

Promoting Positive Behaviour in Early Learning and Childcare Policy and Guidance

This policy and guidance sits as part of the more [general Highland Council Promoting Positive Relationships Framework and Guidance](#). It highlights the aspects which are most relevant for Early Learning and Childcare settings. It sits alongside [Cawdor's Way to Wellbeing](#).

Principles

The following principles should guide approaches to managing behaviour in ELC settings in Highland.

- Nearly all inappropriate behaviour can be seen as a communication of need
- Children in ELC are still developing and may lack the developmental skills, knowledge or practised expertise to meet their needs in appropriate ways.
- Many issues with behaviour can be prevented through providing a rich environment of positive relationships and suitable stimulation and opportunities
- Children's perceptions and experiences of an environment may be very different to those of the adults. They have a right to a voice and influence on their environment – this may well be expressed through "behaviour"
- Good staff relationships and communication are key to a happy setting where developmental appropriate problems are catered for with sensitivity

Key processes

Prevention

Many of the issues with behaviour that arise in ELC are part of the day to day development and learning. Children are developing skills in self-regulation and playing with others, and mistakes are to be expected. The frequency of issues can be minimised through the following steps:

- Ensure the environment, routines and pedagogy support consistent experiences of positive relationships for all children and staff
- Understand that being in ELC is in itself moderately stressful for many children. Ensure that children know at each point of the session what is happening now and what is happening next
- Have consistent "small routines" for how children access snack, go outside, change activities, etc; including consistent language and labelling
- Balance a clear and displayed plan for the session with flexibility to vary it to allow extended and deepening play experiences if these arise
- Reduce the potential for conflict over activities or resources by ensuring that there are enough things to do and equipment provided for all children to be engaged in play and learning

- Ensure and monitor that staff really know the children, and children feel that staff understand them. This is a responsibility for all adults, not just a child's key worker or supporter
- Be active in scaffolding positive interactions between children, anticipating difficulties and adapting in real time to promote development and learning
- Use the Words Up key messages and the Positive Relationships Pyramid to support sensitive and attuned communication between adults and children

Responding to incidents

It is of paramount importance that when difficulties arise staff remain calm and reflective so that they can help the children involved to regulate their feelings and actions. The following steps will deal with most incidents in a way that helps the children learn and develop.

- Getting in early is often the most effective response. Staff who know the children well may "see things coming" and be able to intervene by supporting positive actions, offering distractions or meeting the underlying needs
- Before responding to behaviour, pause to reflect on what need it may be communicating, and consider how best to address that need
- Children's needs can be understood using the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators, and action taken to address the need underlying the behaviour.
- Be aware that when difficulties arise, this is likely to increase children's stress levels and further escalate behaviour. Ensure that adult responses are warm and loving, and avoid shaming the children in any way
- You should follow your settings procedure for recording incidents – link to the ELC Blog with accident/incident guidance and form
- Work with parents/carers to address behaviour issues, supporting all adults to understand these as an expression of a need that the child cannot manage
- The Developmental Overviews should be used with parents/carers to identify any developmental needs that can be addressed using the strategies on bumps2bairns and elsewhere. With persisting or puzzling difficulties, ELC staff can use the various sources of support and consultation available.

Manager responsibilities

- Foster a caring and nurturing environment where everyone feels welcomed and valued
- Ensure all ELC staff are aware of their role and responsibilities to promote positive relationships with children and families
- Support the key worker to build relationships with families, carers and partner agencies involved with their key worker children. This would include sharing appropriate information
- Monitor information related to any incidents and provide guidance and support to ELC staff and families in relation to this