

Behaviour Policy - Children

Children have a right to express themselves through their play. Sometimes this involves noise, mess, risk taking and testing boundaries. Children benefit from learning to manage risk and relationships for themselves.

If children are not causing serious physical or emotional harm to themselves or others or destroying equipment staff should always consider whether children are best placed to manage their own behaviour and support them to do this, if necessary.

Children will often sort out their own differences through play and this provides valuable learning opportunities.

Where there are any concerns about bullying or ongoing behaviour difficulties that pose a risk to other children's physical or emotional wellbeing, then these must be addressed quickly so that they do not affect children's enjoyment of the setting.

Encouraging Positive Behaviour

Hackney Play Association wants to encourage positive behaviour so when children attend our settings staff should talk to them about:

- Listening to staff and each other
- Asking staff for help where they have concerns
- Playing in ways that are safe for themselves and other children
- Respecting each other's differences

Treating each other well

In order to have settings where children treat each other, the staff and the setting well, staff should:

- Create a welcoming and inclusive environment
- Let children know where staff will be and that they can bring any problems to staff
- Treat all children and adults with politeness and respect
- Allow children to sort out their own differences where possible
- Try to be fair
- Talk to children about their own ideas of positive behaviour

Hackney Play Association works to improve play opportunities for children and young people in Hackney.
Registered Charity No. 272651.

- Praise positive behaviour (children and adults)
- Talk about children's achievements
- Respond to politeness verbally
- Never accept racism, bullying or other discriminatory behaviour

Early intervention

Staff can avoid incidences of dangerous or hurtful behaviour by early identification, seeing things coming:

- Notice body language
- Be alert, listen and observe
- Be aware of tensions building up in children's communications
- Remain close when tensions are building
- Be aware of any risk assessments relating to children's behaviour
- Intervene early to head off damaging behaviours

Communication around behaviour

- Ongoing issues with behaviour should be discussed in team meetings
- Staff should apply rules of confidentiality to children's behaviour
- Records of dangerous and hurtful behaviour should be recorded on an incident report form and should be kept with confidential information
- Staff should never use the possibility of speaking to families as a threat
- Communication with parents should be used as a way of letting parents know how their children are doing and should happen in positive times as well as times of challenging behaviour.
- When families are approached about their child it should be as a support with the child's behaviour rather than as a punishment.
- Staff may choose to offer families extra support, if the families are having difficulties with their child's behaviour, by signposting them to other services

Managing challenging behaviour

When staff do have to manage challenging behaviour they should:

- Never take it personally, the behaviour is about the child's feelings not the adults.
- When staff are dealing with behavioural issues they should let the children know that it is the behaviour they are displaying that is wrong and not the children themselves.
- Avoid confrontation and power struggles. Getting into one of these means that the situation cannot be resolved unless someone backs down, which will make matters worse rather than better. The child will see you as an opponent rather than as someone to be trusted.
- Speak calmly and slowly. This is particularly important with children who may have difficulties in comprehending speech. They may be attending more to your tone than to the words you are using.
- Be aware of the effects of violating someone's personal space. Never put your face 'in' theirs.
- Remove immediate pressures and any background distractions where possible. Try to talk to the child away from other children.

- Be confident and assertive, but never aggressive. Make sure that what you say to the child, or ask them to do, is clear.
- Keep talking to the child. Use eye contact sensitively, offer choices, and be prepared to negotiate and to compromise. Give the situation time to de-escalate.

Never use physical punishment, however, appropriate physical intervention may be necessary to prevent accident or harm to the children, e.g. restraining a child who is about to run into the road or stopping a child from seriously harming another.

If an incident like this takes place it must be recorded on an incident form (see form in our Safeguarding Policy).

Staff should be able to call on each other for support when dealing with challenging behaviour.

Restricting children's attendance

- A Senior Playworker or Session Lead should make any decision about sending a child home
- Parents should be informed immediately when a child is sent home and invited to a meeting to discuss behaviour
- A record must be taken and kept of any behaviour agreements or restricted hours.
- A record of reoccurring or serious incidents **MUST** be taken and reported immediately to the Director and Training Manager, who are responsible for safeguarding.