See Appendix D: Children and Behaviour).

Staff should positively support the child's well-being and identity throughout the process of supporting positive behaviour. The child should always feel valued, respected, empowered, cared for, and included.

Staff will assess each situation and use their best judgement in dealing with the matter. Situations may arise where the staff may allow the children 'resolve their own battles' or ignore minor incidents.

A sensible approach is recommended in dealing with minor behaviour problems. It is not always evident to staff what the cause of an incident has been.

Age of child:	Approach:	Examples of behaviour:
1 – 1½ yr 1½ - 2yr	1. Approach calmly 2. Stop any hurtful actions 3. Acknowledge children's feelings 4. Gather information 5. Restate the problem 6. Distract the child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent crying to seek attention • Temper tantrums • Will test limits/rules • Biting
2- 3yrs 3-5 years	1. Approach calmly 2. Stop any hurtful actions 3. Acknowledge children's feelings 4. Gather information 5. Restate the problem 6. Ask for ideas for solutions and decide on an outcome the child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temper tantrums • Possessive of toys • Fussy feeder • Use of bad language • Whiny • Verbally hits out • May be bossy

If a child has a temper tantrum, the age of the child is taken into consideration. A child **under** three years is more likely to have tantrum out of frustration. A child **over** three years is more likely to be linked to defiance. Staff will take a gentler approach with the younger child and a firmer approach with the older child. Staff will explain to the older child in a calm clear way using simple words why they cannot have what they want. If the tantrum continues and other children are getting upset or hit the child will be moved to another area in the room until they calm down.

The staff member should act in a calm and fair manner and allow the child to re-join the activity when they have calmed down as if nothing has happened. At this stage, boundaries should be highlighted to the child. The expectations **must** be clear and reasonable to the age of the child and their developmental level.

Where it is evident that a child is about to misbehave for example taking a toy from another child then the staff member should comment on the behaviour. *'Mary, you know we take turns and share. Angela will let you have that toy [name toy or doll] to play with when she is finished. Will we ask Angela to let you have that toy when she is finished?'* This provides the child with an opportunity to change the behaviour and

not take the toy from the other child. If the child continues a second reminder should be given and what the consequences will be if they continue.

Managing Moderate Behaviour Problems:

ABCD; Action Behaviour Choice Decision

Moderate behaviour problems tend to happen more frequently than the 'once off' type behaviours and have a greater impact on the child themselves and other children in the room. Staff should positively support the child's well-being and identity throughout the process of supporting positive behaviour. The child should always feel valued, respected, empowered, cared for, and included.

Age of child:	Approach:
1 – 1½ yr 1½ - 2yr	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions2. Acknowledge children's feelings3. Gather information4. Restate the problem5. Suggest solutions and choose one together6. Be prepared to give follow-up supports for supporting Positive Behaviour7. Observe the child
2- 3yrs 3-5 years	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions2. Acknowledge children's feelings3. Gather information4. Restate the problem5. Ask for ideas for solutions and6. Choose a decision together7. Be prepared to give follow-up supports for Supporting Positive Behaviour8. Observe the child

Staff will ask the child what is wrong or bothering them. Emotion picture cards may be used with younger children to support how they may be feeling.

Observations will be used to assist making an assessment as to what may cause the behaviour. Observations will be used to capture when the child's behaviour is more positive as when behaviour is more challenging children are regularly corrected. Constant correction can have a negative impact on the child's self-esteem. Staff will

use the observation of 'positive' behaviours to give plenty of encouragement and praise which should help to develop self-esteem.

This approach can be shared with parents/guardians and used at home and in the service.

Observations should be looking for:

- When the child is at their best behaviour and when they 'act out'.
- Consideration will be given to whether the child likes the activity or not, is there a particular child they don't get on with, are they tired, hungry, or perhaps ill?
- If the group of children are becoming disruptive review the activities the staff will review activities to ensure children do not become bored or sit for too long.

Staff will consider changing the layout of the room regularly, and perhaps changing the daily routine to ensure that there is variety and children do not become bored.

Staff will consider liaising with the designated person responsible for behaviour management for support when they have used strategies that have not seen an improvement in behaviour.

Managing Severe & Challenging Behaviour:

ABCD: Action Behaviour Choice Decision

Severe and challenging behaviours are frequent and repeated actions by a child that impact significantly on other children and the child themselves. The child may also find it difficult to engage in the activities being undertaken.

In this type of situation, the behaviour has not improved using the usual behaviour management strategies and may often require more intensive one-to-one support to the child. Staff understand that it is important to recognise in managing severe/challenging behaviour that there is a problem.

Staff will discuss the behaviour problem with the designated person who has overall responsibility for managing children's behaviour problems to put an action plan together.

At any age:	Approach:	Examples of behaviour:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions. 2. Make eye contact with the child 3. Acknowledge children's feelings. 4. Gather information. 5. Restate the problem and ensure the child understands 6. Suggest solutions and choose one together. 7. Be prepared to give follow-up supports for supporting Positive Behaviour 8. Observe the child 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • kicking, • hitting, • bad language, • prolonged screaming, breath holding, • head banging, • ongoing biting, <p>Other behaviours may present as the child refusing to engage, being over anxious, avoiding contact with others and unusual behaviours.</p>

Staff will ensure that instructions or corrections are given in simple words and kept short and that similar phrases are used by all staff and the child's parents/guardians so that the information been given to the child is consistent.

Where a child is receiving professional support the service will work with the parents/guardians and the professionals to implement the programme or approaches recommended.

A behaviour management strategy plan will be drawn up based on observations and professional support guidance {PHN or others} where possible. All staff will adopt the same approach to what to do when the child shows signs that the challenging behaviour is about to be presented, how best to manage that behaviour when it happens, how to limit the negative impact on other children or activities and strategies that can be taught to the child to help them control their own behaviour.

The service will engage and work with the parents/guardians to work towards the same approach at home and in the service to behaviour management

Procedures Which Are Unacceptable for Supporting Positive Behaviour:

- Physical punishment (corporal punishment).
- Sending children out of the room.
- Isolating children from the group e.g. time out.
- Shouting or raising of your voice.
- Physical restraint for example holding will not be used unless it is required to prevent injury to child, other children, adults or property. In cases where it is required to hold a child in such manner, it **must** be recorded in the accident and incident report. Parents/guardians **must** be informed of the incident.
- Speaking negatively about the child to other staff *or* in front of the child/other children.
- The child should not be labelled.
- Staff should not expect unrealistic behaviour from a child in accordance with their age and stage of development.
- Once the incident is over, the staff member should not place emphasis or keep reminding the child of their behaviour.
- The child should not be humiliated.
- Withholding food or drinks.
- Showing favouritism.
- Failing to reassure or comfort a child.

Partnership with Parent(s)/Guardians:

- It is our policy to work in close collaboration with parents/guardians. We recognise and value the role of parent(s)/ Guardians in their child's life in supporting positive behaviour, working in partnership with parent(s)/ Guardians is important. It is our policy to inform parent(s)/ Guardians at the enrolment stage, of the policies and procedures in relation to behaviour. The supporting positive behaviour policy will be explained, in doing this, a consistent approach can be adopted.
- Parent(s)/Guardians are encouraged to share any difficulties/concerns which they may be experiencing regarding the child's behaviour for example bereavement, illness, a new baby etc.

- Where a child's behaviour is causing concern, it is our policy to do this in a consultative manner, and staff will endeavour to work in partnership with the parent(s)/ Guardian to develop a strategy for dealing with the situation.
- Discussing the child's behaviour in front of the child/ other children/parents/guardians will be avoided at all times.

Where a significant incident occurs regarding a child's behaviour, the following should be documented.

- The child's full name
- Time and location of the incident
- Events leading up to the incident
- What happened
- Others involved
- Witnesses
- How the situation was handled (**ABCD**)
- Follow up with the children

Anti-bullying:

Children are afforded a right to their own time and space. Depending on the child's age and stage of development, it may not be appropriate to expect children to share. However, we feel it is important to acknowledge both children's feelings, and to support them in understanding how the other child may be feeling.

Diversity and equality is important for children to understand, and we endeavour to create a positive and supportive environment for all children. Staff will encourage all children to acknowledge and celebrate difference. Consequently, children will recognise from an early age, bullying, fighting, hurting and racial comments are not acceptable behaviour.

Bullying can take many forms. It can be physical, verbal or emotional, but it is always repeated behaviour which makes other people feel uncomfortable or threatened. Any form of bullying is **unacceptable** and will be dealt with immediately. At our service, staff follow the guidelines below to ensure children do not experience bullying.

- Staff ensure all children feel safe, happy and secure within the setting.
- Staff develop positive relationships with all children, and encourage children to speak about their feelings.
- Staff are encouraged to recognise that active physical aggression in the early years is a part of children's development, and recognise positive opportunities should be in place for children to channel this positively.
- Children are learning about their feelings, Staff will support children in identifying their feelings and actions for example happy, sad, and angry.
- At an age and stage appropriate level, children will be encouraged to resolve their problems and take responsibility for their actions.
- Staff are encouraged to adopt a policy of intervention when they think a child is not being treated in a fair or appropriate manner.
- Staff are aware when play becomes 'aggressive', and will initiate an appropriate activity with the children.
- Any instance of bullying will be discussed fully with the parents/guardians of all involved to look for a consistent resolution to the behaviour.
- If a parent(s)/ Guardian has a concern regarding their child's behaviour, the early year's practitioner or manager will be available to speak to the parent. It is through partnership with Parent(s)/ Guardians which we can ensure a child will feel confident and secure in their environment, at home and in the setting.

BULLYING AND PHYSICAL VIOLENCE IS NOT TOLERATED WITHIN THE SERVICE, WHETHER INFLICTED ON ADULTS OR CHILDREN.

What causes children to be aggressive?

Sometimes, aggression takes the form of instigating fights, sometimes the child may provoke other children to fight, or may antagonise or threaten other children. Other children do not like this behaviour, and will often feel intimidated and insecure in their environment.

Children who display aggressive behaviours will often have low self-confidence, poor social skills and may have difficulties with their speech. However, any child regardless of their age or stage of development may experience aggression at some stage.

Aggression brings power, and often children who are aggressive will seek the control and position which comes with it among their peers.

How can we support positive behaviour?

- Aggressive behaviour should never be ignored.
- Staff should not get into a power struggle with the child.
- Be firm but gentle in your approach. The child should not be given mixed messages at this stage.
- The child should always feel valued, respected, cared for, and included.
- One-to-one work should be initiated with the child, and a plan should be devised. For example, when I get angry, I will go to the ... [area].
- Provide opportunity for the child to display positive behaviour, acknowledge and praise this behaviour.
- Provide the child with opportunities which demonstrates leadership and communication in a positive manner.
- The **ABCD** model should be used with the child, where age and stage appropriate, the child should make the choice, and also take responsibility for their actions.
- The staff member should be fair in their expectations, and should be consistent, patient and understand change will take time.

Rough and Tumble play/ Fantasy Aggression:

Young children often engage in play which has aggressive themes- such as superhero and weapon play. This may take over some children's play. This is an interest of that particular child, and *it is not a precursor for bullying*. We will ensure the behaviour does not become inconsiderate or hurtful, and will address it if we feel necessary.

- We recognise rough and tumble play is part of children's development, and it is acceptable within limits. We view this type of play as role play, and not as problematic or aggressive.
- We will offer opportunities for children to explore this type of play in a safe and secure environment.
- Children will be aware of the boundaries with this form of play, and will be aware when this behaviour is not acceptable.

- We recognise fantasy play may contain violent dramatic strategies- blowing up, shooting etc. We will use these opportunities to explore lateral thinking and conflict resolution. These themes often refer to 'goodies and baddies', we will use such opportunities to explore concepts of right and wrong, and alternatives to the dramatic strategies.

Biting:

Biting happens in almost all Child Care settings where young children are together and dealing with biting can be challenging. Biting is a developmental stage which children may go through. All biting incidents are upsetting for children, and will be dealt with in a calm and clear manner. The early year's practitioner will use clear language and be consistent in their approach. We aim to support children in developing self-control; however, the safety of each child is our primary concern.

Why do children bite?

- Children may be teething, and it may feel good to bite and chew.
- Children experience many emotions (positive and negative) that are difficult to express, and at times control.
- Biting sometimes occurs for no apparent reason.

Biting Prevention:

- The correct child: adult ratios will be in place within the setting at all times.
- The layout of the room will be appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child, and staff can see all children at all times from all areas of the room.
- Staff are aware when children are teething, and offer materials/foods which may soothe.
- Age and stage appropriate materials are present within the room for children to access at all times.
- Staff are vigilant to the relationships between children, and are aware of possible conflicts.
- Staff are aware of the temperaments of the children.
- Staff should encourage children to use language to express feelings/emotions.

Where a child does bite, staff should follow these guidelines and try to distinguish a pattern:

- Are there particular times of the day which the child bites?
- Do toys seem to be causing biting incidents?
- Does the child focus on one particular child?
- Is the child teething?
- Can something be offered to soothe the child's biting? For example, toys/food with textures or coldness.

Procedures to follow when biting occurs:

Usually the skin isn't broken and the wound isn't serious. However, the appropriate first aid should be administered.

If the skin is not broken:

- Wash the area with mild soap and water (do not rub) and pat dry.

If the skin is broken:

- The human mouth is full of bacteria, and there may be a risk of infection. Serious bites to the face, hands, or genitals can be especially dangerous.
- Wash the area — but don't scrub — with mild soap and running water for three to five minutes, then cover it with a clean dressing.
- If the wound is bleeding, apply pressure with a clean, dressing and elevate the area if possible.
- If the skin is broken, the child will need to be seen by a doctor, who will clean and examine the wound. Unless the bite is very serious or on your child's face, the doctor will probably prefer not to give your child stitches. Stitching the bite closed can increase the risk of infection. The doctor may prescribe a short course of antibiotics to prevent infection, depending on the location and severity of the bite.
- The child is comforted, and reassured of their safety.
- The Staff will explain to the child who has bitten using a firm but gentle approach that biting is not allowed.
- The person in charge will be informed and details should be recorded in the Accident and Incident Report Form.

- The situation is dealt with professionally, and confidentiality is adhered to. Both parents/guardians are informed separately, and the accident and incident report is signed.
- The Staff should explain the methods which will be adhered to so it does not occur again, and highlight the importance of partnership with parents/guardians.
- If the child bites again, the child should be observed for a period of time to try and develop a pattern of behaviour.
- In the event of a child repeatedly biting, the manager will speak to the parent(s)/guardian. If all avenues have been exhausted, the person in charge may suggest seeking help/support outside the setting.

Please note that every effort will be made to support the biting child and we will work closely with the parents/guardians to find appropriate strategies. We will also support and train staff in this regard. In rare circumstances these efforts may not be successful. Sometimes as a last resort for risk management reasons and with the welfare of all children in mind a child's place may need to be terminated or suspended until a solution is found. Our approach is always to find ways of retaining children in the service rather than terminating places.

APPENDIX D: CHILDREN AND BEHAVIOUR

Where children cannot verbally communicate, children often use behaviour as a form of communication. Children will often use behaviour as a medium to express their feelings, fears and emotions.

Physical behaviour: children's physical behaviour can often be a result of tiredness, illness or medication. Night-time sleep problems (interrupted night sleep) has been found to be a common cause of behaviour problems causing chronic fatigue and a cranky, irritable child with poor coping skills.

Developmental: behaviour will often reflect the age and stage of development of the child for example temper tantrums. Developmental delay in children's speech, mobility or other areas can lead to a child feeling frustrated and may present in challenging behaviours.

Management should be informed by parents/guardians of all concerns regarding developmental delay, as it is through this the child's needs can be fully supported within the setting.

Emotional: learning about feelings and emotions is a process. Often when children's emotions are in disarray, it will primarily affect their behaviour. Such examples include bereavement, a new baby, a house move etc. We ask parents/guardians to inform the early year's practitioner of any changes or difficulties which may be occurring for the child- no matter how small. Through this, the child can be supported positively, and feel valued, cared for and respected.

Environmental: an environment which supports the individual child's interests, age and stage of development, gender and background should be provided. The environment must be stimulating, and offer a variety of opportunities for each child within the room. Settings must ensure the correct space requirements are in place as per the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

Intellectual: where a child's interests, abilities or background is not evident within a room, the child may not be stimulated. It is the responsibility of the early year's practitioner of that room, to ensure age and stage appropriate materials, opportunities and areas are present within the room for each child to utilize.

APPENDIX E: METHODS TO SUPPORT POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

Supporting and encouraging positive behaviour requires documenting, planning, and implementation. However, it is based on staff becoming reflective in their practice. It is our policy to create, and sustain a setting where children are confident and competent learners in a secure, stimulating and age appropriate environment.

- Children will be offered choice.
- Children will have an input to the curriculum.
- Children will be included in areas which affect them.
- Staff will implement fair and consistent expectations regarding behaviour.
- Staff will speak to children:
 - Clearly, using language/ a medium which the child understands
 - Appropriate tone
 - Positive body language
- Staff will offer praise and encouragement to all children.
- Children will feel valued, empowered, included and confident in the environment.
- Follow the behaviour policy (**ABCD**).
- Children will not be labelled, or spoke about in front of the child/other children/ other staff.
- Sanctions are fair and linked to the behaviour for example picking up litter for dropping it.
- We do not use physical (corporal) punishment **of any kind**.
- We do not use a bold chair/step/corner or any other means to isolating or humiliating the child.