CHCECE033
Develop positive and respectful relationships with children

Learner Guide

One World for Children Pty Ltd

Updated to include National Quality Framework changes

Aspire Learning Resources

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Develop positive and respectful relationships with children

Release 1

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One World for Children Pty Ltd

Aspire Learning Resources

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Before you begin

This Learner Guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCECE033 Develop positive and respectful relationships with children*, Release 1.

Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. Information regarding how this Learner Guide relates to this unit of competency is detailed in our mapping guide.

How to work through this Learner Guide

This Learner Guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the Learner Guide you need to read, and which Practice Tasks and Learning Checkpoints you need to complete.

Feature of the Learner Guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	➢ Read each topic in this Learner Guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples	➢ These highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice Tasks	➢ Practice Tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which Practice Tasks to complete.
Summaries	➢ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning Checkpoints	➢ There are Learning Checkpoints at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which activities to complete. These activities give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

This table maps each topic in this Learner Guide to the National Quality Standard and national learning framework: Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).

T = Topic

Topics	National Quality Standard (NQS)
T1–T3	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
T2	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
T2	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
T2	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
T1–T3	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
T1, T2	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
	Early Years Learning Framework
	Principles
T1–T3	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
T1, T2	Partnerships
T1–T3	Respect for diversity
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives
T1–T3	Equity, inclusion and high expectations
	Sustainability
T1–T3	Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning
	Collaborative leadership and teamwork
	Practice
T1–T3	Holistic, integrated and interconnected approaches
T1–T3	Responsiveness to children
T1–T3	Play-based learning and intentionality
T1–T3	Learning environments
T1–T3	Cultural responsiveness
T1–T3	Continuity of learning and transitions
T1–T3	Assessment and evaluation for learning, development and wellbeing
	Learning Outcomes
T2, T3	1. Children have a strong sense of identity
T2, T3	2. Children are connected to and contribute to their world
T2, T3	3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
T2, T3	4. Children are confident and involved learners
T2, T3	5. Children are effective communicators

Topic 1

In this topic you will learn about:

1A Behaviour guidelines

1B Factors influencing behaviour

Understanding the foundations of behaviour

Behaviour is a complex aspect of learning.

Children make many mistakes as they learn how to manage their own reactions and to understand the reactions of others. When you are aware of the foundations of behaviour, you will understand behaviour guidelines as well as factors that impact on behaviours.

1A Behaviour guidelines

Any form of behaviour guidance must be in taken in line with service policies and procedures.

Behaviour guidelines must follow policies, procedures and standards set by the service.

You must also work alongside family members to gain an understanding of the practices, beliefs and standards they have or currently implement. Service guidelines are based on legislation and the National Quality Standard (NQS), which is part of the National Quality Framework (NQF).

Section 166 of the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* – Offence to use inappropriate discipline – states the following: 'The approved provider, nominated supervisor, staff members, volunteers, family day care educators of an education and care service must ensure that no child being educated and cared for by the service is subjected to:

- any form of corporal punishment
- any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances.

Examples of inappropriate discipline and unacceptable practice include:

- hitting or slapping a child
- force-feeding a child
- yelling at or belittling a child
- humiliating a child
- physically dragging a child
- depriving a child of food or drink; for example, saying to a child, 'If you don't behave, you can't have your lunch'
- putting a child in 'time out' where they are placed somewhere in isolation
- negative labelling
- criticising
- discouraging
- blaming or shaming
- making fun of or laughing at a child
- using sarcastic or cruel humour
- using negative language, such as 'No', 'Stop that!', 'Don't …' and 'You never …'
- using restraint, unless used in an emergency situation.

National Quality Standard

Ensure you follow the National Quality Standard (NQS) to develop positive and respectful relationships with children.

The following information from the *Guide to the National Quality Framework* describes what positive and respectful relationships involve.

Element	Guidance	Expected outcomes
Element 1.2.3 – Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world	➢ Provide children with strategies to make informed choices about their behaviours. ➢ Support opportunities for children's age-appropriate decision-making.	➢ Children make choices and decisions about matters that affect them. ➢ Children openly express their feelings and ideas in their interactions with others.
Element 5.1.1 – Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included	➢ View each child as competent and capable. ➢ Be responsive to children's thoughts and feelings, and support them to develop a strong sense of wellbeing. ➢ Interact positively.	➢ Children will develop new skills and feel able to take on challenges. ➢ Children will feel accepted and develop a sense of trust and attachment. ➢ Children's self-esteem will increase as they gain knowledge of their strengths and abilities. ➢ Children will feel supported as they learn to self-regulate.
Element 5.1.2 – The dignity and rights of every child are maintained	➢ Use positive language, gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice when redirecting or discussing children's behaviour with them. ➢ Respond promptly to children's aggressive or bullying behaviour.	➢ Children are acknowledged when they make positive choices in managing their own behaviour. ➢ Spaces, routines and materials should be arranged to minimise times when children are likely to experience stress or frustration. ➢ Take action if child abuse is suspected.
Element 5.2.2 – Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts	➢ Model respectful behaviour and use supportive language to enable children to vocalise their concerns. ➢ Support children to identify their feelings, and provide them a safe place to explore calming strategies. ➢ Implement discussions about inclusion and exclusion, fair and unfair behaviour, bias and prejudice.	➢ Children engage in cooperative, helping behaviour. ➢ Children explore different identities and points of view in dramatic play. ➢ Children challenge other children's behaviour when it is disrespectful or unfair.

Element	Guidance	Expected outcomes
Element 6.1.1 – Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions	➢ Begin to gather information about children at orientation. ➢ Encourage families to be involved in the service, having an influence over behaviour guidance policies and procedures. ➢ Encourage families to stay with children as long as they choose. ➢ Provide safe and private places to talk so families are comfortable speaking openly about their own and their child's needs and expectations.	➢ Educators are aware and prepared to provide for the needs of children. ➢ If families are involved in decisions about service practice, they are more likely to understand expectations and feel they are important to the process. ➢ Families may gain skills and knowledge so they can support behaviour in positive ways.
Element 6.1.2 – The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing	➢ Remember that families are the child's first teachers. ➢ Gather information about families so you are aware of the home experiences and expectations that are being reflected in children's behaviours. ➢ Keep updated with family needs, experiences and key events. ➢ Involve families in decision-making.	➢ Children react differently to educator strategies based on their cultural experiences. ➢ Educators may be given insight into unexpected behaviours and factors that can be supported. ➢ Home and service strategies will align, assisting the child to have consistent understanding of expectations.
Element 6.1.3 – Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing	➢ Provide information about children's progress and the challenges they face. ➢ Provide information and services to families.	➢ Families support or comment on strategies. ➢ Families are aware of challenges and issues, and are interested and able to contribute or share information. ➢ Parenting roles may be developed and children may be better understood.
Element 6.2.1 – Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing information and clarifying responsibilities **Element 6.2.2 – Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program** **Element 6.2.3 – The service builds relationships and engages with its community**	➢ Work with families to support the transition from home to service. ➢ Gain knowledge of each child.	➢ Children feel consistency and understand the expectations. ➢ Children's interests and strengths can be used effectively to promote positive behaviours. ➢ Children feel safe, secure, confident and connected. ➢ Children develop a sense of belonging.

For more detailed information, access the *Guide to the National Quality Framework* at: aspirelr.link/nqf-guide.

Goals of the approved learning frameworks

The goals of the approved learning framework, the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF) is belonging, being and becoming.

The goals of the framework is described in the following table.

Belonging	When children feel they are important, they feel that they belong. If you provide for their individual needs, and respond to them appropriately and consistently in a way they understand, they will feel a sense of belonging.
Being	When children feel safe and supported, they can explore and expand their knowledge and skills, and engage with their world. This is the art of 'being'. By 'being' they are demonstrating that they feel safe and supported by you, and that you are maintaining a safe environment.
Becoming	When children feel they belong, and that it is safe to fully participate in the present, they learn and grow (becoming). This development is appropriate. The depth of the child's trust in the environment and those within it influences the rate of development. It also influences the enthusiasm and opportunities that are open to the child.

These goals can be achieved by providing:

- a safe and supportive environment
- an understanding of the needs of each child
- an attitude and demonstration of equitable practices.

Principles of the approved learning framework

The principles of the learning frameworks help you understand why you are implementing strategies in the way you do.

They also outline how the strategies you use influence the children you work with.

The principles are described in the following table.

Principle	How this supports appropriate behaviour
Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	- Children who trust you and their environment will be more stable and feel a greater sense of belonging. Their emotional and social wellbeing will be stronger, and they will feel supported and acknowledged.
Partnerships	- Partnerships with parents and guardians allow the child to see that you are working together. If you develop strong relationships with family members, you will find out what the child understands, how they belong at home and how you can link home and education settings. - When behaviour is of concern, close partnerships with specialists and others mean that a consistent front can be presented and a variety of perspectives can be used to ensure the best interests of the child are identified and met.

Principle	How this supports appropriate behaviour
Respect for diversity	➢ Each child and family are unique in their reactions and behaviour. When you understand a child and family, you will be able to adapt your expectations and share equally in monitoring the values and beliefs that influence expectations.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives	➢ When educators promote the identity of First Nations' children and their families, they are showing respect and being open to the perspectives of the family and community.
Equity, inclusion and high expectations	➢ Children who are treated with respect and given responsibility at the appropriate level are more likely to be capable beings. They will develop a stronger sense of identity and self-esteem. ➢ Your belief in their abilities will allow you to reduce barriers to their success, and their contribution to their own wellbeing will allow them to gain skills in regulating their behaviour.
Sustainability	➢ When considering sustainable actions, educators are thinking about how they can manage many things over time, such as: – the balance of environments between many aspects; for example, being noisy and quiet, organised and flexible, having solitary time and group opportunities – the cost of materials, staffing, resources and maintenance are within boundaries so that they are continue consistently over time – social relationships between families, children, educators and the community, so that a balance of needs can be met with the least possible stress.
Critical reflection and ongoing professional development	➢ You will only learn if you are open to change. Each day, each child, each family and each event brings new information. You will come across different behaviours, sometimes predictable and sometimes unpredictable. They require you to think about and reflect on how to progress or react. ➢ Learning and reflection work best if they involve a team. ➢ This way, reflection can occur and you can each give feedback, observe each other's reactions and improve how you implement strategies.
Collaborative leadership and teamwork	➢ Each educator takes on a leadership role during some part of their day. This may be during a time that they are supervising an experience or when they are taking responsibility for mentoring or advising other educators. These situations are opportunities for children to learn and develop, to be understood. ➢ When a team is able to collaborate, they will be working together to meet the needs of each child as an individual. This will include sharing information about children, understanding their needs and implementing strategies that are agreed on. ➢ Through leadership and teamwork, educators are able to support each other.

Practices of the approved learning frameworks

The practices of the learning frameworks support your pedagogy as you work with children and apply strategies according to their unique needs.

The following table outlines how you can use learning framework practices to support appropriate behaviour.

Practice	How this supports appropriate behaviour
Holistic, integrated and interconnected approaches	➢ Behaviour of concern is not isolated. It involves the whole of the child's development, in particular their emotional and social self. ➢ Support plans must address the whole child, not just their behaviour in isolation.
Responsiveness to children	➢ Behaviour of concern is about sending a message. Your role is to respond to this, initially by acting to resolve any issues, and then by adapting and changing your plans based on the child's response to your support.
Play-based learning and intentionality	➢ Play allows children opportunities to make decisions, problem-solve and develop their self-esteem and identity. Although play periods may be common times for behaviour of concern to arise, this also makes them the perfect time to model new techniques, to provide positive encouragement and to engage children in new experiences of success. ➢ Many behaviours of concern occur due to a child's inability to problem solve or make decisions. Intentional teaching can be used to incorporate these concepts into the curriculum. Make intentional teaching enjoyable by focusing on the child's interests and keeping it suitable for their developmental level.
Learning environments	➢ Provide settings that respond to children's behaviour by removing challenges that are too complex, adding parts that encourage them to develop skills, and allowing more or less choice based on the child's current needs and abilities.
Cultural responsiveness	➢ When you get to know a child and family you can respect their differences, and accept that each child will act and react individually based on their own fears, anxieties, experiences and boundaries.
Continuity of learning and transitions	➢ Many children find transitions difficult. Different places and spaces mean different things to each child. You may identify behaviours that occur only during transitions, or you might find that a child only reacts in a particular situation or setting.
Assessment and evaluation for learning, development and wellbeing	➢ Continue to collect data and evidence that can be monitored and that, as a team, you will be able to work consistently toward success for a child.

Inclusive practice

According to the EYLF Principle: Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning, you must use reflective practice and critical reflection as part of your ongoing learning.

You can do this by examining your practices and acting to achieve inclusion, equity and acceptance of diversity.

For your curriculum to reflect the approved learning frameworks, it must include and acknowledge diversity. This initially commences with the concept of belonging, in which the child feels:

- welcome and part of the service curriculum, decisions and plans
- accepted and important for being who they are.

This is not just about celebrating difference. It also includes the need for children to feel respected and supported, and to know that they are safe and secure.

The following outlines how you can achieve inclusion, equity and diversity.

Inclusion	Equity	Diversity
➢ Allow all children to access the same level of education and care through the same service types. ➢ Reflect on children of all abilities as active participants that need education and care for the same reasons.	➢ Give everyone the opportunity to succeed. This is different to equality or fairness, where everyone is given the same resources despite their needs. ➢ All children have a right to fair, non-discriminatory education and care – enrolment policies must reflect this. ➢ To ensure that equity is provided, acknowledge that inequality exists. ➢ By being aware of inequality, you are ready to act and provide equity.	➢ Diversity is the rule, not the exception; your practice needs to respect this. ➢ Each person/family is different, so policies and procedures must allow you to provide for these differences. ➢ Diversity must be recognised as valuable; the service philosophy should state that diversity will be celebrated and used as an educational tool.

Practice Task 1

1. Which of the following NQS elements relate to behaviour guidelines? Select all that apply.

- [ ] Element 1.2.3 – Child-directed learning
- [ ] Element 4.1.2 – Continuity of staff
- [ ] Element 5.1.1 – Positive educator to child interactions
- [ ] Element 6.1.1 – Engagement with the service
- [ ] Element 6.2.1 – Transitions
- [ ] Element 7.1.2 – Management systems

2. Draw a line to match each behaviour guideline to its description.

* Inclusion	* Offence to use inappropriate discipline
* Equity	* Providing a safe and supportive environment, an understanding of the needs of each child and an attitude and demonstration of equitable practices
* Diversity	* Reflecting on children of all abilities as active participants that need education and care for the same reasons
* Belonging, being & becoming	* Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts
* Section 166 of the Education and Care Services National Law	* Giving everyone the opportunity to succeed
* NQS Element 5.2.2 – Relationships with children	* Each person is different, so policies and procedures must allow you to provide for these differences

1B Factors influencing behaviour

Ensure you are familiar with the factors that influence a child's behaviour.

This will help you understand how to:

- develop relationships with children
- provide environments that support cooperative behaviour
- strengthen children's ability to manage their behaviour.

Even small changes to a child's environment can have a big influence on their behaviour.

While home environment and history play a part in a child's learning and development, the service environment and expectations must be considered as vital influences on a child's behaviour. Often a small change to a child's social or physical environment or experiences can make a huge difference to a child's ability to function in a positive way.

Developmentally appropriate behaviour

Knowing what to expect of a child at a particular developmental stage helps you determine whether their behaviour is appropriate and how you should guide it.

The following table outlines age-appropriate expectations for children of various ages.

Age	Developmental characteristics	What to expect	How to support
Birth to 12 months	➤ Depends on non-verbal communication to express feelings and needs ➤ Displays anger, pulls away, squirms, cries and throws objects to communicate needs and wishes ➤ Has trouble regulating their emotions; can become overwhelmed by them ➤ Starts to develop attachments to adults; this may prompt fear and/or anger at separation ➤ Has no sense of time and requires instant gratification ➤ Responds to the distress of another baby by crying, but can't understand that the baby's distress is distinct from their own feelings	➤ Crying used to gain attention, to express fear, anxiety and anger ➤ Not understanding why another child or adult is distressed	➤ Help infants to calm down when they are experiencing strong emotions by holding or rocking them, or reading a story to them. ➤ Respond to infants quickly and sensitively – they should not be expected to wait.

Age	Developmental characteristics	What to expect	How to support
1–2 years	➤ Starts to develop a sense of self ➤ Starts to develop autonomy and independence ➤ Has limited language ability and may resort to non-verbal means of communication ➤ May demonstrate empathy by offering things that they find comforting, such as a toy ➤ May understand that another child is distressed, but may not understand why ➤ Starts to develop single friendships and to engage in reciprocal and complementary play ➤ Has little sense of time; finds it difficult to wait ➤ May develop fears of imaginary creatures and physical harm ➤ Tends to be impulsive; does not think before they act	➤ Assertion of autonomy and independence ➤ Saying 'no' and refusing to comply with requests ➤ Conflict caused by attempts to gain power and control over their lives ➤ Frustration with the limitations of their own abilities, possibly resulting in anger and temper tantrums ➤ Making simple choices and decisions about what they want to do ➤ Not showing remorse for hurting another child ➤ Unwilling to wait to have their needs met	➤ Provide toddlers with space, support and guidance during their interactions with other children. ➤ Help toddlers regulate their emotions and calm down after strong emotions.
2–3 years	➤ Needs to assert their autonomy and independence; starts to develop a greater understanding of their social self ➤ Has emerging cognitive skills ➤ Can delay gratification ➤ Begins to differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour ➤ Continues to develop a sense of self, which can lead to possessiveness and refusal to share ➤ Need for autonomy may result in intense feelings that sometimes cannot be controlled ➤ Increase in language skills and ability to use symbolic thinking, greater use of deferred imitation and self-evaluation ➤ Tends to be flexible in their friendships; begins to take part in social pretend play ➤ May have trouble distinguishing between accidental and intentional behaviour	➤ A developing understanding of the social rules for acceptable behaviour ➤ Waiting for short periods ➤ Limited degree of self-control and concern for others ➤ Use of physical aggression to solve problems ➤ Forgetting limits and guidelines even though they may be able to recite them ➤ Imitating the behaviours of others ➤ Simple turn-taking ➤ No spontaneous, conflict-free sharing of belongings, toys or equipment ➤ Not understanding the difference between accidental and intentional behaviour	➤ Provide children with plenty of opportunities to express their feelings. ➤ Help children solve problems and conflicts; your intervention may be necessary to prevent physical aggression.

Age	Developmental characteristics	What to expect	How to support
3–6 years	➤ Able to demonstrate increasing amounts of self-control ➤ Begins to assert their rights in the group, and to openly express their likes and dislikes ➤ Generally likes to please adults; able to distinguish their friends from their playmates ➤ Starts to develop the ability to empathise with others ➤ Starts to understand another person's perspective; can imagine themselves in their position and respond appropriately	➤ Basic understanding of the consequences of their actions ➤ Observance of simple social rules ➤ Increasing ability to manage behaviour and demonstrate self-control ➤ Independent attempts at problem-solving	➤ Help preschoolers to rectify the consequences of their behaviour (when necessary). ➤ Help preschoolers to solve disputes fairly. ➤ Model positive interactions, such as turn-taking, asking, listening and sharing.

Developmental expectations

Your understanding of developmentally appropriate behaviour will determine how you respond to children of different ages who display similar behaviours.

The following table provides an example, showing how you might respond to children of different ages who kick other children.

Age	Strategy
0–1 years	➤ Place child in a soft area or near a resource that can be kicked, such as a mobile or soft toy. ➤ Explore kicking with the child, placing items in front of the child and talking about their exploration.
1-2 years	➤ Explore kicking with the child, place items in front of the child and talk about their exploration.
Over 3 years	➤ Redirect the behaviour. ➤ Discuss how to use other ways to communicate, including providing words the child could use. ➤ Provide alternatives; for example, kicking a football or beanbag. ➤ Use positive language; for example, 'Be gentle with other people' or, 'We only kick balls, not people'.

Developmental delay

A child's behavioural capabilities link with their developmental milestones, which provide educators with a benchmark of expectations.

These expectations usually allow for variations due to external influences on the child's life.

Here are some examples of the potential impact of developmental delay on a child's behaviour based on the possible causes.

Cause	Potential impact
Short concentration span	➢ Difficulty in: – listening – following instructions and directions – solving problems
Lack of reaction to stimuli	➢ Slow to respond to danger or sensory influences ➢ Misunderstanding signs and signals from others ➢ Not noticing what is happening or what needs to happen
Lack of control of actions	➢ Speaking at inappropriate times ➢ Reacting slowly ➢ Reacting without thought
Unduly aggressive reactions to certain stimuli	➢ Panic attacks ➢ Hitting out ➢ Reacting quickly to events
Tiredness	➢ Not listening properly ➢ Uncharacteristic responses ➢ Wanting to be in solitary spaces
Frustration	➢ Angry reactions ➢ Throwing the materials that contribute to the frustration ➢ Losing control of emotions

Emotional and social challenges

The feelings that children express must always be taken seriously and supported.

Many behaviours of concern are linked to mental health in some way.

Like adults, children's emotions and ability to socialise alter throughout the day. The reactions or behaviours of the child influence their abilities to deal with problems and enjoy their learning and play.

Emotional and social challenges can sometimes be the cause or the outcome of a mental health concern.

Mental health issues can impact on a child's ability to:

- make friends
- resolve conflict
- make decisions
- learn about people
- develop life skills
- separate from parents and/or educators
- play freely
- develop confidence
- deal with anger
- accept behaviour guidance.

To read more about mental health issues in childhood, access Be You, an initiative of Beyond Blue: aspirelr.link/be-you.

Behaviour disorders

Children demonstrating behaviours of concern may be diagnosed with a disruptive behaviour disorder.

Many of these disorders are related to one another, and a child may be diagnosed with more than one disorder, or progress from one disorder in early childhood to another in adolescence or early adulthood.

Here is a list of common disorders and how they may impact the behaviour of a child.

Disorder	Description	Impact on behaviour
Conduct disorder (CD)	Repetitive and persistent violation of societal norms and rights of others	- Aggression - Bullying - Destruction of property - Lying - Violation of rules
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and attention deficit disorder (ADD)	Affects learning and behaviour; children often feel out of control or lonely	- Difficulty concentrating - Forgetfulness - Inability to complete tasks - Moving from one task to another - Impulsiveness - Restlessness - Fidgeting - Accident-prone

Disorder	Description	Impact on behaviour
Oppositional defiant disorder (ODD)	Frequent disobedience; hostility	➤ Easily angered, annoyed or irritated ➤ Argumentative ➤ Refuses to obey rules ➤ Seems to deliberately annoy others ➤ Low self-esteem ➤ Blames others
Autism spectrum disorder	Delay in the development of social and communication skills	➤ Repetitive behaviour ➤ Lack of social skills ➤ Inability to imagine ➤ Confused thinking ➤ Inability to use language ➤ Aggression ➤ Anxiety ➤ Fear

Self-regulation and brain development

Emotional regulation relies on many skills, including the ability to problem-solve, communicate, predict, interact with others and control behaviour.

The brain develops rapidly from birth. As children learn new things, connections are formed in the wiring of the brain. Practice strengthens and secures these connections over time. Due to the many abilities linked to self-regulating emotions, some skills require lots of effort and others become automatic.

Self-regulation refers to the ability to deal with various emotions. When people are stressed or insecure, their brains naturally react with common actions referred to as fight, flight or freeze reactions. Some actions you might notice children display in response to this include:

Fight	Flight	Freeze
➤ Kicking ➤ Screaming ➤ Spitting ➤ Pushing ➤ Throwing things ➤ Punching ➤ Banging their head ➤ Self-harming	➤ Becoming restless ➤ Running away ➤ Hiding ➤ Fidgeting ➤ Being wary of others ➤ Whining	➤ Holding their breath ➤ Shutting down ➤ Feeling numb ➤ Not reacting ➤ Daydreaming ➤ Being unable to respond

These reactions occur when a child's emotions feel uncontrollable. When children learn to self-regulate, they increase their ability to recognise and manage their feelings.

Domains of self-regulation

There are five domains of self-regulation, and children may need additional support in these areas to self-regulate their emotions.

The following table outlines the domains and provides some strategy ideas you could incorporate as you observe and monitor children's behaviours.

Domain	Related areas	Strategies
Biological	➤ Physical health ➤ Energy levels ➤ Ability to focus ➤ Ability to complete routines and care for own health	➤ Reduce sensory load, such as level of lighting or noise ➤ Vary spaces and dynamics ➤ Provide natural environments and materials ➤ Provide breaks ➤ Provide safe spaces
Emotional	➤ Excitement ➤ Frustration ➤ Anxiety ➤ Ability to focus	➤ Discuss feelings ➤ Use relaxation techniques, such as yoga, meditation, talking about feelings, taking a breath and counting backwards from 10 ➤ Use positive self-talk ➤ Role-play how to express emotions
Social	➤ Listening to others ➤ Taking responsibility for own actions ➤ Responding appropriately ➤ Reading social cues	➤ Work with others ➤ Use humour ➤ Learn about social cues ➤ Engage in social activities
Cognitive	➤ Focus ➤ Managing frustration ➤ Staying on task ➤ Avoiding distraction	➤ Provide quiet spaces to refresh ➤ Provide learning games ➤ Break down instructions into manageable steps ➤ Offer choices ➤ Encourage goal setting ➤ Use digital technology ➤ Focus on interests and strengths ➤ Encourage self-reflection ➤ Provide consistency
Prosocial	➤ Understanding and managing the feelings of others ➤ Coping when others behave appropriately ➤ Feeling relaxed during interactions ➤ Being involved in social situations	➤ Create social circles or buddy systems ➤ Provide responsibility through tasks, chores and monitoring roles ➤ Reflect on behaviour ➤ Hold group discussions on feelings ➤ Discuss empathy

By identifying the domain of self-regulation a child is struggling with, you can choose targeted strategies for effective support.

Developing resilience

Resilience involves facing negative life experiences and being able to bounce back from difficult situations or challenges.

Resilience is about recognising that while there is a challenge, you can work it out and move forward. With this in mind, both educators and children require resilience.

The ability to be resilient increases a person's self-esteem.

Resilience is about changing the messages you say to yourself so that your actions are more considered, on track and beneficial to your wellbeing. When children develop resilience, they are better able to:

- deal with challenges
- know what to do when something goes wrong
- recognise their emotions and respond in positive ways.

Help children develop resilience by encouraging them to:

- think positively and accept that sometimes negative things happen.
- look after themselves by talking about their feelings, working out what makes them feel calm, identifying strategies for reducing stress or relaxing and asking for help when needed
- set and try to achieve goals, then keep trying until they are achieved – even if they need to work overtime, step-by-step
- accept that we all need to learn and it takes time
- accept that everyone makes mistakes and learns from these mistakes
- problem-solve and work out how to improve things, work through things and enjoy challenges.

These skills are only possible when the child becomes self-aware. Self-awareness is developed by identifying your:

- limits – what is too challenging or not enjoyable
- priorities – what is important to you and what your goals are
- reflections – what has been successful or unsuccessful in the past and if there is anything you would like to change.

Temperament and personality

Temperament refers to the behavioural characteristics that shape reactions and responses.

Temperament is believed to be something that individuals are born with. The temperament of a young child affects the way you interact, and may alter your expectations of them.

There are generally three types of temperament that relate to young children, as shown in the following table.

Temperament	Characteristics
Easy	➤ Cheerful ➤ Adaptable ➤ Fits well into routines ➤ Positive in mood
Slow to warm up	➤ Adjusts slowly to new experiences ➤ Tends to be negative in mood ➤ Inactive ➤ Mildly responsive to the world around them
Difficult	➤ Slow to adapt to new experiences ➤ Strong reactions to change ➤ Irregular routines ➤ Negative in mood ➤ Often withdrawn

The term 'temperament' is often used when discussing infants and toddlers as their natural character dominates. As children develop socially and emotionally, various positive and negative experiences affect them, and they begin to develop a personality that is not based solely on their inborn traits.

You can adapt your interactions and responses to suit a young child's temperament and, later, their personality. You may even be able to assist a young child with a difficult or slow-to-warm-up temperament become more settled and ready for change.

Providing goodness of fit

To meet the emotional and psychological needs of a child, you must match the environment and your interactions with their temperament.

When attempting to provide this 'goodness of fit', consider the following aspects.

Sensitivity	Consider how sensitive each child is to particular situations and experiences, including: ➤ noise ➤ room temperature ➤ pain ➤ smells ➤ colours and textures. These affect everyone differently, so consider this when planning changes or actions.

Activity level	Each child may require a different amount of activity – some children can be active all day without rest; others of the same age require a regular sleep or rest period. Children require both quiet and active choices throughout the day, so be aware of the needs of individual children and be flexible in your day to ensure their needs are catered for.
Adaptability	Constantly changing rooms, staff and routines is disruptive to children and may cause great anxiety in some. When a child is new to your service, establish a routine so there are as few changes as possible. Prepare the child in advance for any changes that need to occur. Even very minor changes, such as moving from play to snack or lunch time, can cause new children to become upset if they are unfamiliar with the routine and unaware of what will happen next.
Approach	For new children, use handles for attachment, a strategy where you use a familiar item or object to bridge your relationship and break down the barriers between you and the child. Respect a child's need to take things slowly when dealing with new people, places and practices. Rushing things may only cause the child to develop mistrust and create further difficulty in dealing with new situations. Slow-to-warm-up children may need a family member to stay longer than other children, so encourage this to occur.
Attention span	Be realistic in the time you expect a child to concentrate on one activity for. In a group of children, all with varying skills, temperaments and personalities, there will be a number of children who can stick with an activity for a long period of time, and others who can maintain only a brief concentration span. Ensure your routines and activities allow for these differences; in particular, group times should be flexible and suited to the individuals in the group.

Lifestyle stressors

Sometimes, the behaviour of a child is their way of communicating they are stressed.

There are many situations that can cause stress for an individual, regardless of age. If a child is subjected to an ongoing situation, and their personal difficulties are not supported, their behaviours can become concerning.

When working with children, you may observe the following behaviours or situations that may indicate stress.

Loneliness or reticence	Children have a lack of social contact with their peers.
Shyness	Children are limited by their worries and abilities.
Prejudice and discrimination	Children do not appreciate similarities and differences in others. Differences between girls and boys are made clear and are founded on stereotyping.

Exclusion	Being left out due to bullying or other factors relating to group play.
Aggression	Violence, nasty words or gruff tones are used to communicate.
Grief	These feelings often result from a loss or death of someone important.
Poverty	Financial situations result in outcomes affecting the child's ability to function.
Abuse	A situation in which a child is mistreated.
Sickness	Illness relating to a child, family member or someone else significant to the child.
Developmental challenges	The child, family member or another important person in their life has a disability.

Family circumstances

Sometimes behaviours of concern occur in response to family circumstances.

These may be causing the child to react in a particular way and may result in a loss of a sense of belonging. Consider the information in the following table, which describes some family circumstances or events and possible behaviours.

Circumstance	Possible behaviours
Lack of consistency This may be due to: - separated or hostile family members - a death in the family - loss of a family member, friend or pet - a new baby - a sick family member - visitors staying in the family home - sibling rivalry - joint custody - family members working extended hours.	- Crying - Temper tantrums - Lack of motivation - Unwillingness to participate or play with others - Inability to follow directions and limits - Hitting, kicking, biting and punching - Yelling and screaming - Not eating or refusing foods - Not sleeping - Sitting by themselves - Getting frustrated when others enter a play space - Intolerance of transitions and routines

Circumstance	Possible behaviours
Illness	➤ Crying ➤ Holding body parts ➤ Lack of motivation ➤ Lashing out at others ➤ Not sleeping ➤ Not eating ➤ Clinginess ➤ Wanting constant adult attention or affection ➤ Being grumpy and unsociable ➤ Not wanting to participate in play or group times ➤ Becoming inconsolable
Change of educators in the service	➤ Not listening ➤ Crying ➤ Not following directions ➤ Experiencing frustration ➤ Lashing out ➤ Swearing or using other inappropriate communication methods ➤ Ignoring requests and attempts at redirection

Example

Reactions to educator changes

The following examples are either developmentally appropriate or developmentally inappropriate reactions to the same situation.

Example 1 – Developmentally appropriate behaviour	Example 2 – Developmentally inappropriate behaviour
➤ Tricia (12 months) has a new educator and has not taken well to the change. She cries when the educator comes near her and pushes her away, reaching for the other educator who she knows well. ➤ This is age-appropriate behaviour and, although it is upsetting to see Tricia unsettled, it is not unusual for infants and toddlers to respond in this way.	➤ Dadin (five years) has a new educator and he has not taken well to the change. He cries when the educator comes near him and pushes her away. He races to his familiar educator and grips her leg tightly, hiding behind her. ➤ This is concerning behaviour, as by the age of five, Dadin should be able to express his uncertainty in a less intense manner.

Child abuse

When you know signs of harm, this alerts you to possible child abuse.

You may notice behaviours that are uncharacteristic or unusual for a particular child. You might also notice unusual things for children of a particular age or developmental stage to have knowledge about.

Risk of harm indicators
A child appearing frightened of their family members or another person they know
A child acting in a way that is unusual for their age and stage of development
A family member avoiding child health services, or treatment of their child's illness or injury
A family having unrealistic expectations of their child
Complaints by the child or someone else that the child is often being criticised harshly or is not provided with emotional comfort
Family members or others caring for the child who are missing or appear drunk or affected by drugs

When child abuse is suspected as the cause of a behaviour of concern, you should collect a range of evidence to support your assumption. You may need to make a judgment as to how much evidence warrants you making a report. Your service policies and procedures can guide you in this, or you may need to speak to a supervisor or manager.

Any display of behaviours of concern must be reported to those involved in the management of any support and/or guidance process. In some cases, mandatory reporting may require specialist or legal involvement.

If you report serious concerns or incidents, ensure you follow your service guidelines relating to:

- accurate documentation
- confidentiality
- reporting incidents to colleagues and more senior workers or supervisors.

The legislation of each state and territory declare that certain professionals must legally report situations where children may be at risk of harm. The following is an educator's guide for mandatory reporting.

State or territory	Are educators mandated to report?	What must educators report?
ACT	Yes	➤ Physical abuse ➤ Sexual abuse
NSW	Yes	➤ Physical abuse ➤ Sexual abuse or other exploitation of the child ➤ Emotional/psychological abuse ➤ Neglect ➤ Exposure to physical violence
NT	Yes	➤ Physical abuse ➤ Sexual abuse or other exploitation of the child ➤ Emotional/psychological abuse ➤ Neglect ➤ Exposure to physical violence
Queensland	Yes	➤ Physical abuse ➤ Sexual abuse
SA	Yes	➤ Physical abuse ➤ Sexual abuse ➤ Emotional/psychological abuse ➤ Neglect ➤ Exposure to physical violence
Tasmania	Yes	➤ Physical abuse ➤ Sexual abuse ➤ Emotional/psychological abuse ➤ Neglect ➤ Exposure to family violence
Victoria	All adults are mandated to report sexual abuse. Educators must follow Child Safe Standards.	➤ For full details of all reporting obligations, go to: aspirelr.link/child-reporting-obligations-vic
WA	Not all educators are required to report – only teachers	➤ Sexual abuse

Whether you are mandated to report or not, you have a duty of care towards children and are encouraged to report any concerns.

For more information about mandatory reporting, go to: aspirelr.link/state-child-abuse-authority.

Trauma

Trauma can impact on a child's mental health and behaviour.

The severity of trauma is determined by the impact it has on each individual. Trauma may involve health and safety or may relate to life experiences such as becoming a refugee, being tortured or being held in custody.

A child who has experienced trauma may:

- have difficulty sleeping or disrupted sleep patterns
- lose their appetite or refuse to eat
- demonstrate regression in development
- demonstrate anxiety in response to separations or unfamiliar events, situations or people
- demonstrate social withdrawal or restricted play
- re-enact an event in play, sometimes repeatedly
- show aggression towards others
- fantasise about an event
- express intense emotions inappropriately
- experience flashbacks
- display hyper-aroused behaviour – e.g. being continually alert and looking for danger or threats.

Group dynamics

Behaviour may be influenced by the patterns and dynamics of a group.

Recording can be detailed in a number of ways, such as in an event sample, sociogram or learning story. The following are some factors that you may notice that affect a child's behaviour in a group.

Factor	Description
Participation	When children feel they are involved and have ownership over what they are doing, including having choices and participating in a way they understand, their behaviour is more likely to be positive and productive.
Belonging	When children feel safe, they are more likely to participate in positive ways. This might include being recognised as individuals and being involved in positive interactions.
Leadership	Educators' expectations, interactions and the quality of their modelling influences the group's behaviour.
Norms of behaviour	Each group will form its own way of being, its own limits and expectations. Children can be involved in deciding these 'norms' and working together to solve problems so that the group takes responsibility for its behaviour and gains control over what is happening.

Children may disturb groups or other individuals if they:

- choose not to participate in a group
- are unable to participate
- have an alternative goal during participation
- feel unwelcome
- are unable to understand what is occurring
- feel uncertain
- are unclear about what is expected of them
- speak when others are speaking
- use inappropriate or rude behaviour
- are disrespectful or cruel
- demonstrate behaviours they hope might be seen as silly or funny
- encourage others to follow their actions.

Gender stereotypes

Gender stereotypes generally identify some common differences between boys and girls.

They typecast children in the following ways.

Boys	Girls
More active Become restless if sitting or listening for long periods Gravitate to large groups Enjoy rough behaviours Speak out without being asked Often choose physical, mathematical or science activities such as sports, construction and exploring	Seek and maintain one or two close friends Have intimate relationships where feelings are shared Are motivated to perform well Often choose play that involves communication, caring, cooperation and creativity

These stereotypes may influence group dynamics. Boys may need larger spaces where they can be loud and rough. Girls may need to have the opportunity to problem-solve using communication and express caring behaviours through dramatic play.

A progressive view focuses on each individual child and their needs, not just their gender. It recognises that some girls prefer physical pursuits, group play and construction, while some boys prefer caring behaviours, close friendships and the arts.

By identifying each child's needs you will be able to find out what engages them and provide for this. Any child whose needs are not fulfilled, or who is being pressured into participating in the direction an educator feels the group must follow, may demonstrate their frustration using inappropriate behaviours. Involve them in setting limits and create structured times around children's needs, taking into consideration that these will be different for each child and each group.

Example

Adapting to meet group needs

Maddox is an educator who encourages group activities spontaneously throughout the day.

In the morning he plans a structured group activity. The children identify the guidelines and limits for the group. They agree that all children should have a choice of whether they would like to participate, coming or going as they choose, as long as they don't interrupt others. The activities they undertake when the group activity is occurring would need to be quiet.

Each week the children help set up a shelf of options for individual quiet activities.

Practice Task 2

1. Which of the following do you need to consider in relation to factors that influence a child's behaviour? Select all that apply.

- ☐ You should know how to identify behaviour disorders so that you can diagnose them.
- ☐ You should know developmentally appropriate milestones so you understand if a child's behaviour is appropriate for their age.
- ☐ You should form strong relationships with families so they are aware of their home environment and history, and how it may affect behaviour.
- ☐ You should be aware of the child's usual temperament, personality and interaction patterns so that you can adapt interactions and responses.
- ☐ You need to understand how a child's brain development affects a child's self-regulation, and how this allows children to deal with different emotions.

2. Draw a line to match each factor that may influence behaviour to its definition.

* Child's home and community	* The ability to deal with difficulties and challenges. You can develop this by encouraging children to accept mistakes, problem-solve and ask for help.
* Personality	* How children are influenced by the patterns and actions of others. You should observe the children to see how they are influenced negatively and positively through participation, contribution, discussions and behaviours.
* Resilience	* Understanding what is going on in a child's life that may impact behaviour, including lifestyle changes, family circumstances, trauma and their ability to socialise with others.
* Group dynamics	* The natural character of a younger child and later the learned disposition of the child, the way they handle emotions and different situations, and their ability to adapt and socialise with other children.

Summary

- Any form of behaviour guidance must be carried out in line with service policies and procedures.
- You must work alongside family members to gain an understanding of the practices, beliefs and standards they have or currently implement.
- For the curriculum to reflect the approved learning frameworks, it must include and acknowledge diversity.
- The child's home environment and past experiences play a part in their learning and development.
- The service environment and expectations also influence a child's behaviour.
- Often a small change to a child's social or physical environment or experiences can make a huge difference to their ability to function in a positive way.
- Knowing what to expect of a child at a particular developmental stage helps you determine whether their behaviour is appropriate and how you should guide it.
- Emotional and social challenges can be the cause of a mental health concern.
- When children learn to self-regulate, they are increasing their ability to recognise feelings and to manage these.
- Resilience is about recognising that while there is a challenge, you can work it out and move forward.
- To meet the emotional and psychological needs of a child, you must match the environment and your interactions with their temperament.
- If a child is subjected to an ongoing stressful situation and their personal difficulties are not supported, their behaviours can become concerning.
- Behaviour may be influenced by the patterns and dynamics of a group.

Learning Checkpoint 1
Understanding the foundations of behaviour

1. Draw a line to match each behaviour guideline to the example.

* Equity and access	* After changing Kaia's nappy, Suzannah asks him to wash his hands. She stands back and allows him to try to turn the tap on himself. She helps him by lifting him up when he is struggling to reach the soap dispenser, but still allows him to press the button. She asks him what he needs to do next and claps her hands with encouragement when he uses a cloth to dry his hands.
* Inclusiveness	* Rogan is an educator who is conducting an orientation session with Haidar and his family. Rogan wants to learn as much as she can from the family. She asks lots of questions about their home life, their expectations and their connections to the community.
* Diversity	* During a music session, Hudson encourages all children to join in regardless of their age, gender or race.
* NQS Quality Area 6	* Avni is an educator who sets up an experience for fine motor skills. She includes small and large blocks so that all children are able to manipulate the blocks regardless of their hand strength in order to build and develop their skills.
* NQS Quality Area 5	* Tyla is an educator who sets up a kitchen and adds pretend food and utensils from different cultures including chopsticks, mats on the floor to sit and eat, as well as tables and chairs. She puts up posters showing people around the world eating.

2. Perry (six months) has woken and is babbling and playing with her toes. Ray, an educator, comes to the cot and smiles at Perry, saying, 'Oh, you are awake. I hope you had a good sleep. I will get you up in just a minute when I have put Shannon down at the table for lunch.' Perry smiles at Ray and begins to kick her legs and play with her toes, cooing and babbling happily.

   Which of the following statements are correct? Select all that apply.

   - ☐ Perry's behaviour is appropriate for her age.
   - ☐ Ray has responded to Perry in a time that suits her behaviour.
   - ☐ Perry should be screaming and crying as soon as she wakes up to let others know that she is awake.
   - ☐ Perry is self-regulating by happily waiting and playing with her toes.
   - ☐ Ray is displaying aggressive behaviour towards Perry.
   - ☐ Perry seems to have an easy temperament.

3. Donald (three years) is the youngest of four brothers. His mum has told you that his brothers take over and control Donald's play.

   Anaya knows that Donald needs plenty of warning before pack-up time if he is working on something or he will become angry, so she warns him that there is 10 minutes to go. On one occasion a child has reminded Donald to pack up and Donald has thrown a block at him. Anaya has told Donald that it isn't safe to throw blocks. She suggests he slows his breathing.

   Which of the following statements are correct? Select all that apply.

   - ☐ Donald seems to have a slow-to-warm-up temperament.
   - ☐ Anaya is using strategies that support the emotional domain of self-regulation and increase Donald's resilience.
   - ☐ Donald's behaviour is age-appropriate.
   - ☐ Being the youngest of four children may be a lifestyle stressor for Donald.
   - ☐ Donald is displaying a difficult temperament.

4. Which of the following statements about group dynamics are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

a.	All boys like playing superheroes and all girls enjoy playing with dolls.	* Yes	* No
b.	If children feel safe and secure, they will be more likely to feel supported to participate in experiences without fear of failure.	* Yes	* No
c.	As long as you give clear instructions of expected behaviour, all children will abide by these limits.	* Yes	* No
d.	Boys will be better at playing ball games than girls.	* Yes	* No
e.	If you involve children in setting up an experience and they are given the opportunity to have input in the experience, they are more likely to be positive and productive.	* Yes	* No

Topic 2

In this topic you will learn about:

- **2A** Responding sensitively to children
- **2B** Working in partnership with families
- **2C** Interacting positively with children
- **2D** Relaxed, unhurried routines

Maintaining positive environments

A positive approach to relationships and interactions focuses on improving children's strengths.

Take each child's developmental level into account, and use techniques that provide guidance and help children to behave in socially acceptable ways. These techniques allow children to develop skills required to understand themselves and their feelings, and to develop resilience and prosocial behaviours.

2A Responding sensitively to children

When a child develops a trusting and positive relationship with you, they will more freely accept your assistance as they will feel safe and respected.

Relationship-based strategies that focus on strengthening the bond between you and the child promote a sense of belonging. They empower the child and help them to feel they are active participants in their own lives.

Respond to children's needs to develop a positive and trusting relationship.

Children are more likely to express themselves in positive ways, to learn about themselves and their needs, and to develop resilience if you show genuine care and interest in them as individuals. When you develop positive relationships with children and families, this can help behaviour issues to decrease significantly. Any issues that occur should be handled promptly, effectively and compassionately. Children with ongoing challenges should be provided with sensitive and responsive plans for support.

Circle of security

The aim of a positive and communicative environment is to help the child feel that they are in a circle of security.

A circle of security is created when you provide for children's needs. You must show children that they are in a space that is safe and secure, and that they are being cared for.

This can be represented to children in the following ways:

- Show children they are welcome in the service.
- Demonstrate that you are excited to be part of their day.
- Comfort children when they are upset.
- Protect children from harm.
- Support children's mistakes and celebrate their successes.
- Encourage children to try.
- Watch children, show that you enjoy what they enjoy and be part of their exploration.

Secure attachments

Children are able to form attachments to a number of people, each important to their social and emotional development and wellbeing.

Children who are securely attached will experience less distress than other children. Children who lack a strong attachment relationship with others may demonstrate challenging behaviours.

Children show attachment relationships through the following behaviours.

Behaviour	Characteristics
Social referencing	➤ The child may watch emotional responses of a caregiver they are attached to and respond in a similar way. ➤ For example, if a spider is crawling on the wall, the child may copy the response of the caregiver. If the caregiver screams, the child will scream; if the caregiver says, 'Hey, look how many legs it has!' the child will show interest.
Anchoring	➤ The child may move off to explore, but will not move too far from the caregiver they are attached to. ➤ The child will ensure this caregiver is close by just in case, and will become confused and concerned if the caregiver moves away unexpectedly.
Refuelling	➤ The child may periodically return to the caregiver they are attached to with a toy or activity, or just to make sure they are still there. ➤ The child will also return to the caregiver when frightened, hurt or upset.

These attachment behaviours allow you to observe how well you have developed relationships with children. If you are available to a child and respond to their emotional needs, you will develop a healthy, trusting relationship.

Emotional responses

Emotions are the positive or negative feelings that are experienced over the course of a day.

Examples are listed in the following table.

Positive emotions	Negative emotions
Enthusiasm	Grief
Happiness	Anger
Empathy	Shame
Excitement	Sadness
Curiosity	Fear

Positive emotions are pleasant to experience, while negative emotions are often upsetting. However, both are important in children's emotional development. Children need to learn to express and manage their emotions appropriately in order to participate with others and feel a sense of belonging.

If you notice signs of hurt or distress, respond using appropriate strategies.

Children may express feelings of hurt or distress by:

- crying
- clinging to a caregiver
- feeling sick
- displaying negative behaviour
- losing their appetite
- becoming aggressive
- sucking their thumb
- regressing in development.

There are a number of strategies you can use to encourage individual children to express and manage their feelings appropriately, as outlined in the following table.

Listening to the child and responding to show you understand	- Use active listening.
	- Face the child.
	- Get down to their level.
	- Respond to the child by saying:
	  – 'Oh, I understand.'
	  – 'Mmmm.'
	  – 'That's interesting.'
	  – 'What an interesting idea.'
	  – 'So how does it feel?'

Recognising specific feelings	- Say to the child:
	  – 'You seem angry.'
	  – 'Are you sad about it?'
	  – 'You are very excited about this idea.'
	  – 'How confident you are.'
	  – 'You seem very happy.'

Asking the child for ideas	- Find out what the child wants to do. - Problem-solve in simple ways by asking the child what they think they should do. - Brainstorm a solution together if the child is old enough.
Using non-verbal language	- Comfort the child physically by sitting close, touching their arm, rubbing their back or giving them a hug (the child's level of comfort with you, their age and their own personal space requirements dictate how close you can get to them). - Use appropriate actions and no not invade the child's space. - Demonstrate enjoyment or pleasure if appropriate by clapping, smiling, jumping up and down, or laughing. - Mirror the child's feelings if appropriate.

Providing materials or opportunities	➤ Provide the child with a comforter if necessary (such as a toy, blanket or dummy) . ➤ Provide the child with time, space, materials or other resources so their idea can be expressed. ➤ Encourage the child to tell others or express themselves to specific people. ➤ Provide space for privacy, solitude or quiet, where the child can relax, rest and refuel. ➤ Redirect the child to new activities unless they are extremely upset. Monitor the child after redirection and participate in the activity to ensure the child is emotionally stable. ➤ Ensure the environment and your relationship with the child allows the expression of feelings, as suppressed feelings can lead to greater issues.

Acknowledging children's efforts

Acknowledgment and encouragement show children that you value them and their achievements.

This motivates children to do things for intrinsic reasons (to please themselves or because the task is worth doing).

Acknowledgment and encouragement focus on the child's efforts and reflect your understanding of each child's ability level and confidence. They are aimed at helping children feel good about themselves, which empowers them and boosts their self-esteem. There is a range of ways you can demonstrate acknowledgment and encouragement during or after an event, such as the following:

- After a child has helped pack away toys, encourage them by saying, 'You worked really hard to put all the toys away.'
- Provide feedback using a comment about the effort that has been put in, the object the child has created or something they have done that particularly interests you.
- Ask questions that demonstrate your interest and appreciation, such as:
  - 'How did you do that?'
  - 'What materials did you use?'
  - 'What do you think of your work?'
- Thank children for their contribution by saying please and thank you, and acknowledging the achievement.

Your knowledge of each child should help you to recognise things they see as important. Having a conversation about what they have done will help you learn more about how they express themselves.

Respond to successes and try to consider things from the child's perspective. The most effective way to do this is by providing a child-focused program.

Example

Encouraging children

Denise is three years old. She is helping pack up the home area by hanging the dress-ups on hooks, but they continue to fall down. She does this four times. The fifth time she stops and looks at the clothing that has fallen on the floor. She lets out a sigh, then moves all the dress-ups so she has clear access to the hooks.

The educator encourages Denise by saying: 'Denise, I can see you are trying very hard. It looks like you have worked this out.' Later, she says, 'Thank you for your help, Denise.'

This type of encouragement acknowledges Denise's efforts, but does not require her to follow a particular process.

Responding to achievements

It can be difficult to identify all successes when some children express their feelings openly and others are quiet achievers.

Careful observation and your knowledge of each child will enable you to recognise what they see as important and how they express themselves. Take the time to identify when children:

- achieve something and experience success
- are being positively challenged.

Your observations and interactions will help you identify and monitor the child's level of confidence as they are challenged positively or experience an achievement. The following table provides ideas that will help you identify what is happening when children are experiencing achievements and challenges, and suggests ways you can positively support and respond to them.

Child's experiences	What the child might say	Cues the child might give	What you can do
Achievements and successes	➤ 'Look what I've done.' ➤ 'We did it!' ➤ 'I did it myself!'	➤ Smiling ➤ Finishing and sharing their work ➤ Wanting to do the activity again ➤ Telling others	➤ Comment on the process or skill involved. ➤ Ask how the activity was done. ➤ Offer tasks for a similar skill level or area of interest.

Child's experiences	What the child might say	Cues the child might give	What you can do
Positive challenges	➤ 'This is hard, but I can do it.' ➤ 'I know I can do it if I try hard.' ➤ 'Look what I can do.' ➤ 'I need some help, but not very much.'	➤ Smiling ➤ Humming or singing ➤ Concentrating hard ➤ Succeeding ➤ Working on the task for some time with progress ➤ Asking for a bit of help or feedback, but not wanting you to take over or complete the activity for them	➤ Stay nearby to ensure you provide timely support. ➤ Offer ideas and help only when needed or asked for. ➤ Comment on the process or skill involved. ➤ Do not interrupt their concentration. ➤ Allow time and space for success.

Example

Considering a child's perspective

Greg is an educator who is chatting with Spencer about the picture he has drawn of a horse, when Ramone approaches them to see what they are looking at. Ramone believes he is good at art and likes to copy pictures from books.

Ramone says, 'Spencer, your horse's legs look funny. Horses don't have legs like that!' Spencer looks upset. Greg says, 'What I like about Spencer's drawing is the way you can tell the horse is going really fast – his nostrils are flaring and his tail is blowing in the wind. You can tell that Spencer really thought hard about how to draw that.'

Spencer looks pleased. 'Yes, I saw a horse galloping at my Grandpa's in the country. He was going really, really fast!'

'That's cool!' says Ramone. The two boys start talking about animals that run fast and Greg moves away.

When Greg made positive comments about Spencer's drawing, Spencer's feelings of success were acknowledged and his self-esteem increased. He also modelled to Ramone that effort is important, not just results.

Sharing successes with families

Family members are often excited to hear about their child's interests, learning and successes, and to see how independent their child is becoming.

Information-sharing through informal discussion is a great way to develop a positive relationship with families. Communicate with families about the individual learning and achievements of their child, as well as things that are happening with the whole group.

Some formal methods for information-sharing include providing:

- records that are personal to the family, such as a diary or portfolio
- records of routines and independence, such as a log or communication sheet
- opportunities for families to contribute information, such as a communication book or learning story
- times when families and educators get together, such as at a parent–educator meeting.

Practice Task 3

1. Draw a line to match the factors that influence children's behaviour on the left to the strategies for creating positive and respectful relationships on the right.

* Building secure attachments	* Educators create warm, positive and trusting relationships that are sensitive to children's needs and emotions, and help to build a sense of belonging.
* Providing comfort	* Educators respond warmly to all children's conversations and needs in order to build a secure relationship that demonstrates interest and respect, and validates their emotions.
* Responding to children	* Educators know each child's abilities, capabilities and confidence levels, and use this to celebrate successes and positive challenges.
* Supporting effort and achievements	* Educators respond to children who are distressed and hurt, and provide them with a supportive environment that offers security and allows children to express their feelings.

2. Which of the following positive communication strategies should be used to respond to children who are expressing their feelings and ideas? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Respond sensitively and with respect. Get down to the child's level and listen to what they have to say.
- ☐ Use appropriate physical space and language that demonstrates support and comfort, but does not invade the child's personal space.
- ☐ Provide what the child needs, such as comfort items, privacy, space, materials or other resources.
- ☐ Tell the child what emotions they should be feeling and what they should do to overcome negative emotions.
- ☐ Help the child to name and recognise the emotions they are feeling and help them to self-regulate if needed.
- ☐ Understand factors behind emotions and respond to the child in a way that demonstrates care.

2B Working in partnership with families

When educators and families demonstrate sensitive, warm, trusting and reciprocal partnerships, communication with children will be more open, responsive and relaxed.

To improve this partnership, learn about each other's differences, and try to understand each other's views, cultural experiences, challenges and choices.

Work closely with families to learn about each family's culture.

Cultural differences are not limited to different groups of people; each family has a particular culture as well as its own:

- expectations regarding communication
- responses to behaviour
- form and style of communication
- norms
- social functioning.

If you do not know this cultural information, you may fail to meet the needs of the family or other professional you are working with. This may result in a lack of responsiveness to the child's needs.

Cultural practices

Australia is a multicultural society and you need to recognise that each family acts and thinks differently.

By understanding some of the differences between people, you will gain insight into their communication expectations and preferences.

Different cultures have different beliefs about religion, family, food, gender and the way people communicate and interact with each other. By understanding family choices, being aware of your own choices and finding out the influences of your colleagues, you can make informed decisions about how to communicate effectively and positively with each child.

In some cases you will maintain a family's chosen practice. In other cases families will choose for their child to experience alternative or additional communication beliefs. The following table outlines some common and opposing beliefs that may be held by different families.

Common beliefs	Opposing beliefs
Children should look adults in the eye to show that they are paying attention or telling the truth.	Children should not make eye contact with adults because it is disrespectful.

Common beliefs	Opposing beliefs
Providing positive modelling and building a respectful relationship with children are good ways to guide a child's behaviour.	Teasing and threatening is a useful way to manage a child's behaviour; for example, 'If you eat that your teeth will fall out'.
Children should be encouraged to ask 'Why?' – an inquiring mind is a learning mind.	Children must do as they are told. There should be no questions.
Feelings should be demonstrated and learnt about.	Feelings should not be expressed or discussed.
It is safe to make a mistake. This is a good way to learn.	It is better to do nothing than to make a mistake.
Males and females are equal and should be treated the same.	Males don't have to listen to any guidance or discipline that is provided by a female.

Collaborating with families

Knowing and understanding the expectations and strategies families use helps you to see the world from the child's perspective, and be able to adapt your communication appropriately.

A child's communication can be influenced by individual issues that may stem from family lifestyle stressors, cultural issues, developmental challenges, behavioural disorders or mental health issues. Recognise these factors so you can plan an appropriate strategy in cooperation with the child's family.

Family members have a sound knowledge of their child's temperament, interests, skills and needs. This information allows you to gain a starting point for understanding individual children, which helps you work together as the child develops and learns.

Each family group has its own beliefs, practices, values and interests; together these form the family's culture. You must find out about this culture if you are to understand and meet the needs of each child. Keep an open mind and show respect for each family's culture, particularly when you discuss the family's culture with others.

To communicate effectively with families you may:

- ask them to fill in documents, such as enrolment forms
- use service apps or social media to post information and receive feedback
- provide opportunities for participation through feedback, such as suggestion boxes or surveys
- involve them in discussions at arrival and departure times
- develop methods where they can write or record information
- ask specific questions about children
- share the information you have gathered about the child and ask them to add any further details or clarify the information.

Sharing information

To exchange information with family members effectively, make yourself available to speak with them at appropriate times.

This availability may vary according to the structure of your service, your role and responsibilities.

Take the time to exchange information with families.

You can make yourself available to communicate and share information with family members:

- during drop-off and pick-up times
- over the phone
- during organised learning and development review meetings
- when families participate in activities
- when family members drop in during the day.

By planning to share information at these times, you show respect and that you value communication. Families appreciate this knowledge transfer as it demonstrates that you are willing to meet the individual needs of their child.

Ongoing communication

The frequency and level of communication you have with family members will vary – some information may need to be communicated daily or weekly.

Things that may impact the level and frequency of communication include:

- how often the child attends the service
- the child's developmental milestones
- the period of time the family has used the service for
- the family's expectations of the service.

Ongoing communication with family members keeps you up to date with their needs and the needs of the child; it also helps them to share significant events that occur. Events such as celebrations, relocation, separation or the death of a relative or pet may all impact the child's abilities, behaviour or needs. These events affect individual children in different ways; however, knowing about the events helps you understand any responses that occur.

Consultation is a basic principle of quality relationships, and there are many opportunities to incorporate it in your practice using verbal, written or non-verbal communication. You can consult with children and families by:

- holding a meeting
- sending out a survey
- having a group or individual discussion
- chatting informally
- making requests
- providing a suggestion box.

Consultation can also occur spontaneously when the opportunity arises; for example, you could provide anecdotes or listen to conversations to spark an idea.

Be aware that some families may not want to pass information onto you. You must respect this decision; however, you should still work towards establishing a relationship based on interest and mutual trust, which in time may encourage them to share information with you.

Collaborating with colleagues

Colleagues can support your collection of information about children in a variety of ways.

The experience educators and educational leaders have had with curriculum planning and with service policies and procedures means that they are great sources of support. They can:

- identify which recording methods suit each type of observation
- identify what records are mandatory, expected or preferred
- outline your responsibilities
- provide you with support and guidance
- provide background information about a child
- provide documentation they have collected, such as portfolios or files containing the child's work or personal information
- provide information from discussions they have had with others.

Celebrating differences

The more exposure children have to diversity, the less they will notice difference.

Similarities and differences are evident in everyday life. How children deal with diversity shapes their perception of themselves, others and the world. The best opportunities to help children develop positive attitudes to differences occur during daily interactions and events.

Encourage children to celebrate differences and to be more open-minded.

Children who engage with environments in which all people are valued and uniqueness is celebrated will view the world in a more open-minded way and appreciate others' values, beliefs and ideas.

You have the opportunity to create this world for children. Each experience you provide should be embedded with behaviour that shows respectful and equal relationships. Spontaneous or planned discussion helps children see the links and share their thoughts.

Practice Task 4

1. **Which of the following are reasons why educators should gather information about a child's and family's culture, home life and background? Select all that apply.**

- ☐ To create partnerships that are sensitive to the family's beliefs and needs, and show respect for their views and choices.
- ☐ To include diversity and show that all children are represented and feel valued and celebrated.
- ☐ To identify factors from a child's background that may impact the child's behaviour.
- ☐ To collaborate with families to keep up to date and meet a child's needs.
- ☐ To share information with other families so that they have an understanding of the child's beliefs.

2C Interacting positively with children

All your actions and interactions are observed by others in your workplace: your colleagues, the children and their families.

Modelling is one of the most powerful ways to teach children how to interact with others in positive ways. Children will quickly pick up behaviours and attitudes in the environment – both positive and negative. Always use encouraging and positive language, and model good social and communication skills in all your interactions. For example:

Children look at you as a model for good behaviour.

- If you want children to use quiet voices inside, use a quiet voice yourself.
- If you want children to be problem-solvers, demonstrate problem-solving behaviour.
- If you want children to respect you, show them respect.

Consulting with children

One of the most effective ways to empower children is to consult with them.

By consulting with children, you are supporting them to express their ideas and views. Some common things children can be consulted about include:

- limits and guidelines
- activity choices
- curriculum ideas
- behaviour expectations
- family involvement
- staff involvement.

Consultation must be appropriate to the child's level of development. Get to know their communication style and consult them over matters that concern them. Consult children to provide them with experiences that are relevant and interesting to them. Some children will easily be able to plan activities with you; others will need encouragement and support.

Try the following suggestions:

- Offer possible play choices and listen carefully to children's questions about the choices.
- Use open questions to encourage children to reflect and ask their own questions; for example, 'What should we do about ...?' or 'How do you think we should ...?'
- Encourage children to consult with each other. If they have a question, see who can help them find an answer.
- Teach children to research. You don't always need to have an answer; children can use a computer, books, posters and other people, including visitors, to find out information.

Active listening

A conversation is an exchange of ideas between two or more communication partners.

Active listening means giving someone your full attention to show that you understand their point of view. Active listening is essential if your conversation is to be meaningful and sustained.

Try to use active listening with every child or adult you are conversing with. Even in situations where words are not used, you can smile, use body language, respond and give your full attention.

To show you are concentrating and interested, you will need to:
➤ focus your attention on the topic
➤ observe body language and other non-verbal messages
➤ avoid distractions
➤ set aside your prejudices and opinions
➤ ask questions or seek direction
➤ change your body position to show you are listening; for example, face the child and lean towards them
➤ answer questions and follow directions
➤ respond with reflection (reflective listening); for example, 'So you felt scared?' or 'Is that right?'
➤ give encouragement through verbal responses; for example, 'Oh, really?' or 'Go on'.

Open-ended questions

Open-ended questions are a useful tool that require you to think about how your questions are worded so that children will have an opportunity to extend beyond a 'yes' or 'no' response.

Questions that require a 'yes', 'no' or another one-word answer are called closed questions, because the response is limited. These questions do not sustain a conversation. You can show care and interest by using open-ended questions to gain additional information from children.

Compare the following examples.

Closed questions	Open-ended questions
➤ Is it hot outside?	➤ What is the weather like outside?
➤ Did that hurt?	➤ What happened?
➤ Do you like trains?	➤ What do you like about trains?
➤ Are you angry?	➤ How did it make you feel?
➤ Did you do that?	➤ How did that happen?

Positive interactions

Strong relationships are built on effective interactions.

You may enjoy working with children; however, this in itself won't make you an effective educator. You need to become a responsive communicator and use strategies to help you develop positive relationships with children and help them feel a sense of agency. The following strategies will help you to achieve this.

Talk positively	➢ Reflect on how you currently speak to and interact with children. Do you use positive instructions? ➢ Use positive language, as most children try to follow limits. When you say not to do something, a child will know what not to do, but they may not understand what you would like them to do instead. You should state exactly what you expect , rather than what is not allowed; for example, say 'Walk' instead of 'Don't run', or 'Feet on the floor' rather than 'Get your feet off the table'. Positive language lets the child know exactly what it is you want them to do and creates a more pleasant atmosphere.
Send clear messages	➢ Use language that is appropriate for a child's age, stage of development and culture so your communication is positive and clear. ➢ Say what you mean clearly and concisely. For example, if you want to implement group time, rather than saying, 'Stop running, you have to come and sit on the mat now', say, 'Let's all sit down for a puppet show'. This communicates your message clearly and positively to children. ➢ Your use of gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice will help. These aspects can be cultural, so you may need to think about the way you use them; however, simple messages that are conveyed positively usually work well.
State the expected behaviour	➢ If a child has acceptable behaviour, encourage them; for example, 'Thank you, Anna, for picking up the blocks. I was worried someone would fall over'. ➢ If a child displays an undesirable behaviour, take them aside and explain why it is unacceptable; for example, 'Anna, you left the blocks on the floor, someone may fall over. Please put them away if you have finished with them.'
Listen to and accept children's feelings	➢ To really listen to children, you should get down to their eye level and use body language to show that you are concentrating. ➢ Show that you respect what they have to say and think it is important. ➢ Mirror what a child says in conversation back to them. For example, if a child says they don't want to go outside as they are cold, your response may be, 'If you feel cold today, maybe you can put on your coat'. This shows you are listening and that you understand what they are saying.
Give children time	➢ Take any opportunity you can to spend time with children and communicate with them. Do this informally and regularly.

Requests for assistance

If a child requests help from you, always take them seriously and try to respond to their needs. This helps them to feel safe, secure and supported.

You can communicate your willingness to help children by listening to them when they ask for your attention. Ask children whether they need help and watch their cues to see how they are progressing in their activities.

Frustration is a difficult feeling for children to identify as it is similar to anger. Your careful observation and discussion will help children to recognise when they feel frustrated, why they feel this way and how they can ask for help.

Signs that a child is feeling frustrated or requires assistance include:

- not progressing in their activity
- irritability, anger or annoyance
- biting their lip
- giving up.

Possible actions you can take are outlined in the following table.

Action	Examples
Set simpler challenges or provide assistance	➤ Move a toy closer to an immobile infant. ➤ Provide a selection of puzzles of different difficulty levels. ➤ Give directions and support – 'Try turning the piece this way. See how the green part matches here?'
Intervene when interactions seem to be developing into frustrating scenarios	➤ 'Jamie and Easton, what are you trying to do here?' ➤ 'How could you work together?' ➤ 'There are lots of jobs to do. Let's decide who will do what.' ➤ 'Let's work out what to do first.'
Support the child to use methods for expressing or dealing with frustration	➤ Suggest they move away from the activity or person that is causing a problem. ➤ Provide stress-relief strategies such as: – 'Take a big breath.' – 'Stop and take a look at things again.' – 'Go for a walk and then come back and see if you can do it.' – 'You need to do some stretches and come back to that!' – 'Maybe it will be easier if you try something else first.'
Acknowledge the frustration	➤ 'This is frustrating; it's a very hard job to do.' ➤ 'We all get frustrated sometimes; it's part of learning.'

Answering questions

When a child is curious about the world, themselves and others, you can use this as an opportunity to develop their decision-making and problem-solving skills.

It is common for children to ask questions and make comments. In particular, you will hear a lot of 'why' questions.

You can support decision-making and problem-solving that evolves from comments and questions by:

- recognising problems and/or decisions
- clarifying goals
- planning strategies
- finding solutions
- asking open-ended questions
- supporting children to share their ideas with others
- providing new and stimulating materials
- using everyday events to explore the world
- supporting exploration
- talking about routines and choices
- supporting families to provide learning environments at home
- helping children break things up into manageable steps
- helping children to see other people's points of view.

Educator roles in play

The roles you take in children's play should extend its value and increase children's agency.

Think carefully about the play that is occurring and the messages or cues the children are sending to determine the roles you should take during play. This process will help you to identify when it is time for you to exit or change your participation. You might take on one of the following roles.

Play role	What you would be doing
Observer	- An observer watches, listens and tries to figure out what the play is about by understanding the children's perspective and interests. - Careful observation means you are less likely to say or do something that disrupts children's play, and you will have a better idea of what to say or do to extend play if the opportunity arises. - You may be an observer initially and then move into one of the other play roles.

Play role	What you would be doing
Provider	➢ A provider identifies what the children are trying to do and then thinks about what can be provided so that play can proceed smoothly. For example, a provider may arrange: – space for play – special materials for play – more time for play. ➢ Careful provision means you will support the play and allow it to continue. You can also extend the play by giving children more to think about and do in their play. ➢ A provider must be careful not to disrupt play.
Mediator	➢ A mediator helps children solve problems when they can't solve these problems themselves. ➢ Watch for times when children get stuck. For example, when an argument threatens to stop the play, this is a cue for you to mediate. You can then: – step in and make a suggestion – offer an alternative – model a new way to act to solve the problem – support the children to work out how to solve the problem. ➢ You will extend children's skills in problem-solving when you mediate as children will often copy your problem-solving solutions in future play.
Player	➢ A player joins in with the play. This seems to be the easiest role, but careful thought is needed before you join in. Adults can be actively involved in play as long as they respect that the play belongs to the children. ➢ Being a player lets you: – extend play by modelling new ideas – assist new players to find a role – help children act out scenes or ideas that they don't know much about. ➢ A player also assists children to keep their play going for a longer period of time. It also strengthens the child–educator relationship, as the interaction allows both parties to learn more about each other.

Changing your involvement

Often something will happen during play that means you must change your role.

The following table gives some examples of cues you might notice that tell you your role should change.

Cues that tell you to change your involvement	What you should do	New role
Children are arguing, disagreeing, confused, tense or facing a problem	Help children to solve the problem	Mediator
Children are looking around or searching for things, or asking for materials or resources	Provide resources	Provider
Children ask you to play	Join in playing	Player
Play continues successfully	Allow play to continue	Observer or player
Items are not being cared for or are being used unsafely	Remove items that are not required or suggest alternatives	Provider or mediator
Play extends	Provide additional resources	Provider
Other children wish to join the group, but are not sure how to	Support the children to join in or provide additional resources	Mediator or provider
You are playing with children, but your role reduces or changes and you are no longer needed	Remove yourself from the play	Observer

Example

Extending play

Rueben is an educator who notices that Lewie and Maya, both three years old, are working beside each other using the train set. The children have built a long, winding track. Rueben hears the children talking about who will drive the train and realises it only has one engine and three carriages. He is aware that the children will both want to drive and have their own train, so he collects more train parts and brings them out.

'Here, Lewie and Maya, there are many engines and carriages for you to choose from!'

Sustained shared conversations

A sustained shared conversation is a discussion – either spontaneous or planned – between adults and children.

Sustained shared conversations extend children's thinking and listening skills. They focus on a particular topic, but incorporate a range of ideas and thoughts, some initiated by the educator or family and some by the children. Children may participate in the conversation, depending on their interests and needs.

A sustained shared conversation might become part of an inquiry process or a construction activity. Most effective conversations revolve around the interests of the child.

Sharing ideas and stories

Children are imaginative and will come to you with many thoughts, questions, ideas and suggestions.

They may seem excited by an idea for an activity or concerned that it may not work. Sometimes their ideas are not fully formed, and your ongoing interaction can help them to develop their ideas.

The following table outlines some strategies you may find useful when children share their ideas and stories with you.

Strategy	How to implement
Use active listening	➢ Get down to the eye child's level. ➢ Face the child.
Respond with simple comments	➢ Make comments such as: – 'That's interesting.' – 'What an interesting idea.'
Recognise specific feelings	➢ Make comments such as: – 'You seem very excited about this.' – 'How confident you are!' – 'You seem very happy.'
Ask open-ended questions	➢ Ask what the child wants to do next. ➢ Brainstorm if needed and if the child is old enough. ➢ Ask questions such as: – 'How could we make this happen?' – 'What happens next?'
Use body language	➢ Sit close to the child. ➢ Demonstrate enjoyment or pleasure if appropriate by clapping, smiling, jumping up and down or laughing. ➢ Copy the child's reactions, if appropriate.
Provide materials or opportunities	➢ The child may need time, space, materials or other resources so that their idea or story can be expressed. ➢ The child may need to tell others or express themselves to specific people.
Redirect the child to the next experience	➢ If the child is extremely excited or enthusiastic, help further their ideas or stories. ➢ Monitor the child's participation to ensure they are still feeling positive and enthusiastic. You will be monitoring their levels of frustration, confidence and ability to cope with challenges.

Extending ideas

When children share their ideas and stories, there is an opportunity to develop the situation into a learning experience for the child or group.

Children's ideas and story sharing can be spontaneous or planned, formal or informal, or part of an individual discussion or group activity.

Helping children to extend their ideas
Encourage them to listen to each other's ideas.
Encourage them to think flexibly about their options.
Show children how you think about problems by explaining or demonstrating how you would do things.
Accept and acknowledge children's suggestions in a positive way.
Allow children time to make suggestions; don't rush them or decide for them.
Explain things that limit options, such as safety considerations, practicality or resources.
Offer new ideas and encourage children to consider different interests.
Make sure all children participate – not just those who are loud, enthusiastic or quick to speak up.
Provide new and stimulating materials or topics for discussion.
Let the child take the lead – avoid taking over.

Example

Extending an idea

Kobi is an educator who is sitting with Marta, aged five. Marta is telling Kobi how she would like to sail in a boat and catch fish in the sea. Marta went to the beach for a holiday and brought back some shells she had collected. Marta asks if she could show other children her shells.

Kobi tells Marta he thinks this is a great idea and suggests they create a discovery table and put some sand on it. He asks Marta what else they might add to the table. Marta suggests she would like to build a boat using blocks and make fishing lines with sticks and magnets. Marta is excited and jumps up and down saying, 'Yes, yes!'

Sustained shared thinking

The inquiry process usually includes exploration, problem-solving, intentional teaching and sustained shared thinking.

Inquiry might relate to a concept, something new to the child, something they have not noticed before or something they found interesting at the time. The processes involved in inquiry are explained in the following table.

Exploration	When children examine, try to work out and understand something.
Problem-solving	When children are learning skills and knowledge, they might problem-solve to work out the answer. Help them do this by: › identifying what the problem is › having ideas and trying them out › checking if the ideas worked. Children may need help to: › break problems up into manageable steps › identify which issues to tackle first › choose a strategy to use › see other people's points of view › wait long enough for a result.
Intentional teaching	Intentional teaching may involve providing children with information, showing them new things and supporting them to learn how things work.

Some skills children might develop through sustained shared thinking are:

- conversation and discussion skills
- exploring
- identifying
- classifying (sorting)
- comparing and contrasting
- hypothesising (putting forward an idea and testing it).

They will also have the opportunity to make mistakes as part of learning.

Prosocial skills

Prosocial behaviour is positive behaviour that benefits another person in some way.

Prosocial behaviour includes:

- helping
- sharing
- giving
- comforting
- showing sympathy and kindness
- expressing positive verbal and physical contact
- showing concern
- considering another person's perspective
- cooperating.

When you assist children to develop prosocial behaviour you are helping them to succeed in friendships and gain acceptance and belonging in a group. You can do this by helping children to:

- notice and interpret social cues
- formulate social goals
- generate problem-solving strategies
- evaluate effectiveness of strategies
- consider peer perspectives
- follow social rules
- remember past experiences and link these to expectations for future experiences.

Talking about friends

Educators often refer to a whole group of children as 'friends'.

This implies that all children are in the same friendship group or that any people who are sharing a space are friends. Often educators use the word 'friend' instead of using the child's actual name. This can be disrespectful as it removes the child's identity from the situation.

When guiding behaviour an educator might use statements such as:

- 'We don't hurt our friends!'
- 'Friends need to be gentle with each other!'
- 'What do you say to your friend?'

This is controversial because it raises a number of questions:

- If a child is told that they should not treat 'friends' in a particular way, does this imply that if the other person in not a friend, then they may harm them or treat them with less respect?
- Do the children understand the concept of friendship?
- Are educators using the word 'friend' in ways that misinterpret what a friend is?
- How do we demonstrate and celebrate the special relationships between children if they are all labelled as friends?

When children are engaged in special relationships with another child, it is useful to support this as a friendship. If an educator is using general discussion or referring to a situation where an actual friendship is not in place, respect the rights of all children by using more general terms.

The following examples show how to avoid using this controversial strategy when guiding behaviour.

Controversial strategy	Recommended strategy
Alisha is an educator who approaches Riley (aged three), who is working in the construction area. He has just hit another child on the head with a block.	Alisha approaches Riley (aged three) who is working in the construction area. He has just hit another child on the head with a block.
Alisha comments, 'Riley, we need to be gentle with our friends. What should you say to your friend now?'	Alisha states, 'Riley, we need to be gentle with each other. What should you say to Hammond?'

Social interaction

When providing opportunities for social interaction, make them appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the child.

Infants are learning how interaction works – they imitate, take turns and copy the actions of others.

Toddlers have a greater ability to interact and start to choose their social activities based on shared interests. Children of this age group (one to three years) may benefit from the social interactions outlined in the following table.

Toddler-appropriate social interactions	Examples and strategies
Opportunities for small group play	➢ Providing: – home areas – simple games – open spaces to move around
Activities that encourage independence	➢ Allowing toddlers: – to help set up simple tasks – opportunities to participate in self-help skills – dressing, washing hands, etc. – to help with simple room responsibilities – setting the table, feeding the fish, etc. ➢ Providing all required materials that they need so they do not become frustrated or unable to complete the task.
Support when needed	➢ Providing the right amount of support depending on the child, their abilities and the task ➢ Allowing the child to complete tasks independently, but ensuring you are available if needed ➢ Encouraging the child by commenting positively as the task progresses ➢ Providing direction by giving instructions ➢ Assisting by taking on a play role
Asking for children to share but not expecting them to	➢ Supplying common items, such as prams, dolls and bikes, if parallel play is to occur successfully ➢ Offering enough equipment for several children to play with similar toys at once

Preschoolers are interested in relationships, exploring, investigating and being in control. Their imaginations allow them to play out a range of ideas and feelings based on social situations they have experienced or are interested in.

Preschoolers may benefit from the social interactions outlined in the following table.

Preschooler-appropriate social interactions	Examples and strategies
Opportunities for small group activity	➤ Home area and other dramatic play ➤ Games ➤ Interest groups ➤ Planning groups ➤ Research groups ➤ Information-sharing and discussion groups
Opportunities for large group activity	➤ Music and movement ➤ Excursions ➤ Stories ➤ Sharing information ➤ Discussion groups
Provision of culturally appropriate materials for role-play	➤ A range of props ➤ A variety of resources that depict the home life of different children

All children need times and spaces that allow for their need to have privacy, solitude and quiet. You can provide for this by including areas that are secluded, away from loud activity, set out with comfortable and cosy furniture, or accommodate just one child in an experience.

Group discussions

Group discussions are an excellent way to involve children in the interests, learning experiences and ideas of others.

This allows them to find out new ideas, observe how others react and gain information about different values or beliefs. Group interaction helps children develop self-esteem and provides opportunities for each child to learn about patience, turn-taking and cooperation.

Group discussions may either be planned or unplanned.

The lifespan of a discussion will vary depending on the age and developmental stage of the children involved. For example, a discussion among three-year-olds may only last a few minutes before the children move away or change to another topic or activity. By having realistic expectations of group interactions, you will reduce behaviour challenges.

The success of a group discussion relies on:

- whether the discussion fits with the children's interests and developmental understanding
- how well you engage with the children
- how you influence the children to take an interest.

Spontaneous group interaction might occur during the day to:

- develop enjoyment and contribute to an experience
- develop a new interest
- regain control of an energetic space
- calm a noisy period
- extend a new interest of the group.

During a group discussion, remember the following things:

- the length of the discussion should be suited to the concentration level of the children
- the topics and content should be suited to the children's understanding
- children should be aware of any limits, such as one person speaking at time
- all children involved in the discussion should be encouraged and given the chance to contribute
- children and educators should participate, making it a discussion.

Practice Task 5

1. **Draw a line to match each of the ways you can respond to children's efforts to communicate to the example.**

* Educator roles in play	* 'How did that make you feel?'
* Sustained shared conversations and questioning	* 'I will bring some more blankets.'
* Group interactions	* 'Look at the way this pattern is made in the sand.'
* Modelling	* 'Let's all sit down and show each other what we made.'
* Active listening	* 'You seem to like that. What can you tell me about it?'
* Shared sustained thinking	* 'Maybe I can help. I will show you what to do.'

2D Relaxed, unhurried routines

Routines are excellent opportunities to be together and start discussions as children participate in practical tasks.

There are usually some obvious topics that can link back to home or other experiences, or allow children to share their knowledge and skills or gain information.

Meal and snack times are excellent opportunities for informal discussions.

When you use routines as discussion opportunities you are demonstrating how people act socially. Some things that can make routines more enjoyable are:

- allowing enough time so the children are not rushed
- being with the children to encourage a sociable atmosphere
- accepting that there will be some mess
- modelling manners and positive actions
- encouraging children to talk to each other.

There are many opportunities for showing interest and learning about children during routines such as mealtimes. Remember to provide environments suited to the routine and children's needs, and to listen, discuss and ask questions. For example, during mealtimes you could ask questions about the food and its taste, if it is enjoyable or if the children would like to eat it again. You might also discuss:

- food in general
- health and wellbeing
- similarities and differences between like and dislikes
- home life
- interests
- what the child has been doing today or on the weekend
- plans the family has for later in the day or week.

Routines for wellbeing

To care for children's emotional, psychological and social development, make the most of spontaneous one-on-one times during routines as opportunities to interact with them.

Aim to do each of the routines slowly and to give the child your full attention.

Consider the examples in the following table.

Routine	Possible activities
Settling the child to sleep and welcoming them after sleep	➤ Doing calming and relaxing activities to help the child wind down ➤ Stroking or patting the child ➤ Talking or whispering ➤ Singing
Changing nappies	➤ Touching and talking about body parts, such as toes and fingers ➤ Pointing out a mobile or poster in the room ➤ Talking about what you are doing ➤ Repeating baby/toddler sounds ➤ Singing
Feeding the child	➤ Watching the child's face ➤ Reacting to the sounds and movements of the child ➤ Talking about the food or drink ➤ Talking quietly about the physical experience, such as temperatures, tastes and textures

Respectful routines

During routines, treat the children with respect and demonstrate that they are important.

Respect can be shown to children by:

- returning the interactions they initiate with you
- using children's names often and respectfully by saying them correctly
- never giving children nicknames unless these are provided by family members as the name the child is known by
- being affectionate, but avoiding terms like 'darling' or 'sweetie'.

You can also show respect by using an approach that assists you to gain the child's trust. Whether you need to wipe a nose, change a nappy, move the child to another area or put them in a highchair, always approach them, move to their level and tell them what you are going to do.

Transitions

A daily timetable should comprise a variety of routine practices that link together to meet everyone's needs.

Constantly consider priorities and practicalities regarding when to do particular things. With children this includes the way you move them from one activity or space to the next. This linking or moving from one activity to another may involve interrupting play or a routine activity to move to another type of play or routine.

Smooth routine changes, or transitions, allow children to feel secure, respected and promote their sense of agency. Well-planned routine changes are flexible, cater for individual needs and keep the program relaxed and enjoyable. Here are some ways to help you develop and implement smooth routine changes.

Give warnings	Provide a warning that a change is approaching. Children often become very engrossed in play and it shows respect when you give them a warning that they soon need to stop.
Use clear, simple directions	Use clear and simple directions so that children know what you expect. Remember that young children can only remember one or two instructions at a time.
Finish activities	If possible, allow children to finish an activity they are engrossed in or provide a means for them to continue it later. It is a sign that you value the children's work when you allow them to save what they are doing and continue or complete it later. You may need to consider storage or how you use space to enable this.
Appropriate group sizes	Consider whether the group size is appropriate to the activity you are moving to. You may find that you only need to move some children to a new routine, activity or space, and others can come later or may not participate at all. You may also be able to eliminate a structured routine change by using progressive techniques where children choose to move to a routine or activity by themselves.
Participation and independence	Allow children to participate and be independent when possible. Remember that the service exists for the children and that the environment is meant to give them a feeling of belonging. Educators often become stressed about what needs to be done and forget that children are capable of taking on responsibilities, particularly if they are supported, encouraged and thanked for their efforts.
Allow children to set up and pack away activities	By the time children are preschool age, they are able to set up and pack away most activities with guidance. The more responsibility and impact children have over their environment, the greater their sense of security and belonging. Children are often much more capable than adults give them credit for.
Use tidying up as learning time	Include tidying up as a valuable learning time rather than a chore that must be completed quickly. There are many things a child can learn at this time, such as: › classifying or sorting – organising things into containers and shelves › placement – putting things in a designated place › care and respect for the environment and equipment – modelling by educators assists children to gain this skill; by helping to care for the equipment, children can feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for it › cooperation – working with others to achieve a task › responsibility – being responsible for the task or equipment, leading others and organising their own time and space › independence – developing skills so that they gain greater competence as they grow.

Flexible routines

In most circumstances, children respond well when they are able to move through routines at their own pace or in small groups. This increases their ability to have agency and allows them to make decisions for themselves.

This enables their routines to be implemented in a way that provides choice and flexible timing. It also makes a typical day for an educator more spontaneous and enjoyable.

Consider the following ways that routines can be more flexible.

Progressive mealtimes

A progressive mealtime is when the snack or mealtime foods are prepared and placed out ready to be eaten, and children come in small groups to eat when they are ready. This replaces a group mealtime.

Staggered transition

A staggered transition allows the individual needs of children to be catered for differently within a group. A staggered routine allows some children in the group to start a routine earlier or later than others. For example, younger children may commence eating and preparing for sleep prior to the rest of the group, or preschool children may arrive at different times if they are involved in a kinder program.

Indoor–outdoor program

An indoor–outdoor program can take place when educators and activities are available indoors and outdoors at the same time. Children can choose to be indoors or outdoors depending on their preferred activity.

Whatever the routine, families, children, staff and management should all have some contribution to how routines operate, and have their needs met as much as possible. Be aware that many routines follow policies, procedures and standards; some of these are set by the service, some are guided by legislation and others are guided by quality assurance.

Arrival routines

A responsive arrival routine is about taking time to welcome everyone, gather information about family needs and allow for active participation of children and their families.

Responsive and child-centred arrival routines help to minimise the distress of children and families when they are separating.

The following table shows an example of a responsive routine. The order of these steps may vary depending on individual situations, but the basic points should still be covered in all situations.

Welcome on arrival	➤ Approach the family and child and give a warm welcome. ➤ Show respect and communicate clearly. ➤ Move to the child's level by sitting, kneeling or crouching when you are speaking to them. ➤ Initiate contact with the child as early as possible so separation is gradual, and both family member and child feel ready to separate.
Individually acknowledge the family	➤ Acknowledge the family in an individual way. This might include discussing: – something they have brought with them – an event you know they are attending or have attended – an activity you have set up for the child – an activity you think the child may be interested in – other individual interests or situations.
Settle the child into an activity	➤ The child might choose an activity once they arrive, or the educator or family member might suggest one. ➤ Settle the child into the activity. Sometimes this is difficult as other children are also arriving.
Establish what the family member wants	➤ Establish what the family member plans to do. This might include: – exchanging information – leaving the service – staying for a while. ➤ If the family member wants to stay, be sure to support and encourage this choice.
Exchange information about the child	➤ Exchange information about the child so everyone's needs are met. ➤ This ensures you: – are aware of your responsibilities – understand the child's routines and other needs – have all equipment and materials you need – are prepared to provide any additional or adapted support.

Establish a goodbye routine	➤ A goodbye routine is usually individual to the family. ➤ Some families already have an established goodbye strategy, while others are not sure how to do this effectively. ➤ Culture may also have an influence; some families may be physical with their children, giving hugs and kisses, while others may be more verbal, simply saying goodbye. ➤ Your suggestions should meet what you think the family requires; most goodbye rituals include a goodbye, a hug and/or kiss, and an indication of when the family member is expected to return. ➤ Goodbye routines must always include the child knowing that the family member is leaving, despite any stress this causes. If a family member disappears without saying goodbye the child will not develop trust in the educator and may lose trust in the family member.
Reassure the child	➤ If a child is distressed, you may need to hug them and wave to the family member through a window. ➤ Acknowledge the child's feelings and reassure them that everything is fine by making a comment like, 'I know you are sad that Mum is leaving, but she'll be back later'.
Reassure the family member	➤ If the family member is distressed, you may need to offer suggestions for support, such as: – having a coffee in the staffroom before leaving – going with a staff member to have a chat or cry – calling the service later to find out how their child is doing – using a support service if the situation relates to family distress. ➤ Some signs that a family member is distressed include: – obvious emotions like crying – checking over and over that you understand what their child needs – watching for a long time after they have said goodbye – calling or contacting you frequently to check on their child.
Farewell the family member	➤ Say goodbye to the family member. If the family member and child are comfortable with the goodbye ritual and have been reassured, they will separate well and move into their daily routines.

Reducing waiting times

The younger the children, the less appropriate it is for your routines to include waiting.

Infants who are crying or upset need to be responded to immediately.

When an infant cries to tell you they are hungry, sleepy or lonely, they expect to be fed, put to bed or hugged and played with immediately. This is because they have no concept of time or understanding of the tasks you need to complete to prepare yourself and the environment. They simply recognise they are hungry or tired and then alert you to this fact.

Preschoolers and toddlers should be energetic and involved with you and their peers. They have a limited understanding of time, yet they know what is coming next in most cases. Children of this age see waiting as time to amuse themselves, sometimes in the form of behaviour that may not be appropriate.

Preparation is the best way to exclude waiting times and keep your stress levels low. By having the materials, space, staff and activities ready to go, or at least ready to set up, the plan is more likely to go smoothly and allow for flexibility. Communicate with the person who determines the plan and, once they have completed this, ask if any preparation is required. It's a good idea to have a look at the plan when you arrive for the day to see what preparation you can assist with.

If waiting time does occur, use this as an opportunity to add some spontaneous activity. This might include:

- singing or dancing
- a simple game
- providing some intentional teaching.

Practice Task 6

1. Which of the following statements are correct about mealtimes? Select yes or no for each one.

a.	When children can communicate which foods they would prefer to eat, this reduces their stress and allows educators to respond sensitively and appropriately.	* Yes	* No
b.	You should take the opportunity to catch up with routine chores during children's mealtimes. You could still interact with the children while getting things done.	* Yes	* No
c.	Some children like to chat during mealtimes, others prefer to sit quietly and eat. Understanding this allows you to respond to children in respectful ways.	* Yes	* No
d.	Mealtimes are an excellent opportunity for children to ask questions, make comments and share their concerns. You will be able to listen and take these into account if you are unhurried.	* Yes	* No

2. Which of the following are true about transition times? Select all that apply.

- [ ] You can prepare for arrival times by organising resources, spaces and experiences that meet the child's interests, strengths, knowledge and culture.
- [ ] Find out what children need at arrival times by telling families to ignore the child.
- [ ] When you develop a trusting, warm and sensitive relationship with families, children are more likely to settle well at arrival.
- [ ] When children are distressed due to a transition where they are moving from one space to another or one activity to another, educators should make the change as quick as possible to avoid drawn-out distress.
- [ ] Some children need additional comfort and reassurance during transition times, especially if they are crying or distressed.
- [ ] Stress and frustration can be reduced during transitions times, if children are allowed to make decisions. This supports them to develop a sense of agency.

Summary

- Relationship-based strategies that focus on strengthening the bond between you and the child promote a sense of belonging. They empower the child and help them to feel they are active participants in their own lives.
- Children are more likely to express themselves in positive ways, to learn about themselves and their needs, and to develop resilience if you show genuine care and interest in them as individuals.
- One way to improve partnerships is to learn about each other's differences, and to understand different views and cultural experiences, challenges and choices.
- Modelling is a useful way to teach children how to interact with others positively.
- Consult with children to provide them with experiences that are relevant and interesting to them.
- Try to use active listening with every child or adult you are conversing with. This includes smiling, using positive body language, responding and giving your full attention.
- Think carefully about the play that is occurring and the cues the children are sending you to determine which role you should take during play.
- Sustained shared conversations focus on a particular topic, but incorporate a range of ideas and thoughts, some initiated by the educator or family, and some by the children.
- When you assist children to develop prosocial behaviour, you are helping them to succeed in friendships and gain acceptance and belonging within a group.
- By having realistic expectations of group interactions, you will reduce behaviour challenges.
- When you use routines as discussion opportunities, you are demonstrating how people act socially.
- To care for children's emotional, psychological and social development, make the most of spontaneous one-on-one times in the routine as opportunities to interact.

Learning Checkpoint 2
Maintaining positive environments

1. A child has been painting. She has dipped the brushes into the wrong colours as she has been experimenting. Which of the following statements would be an appropriate response? Select all that apply.

- ☐ 'You have put the brushes into the wrong pots and mixed them together. Now it is ruined for the next person.'
- ☐ 'I can see that you have worked really hard on this painting.'
- ☐ 'Tell me about your painting. I would love to hear about it.'
- ☐ 'I can't tell what you've painted; you will need to explain it to me.'
- ☐ 'What colours have you made in those pots?'
- ☐ 'Would you like to help put new paint in the pots for the next person?'

2. A child has been working on a difficult puzzle. He is picking up pieces and trying them, but can't seem to find where they fit. He is starting to get upset and frustrated. Which of the following statements would be an appropriate response? Select all that apply.

- ☐ 'I think that puzzle is too hard for you. Let's get another one.'
- ☐ 'I can see that you really want to finish that puzzle. Do you want me to help you?'
- ☐ 'Well done, you have tried really hard and you haven't given up.'
- ☐ 'You are too young for this puzzle. It's for the older children. Please choose an easier one off the shelf.'
- ☐ 'Could I sit down with you and we can try to finish the puzzle together?'
- ☐ 'You seem to be getting frustrated with this puzzle. Would you like me to help you finish it or would you prefer to get another one from the shelf?'

3. Outside in the yard a child asks you to hold their hand while they walk along a high beam. You know that it is too high for the child and might be dangerous. Which of the following statements would be an appropriate response? Select all that apply.

- ☐ 'I think it's great that you want to walk on the beam. It might be a bit high. Would you like to try the lower one first?'
- ☐ 'Sure, but if you fall, you chose the high beam yourself.'
- ☐ 'Shall we make this beam a little bit lower so it's safer? Then you can have a go.'
- ☐ 'I don't think that you are ready to climb the high beams, let's go and play something else.'
- ☐ 'You're very brave! Make sure you hold my hand really tight. If you fall you will be safe on the mat.'

4. Which of the following interactions encourage positive relationship-building and prosocial skills between children during the transition shown in the image below? Select all that apply.

- ☐ 'Let the oldest child put the cards in the basket. This way they will be neat.'
- ☐ 'It's great to see everyone helping.'
- ☐ 'I can see you are each putting cards into the basket. You are helping each other.'
- ☐ 'You guys are so cute.'
- ☐ 'What a great way to work together.'

5. Which of the following interactions encourage positive relationship-building between children during the transition shown in the image below? Select all that apply.

- ☐ 'Would you like to come in and find out what the other children are doing?'
- ☐ 'What did you do this morning at home?'
- ☐ 'Everyone is about to play a game together. Would you like to come and join in?'
- ☐ 'Jayden and Charity have been waiting to see you.'
- ☐ 'Let's find something you can do on your own.'

6. Which of the following interactions encourage prosocial skills and positive relationship-building between children during the transition shown in the image below? Select all that apply.

- ☐ 'If we hold hands, we will be safer. Who would you like to be your partner?'
- ☐ 'Hold hands and walk together. We don't want any lost children.'
- ☐ 'Maybe we can tell our partners what we can see as we walk along.'
- ☐ 'Let's talk together about what we might do when we get there. Remember to take turns to listen to each other.'

7. Which of the following images show positive communication and interaction that promotes prosocial skills with children during a mealtime? Select all that apply.

☐ Image 1

☐ Image 2

☐ Image 3

8. Which of the following statements are correct about communicating with families? Select yes or no for each one.

a.	Information that families provide about the way their child's behaviour is influenced at home is not useful as each setting varies and therefore children will behave differently.	* Yes	* No
b.	It is important to work in partnership with families and to honour and respect the family's values and practices. However, their expectations must fit with education and care service guidelines.	* Yes	* No
c.	You only need to consider your personal beliefs and cultural practices as they will be the main influence on children's behaviour while they are at the service.	* Yes	* No
d.	You need to find out about the values and beliefs of other people as this is part of your job.	* Yes	* No
e.	Children who experience positive and respectful relationships in their home, community and service are more likely to be open, responsive and relaxed.	* Yes	* No

Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

- **3A** Reassuring children
- **3B** Guiding children's behaviour
- **3C** Reflecting on relationships

Strengths-based approaches to behaviour guidance

Children use different behaviours to express themselves and everyone has different views about what is an appropriate way to express feelings.

Use a strengths-based approach to support children to identify, develop and use appropriate behaviours. This means finding out what the child is good at and then building on these skills.

3A Reassuring children

When you respond to difficult situations in a calm and gentle manner, you will be modelling positive ways to work through a challenging situation.

Basic guidelines for supporting positive behaviour and reassuring children include the following beliefs:

- Children should be supported to learn to cope with emotions, emotional setbacks and overwhelming situations in safe ways.
- Children should be supported to demonstrate respect for themselves and others.
- Children should be supported to be socially accepted, and share their feelings and thoughts with others in ways they understand and can respond to.

Reassure children who are upset and help them cope with their emotions.

Frustration

When children are supported to manage frustration and to persevere in working toward their goals, they will develop resilience and an increased sense of agency.

Children often become frustrated if the challenges provided to them are inappropriate or too difficult. They may also become frustrated if your expectations are too high or too low.

The following table illustrates what you might hear and observe when a child is frustrated or overly challenged, and provides some ideas of how you can respond and support their efforts. Most of these strategies support the child to learn to persevere when faced with a challenge. Over time this builds their resilience or ability to deal with difficult situations.

What the child might say	Cues the child might give	How to encourage children to persevere
‘I can’t do this.’ ‘This is too hard.’ ‘I don’t want to do this.’ ‘This is stupid.’ ‘I’m stupid.’ ‘You need to do it for me.’ ‘I’m no good at it.’ ‘Why can’t I do it?’	Frowning Growling or making aggressive sounds Stopping work Working on the task, but not progressing Asking you to do the task for them Telling you they can’t do it Being aggressive, throwing materials, sweeping the activity off the table or interrupting others	Stay with the child and offer help or assistance Simplify the activity if possible Provide strategies or techniques Give hints Change the activity to something more suitable Ensure that the next activity meets the child’s level of ability Provide successful experiences to rebuild confidence

Fear and anxiety

Children often experience fear and anxiety because they do not understand a situation or are not prepared for a change.

Fear and anxiety start off as a reflex at birth and develop in a child as their brain function increases, and their imagination and thought processes become more complex and abstract.

The following table summarises common fears that children become anxious about. Children may become more fearful when they are dealing with other issues in their lives, such as moving house or the loss of a pet or family member.

Age group	Common fears
Infants	Infants show an instinctive fear of sensory surprises, like loud noises, unexpected approaches and unknown people (stranger anxiety). Later, once their brains are better able to connect objects and actions with sounds, they show fear of being separated from familiar people (separation anxiety).
Toddlers	Toddlers may show fear of night-time, darkness and of potentially scary activities. This occurs due to their developing imagination.
Preschoolers	Preschoolers show fear of imaginary things and often have nightmares. They often become afraid of things they don't understand, sometimes after having overheard an adult conversation they misunderstood.

Separation anxiety

Most children experience anxiety when they are separated from their family.

Common signs of distress a child may display include:

- withdrawal
- aggression
- crying
- behaviour that is out of character (any action or emotion that is not usual for this child).

Strategies for supporting children who show separation anxiety
Physically comfort the child with a hug or by rubbing their back, arm or shoulder.
Talk to the child and listen to what they have to say.
Provide a comforter to relax the child, such as a dummy, blanket or toy.
Redirect or distract the child with an activity (be sure to acknowledge the child's feelings first).
Use a 'transition action', i.e. use an object to gain the child's interest, such as a special toy.
Ask families about their practices at home. What makes the child comfortable or helps to calm them down? Does the child have any comforting toys or favourite songs?
Make the environment more homelike by providing familiar toys and other things from home.
Learn about what interests the child and incorporate this into your care and activities routine.

Managing fear and anxiety

As fear affects children differently, your strategies for managing fear will vary.

When the routine is stable and predictable, you can eliminate certain fears, such as:

- What will happen next?
- What is expected?
- Who will be looking after me and making me safe?
- When will things happen?

Some strategies to manage the predictable fears children experience are outlined in the following table.

Strategy	How to implement
Anticipate fears and act to prevent them	If you know that a child is afraid of something or someone, you may be able to prepare the child for experiencing fear or, if possible, avoid it completely.
Remove objects causing fear	If the child is afraid of a particular toy or noise, removing it will be relatively simple. If the child is afraid of something that cannot be removed, such as an educator, people with glasses, men or the playroom, you will have to try another strategy.

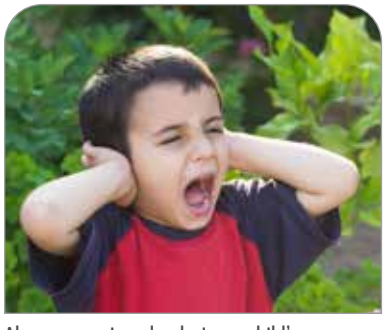
Strategy	How to implement
Prepare children for unpleasant times and events	➤ Children's lives may involve unpleasant experiences; for example, having a blood test, going to hospital or moving rooms. You can use the suggested experiences identified previously to encourage emotional expression, and to provide ways for children to find out more about what the experience involves. ➤ Be honest and give the child accurate information, as telling children that an experience will be different to what it actually will be may only make them more afraid once they undergo the experience.
Appropriate routines	➤ Ensure routines are appropriate for the age and stage of the child, and provide a stable and predictable environment. ➤ When routines aren't flexible or if materials and messages in the environment don't match a child's needs, the child may become fearful or distressed, and the common causes of negative feelings may become a regular part of the day.
Offer the child a security item/ comforter	➤ If the child has an item they use for comfort, this is the time to use it. If the child doesn't have a favourite item, provide something they can use as one.
Get the child's attention	➤ Ask the child to look at you. If necessary, hold the child's face gently and turn them towards you.
Comfort the child	➤ Talk calmly and quietly, and use body language to let the child know you care about what they are feeling.
Acknowledge the fear	➤ Acknowledge the fear by saying, 'I know you are afraid'. Ensure the child knows they are safe with you and stay nearby until they have calmed down. ➤ Don't talk too much; continuing to speak about the fear or continuously reassuring the child may increase their anxiety.
Redirect	➤ Encourage the child to move to another area or experience, to give them something else to occupy their thoughts. This step may not suit all children and the timing may be difficult to judge.

Anger

Dealing effectively with children's emotional outbursts relies on your ability to remain calm.

Many issues concerning children's feelings and behaviour are a result of them not understanding their emotions, not knowing that feelings are normal, or dealing with feelings in inappropriate ways. Anger is an example of this.

Children's outbursts can be frightening and even dangerous. This may demonstrate that the child is not in control of their feelings or not capable of expressing themselves safely.



Always remain calm during a child's emotional outbursts.

Your actions should be consistent and you should be open to comforting upset children at the appropriate time, even though they may seem difficult to get close to.

Children deal with emotions differently:

- Some children need quiet time away from others.
- Some children need to try to solve the problem or just talk to someone who is prepared to listen.
- Some children need to express their emotions physically.

You can cater for each of these calming methods in your environment, but you must also consider the safety of the other children. It is appropriate for children to become emotional, but it is inappropriate for them to hurt others, damage the environment or attempt to leave your care. The limits and strategies you provide for the child at this stage will help them throughout their life.

As you gain more experience working with children, it will become apparent that every child has different emotional needs and different problem-solving abilities. Emotional outbursts of anger are common for some children, just as emotional outbursts of fear, frustration, sadness and joy are common to others.

Empowering children

It is generally easier to empower children to manage fear and anxiety themselves by talking to them about their fears in the lead-up to an unpleasant or concerning event.

You might demonstrate how to manage fear by:

- humming – this distracts their minds from the fear
- taking deep breaths – this allows their bodies to slow down and relax
- squeezing a hand or item – this gives a focus of tension and allows some anxiety to be transferred to this action.

Ensure you are familiar with these fear management methods so you can provide the child with the comfort and support they need. Most importantly, you need to ensure the environment and your relationship with the child allows the expression of feelings, as suppressed feelings can lead to greater issues.

Providing a place to refuel

Many children find they are able to face issues rationally if they are able to use a private or quiet space to refresh and refuel.

When children are able to take this time to gather their composure, they are showing self-regulation. For very young children, this might work as they may be tired, need emotional support or misunderstand a situation. You could support children to use this strategy by suggesting it, accompanying the child or making sure they know these opportunities are available. Private and quiet areas include:

- a secluded cushioned area
- under a tree alone or with an educator
- in a cubby or tent
- under a blanket
- on a mattress.

The important part about self-regulation and private places is that the child is choosing this opportunity and using it to control their own behaviour. In opposition to this strategy, time out, where the child is told to sit somewhere until the adult is ready, takes away the child's opportunity to self-regulate and often increases their anger and frustration.

Example

Resilience and self-regulation

In the following examples, the child in example 1 shows that she is able to self-regulate and is resilient, while the child in example 2 shows that he has difficulty self-regulating and is less resilient.

Example 1

Hamish knocked over Elise's stack of bricks. Elise was upset. She told Hamish to go away. Elise crossed her arms and started to cry. Anfisa, the educator, asked Elise if she needed help. Elise stopped crying, wiped her tears and began rebuilding her stack.

Example 2

Elise jumped on a sandcastle that Hamish was building. Hamish was upset. He told Elise to go away. He lay in the sand and cried. Anfisa asked if Hamish needed help, but he yelled at her and pushed her away. Anfisa told Hamish she would be sitting nearby if he needed her and sat at the edge of the sandpit. Hamish cried for some time, then threw sand at other children. When Elise walked by five minutes later, Hamish yelled at her and told her to keep away. When the children were called to wash their hands, Hamish came indoors. He was still sobbing and told the other educators what had happened.

Supporting self-regulation

Self-regulation is important as it helps children to become more resilient. Resilience is about being able to recover when something goes wrong.

Self-regulation is highlighted in Element 5.2.2 of the NQS: 'Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts'.

When children are faced with feelings that are overwhelming, they will react based on their perception of what they feel is the best way to express their feelings or needs at the time.

The goal of the educator is to be realistic about their expectations and to support children to learn to manage their feelings and express them in safe ways.

Some ways you might support children to self-regulate include:

- recognising problems
- clarifying goals
- planning strategies
- finding solutions
- asking open-ended questions
- supporting children to share their ideas with others
- answering questions
- talking about routines and choices
- encouraging children to consult each other
- supporting families to provide learning environments at home.

Using mistakes to learn

Mistakes should be seen as a natural part of learning.

Relationship and behaviour mistakes are common among children. This is because social and emotional development relies on the child's ability to understand the needs of others, determine correct and incorrect responses, and control feelings – all very challenging concepts.

If mistakes are characterised as weaknesses and failures, or are viewed as irritating or intolerable, children will develop a fear of trying because they might make an error.

If mistakes are seen as developmentally appropriate methods for learning, children will be able to take responsibility for their actions when they make a mistake. This gives them the opportunity to fix the problem or learn how to better manage the situation in case it arises again.

Not all socially inappropriate actions can be labelled as mistakes. Sometimes children will repeat behaviours or actions that are inappropriate. This could be by habit, because they are testing the boundaries, or because they are upset about something. If you teach children that their actions affect others and that they can change their behaviours, they will take greater responsibility for their actions and behaviours.

You can help them achieve this by:

- discussing the situation openly
- refraining from blame or punishment
- discussing the effects of their actions on others
- providing alternatives
- modelling and/or demonstrating appropriate behaviour
- acknowledging their efforts
- guiding or assisting the child during an event.

Practice Task 7

1. Draw a line to match each behaviour or emotional response of a child with the most respectful and sensitive response that promotes self-esteem.

* A child feels angry	* Empower the child by providing strategies for managing their feelings.
* A child is damaging equipment	* Organise places to be alone to self-regulate behaviour.
* A child feels afraid and anxious	* Model calm behaviour and speak quietly to the child.
* A child is upset when they arrive	* Communicate expectations so the child is aware of the limits.
* A child is very distressed	* Redirect behaviour to defuse the situation by creating a music experience where children create rhythms.
* A child is banging blocks together	* Establish secure attachments by communicating with the family.

3B Guiding children's behaviour

Regardless of a child's age, you must act promptly and use positive actions to support them.

The longer a behaviour is ignored, or treated in a negative way, the greater the risk of the behaviour becoming concerning.

To help children develop positive behaviour patterns, be consistent in your expectations and use strategies that are developed with the child's best interests in mind – those that consider the child's confidence, wellbeing and individuality. You also need to take into account the child's age and the impact of the method being used on all of the children in the environment. This is sometimes referred to as allowing freedom within boundaries.

Use positive actions and language to guide a child's behaviour.

Children learn through repetition, guidance, making mistakes, observation, and trial and error. By giving children ownership over their behaviours and strategies to overcome negative or inappropriate ones, children begin to learn what is acceptable and what is unacceptable. This helps children to learn and develop, and to form attitudes and beliefs.

These techniques support the development of a child's:

- prosocial skills
- self-regulation
- sense of belonging
- positive self-esteem.

They also help you develop a relationship-based pedagogy and a strengths-based curriculum.

Situations requiring intervention

You will notice that intervention is needed if the child uses behaviours that are outside limits or boundaries.

If possible, you should intervene before this time, if you notice that a child is having trouble managing a situation.

Some indications that this support is required include a child struggling to manage their emotions or lacking skills in dealing with a particular emotion. This might occur due to them having overwhelming feelings that are hard to control. This level of ability to self-regulate their emotions might peak early if the child's resilience is low.

Curriculum and pedagogy

It is unrealistic to expect that one curriculum and pedagogy will meet the needs of every child at every point of the day.

In some situations and for some children, their reaction to this will be to demonstrate distress or reluctance to participate. When a child is distressed or reluctant to your strengths-based approach, act immediately to support the child and make long-term changes to better suit the child's needs in the future.

Here are some curriculum and pedagogical factors that may impact on a child's communication and behaviour, resulting in display of distress or reluctance. Some of these relate to individual children, others link to the dynamics of a group.

Factor	Strategy
Lacking a sense of belonging	➢ Get to know families, develop strong relationships and work to involve family members in the service. ➢ Provide spaces and places that belong to each child. ➢ Include experiences that are based on individual interests and ideas. ➢ Include evidence of each child's family in the environment. ➢ Help children to learn about each other, use games and activities that involve names, likes, dislikes, similarities and differences. ➢ Include celebrations and events that are important to the child and their family.
Lack of consistency in educators	➢ Attempt to roster familiar educators to work with the same group of children. ➢ When educators go on breaks or are absent, attempt to maintain as much consistency in educators as possible.
Inconsistent limits	➢ Children are unsure of expectations if they are altering. Set out limits and maintain these. Clarify any changes that are made. ➢ Work together with other educators to make sure everyone is experiencing and supporting the same limits. ➢ Involve children in setting limits so they are aware of and clear about the limits, and to give them a sense of ownership.
An environment that is too noisy and overstimulating	➢ Use quiet voices. Children often raise their voices to talk over loud adult voices and this can lead to a very noisy environment. ➢ Reduce background noise (for example, use music selectively). Children learn to tune out if there is constant background music. This can have a negative effect on their ability to listen carefully when required.

Factor	Strategy
Activities that are too crowded	➢ Set up activities so the number of children taking part is limited. For example, if you have enough play dough for two children to work at the table, provide two lumps of dough and two chairs. If both chairs are occupied, other children can see there is no space for them at the time. This avoids overcrowding.
Lack of time or space to work alone	➢ Provide areas for an experience where one child can choose to work alone. Create these areas by using screens and furniture. ➢ For example, you could provide: – building blocks – books on a cushion – a table with just one chair for drawing, pasting, etc. – felt board and figures. ➢ It is valuable for children to enjoy their own company and to learn to work alone at times. ➢ Many children need extra time for working and playing uninterrupted by other children. ➢ Children who need time for solitary play may become involved in conflict more easily if this need is not met. ➢ Provide areas where one child can choose to work alone. ➢ Create quiet areas using cushions, mats, screens, tents, cubbies or furniture. ➢ Encourage children to ask first before joining someone who is working alone. A negative response needs to be respected. This is part of learning to respect the rights of others. ➢ In your planning, make sure you offer a balance of solitary and group play.
Insufficient materials or equipment	➢ When there aren't enough materials, the child's focus moves from being productive to making sure materials aren't taken by another child. ➢ The younger the child, the harder it is to share or wait. ➢ Be sure that each child has individual equipment when possible; for example, six buckets and six spades in a sandpit that comfortably accommodates six children. ➢ If it isn't practical to have enough for each child, expect to help children to resolve conflicts. ➢ Remember that you can assist children under six years to share, but you can't expect them to share.

Factor	Strategy
Activities that cause frustration	➤ Provide activities that are suited to the children's developmental level. They will then be fully involved and conflict is less likely to occur. ➤ If an activity requires you to be helping or directing most of the time, it is probably not developmentally appropriate. ➤ As well as structured activities such as puzzles, provide plenty of open-ended experiences so children can work at their own pace and skill level. Open-ended experiences include play dough, water play, clay, painting, drawing, the home area and block corner. ➤ Experiences need to be appropriately challenging; if activities are too challenging, children may become frustrated. This can lead to conflict and aggression between children.
Inadequate ratios	➤ Some children need additional attention or support. ➤ Make arrangements for extra support prior to times that are regularly busy. ➤ Adjust routines and timetables to meet needs of children and abilities of educators – be flexible. ➤ Involve children in routines, preparation, helping and supporting others (prosocial skills).
Children who are overtired	➤ Overexcited and boisterous behaviour is often an indication of tiredness in young children. ➤ Provide rest periods in the routine to cater for needs that will change according to age, weather, time of year, etc. ➤ Children need a space to rest, which can include having a sleep, lying quietly with book, listening to music or a recording of a story, or just playing quietly by themselves.
Lacking a sense of agency	➤ Observe, analyse and plan for experiences and interactions that reflect each child's learning and development level. ➤ Take advantage of what you know about each child to ensure their interests are provided for. ➤ Find out more about children, especially when they express ideas and enthusiasm.

Small changes can make an immense difference to how a child feels about the environment, the curriculum and their educators. If you are attempting to identify the source of a communication issue, this is often a good place to start. Always scan the environment for possible influences before attempting specific child-focused strategies. By changing part of the environment or curriculum, you may be able to change the child's inappropriate communication or behaviour.

Example

Changing behaviours in different environments

Sami (aged four years) arrives every morning happy but reserved. Sami plays quietly inside using a very small voice to communicate.

When Sami moves outdoors, his communication changes. His body becomes active and he laughs loudly. He calls to other children across the yard and makes exaggerated motor sounds when riding a bike.

Analysing records

Making and analysing observation records provides you with a holistic understanding of the child.

This allows you to review your curriculum in relation to an individual child. The following table outlines some of the factors you should take notice of when analysing your observation records.

Interests, knowledge, ideas, skills and strengths
Children will demonstrate that they enjoy and know about experiences and activities by using them more regularly, spending more time participating in the activity, or by telling you how they feel or what they think in relation to it. Children might come up with ideas that can be used to create new experiences or give ideas to extend on current experiences. Children may be very skilled at activities and challenged by others.
Challenge and stimulation
If an experience is too challenging, children may become frustrated as they are not able to master skills or achieve a goal. If an experience is not challenging enough, children will be bored, annoyed and may begin to demonstrate inappropriate behaviours.
Social interaction
Notice how well children communicate with you, other adults and other children. Identify if this meets their developmental milestones or if you can build on their ideas and abilities. There may be times when children have difficulty becoming involved in play or social interactions. Children may support others and model behaviours or skills.

Reactions and choices

Take children's reactions to the play environment into consideration. These may be negative or positive.

The following can influence a child's behaviours, involvement and interactions:

- the way the environment is set up
- the sensory information it includes
- the other children involved in an experience
- the level of challenge.

If you identify with and use this type of information, you can determine appropriate ways to enhance children's play and experiences. You can also ensure your interactions with children meet their individual requirements. Children should enjoy and benefit from the experiences you choose.

Additional support

Children who are unable to adequately self-regulate may need additional support to manage their behaviours.

When a child's self-regulation or resilience is challenged, they may do one or more of the following things:

A child who cannot self-regulate may refuse to join in activities they usually enjoy.

- Hurt themselves – Hitting or scratching themselves
- Hurt others – Hitting, pinching or biting someone else
- Break things – Tearing books and breaking toys
- Refuse to do things – Refusing to eat or to join in activities they usually enjoy
- Do the same thing over and over – Repeating the same thing over and over again
- Do things that others don't like – Screaming, swearing or taking their clothes off
- Hide away from people – Finding a place to hide on their own so they don't have to interact with other people

These behaviours can hinder the child from participating in activities and are usually very stressful and upsetting for the child and others involved. Your initial steps might be to follow strengths-based approaches by concentrating on the things a child is good at or enjoys. If the behaviours continue or increase, you should seek guidance from a relevant supervisor.

Communicating clearly

To communicate clearly, your actions and words must match.

Communication involves your:

- words
- gestures
- facial expression
- tone of voice.

The following table gives some examples of how to match your verbal, non-verbal, facial and vocal messages.

Verbal message	Gesture	Facial expression	Tone of voice
'Let's sit down for a puppet show.'	• Wave with your hand to indicate that the children should come over.	Smile	Welcoming, happy
'It's dangerous to run with scissors.'	• Hold the child by the hand gently to gain their attention. • Kneel at their level and look into their eyes.	Frown	Serious
'I will put the hammer away. It needs to be used safely.'	• Kneel at the child's level. • Look into their eyes.	Frown	Serious

Example

Using clear communication

Betty is explaining appropriate behaviour to Jodie, who has accidentally flicked an object into another child's face. Betty can see that the incident could be repeated and cause danger, so she explains the equipment limits to Jodie with a straight face. She wants Jodie to understand she is serious. Betty tells Jodie she knows this was an accident and she is aware it was a mistake. They talk about what they learned from this mistake.

Positive acknowledgement

Positive acknowledgement is a technique used to increase a desired behaviour.

It provides the child with a feeling of pleasure, along with the attention and sense of reward that most children seek.

For positive acknowledgement to be effective, timing is crucial. It should be delivered immediately after a responsible behaviour and then consistently every time the behaviour is demonstrated until the behaviour has been learnt.

Positive acknowledgement does not necessarily need to be a tangible item. Instead, you can positively acknowledge a child's behaviour by:

- giving them a high five
- offering praise
- giving a hug or pat on the back
- giving a thumbs up
- clapping and cheering
- telling another adult or child how proud you are of the child's behaviour while the child is listening.

Positive language

If you want a child to demonstrate positive behaviour, use positive language.

Consider these two examples. One uses positive language and the other does not:

- Negative language: An educator sees a child running inside after being outside and says, 'Sean, no running in the room! You know that's not allowed!'
- Positive language: An educator sees a child running in the hall at the end of the day and says, 'Hello, Sean. You seem to be in a hurry. Remember to walk safely in the hall.'

Positive language shows your belief in the child's abilities and intentions. You acknowledge that they are capable of doing the right thing, and you build on this strength to encourage the child to develop more awareness of their actions and self-control.

Here are some guidelines for using positive language effectively.

Strategy	Guideline
Name concrete, specific behaviours	Let the children know exactly what they are doing successfully; that is, what to keep doing and building on.
Use a warm but professional tone	This shows you are taking each child seriously.
Describe the behaviour; avoid personal opinions	Focusing on a child's positive behaviour and what it helps them achieve motivates them much more powerfully than focusing on whether you personally like or dislike their behaviour.
Find positives in all children	Acknowledging each child's successes lets them know you are watching and encourages them to keep practising desired behaviours.

Behaviour expectations

Children learn by observing others and interacting with their environment.

They often push the boundaries of social acceptance in order to understand what is and is not acceptable.

It can be argued that socially acceptable behaviours are learnt, not inherited. Therefore, if a child is not aware of the boundaries, either due to a cognitive condition or because the behaviours have not been demonstrated, they may exhibit unacceptable behaviour.

Some examples of behaviour expectations you might find in your service are listed here. Notice that these are always written positively. Each one tells the child what must be done, rather than what cannot be done:

- 'Stay in the fenced area.'
- 'Walk on the concrete.'
- 'Always walk when inside.'
- 'Take turns on the play equipment.'
- 'Be gentle with each other.'
- 'Share with others.'
- 'Only one person is to speak at a time.'
- 'Sit at the table to eat and drink.'
- 'Close your mouth while you eat.'
- 'Hold hands when you cross the road.'

Involving children in developing behaviour expectations

Children should be involved in developing expectations, especially for new experiences.

Children can work together to discuss appropriate behaviours they believe need to be put into place. Setting behaviour expectations with the children allows them to feel a sense of agency as they take ownership of and understand the reasons for decisions.

Children may also decide to make their own consequences. For example, they may suggest that if they run inside, they must walk back to where they began and start again. Supporting children to make their own strategies for when expectations are not met, allows them to:

- feel ownership and control over their behaviour
- bring the group together with a common understanding
- develop a confident sense of belonging in the environment.

Children may need to have expectations communicated to them more than once, and older children may even have a written copy of their own.

Sometimes it is appropriate to display these guidelines using words and images to remind children of the limits.

Example: Communicating limits and guidelines

Example

Communicating limits and guidelines

Noah, Milly and Lexi, all four years old, are playing in the sandpit. Unexpectedly, Noah raises his shovel and throws sand on the girls. As Noah prepares to do it again, Milly turns to him and says, 'Noah, remember, if you throw sand you have to go and play somewhere else.' Noah puts the shovel down and moves to help dig the trench they were working on.

Varying expectations

When children successfully express their feelings and needs, it is an opportunity to acknowledge their choices.

Encouraging positive behaviours is just as important as guiding negative behaviours.

Children need to respect other children around them and give everyone an opportunity to learn, play and develop without feeling insecure or threatened by others. Appropriate behaviour for different environments (such as indoor and outdoor environments) may vary, as will the behaviour expected during an excursion.

Indoor environment	- Children can be made aware of basic expectations, such as using quiet voices, walking, asking for toys, etc. - The indoor area is generally smaller with closer staff–child contact. The size of equipment in use is usually much smaller and children may need to show care when using this equipment.

Outdoor environment	➤ When setting outdoor limits, take into account accidents, injuries and staff positioning. ➤ There are often more high-traffic and faster moving experiences in outdoor environments, which may lead to more accidents occurring.
Excursions	➤ Children may become excited and this is a time when their self-regulation may be challenged. By providing clear limits and adequate child–adult ratios, children can be supported to react in positive ways. This may require family volunteers to take part in the outing. ➤ To achieve success, pair children with adults that understand their needs and create a balance of volunteers to educators so that adults do not feel overwhelmed. ➤ Discussions about guidelines and limits need to be set with children prior to taking them to a new place of learning and interest.

Redirection

As children experiment and learn, they are likely to make mistakes and engage in undesirable behaviour.

An effective way to teach young children the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour is to use redirection, which shifts the child's attention from the inappropriate behaviour to a desired behaviour. Redirection usually involves leading the child toward more appropriate actions or interests, or defusing a concerning situation.

Effective redirection helps children to develop self-control as they start to recognise the reasons for their behaviour, and learn a range of alternative actions to use next time. A child may also learn that their feelings (although accepted) can be controlled to some extent.

The following table outlines some common forms of redirection.

Form of redirection	Description	Example
Distraction	➤ This type of redirection involves moving a child's feelings or thoughts from something distressing or frustrating to something more positive. ➤ Identify a child's interests and engage them in a different activity. ➤ This strategy should never lead you to ignore a child's feelings – these need to be acknowledged. However, it is a useful strategy to use when children need to break away or move on from the situation they are in.	➤ Kenya's mum has just left and Kenya is now crying and upset. An educator is giving her a hug and talking softly to her, saying, 'Kenya, I can see you are upset that Mum has left, but she'll be back after lunch.' ➤ After a short while, the educator comments that the pet mice are spinning on their wheel, and asks if Kenya would like to come and watch them. They move over to the mice and Kenya begins laughing and then moves off to play with the other children.

Form of redirection	Description	Example
Preventing harm	➤ Redirection is often used to prevent harm when drawn-out explanations are not appropriate. When redirecting, the following steps are often successful: 1. Verbally acknowledge the child's feelings or purpose; for example, 'You seem angry.' 2. Redirect the child to an activity with a similar outlet for their feelings or purpose; for example, 'Let's hit some wood with the hammer.' 3. Help the child move to the new location or activity. ➤ Once you become familiar with individual children, you will be able to identify when they are heading for a situation that may lead to concerning behaviour. This is called 'recognising the triggers'. ➤ Redirection is useful when you can predict this situation, as intervening prior to an incident and redirecting the child to another activity removes potential harm.	➤ Gene is climbing on the chairs. Leila, the educator, uses a pleasant but firm tone of voice and says, 'Come down on to the floor, Gene.' As Gene starts to climb down, Leila takes his hand gently and says in a happy voice, 'Let's go and climb on the climbing frame!'

Example

Redirecting to defuse the situation

Abdulah is laughing and doing a silly dance. Other children are looking at him and laughing. Hattie, his educator, is concerned that he will fall onto the table nearby.

Instead of telling Abdulah to stop, Hattie approaches Abdulah and tells him he is very funny. She asks if he would like some music so he can dance some more, and suggests other children may want to dance too if they move to the mat area, which has lots of room.

Abdulah is happy with this idea, and moves to the mat area, where he dances with the other children to some lively music.

Offering choices

When children are provided with the opportunity to make simple choices, they begin to learn about decision-making and their agency or interest is developed. When children are part of the decision-making process, they gain a sense of ownership towards the outcome and are more likely to follow through.

All choices offered to children must be legitimate, meaningful to them and acceptable to adults. Always offer children a choice that is appropriate and that you are able to accept. For example, if a child is choosing an activity, you may give them two options: 'Would you like to paint or work in the sand?' If outdoor sand play is not suitable at the time because it is raining or there aren't enough educators, do not offer it as an option.

When you add consequences to the limits and guidelines you have developed with children, you can expect them to be able to make their own judgments and positive choices.

This may mean that they:

- avoid an inappropriate behaviour
- commence an inappropriate behaviour, but realise what they are doing and stop
- react with an inappropriate behaviour, but when helped to stop, understand what they need to do next.

Example

Offering choices

Jago has just arrived. Cherie, an educator, asks Jago what he would like to do today. Jago seems unsure and is looking around the room without making any decisions. Cherie provides a limited choice by saying, 'Jago, I know you love building in the block corner and you usually enjoy painting too. Would you like to do either of these?' This suggestion is received well by Jago, who moves off to the block area.

Using 'I' messages

An 'I' message is a way of phrasing a statement to give children a clear message about how you feel without blaming or judging them.

This is an excellent way to express limits as it shows the child you know they can succeed.

An 'I' message usually consist of three parts:

- How the behaviour is affecting you – your feelings
- Which behaviours are unacceptable without blaming or judging
- What the reason is for your concern

The order of these three parts does not really impact the way 'I' messages are used. The following examples demonstrate three possible ways you can use 'I' messages effectively.

Example 1

1. 'It scares me ...' (How the behaviour is affecting you)
2. '...when I see you running inside ...' (Unacceptable behaviour)
3. '...because you may slip over and hurt yourself.' (The reason)

Example 2

1. 'When I see you running ...' (Unacceptable behaviour)
2. '...it scares me ...' (How the behaviour is affecting you)
3. '...as I think you're going to slip over and hurt yourself.' (The reason)

Example 3

1. 'The floor is slippery and you may fall ...' (The reason)
2. '...that's why it scares me ...' (How the behaviour is affecting you)
3. '...when I see you running inside.' (Unacceptable behaviour)

You can help children use 'I' messages to communicate their feelings to you and other children. They may need reminding, but this approach allows them to take responsibility for their own feelings.

If 'I' messages are not effective, you may need to implement consequences.

Using consequences

Consequences are one of the most effective strategies for helping children to change inappropriate behaviour.

Consequences help children identify and understand the result of their actions, and provide the opportunity to make a better choice next time.

There are two types of consequences that are commonly used: natural and logical consequences.

Natural consequences

A natural consequence is when an action happens and the natural outcome guides the child's behaviour.

Natural consequences are not always safe, especially when other children are involved. However, if the natural consequences of an action are safe, it can be excellent way for children to learn.

For example, a child says he does not need to put his coat on to go outside. When he does go out, he becomes cold and asks to get his coat. In this example, getting cold is the natural consequence of the child's decision. By allowing him to decide on his clothing needs and experience the natural consequence of that choice, he has learnt that sometimes he will need his coat.

Logical consequences

When it is not appropriate to let natural consequences occur, it may be more beneficial to think of a logical consequence.

This type of consequence links directly to the inappropriate behaviour and shows children the possible and logical result of their decision. For example:

- If you throw sand, you need to leave the sandpit.
- If you hurt other children, you need to work on your own.
- If you don't wear a hat, you will not be able to go outside.

When applying consequences, you must assess each child to identify the most appropriate technique to use. A consequence must make sense and should not be a punishment.

Example

Consequences

Sonny takes out all the blocks from the shelf. When he moves to another activity, he leaves the blocks spread out all over the floor.

A logical consequence is that Sonny must pack away all the blocks when it is pack-up time. His educator, Melanie, supports him by giving encouragement and positive acknowledgement. She slowly helps him pack up, so Sonny does not feel overwhelmed.

When the pack-up is complete, Melanie reminds Sonny that if he plays with toys and equipment, he must pack it up when he is finished.

Problem-solving

Problem-solving is part of the decision-making process that children experience as they face challenges throughout the day or select from the appropriate choices you offer.

As they think about the options, they consider how they feel about each choice and what else impacts their decision.

All children need time, support and practice, as well as patient educators, to help them learn to problem-solve. Often you can support children to make choices and learn about problem-solving by applying some controlled strategies, such as the following.

Making a direct suggestion	- This helps a hesitant child make a choice. - Some children find it difficult to make decisions. Others have little experience in making decisions and may feel overwhelmed by being expected to choose for themselves. - You can work through options with children, give them some ideas to think about and, in some cases, suggest the option you feel is best at the time.

Limiting options	➤ This helps young children to make a choice. ➤ Young children (especially toddlers) are unable to make complex decisions. ➤ Provide children with simple choices based on their age; for example, you may offer a two-year-old a choice of two options, but a four-year-old a choice of four or five options.

Example

Encouraging children to resolve problems

Katrina, four years old, has crossed arms and a scowl on her face, and is stomping her feet and growling as she stands close to May, also aged four. Iris, the educator, comes over to the pair and kneels to their level. She asks what is wrong and Katrina says, 'Grrrrr!'

Iris explains to Katrina that she might be scaring May, but Katrina continues to scowl. Iris asks Katrina, 'Why are you upset?'

Katrina says, 'Because of her!'

Iris asks May, 'Do you know what Katrina is upset about?' May shakes her head.

Iris explains to Katrina that she might need to talk to May and tell her what the problem is. She asks Katrina, 'Do you know what to say to May?' Katrina says she does.

May is wearing a scarf from the home corner. Katrina tells May that she wants to play it when she has finished doing a puzzle.

Iris explains to Katrina that May only knew this because Katrina told her, and she thanks Katrina for letting May know. Iris tells Katrina that when she uses a growling voice, May will be scared and won't know what she wants.

Iris supports Katrina to ask May about using the scarf by asking: 'May, can I please play with the scarf when you're finished?'

May replies, 'Yes, I'm nearly finished!'

Iris compliments the children for working out the problem by talking to each other.

Problem-solving and conflict-resolution processes

Your interactions must be encouraging to ensure that decision-making, problem-solving and conflict-resolution processes are cooperative.

You should make suggestions rather than give directions. You can do this by:

- encouraging children to interact with each other or with you
- introducing open-ended activities to encourage children to feel important and to develop their own ideas
- helping children clarify or adapt their shared goals – to successfully make a decision everyone needs to have the same or a similar goal; you can help them talk about what they want to achieve

- involving children who are unlikely to initiate ideas – quieter children are less likely to state their ideas, so support their involvement
- avoiding demonstrating or solving problems for the children – allow the children to think about their options and consider all possible outcomes.

Decision-making strategy

To extend children's ability to make decisions, solve problems and resolve conflicts, implement a common decision-making strategy.

Encourage children to work with others to gain a broader view or support them to work through the following steps themselves.

Step	Description
1. Define the situation	What is the issue or decision? Pick one point and work on that. Be specific: What is the situation and why does it feel like an issue?
2. Brainstorm	Search for solutions; all suggestions should be considered.
3. Select ideas	Sometimes children select a solution as soon as it is identified rather than considering a range of ideas. When they need to choose, support them in thinking about the pros and cons of each option before they select one.
4. Put plans in action	Encourage the children to implement their solution. You may need to help them do this, or just remind them of their decision. In some cases the solution may not work. This does not mean you should take over and decide for the children; it means that you need to help them identify a more suitable option.
5. Review what happened	Notice how the issue was solved and remember to give feedback.
6. Keep going	The solution the children used may also be useful in another situation. Encourage the children to reflect on the issue they solved and use the information and skills to solve other issues in the future.

When used regularly, these skills become part of everyday thinking, which helps the child deal with other issues when they arise.

Supporting decision-making, problem-solving and conflict resolution
Recognise when problems are developing and intervene before issues arise.
Clarify goals by talking children through what they want to achieve.
Plan strategies for supporting children to learn about and use decision-making and problem-solving skills, and plan experiences that require these skills.
Find solutions to issues that occur.
Support children to share their ideas with others.
Use everyday events as a basis for discussing how others may have made decisions, solved problems and dealt with conflict.

Supporting decision-making, problem-solving and conflict resolution
➤ Encourage children to consult each other on decisions.
➤ Give children a strategy to use when they are faced with decisions, problems and conflicts; for example, breaking the issue into manageable tasks.
➤ Help children identify what issues to tackle and in which order.
➤ Assist them to see other people's points of view.

Conflict resolution

A child's age and stage of development influences the way they are able to resolve any conflicts that occur.

Here are some examples of different stages of conflict resolution.

Stage	Description	Example
Educator-led conflict resolution	The educator works through the stages of conflict resolution themselves, yet they verbalise this to show the child how the problem is solved.	Educator: 'I can see you want the toy, Jasper. You need to wait until Peyton is finished playing with it. Let's find another toy.' A toy is found. Educator: 'There you go, Jasper. This one is fun too, isn't it?'
Shared responsibility	The educator works with the child to resolve the conflict. They ask questions and help solve the situation when assistance is needed. The educator stays engaged with the process.	Educator: 'I can see you want the toy, Jasper. What could you do?' Jasper suggests he finds another toy or waits for Peyton to finish. Educator: 'Great ideas, Jasper. Which would you like to do?' Jasper chooses to find another toy. Educator: 'Would you like help to find a toy?'
Child-led conflict resolution	The child resolves the conflict with educator support and involvement if needed.	Educator: 'I can see you want the toy, Jasper. Do you remember what to do?' Jasper begins the conflict-resolution process. Educator: 'Great work, do you need help to do what you have decided on?'
Independent resolution	The child resolves the conflict independently. The educator is available if needed.	Educator: 'Looks like you know how to solve this, Jasper. Let me know if you need help.'

Practice Task 8

Which of the following would you do to help children interact positively if they need additional support or intervention? Select all that apply.

- [ ] Provide a safe learning environment that responds to the child's culture, strengths, interests and knowledge so you have a holistic understanding of the child.
- [ ] Communicate clearly using verbal and non-verbal interaction, positive instructions, clear limits and expectations.
- [ ] Explain limits and consequences, and communicate expectations.
- [ ] Offer choices and problem-solve to resolve conflicts and develop a child's agency
- [ ] Try punishment or threats as a final option.
- [ ] Comfort the child so they maintain positive self-esteem and wellbeing. Help them to self-regulate.
- [ ] Seek guidance from your supervisor to reflect on your actions, as your pedagogy may be contributing to the issues.

3C Reflecting on relationships

Reflection involves thinking about your attitudes and motivations, and identifying how you can reach a higher level of understanding or application of skills and knowledge.

The EYLF Principle: Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning, supports you to regularly think about how you are doing and what skills you could develop. You are encouraged to make changes when needed and set goals for yourself to increase your knowledge. You should also plan to develop further understanding of each child and their family. Part of this is your interaction with colleagues about your observation records and analysis.

Think about your attitudes and motivations to determine how you can improve your skills and knowledge.

Perspectives of others

By gaining others' perspectives, you will receive a greater range of information and develop a more holistic view of a child.

Sharing perspectives supports you to reflect on what you notice and to develop your own skills and knowledge. Following this sharing of information, educators can support each other to develop and implement a curriculum that is responsive to the needs of children. When all educators are involved, they can work together successfully at all stages.

There might be opportunities for discussing or gaining the perspective of others:

- throughout the day as you observe and record information
- during meetings
- as part of planning time
- during informal discussions throughout the day
- at debriefing sessions following an incident
- when challenges arise and various perspectives are needed to develop a consensus on actions to take.

You might reflect on and work out ways to improve:

- your relationships with children
- relationships other educators have with children
- relationships between children.

Support systems

A good support system provides a sounding board and a means for reflection.

This is useful since the implementation of behaviour guidance and support strategies can be stressful, and can sometimes leave you wondering if you are on the right track.

Different people have different thoughts about interactions and on how to guide a child's behaviours. When this happens, facilitated discussion and gathering information can help to identify the best response and maintain a positive attitude among all the people involved.

Example

Support systems

Whenever Jaiden is part of Sayed's play, Sayed becomes aggressive and upset, and demands that Jaiden goes away.

Kelsey, an educator, puts a plan into place. Whenever Jaiden and Sayed are playing together, she will closely supervise the play to ensure it stays appropriate.

When Kelsey talks to her supervisor, Sasha, she gains another perspective. Sasha wants to know what causes Sayed to become upset with Jaiden. Sasha is worried that if the root cause of the behaviour is not identified, Sayed may demonstrate the inappropriate behaviour again. Together they work to learn more about Sayed so they can provide strategies for him to manage his own behaviours rather than avoiding the root cause of the issue.

Sasha reminds Kelsey that Sayed is learning, and that self-regulation is another part of his learning journey.

Documenting and evaluating reflections

Aim to document your reflections so that effective self-evaluation can occur.

Some models for self-evaluation and how these can be implemented are outlined in the following table.

Structured discussion
Structured discussions may occur in meetings and during professional development activities. Performance review is a structured discussion that occurs as part of the quality process in your service. However, you can arrange a structured discussion with a supervisor or mentor any time you want feedback.

Unstructured discussion

Unstructured discussions occur every day at work – whether you are talking to other educators, families or community members – and all provide opportunities for self-reflection.

Event samples and checklists

An event sample or checklist may be part of your service practice or something you develop yourself. The event sample or checklist may include various actions you can undertake to review your skills and abilities, or it might be a list of skills you want to achieve that you can check off when completed.

Questioning

Before and after questions are useful for self-evaluation.

Think about how you feel before you start something, implement an idea or make a decision for change. Be clear about your plans and intentions.

You should then reflect on the implementation, thinking about:

- how you feel now
- what you understand after this experience
- how this affects your future practice
- what you need in order to move forward; e.g. research, skills, support or cooperation
- what you want to achieve next.

Reflection journal

A journal, diary or reflection log is an ideal way to document your reflections. It allows you to record your thoughts and feelings, and evaluate your ideas and actions as well as the ideas and actions of others.

Ensure the content is meaningful to you. You can record reflection questions or write about your thoughts on the techniques you used or noticed, the context of your work, or the ideas you have.

A journal may include:

- research
- personal comments
- records of discussions
- notes from professional development seminars, conferences or workshops
- quotes
- photos or sketches.

Practice Task 9

Which of the following statements about collaborating with others about a child are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

a. Before deciding on an appropriate response to a child's behaviour, consult with others who are involved with the child, such as parents or guardians and other educators. * Yes * No

b. You may record specific observations of children and use these to understand more about the relationships children have with each other. * Yes * No

c. When you discuss a child's behaviours of concern with a family member, they will always react with negative feelings and responses. * Yes * No

d. A collaborative approach should be used when analysing and planning for behaviour. * Yes * No

e. A good support system provides a sounding board and a means for self-reflection. * Yes * No

f. The impact of an incident may result in a loss of confidence. If this happens, reflect on the situation and involve your supervisor. * Yes * No

Summary

- Children often experience fear and anxiety because they do not understand a situation or are not prepared for a change.
- Children deal with emotions differently.
- To help children develop positive behaviour patterns, educators must be consistent in their expectations and use strategies that are developed with the child's best interests in mind – those that consider the child's confidence, wellbeing and individuality.
- Take into account the child's age and the impact of the method being used. This is referred to as allowing freedom within boundaries.
- Sharing perspectives supports you to reflect on what you notice and to develop your own skills and knowledge.
- Educators can support each other to develop and implement a curriculum that is responsive to the needs of children.
- When all educators are involved in reflection and sharing perspectives, they can successfully work together at all stages.

Learning Checkpoint 3
Strengths-based approaches to behaviour guidance

Part A

1. Draw a line to match each of the child's challenging behaviour with an appropriate strategy for reassuring the child and promoting self-esteem.

* Angry	* Kirby (3 years) is struggling to pull apart some blocks. He is frowning and making grunting noises. You approach Mirza and ask if he would like to help.
* Frustrated	* Nur (aged two) is getting ready for bed. You suggest to Nur she uses the toilet, but she shakes her head and backs away. You reassure Nur that it's safe and offer to hold onto her while she is sitting on the toilet. Nur uses the toilet and you both celebrate.
* Over-tired	* Rikki (4 years) is knocking over other children's buildings and hitting them. You suggest to Rikki that he may enjoy pounding some dough. He agrees, so you set up some big lumps of dough.
* Anxious	* Lennon (18 months) has missed his morning sleep. At lunch time he throws himself on the floor and screams loudly because he doesn't want lunch. You ask Lennon if he would like to go to bed and have lunch later.

2. Which of the images below shows a situation most likely to result in conflict due to lack of equipment and resources? Select the correct answer.

☐ Image 1 ☐ Image 2 ☐ Image 3

3. Which image below shows a situation most likely to result in conflict due to inadequate physical space and group dynamics? Select the correct answer.

☐ Image 1 ☐ Image 2 ☐ Image 3

4. Which of the following are ways to develop effective relationships with children? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Discuss the beliefs and practices of other educators so you can understand their ideas, and learn how they communicate and build relationships with children.
- ☐ Observe and record information to help you understand your relationship with each child.
- ☐ If an educator overreacts to a child's inappropriate behaviour, the educator should be told they did the right thing. Otherwise they might lose confidence and avoid reacting to a child's inappropriate behaviour in future.
- ☐ You have a discussion with your supervisor and together you realise that if you both participate fully in group times, all children's needs will be met.
- ☐ You have difficulties developing a positive relationship with a child. You notice the child is attached to another educator. You should use this to reflect on what you are doing wrong.

Part B

Read the first case study and answer the questions that follow.

Case study 1

Sacha has been washing his hands in the bathroom. He accidentally drips some water on the floor. Noticing this, he uses his cupped hands to add more water and make a puddle, which he spreads across the floor with his foot.

1. If Sacha was 18 months old, which of the following actions would demonstrate a strengths-based approach to his behaviour that increases his ability to have agency and supports his self-esteem? Select yes or no for each one.

    a. Sacha may be showing that he is interested in exploring water. You could redirect Sacha to an experience where play with water is safe. * Yes * No

    b. You could cross your arms frown and make a 'grrr' sound to show Sacha that you are unhappy with the mess that he has made. * Yes * No

    c. You could point to the puddles and remind Sacha that he slipped over on the water earlier. You could then show him where the water play trough is set up and show him it is safe. * Yes * No

    d. You should use a gentle tone of voice with Sacha and tell him it is alright to play with water, but only at the water trough. * Yes * No

2. If Sacha was five years old, which of the following actions would demonstrate a strengths-based approach to his behaviour that increases his ability to have agency and supports his self-esteem? Select yes or no for each one.

    a. You explain to Sacha that someone might slip over on the wet floor. You could then ask Sacha what the best thing would be to do next. * Yes * No

    b. You could use a worried and concerned facial expression when explaining to Sacha that people might slip on the wet floor. * Yes * No

    c. You could laugh and tell Sacha that it's fine that he has spilt water on the floor because you know he was having fun. * Yes * No

    d. You could take an opportunity during group time to talk to all children about playing with water in the bathroom. You might then ask the children to set some limits and consequences for their safety. * Yes * No

e. You could say, 'Sacha, don't play with the taps in the bathroom. They are just for washing your hands'. * Yes * No

f. You could say, 'Sacha, I can see that you are really enjoying playing with the water, but it is safer if you go and play at the water trough.' * Yes * No

Part C

Read the second case study and answer the questions that follow.

Case study 2

Mahi (aged four) has been biting other children and is resistant to your service strategies. Mahi's family has the view that Mahi must have a communication problem to make her bite. They would like the educators to use problem-solving strategies to help her communicate better so she does not get frustrated.

Lily (also aged four) cries if she is frustrated. Lily's family has the view that she will be held back in development if she continues to cry whenever she is frustrated. They would like educators to make her sit out from play as a consequence if she cries.

1. Which of the children would you need to understand holistically to have enough information to guide their behaviour?

2. Which child would you need to seek additional support and guidance for?

3. Which of the children would most likely respond positively if you supported them to self-regulate their behaviour by helping them understand their feelings?

4. Which family view should you follow? Are there any family views you would not follow?

5. Which child's behaviour would benefit from being provided with experiences that build on their community connections, interests, strengths and knowledge?

6. Lily is frustrated and looks as if she is going to cry. Mahi approaches her and puts an arm around Lily, but Lily shrugs it away. Mahi turns to bite Lily, but stops. Lily looks surprised, then laughs and gives Mahi a big hug.

   Which child should you smile at and comment, 'Well done! That was fantastic.'