

### Background

Responsive and reciprocal relationships are the foundation of quality early childhood education and care programs. Children thrive when they form secure relationships with caring and responsive adults in environments that encourage exploration and discovery. These connections are strengthened through collaborative partnerships—where teachers, educators, families and professionals work together to support each child's learning, growth and development. *“When children feel safe, secure and supported they grow in confidence to explore and learn.” The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (V2.2022, p. 30)*

C&K support the Department of Education, *Statement of Shared Commitment – Every Interaction Counts*. At C&K every interaction counts. At C&K everyone commits to:



creating a culture that promotes wellbeing and self-regulation



putting children, their voice, rights and dignity, at the centre of everything we do



supporting inclusive and culturally safe and nurturing environments, rich with quality relationships and interactions



embracing a safeguarding culture through the way we speak and act, at every level of our organisation



having zero tolerance for any form of inappropriate interaction with children or use of inappropriate discipline

### Daily interactions with children

#### Teachers and educators will:

- Act in the best interests of children and (*For Branch Centres Only*) adhere to the [C&K Code of Conduct](#).
- Show empathy by acknowledging and responding to children's needs, questions and requests. Actively listen and respond appropriately to their knowledge, perspectives, interests and emotions.
- Engage in meaningful, unhurried conversations with children.
- Encourage children to express themselves safely through movement, talking, drawing, writing or other creative means.
- Foster secure attachments through consistent, warm and predictable interactions.
- Take a strengths-based approach by recognising and supporting children's capabilities —focusing on what they can do now and what they can achieve with support.
- Celebrate children's efforts and persistence in overcoming challenges.
- Engage in back-and-forth interactions with children by repeating and expanding on their words, sounds and gestures.
- View all behaviour as communication, responding calmly and respectfully.
- View personal care routines/rituals – such as mealtimes, dressing, sleep, rest, toileting, nappy changing - as rich opportunities to strengthen relationships with children.
- Engage in professional development opportunities to review and strengthen practice.
- Empower children with choice for their personal care routines by using 'Invite', 'Suggest' and 'Engage'. For example, changing a child's nappy:



### Interactions with children to support social and emotional learning

#### Teachers and educators will:

- Support children's relationships, independence and collaboration, encouraging responsibility for others.
- Support children in expressing their needs and resolving conflicts constructively.
- Promote independence and active participation by involving children in age-appropriate decision-making.
- Be emotionally attuned, especially to non-verbal cues, expressions, body language and behaviours.
- Help children develop self-regulation and empathy for others.
- Model respect, compassion, and kindness, and reinforce positive social behaviours for example, sharing, turn-taking, cooperation and empathy.
- Be mindful of and support children who withdraw or experience challenges to engage with others.

- Use positive behaviour guidance as per the *Supporting Children's Behaviour Procedure*.
- Engage in professional development on social-emotional growth, self-awareness and regulation.

### Interactions with children to create culturally safe and inclusive learning spaces

#### Teachers and educators will:

- Show respect for all children and families, valuing diverse background, ethnicity, language, religion, family structure and gender. Value and respect each child's story and lived experience.
- Actively engage in cultural responsiveness by reflecting on how diversity influences practice and daily interactions. Take action to address personal and professional bias.
- Embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into the curriculum.
- Work collaboratively with culturally and linguistically diverse families to ensure children's identities, languages and strengths are acknowledged and celebrated. Recognise and affirm children's home languages and cultural identities in everyday interactions and learning experiences.
- Understand and support children with diverse needs, including children with disabilities, developmental delays or impairments, medical conditions or children who are or have experienced trauma or vulnerability.

### Interactions with children and safeguarding

Teachers and educators hold a position of trust, care, authority and influence, creating an inherent power imbalance with children. A breach of professional boundaries occurs when this power is misused in a way that compromises a child's wellbeing. In addition, teachers and educators must be mindful that their interactions with children can be observed and interpreted by others, including colleagues, families and the wider community. Even well-intended actions can be misperceived, making it essential to always maintain professionalism, transparency and adherence to safeguarding practices.

#### Teachers and educators will:

- Empower children to speak up when they feel unsafe, disrespected or unhappy. Treat children's concerns seriously and respond in a sensitive and timely manner.
- Teach and model consent. Demonstrate and support children to practice respectful ways to ask for and give consent in play-based and everyday social situations.
- Ensure visibility by interacting with children in environments where they can be observed by others.
- Use positive, non-threatening body and verbal communication. Avoid actions that could be misinterpreted as punitive, inappropriate or excessive.
- Respect children's autonomy, maintaining appropriate tone, body language, and physical proximity, while being appropriate and necessary to their care or education.
- Unless there is an immediate threat to a child or another person's safety, never make physical contact that holds or restricts a child against their will to force compliance for example, restraining, pulling, pushing, dragging or grabbing.
- Offer and provide support to colleagues with they display signs they are stressed, overwhelmed or challenged by a child's behaviour. Where practical, suggest they take a short break while maintaining active supervision and regulatory educator to child ratios.
- Seek colleague support when facing challenges or feeling overwhelmed. Where practical, take a short break while maintaining active supervision and regulatory educator to child ratios.
- Promptly intervene and report any inappropriate interactions with children to the centre Director/Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person in Charge (RPIC) or Early Childhood Education Manager (ECEM)/Committee as per *Reporting an Allegation of Harm Occurring at Centre Procedure*.
- Regularly reflect on practice and contribute to a strong safeguarding culture. Seek clarification from centre Director/Nominated Supervisor or RPIC or ECEM/Committee if unsure about appropriate conduct in specific situations.

### Examples (not limited to) of inappropriate interactions with children. Teachers and educators are

#### NOT permitted to:

- ✗ Act in ways that place a child at risk.
- ✗ Deliberately ignore a child's attempts to communicate or seek comfort.
- ✗ Threaten, shame, belittle, humiliate, mock, blame or criticize a child.
- ✗ Use sarcastic or cruel humour towards a child.
- ✗ Intentionally exclude a child from activities and events.
- ✗ Negatively label a child or family.
- ✗ Grant special privileges, gifts or excessive attention to a child that others do not receive.
- ✗ Single out a child for one-on-one time beyond what is appropriate for their care and education.
- ✗ Frequently carry a child when not necessary for their comfort, wellbeing or safety.

- ✗ Express romantic feelings towards a child.
- ✗ Discuss or disclose sexual or inappropriate personal topics with a child.
- ✗ Force physical affection when a child resists or expresses discomfort.
- ✗ Kiss a child or encourage or ask a child to kiss them or another child or another adult.
- ✗ Communicate with children via personal social media.
- ✗ Engage in tickling or rough-and-tumble play with a child beyond what is developmentally appropriate and suitable for a professional educational or care-based setting.
- ✗ Encourage children to keep secrets.
- ✗ Be alone with a child in an isolated space without a reasonable educational or care-related reason and without notifying a colleague.
- ✗ Consistently isolate a child from their peers for individual attention.
- ✗ Capture, store and share images, videos or sound recordings of children on a personal electronic device.
- ✗ Engage in any form of grooming behaviour.
- ✗ Use any form of physical or corporal punishment, including hitting, smacking, slapping, kicking, biting, squeezing, pinching or throwing objects with the intent to harm.

#### Interactions with families

##### Teachers and educators will:

- Seek parent/guardian feedback on their child's learning and experiences through various methods of communication. For example, informal daily conversations, StoryPark posts, formal and informal surveys.
- Build and sustain respectful and trusting relationships with families by engaging in self-reflection on personal biases and discussions with colleagues when challenges arise.
- Create a welcoming, inclusive environment that respects cultural, linguistic and family diversity. Consult with families about cultural and linguistic inclusivity. Encourage family input in shaping the learning environment.
- Celebrate and honour family diversity. Foster trusting relationships that respect cultural, spiritual and lifestyle differences while addressing actions that undermine their rights.
- Support families who may feel isolated. Recognise past experiences may impact a family's ability to engage and build relationships.
- Empower parents/guardians in their role as primary caregivers. Offer relevant and current information on child development, learning support, family services, specialist referrals and funding opportunities.
- Address family concerns and complaints as per the Complaint Management Procedure.
- Facilitate formal meetings as needed to discuss their child's progress and future learning.

##### Examples (not limited to) of inappropriate interactions with families. Teachers and educators are **NOT permitted to:**

- ✗ Engage in a personal, social or financial relationship with families that may compromise professional integrity.
- ✗ Share information about a child and centre operations with families outside official, approved C&K channels. For example, using personal electronic devices, social media or messaging apps.
- ✗ Engage in unprofessional exchanges with parents/guardians and other family members.
- ✗ Provide special treatment to a family due to a personal relationship away from the centre.
- ✗ Ignore or delay responding to a child protection concern due to a personal connection with a family.

#### Interactions with community

##### Teachers and educators will:

- Build a strong understanding of the local community, including traditional knowledge, and collaborate meaningfully with community members to embed cultural perspectives across the curriculum, to ensure children's identities, language, and strengths are acknowledged and celebrated.
- Stay informed on community events and issues that matter. When appropriate, actively participate in cultural celebrations to foster connection and mutual learning.
- Advocate for children, families and the early childhood education and care sector by raising awareness of key issues and promoting positive change.
- Use Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) and other community data to inform curriculum decisions and establish local networks.
- Partner with community stakeholder groups, agencies, professionals and schools to enhance children's learning and outcomes.
- Where appropriate, support and mentor colleagues, students and volunteers.

##### Examples (not limited to) of inappropriate interactions with communities. Teachers and educators are **NOT permitted to:**

- ✗ Engage in unprofessional activities in the community while wearing C&K branded clothing or identification.
- ✗ Publicly (online or in person) criticise C&K, colleagues, children or families.

- ✗ Publicly (online or in person) share sensitive, identifying confidential information about children, families, C&K employees or C&K matters without prior and appropriate written authorisation.
- ✗ Develop relationships with community members that create conflicts of interest. For example, receiving personal benefits in exchange for preferential treatment at centre.
- ✗ Discuss child or centre matters in community settings where privacy is not ensured.
- ✗ Speak to media or community organisations on behalf of C&K without prior and appropriate approval.
- ✗ Impose their own political, religious or ideological beliefs on colleagues or families, in a manner that is inconsistent with C&K policies and procedures and National and Queensland curriculum frameworks and guidelines AND creates discomfort, disrupts the work environment or undermines respect for diverse perspectives. This may include persistent or overt discussions, actions or behaviours that go beyond casual conversation or that make others feel obligated to share or agree with such beliefs.
- ✗ Post content on personal social media that breaches the C&K Code of Conduct, policies or reflects negatively on C&K.

### Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

#### Parents/guardians will:

- Share relevant information about their child's needs and experiences to support learning and well-being.
- Involve teachers and educators in multidisciplinary meetings of their child, when appropriate.
- Consider advice and support from teachers, educators and other professional partners.
- *(For Branch Centres Only)* Adhere to Parent and Community Code of Conduct.
- Respect diversity, comply with staff reasonable requests as C&K policies and procedures.
- Act in a matter that promotes a positive, inclusive centre community.
- First share feedback with the Centre Director/Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person in Charge. If the matter remains unresolved:
  - Branch Centres – Contact centre C&K Early Childhood Education Manager. Refer to displayed Centre Profile in foyer for details or contact C&K Central 3552 5300 or [feedback@candk.asn.au](mailto:feedback@candk.asn.au).
  - Affiliated Centres – Contact a committee member. Refer to displayed Centre Profile in foyer for details.

### Centre Directors/Nominated Supervisors and Responsible Persons in Charge Responsibilities

#### Centre Directors/Nominated Supervisors and Responsible Persons in Charge will:

- Outline the responsibilities of this procedure when inducting new teachers/educators. Provide constructive and targeted support to strengthen and develop professional practice and ensure completion of the Learning@C&K “*Positive Interactions and Behaviour Support*” module during their induction.
- Recognise and celebrate responsive, respectful, quality interactions with children, families and communities. Identify areas for improvement, provide targeted feedback, model best practice and facilitate regular professional discussion to strengthen and review centre practice.
- Take immediate action to address and report inappropriate teacher/educator interactions with children (as detailed in this procedure) by following the Reporting an Allegation of Harm Occurring at Centre Procedure.

### C&K Early Childhood Manages and Advisors Responsibilities

#### C&K Early Childhood Manages and Advisors will:

- Outline the responsibilities of this procedure when inducting new Centre Directors/Nominated Supervisors. Provide constructive and targeted support to strengthen and develop professional practice and ensure completion of the Learning@C&K “*Positive Interactions and Behaviour Support*” module during their induction.
- Prioritise the observation of teacher/educator interactions with children, families and communities during centre visits. Recognise and celebrate responsive, respectful, quality interactions, and identify areas for improvement, providing targeted feedback and professional development. When necessary, work alongside teachers/educators to model best practice.
- Take immediate action to address and report inappropriate interactions with children (as detailed in this procedure) by following the Reporting an Allegation of Harm Occurring at Centre Procedure.

### Acknowledgements, references and resources

- ACECQA (2016) Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children and Building partnerships with families
- ACECQA (2023) Information Sheet – Inappropriate Discipline
- ACECQA (2023) Information Sheet Quality Area 5 – Relationships with children.
- ACECQA (2023) Information Sheet Quality Area 5 – Supporting children to regulate their own behaviour.
- Australian Government Department of Education (2022) The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia V2.0
- Australian Government Department of Education (2022) My Time, Our Place- Framework School Age Care in Australia
- Commonwealth of Australia (2021) Australian Early Development Census

- Department of Education, Early Childhood Regulatory Authority [accessed 2025] [Statement of Shared Commitment – Every Interaction Counts](#)
- Early Childhood Australia (2016) [Code of Ethics](#)
- C&K (2019) *Listening and Learning Together - C&K Curriculum Approach*
- Queensland College of Teachers (2019) [Professional Boundaries: A Guideline for Queensland Teachers](#)
- Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (2024) [Queensland Kindergarten learning guideline](#)
- [United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child](#)
- Victoria Government [accessed 2025] [Supporting children’s behaviour in early childhood services](#)