

Behaviour Management Policy

Policy Statement

At Cairdeas we believe that every child is unique and special. Based on our experiences we firmly believe that any behaviour displayed by a child is shaped by many contributing factors, including the mixture of the child's personality and temperament, their background and culture, their social surroundings and their current circumstances. Therefore we accept the complexity of behaviour and understand the importance of a positive approach. We also acknowledge that challenging behaviour affects both children and staff involved.

Corporal punishment is expressly forbidden in the centre.

Support for staff:

- Correct child-adult ratios maintained at all times.
- Child development training made available to all staff to ensure the understanding of milestones and age appropriate behaviours.
- Key worker system ensures equal sharing of responsibilities among staff and consistency for the children.
- Regular communication with parents leads to more effective, consistent approach.
- Management team available to support staff on daily basis.

Promoting positive behaviour:

- Staff address children with respect and role model desired behaviours.
- Settling in policy and transition policy to make it a pleasant experience for all involved.
- Children's environment arranged to stimulate and satisfy their developmental needs.
- Daily routines provide sense of security and consistency.
- Daily access to a variety of large outdoor areas allows any excess energy to be channelled effectively.
- Staff address children's behaviour in a positive way (for example: "please keep your feet on the floor" instead of "don't climb").
- Children are partners, actively involved in their learning, discussing their emotions and finding ways to deal with them.
- Use of the whole brain strategy is encouraged: the following are the steps (see additional information on these in attached document):

1. Connect and redirect	6. Feelings come and go
2. Name it and tame it	7. Sensations; Images; Feelings; Thoughts
3. Engage, don't enrage	8. Mindsight
4. Use it or loose it	9. Connect through conflict
5. Move it loose it	

Initial responses to minor behaviour problems (normal for age and stage of development):

In all cases below adult must identify the behaviour and recognise which response will be appropriate.

If adult decides that the behaviour is not threatening and the children are able to resolve it themselves, she will stay close making herself available if needed but won't interfere.

However, if adult decides that the behaviour may harm one/both of the children and is unlikely to be solved by parties involved, she will intervene and use mentioned below techniques:

Wobblers (6mths-1.5-2yrs)	Junior Toddlers (1.5-2yrs- 3-3.5yrs)	Pre-schoolers (3-3.5 yrs-5yrs)	Afterschoolers (4.5 yrs-12yrs)
Adult approaches calmly, separates the children if necessary and uses positive language, for example: "we play nicely". She comforts the upset child and moves on. It is important to use simple language and short instructions with this age group.	This is an emotionally difficult period for most children. Therefore compromise and distraction prove to be the most effective. Staff continue to use positive, simple language (for example: "please keep your feet on the floor", "please walk").	At this stage children have more understanding of the difference between 'good' and 'bad' behaviour. Adult approaches, asks 'what is the matter? And listens to both sides of the story. Adult asks the children for the solutions: 'what do you think we should do about it?'. Adult praises the children for being able to resolve the conflict.	Conflicts are mostly solved by the children themselves under adult's supervision. It's important to let the children figure it out and practice approaches to conflict. It will remain with them as a life skill.

Moderate behaviour problems

(normal for the age and stage of development but more frequent/intense):

- Staff in the room recognise the behaviour as moderate and inform the management team.
- Supervisors and staff observe the behaviour for a short while and take notes.
- Staff and management team meet, exchange the findings and discuss possible solutions.
- Cairdeas team invite the parents to have a conversation about the child's behaviour in the centre. Staff encourage parents to share any information that may contribute to the behaviour. Adults exchange opinions and discuss possible tactics.
- If plans put in place fail and the child's behaviour continues to deteriorate, the behaviour is recognised as challenging and other measures must be put in place.

Severe and challenging behaviour

“Challenging behaviours are frequent and repeated actions by a child that impacts significantly on other children or the child itself, or their ability to engage in the daily activities, and which fails to improve under the usual behaviour management strategies or requires ongoing intensive one-to-one management to keep under control. The behaviours may have been present from the start, gradually worsening as the child gets older or involve a deterioration of their behaviour from a previously normal pattern”¹

Examples of severe behaviour problems may be:

Repeated openly aggressive actions eg. full blown tantrums, kicking, hitting, bullying, disruptive behaviour, prolonged screaming, oppositional responses (defiance)

Aggressive actions such as breath holding, head banging, refusal to engage with others or activities

Developmentally inappropriate responses eg. biting after the toddler stage, poor coping skills, poor attention span

Unusual behaviours such as flapping hands, unusual vocal sounds, pick at skin etc.

The key element to managing challenging behaviour:

Recognising there is a problem

Carry out a detailed group of observations. Good observations will be of very practical benefit to a professional in making a diagnosis

Observations may show what triggers positive behaviour and what triggers negative responses. Based on these findings certain changes may be made to layout of equipment or how activities are implemented for that child. At this stage the parent will also be involved to ensure behaviour is managed the same way in the home.

Discuss with parents regarding possible urgent referral to relevant professional. The service acknowledges that it may be difficult and upsetting for a parent to accept their child's behaviour may be the result of an underlying problem. Every effort will be taken to be as supportive as possible.

Behaviour problems arising out of child protection concerns will be appropriately dealt with. (See Cairdeas Child Protection Policy)

Provide relevant support A behaviour management strategy will be drawn up including what to do when the child shows signs that challenging behaviour is brewing, how best to control the behaviour when it occurs, how to limit the negative impact on other children or activities and specific strategies that are taught to the child to assist them in controlling their own behaviour.

When giving instruction or correction to the child, make sure we have the child's attention first, getting good eye contact at the child's level. Rules, corrections or direction given are kept short and simple and worded similarly by staff in the service and by the child's parents so the child becomes familiar with what is being looked for.

Should we require additional information, advice or support in relation to the behaviour management of a child, we will contact our local PHN or other relevant professional.

¹ Donegal County Childcare Committee Behaviour Management Policy