CHCECE020
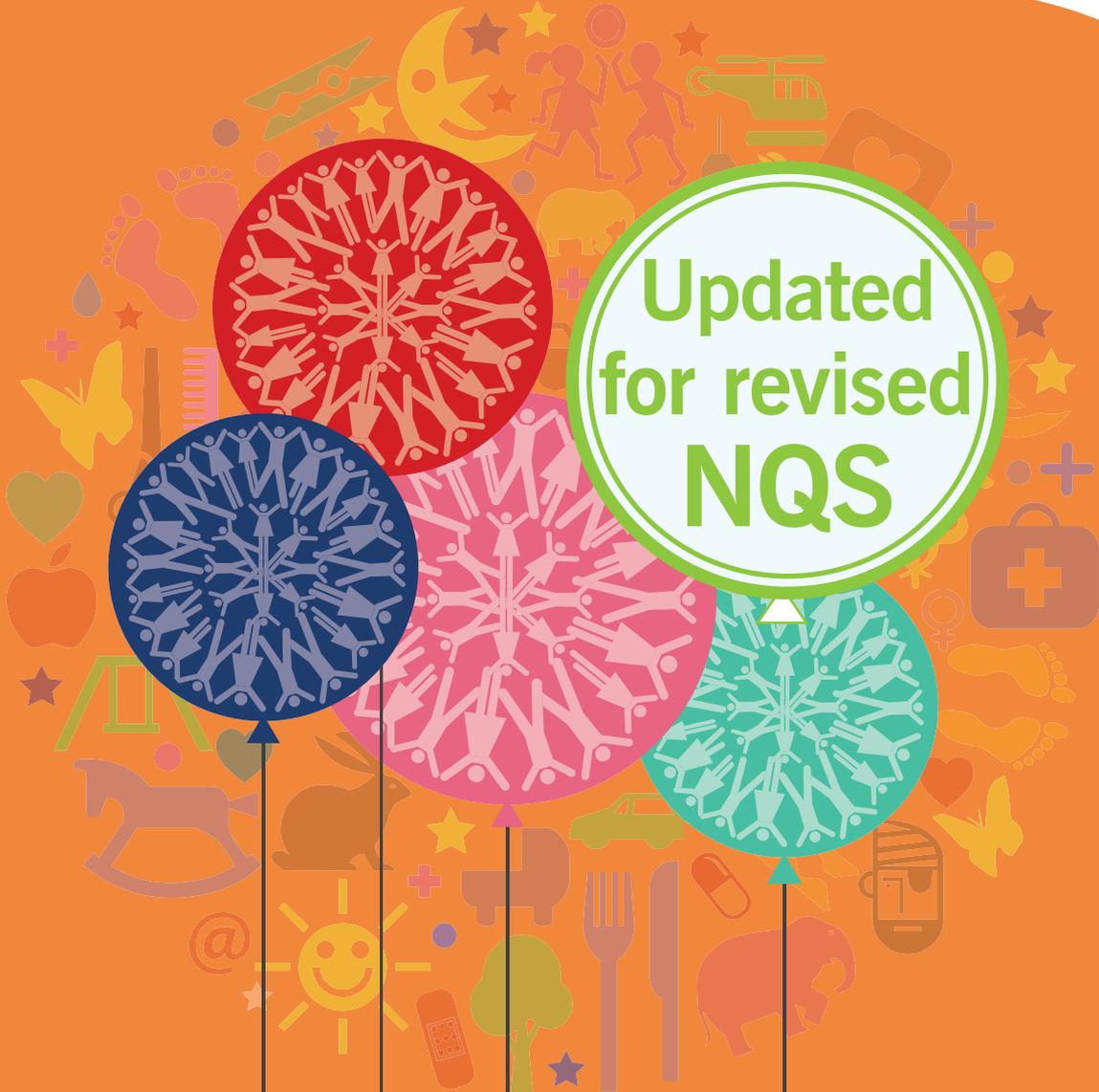# Establish and implement plans for developing cooperative behaviour

Updated for revised NQS

Learner guide

One World for Children Pty Ltd

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learning resources

CHCECE020

Establish and implement plans for developing cooperative behaviour

Release 2

Learner guide

Aspire Version 2.1

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CHCECE020 Establish and implement plans for developing cooperative behaviour, Release 2

Contents

Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCECE020 Establish and implement plans for developing cooperative behaviour,* Release 2. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: www.training.gov.au

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 practice. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
Video clips	▶ Where QR codes appear, you can use smartphones and other devices to access video clips relating to the content. For information about how to download a QR reader app or accessing video on your device, please visit our website: www.aspirelr.com.au/help
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 learning checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

Topic 1

In this topic you will learn about:

1A Initiating strategies and guidelines

1B Establishing guidelines in consultation with families

1C Responding to incidents

Establishing and applying limits and guidelines for behaviour

When an incident arises that is the result of a child's behaviour, it is your role as an educator to intervene and deal with this behaviour in an appropriate, respectful and sensitive way. In doing so, you must consider all parties involved, including their needs, developmental levels and communication strategies.

Working alongside families to implement strategies to address inappropriate behaviour helps children express themselves more appropriately, and learn what is acceptable behaviour in the home and care environment. It also enables children to feel a sense of belonging in different settings.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
✓	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
✓	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
✓	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership

Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	
✓ Partnerships	
High expectations and equity	
Respect for diversity	
✓ Ongoing learning and reflective practice	
Practice	
Holistic approaches	Holistic approaches
✓ Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
✓ Learning through play	Learning through play
✓ Intentional teaching	Intentionality
Learning environments	Environments
Cultural competence	Cultural competence
Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
✓ Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
Outcomes	
Children have a strong sense of identity	
✓ Children are connected to and contribute to their world	
Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	
Children are confident and involved learners	
Children are effective communicators	

1A Initiating strategies and guidelines

When you help children learn from their behaviour and reactions to events, it not only helps defuse certain behaviours and situations, but also helps children to take ownership of their behaviour. If you view developing appropriate behaviour as a learning process, children can begin to understand what is expected of them, what behaviours are appropriate, and what specific behaviours they can use to communicate their feelings.

Understanding appropriate behaviour

Children use different behaviours to express themselves from an early age. Through consistent and clear guidance, they can learn what is appropriate and what is not. Children consider educators and other adults to be role-models, and learn from their reactions every day.

Everyone has different views about what is appropriate behaviour. However, here are some basic guidelines:

▶ Children should learn to cope with emotions, emotional setbacks and overwhelming situations in safe ways.

▶ Children should demonstrate respect for themselves and others.

▶ Children should be socially accepted, and share their feelings and thoughts with others in ways they understand and can respond to.

All guidance techniques and strategies rely on you being able to work with children to help manage their actions.

Appropriate behaviours are those that:

▶ are socially acceptable

▶ demonstrate respect for others

▶ allow the child to retain their dignity

▶ solve problems and put decisions into place

▶ demonstrate self-control

▶ work to effectively obtain the desired results using positive methods.

The educator's role

As an educator, you need to guide and direct children's behaviour. You require an understanding of children's needs and abilities, and should recognise your own beliefs about implementing behaviour guidance strategies.

Undertake reflection to understand areas you may find challenging, and to evaluate your own state of mind in difficult situations and your use of verbal and nonverbal communication methods.

Individual values play a large part in guiding and managing behaviours. To implement strategies positively, you need to be open to new ideas and consider strategies that have previously been successful. Taking time to reflect on your practices and those of others is a great way to move forward.

You must also model positive actions and demonstrate how you can resolve issues, use decision-making and problem-solving, and express feelings and ideas in appropriate ways.

The National Quality Framework

The following information from the *Guide to the National Quality Framework* (http://aspirelr.link/nqf-guide) describes what is required of an educator and how you can support children's behaviour to help them develop resilience and personal capabilities.

Element		How to support behaviour	Children's behaviour outcomes
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. ▶ Encourage children to make choices and decisions. ▶ Provide encouragement and display enthusiasm for children's attempts to gain new skills and knowledge. ▶ Embrace and support play experiences initiated by children, motivating children to persist and extend their learning. ▶ Support opportunities for children's age-appropriate decision-making. ▶ Provide opportunities for children to influence what happens to them and exercise choice. ▶ Support children to explore different identities and points of view. ▶ Be clear about children's responsibilities.	▶ Children make choices and decisions about matters that affect them. ▶ Children openly express their feelings and ideas in their interactions with others. ▶ Children initiate play. ▶ Children begin to display understanding and willingness to negotiate and share with others. ▶ Children are able to show leadership, make decisions and follow directions given by other children. ▶ Children actively participate in decisions that affect them.

Element		How to support behaviour	Children's behaviour outcomes
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. ▶ Discuss with and 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. ▶ Encourage children to listen to other children's ideas, consider alternative behaviours and solve problems together. ▶ Talk with children about the outcomes of their actions, and the rules and reasons for these. ▶ Plan and implement strategies to support individual children's behaviour. ▶ Listen empathetically to children when they express their emotions, acknowledging their feelings and reassuring children that it is normal to experience both positive and negative emotions. ▶ Support children to negotiate their rights in relation to others. ▶ Intervene sensitively when children experience difficulty in resolving a disagreement.	▶ 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. ▶ Children express their feelings confidently and constructively in response to the behaviour of others. ▶ Children are supported to communicate effectively to resolve disagreements with others.

Element		How to support behaviour	Children's behaviour outcomes
5.1.2	The dignity and the rights of every child are maintained.	▶ Pre-empt potential conflicts or challenging behaviours by monitoring children's play and supporting interactions when there is conflict. ▶ 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. ▶ Be patient, gentle, calm and reassuring, even when children strongly express distress, frustration or anger. ▶ Clearly reflect the information received from families, other professionals and resource agencies.	▶ Children are supported to make choices and to experience the consequences of these where there is no risk of harm to themselves or others. ▶ 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.

National learning frameworks

The goals of the national learning frameworks, *Belonging, being & becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia* (EYLF) and *My time, our place: Framework for school age care in Australia* (MTOP), 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.

These goals are described in the following table. From this table you can see that you will guide behaviour differently depending on the child's age.

Goals	What does this mean?
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. This development is appropriate. However, 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.

Developmentally appropriate behaviour

Knowing what to expect of a child at a particular developmental level helps you determine whether their behaviour is appropriate and how you should deal with it. For example, if a child bites another child, how you manage a toddler would differ from how you manage a five-year-old or a 12-year-old.

The following table outlines age-appropriate expectations for children from birth to 12 years.

Age	Developmental characteristics	Appropriate behaviour
0–12 months	▶ Depends on nonverbal communication to express feelings and needs; may resort to whatever nonverbal means are available to them. ▶ 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 parents and other carers; 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.	What to expect: ▶ Crying used to gain attention and to express fear, anxiety and anger What not to expect: ▶ Understanding of why another child or adult is distressed How to support: ▶ 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.
1–2 years	▶ Starts to develop a sense of self. ▶ Starts to develop autonomy and independence. ▶ Has limited language ability and may resort to nonverbal means of communication. ▶ May demonstrate empathy by offering the type of comfort that the child themselves finds 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.	What to expect: ▶ 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 What not to expect: ▶ Showing remorse for hurting another child ▶ Waiting to have their needs met How to support: ▶ Provide toddlers with space, support and guidance during their interactions with other children. ▶ Help toddlers regulate their emotions and calm down after strong emotions.

Age	Developmental characteristics	Appropriate behaviour
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.	What to expect: ▶ 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 What not to expect: ▶ Spontaneous, conflict-free sharing of belongings, toys or equipment ▶ Understanding of the difference between accidental and intentional behaviour How to support: ▶ Provide older toddlers with plenty of opportunities to express their feelings. ▶ Help older toddlers solve problems and conflicts; your intervention may be necessary to prevent physical aggression.
3–5 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 the perspective of another person; can imagine themselves in their position and respond appropriately.	What to expect: ▶ 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 How to support: ▶ 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.

Age	Developmental characteristics	Appropriate behaviour
6–12 years	▶ Requires some level of responsibility. ▶ Likes to fit in with their peers and may become involved in peer pressure. ▶ Enjoys being with friends and may have two or more best friends. ▶ Shows empathy to others. ▶ May value alone time. ▶ Enjoys games with rules and will have varying abilities to allow flexible play.	What to expect: ▶ Simple conflict-resolution skills ▶ Sharing ▶ Struggling with losing at times ▶ Anxiety, worry, insecurity and self-confidence affect behaviour How to support: ▶ Provide appropriate responsibilities. ▶ Give opportunities for making decisions and working out how a situation might be resolved. ▶ Encourage individual thought and decision-making. ▶ Discuss differences.

The following table outlines how you may respond to children of different ages who kick other children.

Age	Strategy
0–2 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.
Over 3 years	▶ Redirect. ▶ 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'.

Types of behaviour

One of the first things you may notice about age-appropriate expectations is that, although you can identify characteristics or norms for a certain age group, no child will match this exactly. Every child is unique.

Within these developmental groupings, children also exhibit many different types of behaviour. Some are appropriate, some are out of character, some are disruptive and some are behaviours of concern. Recognise these differences and adapt your practices to suit the individual situation and the child.

The following table provides an explanation of these different behaviours.

Type of behaviour	Definition	Example
Age-appropriate behaviour	The behaviour is expected and the child responds to usual guidance strategies.	▶ A two-year-old is having a tantrum. ▶ A four-year-old is crying because their work was damaged. ▶ A 12-year-old is complaining that they are bored.
Out-of-character behaviour	The behaviour is unusual for the child, but subsides when the issue or cause is resolved. Out-of-character behaviour usually only lasts for a short time and subsides once the situation is resolved. There is a range of situations that occur in a child's day that may cause this type of behaviour. For example, the child may be: ▶ unwell ▶ stressed ▶ afraid ▶ frustrated ▶ angry.	▶ A child is hurt and only wants comfort from an adult, so they push other children away. ▶ A child is tired from having a late night, so they cry and show frustration.
Behaviour of concern – age-appropriate	The behaviour type is appropriate for the child's age, but the strength or intensity is of concern. The child does not respond to strategies that are usually successful.	▶ A two-year-old is hurting themselves or others, damaging equipment and does not recover easily from the tantrum. ▶ A four-year-old is aggressive and violent towards others and damages items close by. ▶ A 12-year-old is trying to leave the room repeatedly and swearing at educators.
Behaviour of concern – not age-appropriate	The behaviour type is not age-appropriate and may also be extreme or worrying. The child does not respond to strategies for guiding behaviour.	▶ A four-year-old is biting other children. ▶ A five-year-old is using inappropriate language and attempting to break windows and mirrors. ▶ A 10-year-old is breaking the toys of a younger child.

Type of behaviour	Definition	Example
Disruptive behaviour	The behaviour affects the child's ability to focus on a task and/or affects the focus of those around the child. Disruptive behaviour occurs when a child is uncooperative and prevents themselves and/or others from focusing on what they are doing. A disruptive child may also try to gain the educator's attention and distract them from the other children and the task at hand. Most children exhibit some disruptive behaviour before they learn self-control. Although it should be addressed, not all disruptive behaviour is of concern. Examples of disruptive behaviour include: ▶ not following instructions ▶ talking loudly or making inappropriate noises ▶ leaving the area, wandering around, crawling on the floor or throwing objects ▶ crying, tantrums or isolation from peers.	▶ A child is yelling loudly. This disrupts a task and annoys the other children, reducing their ability to enjoy the activity. ▶ A child is removing pieces of equipment that other children are using. ▶ A child is not cooperating with a group, decreasing their ability to participate.

Behaviours of concern

Behaviours of concern, sometimes called challenging behaviours, occur when a child does something that hurts themselves or others, or damages things.

This type of behaviour can hinder the child from participating in activities with the other children and is usually very stressful and upsetting.

Remember:

▶ It is the behaviour that is a problem, not the child.

▶ These behaviours are not uncommon; many children behave this way at times.

▶ These behaviours are 'disruptive', but only become 'of concern' when they cause a problem to the child or those around them.

Some behaviours of concern are described in the following table.

Behaviour of concern	Example
Hurting themselves	A child hits or scratches themselves.
Hurting others	A child hits, pinches or bites someone else.
Breaking things	A child tears books and breaks toys.
Refusing to do things	A child does not eat. A child refuses to take their medicine. A child will not join in activities they used to enjoy.
Doing the same thing over and over	A child says the same thing over and over again.
Doing things that others don't like	A child may scream, swear or take their clothes off.
Hiding away from people	A child does not want to interact with other people.

Remember that everybody is different and that there may be more than one reason for a behaviour of concern.

Supporting children's behaviour

To help children manage their behaviour positively, you need to use strategies that are developed with the best interests of the child 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, not only on the child of focus, but also on the rest of the children in the environment.

Aim to use relationship-based strategies that focus on strengthening the relationship between yourself and the child. A child who has a trusting and positive relationship will follow and be able to more freely accept your assistance as they feel safe and respected by you. Conversely, a child who does not have a strong or positive relationship with you may respond in a more negative way than initially anticipated as a bond and trust has not been formed.

Giving children the opportunity to manage their own behaviour helps them develop their self-esteem, make good personal choices and build a foundation for respectful relationships.

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

Positive reinforcement

Positive reinforcement 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 reinforcement to be effective, timing is critical. It should be delivered immediately after a responsible behaviour and then consistently every time the behaviour is demonstrated until it is considered learnt.

Positive reinforcement does not necessarily need to be a tangible item. Instead, you can positively reinforce 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.

Encouragement

Encouragement shows children that you value them and their efforts, and is a great way to acknowledge responsible behaviour. It:

▶ motivates the child to do things for intrinsic reasons (to please themselves or because the task is worth doing)

▶ focuses on the child's efforts or process in doing something

▶ helps the child feel good about what they have done, which helps to develop their self-esteem.

As an educator, you should encourage each child's efforts whether they succeed or fail. Always be honest and consistent, and ensure that what you say is sensitive to each child's needs and matches their level of understanding.

Example

Responding to a child's efforts with encouragement

Denise is four years old. She is trying help pack up the home corner 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.

Examples of encouragement for Denise may include:

▶ 'Well done, Denise, I can see you are trying very hard.'

▶ 'Thank you for your help, Denise.'

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

Positive language

If you want a child to demonstrate positive behaviour, use positive language. Consider these two examples. One uses positive language and one does not:

▶ An educator sees a child running inside after being outside and says, 'Sean, no running in the room! You know that's not allowed!'

▶ An educator sees a child running in the hall at the end of the day and says, 'Hello Daisy! You seem to be in a hurry. Remember to walk safely in the hall, please.'

Positive language shows your belief in the child's abilities and intentions. You acknowledge that they are capable of doing the right thing, which encourages the child to develop more awareness and self-control.

Always try to communicate calmness and respect with your words, tone of voice, facial expressions and body language. Try not to make judgments; keep the focus on the positive behaviour you want to see, rather than highlighting the negative or inappropriate behaviour that may be in evidence at the time.

Here are some guidelines for using positive language.

Strategy	Guideline
Name concrete, specific behaviours	Let the children know exactly what they are doing successfully; that is, what to keep doing and build on.
Use a warm, 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 to name in all children	Acknowledging each child's success lets them know you are watching and encourages them to keep practising those behaviours.

Nonverbal communication

Nonverbal communication strategies can also be used to acknowledge responsible behaviour.

To use nonverbal communication effectively with children, make sure you:

▶ work at the child's level so they can see your body language

▶ are close enough to the child to gain their full attention

▶ use eye contact or no eye contact, depending on what is appropriate

▶ provide physical touch if needed; for example, hugging a child, holding hands in a circle, being a dancing partner or helping with dress-ups.

It is also important to realise that different people use nonverbal gestures and expressions in different ways. Therefore, you may need to adapt your approach to accommodate these differences.

The following table highlights some differences in nonverbal communication.

Personal space	Different people have different norms for providing personal space when interacting. Some feel comfortable with an arm's length of space between you, while others may be comfortable with closer physical contact.
Eye contact	In some cultures, eye contact is a sign of honesty and respect; however, in others it is a sign of disrespect.
Tone of voice	Some children are used to loud and direct language for communication, while others think a person speaking loudly is angry. At times you may need to change your tone to convey limits and use a stern voice. Some children may ignore the stern tone and others may become overly emotional if they think they have upset you.
Body language	Body language, such as hand communication, is used by many people (for example, shaking hands or giving the thumbs up). This may be polite for some people and offensive to others. The same applies to smiling or bowing your head.

Example

Using nonverbal communication to acknowledge behaviour

Michael, aged five, looks out of his preschool window to see Mary (a nanny) patiently waiting for him. Susan, 18 months, is in the stroller, and Clive, aged three, is at her feet.

Mary glances at the window and sees Michael looking at her. She smiles and waves at him. Michael's educator opens the door to let the children go outside. Michael runs out to Mary.

Mary gives Michael a big smile and says, 'Hello, we've been waiting for you. Clive wants you to help with his train set and Susan has been saying your name all afternoon'.

Michael gives Clive a quick hug and peers into the stroller to make a funny face at Susan, who laughs happily and kicks her legs in response.

Mary holds out her hand for Michael and says, 'Come on, let's get going. We can talk about your day on the way'.

Role-modelling positive behaviour

Children learn by observation. If you want to guide them in appropriate behaviour, model the appropriate behaviour yourself. For example:

▶ If you want children to use quiet voices inside, you must use a quiet voice.

▶ If you want children to be problem-solvers, demonstrate problem-solving behaviour.

▶ If you want children to respect you, show them respect.

Watch this video about encouraging and role-modelling positive behaviour.

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Offering choices

When children are provided with the opportunity to make simple choices, they begin to learn about decision-making. 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 (for example, due to a shortage of educators), do not offer it as an option.

Problem-solving

Problem-solving is part of the decision-making process that children experience as they select from the appropriate choices you offer them. As they think about the options they are given, they need to consider how they feel about the choices and how other things impact their decision.

All children need time, support and practice, as well as patient educators, to help them learn problem-solving skills.

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 the options with them, give them some ideas to think about and, in some cases, suggest the option you feel is best at the time.
Limiting choice	This helps young children to make a choice. Young children (especially toddlers) are unable to make complex decisions. Provide them with simple options; 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

Using controlled strategies

Sam, four years old, has arrived at the long day care centre and his mother has just left. Dean, the educator, asks Sam what he would like to do today, but Sam seems unsure and is looking around the room without making any decisions. Dean provides a limited choice by saying, 'Sam, 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 Sam, who moves off to the block area.

Varying expectations

When children successfully express their feelings and needs, it is an opportunity to give them positive reinforcement and praise, and to interact with them at their level. Encouraging positive behaviours is just as important as guiding negative behaviours.

Children need to respect other children around them and give everyone in the group or setting 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 greatly, as will the behaviour expected on an excursion or an incursion. Consider the information in the following table.

Context	Behavioural guidelines
Indoor behaviour	Within the indoor environment, children should be made aware of more of the housekeeping rules, such as using quiet voices, walking, asking for toys, etc. The indoor area is generally smaller with closer staff-to-child contact. The size of equipment in use is usually much smaller and children may need to show care when using such equipment.
Outdoor behaviour	When setting outdoor limits, take into account accidents, injuries and staff positioning. There are often more high-traffic experiences in outdoor environments, which may lead to more accidents occurring.
Excursions	Set very strict guidelines and ensure adequate child–adult ratios are implemented at all times. This may require parent/family volunteers taking part in the outing. Individual children should be allocated to a group they will stay with throughout the entire event. Discussions and guidelines need to be set with children prior to taking them to a new place of learning and interest.

Limits and guidelines

Children learn by observing 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 lack of adult direction), they may exhibit unacceptable behaviour.

Some examples of limits and guidelines you might find within your service are listed here. Notice that these are always written positively. Each one tells 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

Children should be involved in developing limits, especially for new experiences. For example, preschool children can sit together during a mat session or group time at the beginning of the year and discuss what they believe are rules that need to be put into place in the indoor environment. Setting guidelines and limits with the children allows them to take ownership and to discuss 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 limits and guidelines are broken helps them to:

▶ feel ownership and control over their behaviour

▶ bring the group together

▶ develop a confident sense of belonging within the environment.

Children may need to have limits and guidelines 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**
>
> **Children communicating limits and guidelines**
>
> Sam, Milly and Laura, all four years, are playing in the sandpit outdoors. Unexpectedly, Sam raises his shovel and throws sand on the girls. As Sam prepares to do it again, Milly turns to him and says, 'Sam, remember, don't throw sand. You know that if you do you have to go and play somewhere else'. Sam puts the shovel down and moves to help dig the trench they were all previously working on.

Practice task 1

1. List **three** appropriate and **three** inappropriate behaviours.

2. Provide an example of when you have supported a child's behaviour. What relationship-based strategies did you use? What was the outcome?

3. Do you think your expectations were age-appropriate? Why/why not?

4. Briefly describe an event or experience that requires limits and guidelines. Explain how you would collaborate with children to develop these.

5. Which elements in the National Quality Standard (NQS) are linked to setting limits? Summarise the information about setting limits and guidelines in your own words.

1B Establishing guidelines in consultation with families

Any form of behaviour guidance must be in line with the policies and procedures of your service. Understanding these policies and procedures is important for all educators. You must also work alongside parents and other family members to gain an understanding of what practices, beliefs and standards they have or currently implement in the home environment.

When developing guidelines for behaviour, consult with the families involved. This is a good way to learn about the culture and background of the families and what impact these factors may have on children.

Respecting differences

Families may have varying strategies, beliefs and expectations of their children depending on a variety of factors, including:

▶ age
▶ socioeconomic background
▶ religion
▶ location
▶ family members
▶ language skills.

You must respect these differences while providing a clear link between the home and the care environment. At times you may find that some family practices are not relevant or accepted in your service. For example, a parent may want you to smack their child or sit a child facing the wall on their own for 10 minutes. Such behaviours are not appropriate in an education and care environment, so you should discuss this with the parent to come to an acceptable compromise.

Watch this video about different cultural expectations.

Sharing information

Sharing information with parents about how you guide behaviour gives them an understanding of the practices implemented in the service. Emails, newsletters and information boards can be used to cover guidance topics, as can the confident demonstration of positive techniques while parents are present.

Sometimes, parents may ask for support themselves. This can lead to organising information sessions, parent days and guest speakers. It may also prompt the development of a parent library, including books, DVDs, links to useful websites, and even online training and information.

If your service policies are clear, they can also be used to support parents' understanding.

Collaborating

Collaborating with parents should begin at enrolment. This is a great way to gain an understanding of any family expectations for the child's behaviour.

Communication exchanges upon arrival and departure with parents and families also give good insight into how parents set boundaries for their children. Observing these actions helps you to better understand each child's behaviour.

Children often behave differently for their parents than for others. For example, a parent may say they are having difficulties with their child listening and following through with simple directions at home; however, in the service this is not a problem at all.

Reassurance and positive support is essential. Your goal is to reassure the parent that children often display different behaviour in the home environment than in an environment with their peers. When appropriate, offer suggestions to assist.

The impact of family life and culture

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

Lifestyle stressors

Sometimes, the uncharacteristic behaviour of a child is their way of communicating they are stressed. There are many situations that can cause stress for any individual, regardless of age. Monitor these behaviours. If a child is subjected to an ongoing situation, and their personal difficulties are not supported, their uncharacteristic behaviours can turn into one of concern.

When working with children, you may observe the following behaviours or situations that may arise from or 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.
Exclusion	Being left out, whether due to bullying or other factors relating to group play.
Aggression	Violence is 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, parent or someone else significant to the child.
Developmental challenges	The child, parent or another important person has a disability.

Cultural issues

Australia is a multicultural society, so you can't assume that your neighbour thinks and acts according to the same cultural norms as you. Understanding some of the differences between the cultures of the children and families in your service gives you greater insight into the children's behaviour, and whether or not their behaviour is of concern.

Different cultures have different beliefs about religion, family, food, gender, and the way people communicate and interact with each other.

The following outlines some opposing cultural beliefs that can impact on the behaviour of children.

Cultural belief	Opposing cultural belief
Children should not make eye contact with adults because it is disrespectful.	Children should look adults in the eye to show that they are paying attention or telling the truth.
Teasing and threatening is a useful way to manage a child's behaviour; for example, 'If you eat that your teeth will fall out'.	Providing positive role-modelling and building a respectful relationship with children are good ways to manage a child's behaviour.
Children should be encouraged to ask 'Why?' – an inquiring mind is a learning mind.	Children must do as they are told, when they are told. There should be no questions.
Feelings should not be expressed or discussed.	Feelings should be demonstrated and learnt about.
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.
Male and female adults and children are equal and should be treated the same.	Male children don't have to listen to any guidance or discipline that is provided by a female.

Cultural issues are not limited to different groups of people; each family has its own culture.

Each family usually has its own:

- ▶ expectations of behaviour
- ▶ responses to behaviour
- ▶ forms of communication
- ▶ styles of discipline
- ▶ norms of behaviour
- ▶ social functioning.

If you do not have knowledge of this cultural information, you may fail to meet the child's needs and respond in a way they understand. Knowing and understanding the expectations and strategies a family uses when considering their child's behaviour helps you to see the world from the child's perspective, and be able to adapt your communication appropriately.

Meeting organisational guidelines

The limits and guidelines in every service are usually derived from the official policy and procedure for managing behaviour. This document provides guidelines, ensures legal compliance and promotes best practice. It should outline what is expected regarding:

▶ levels of control

▶ monitoring and/or intervention that can be used in response to a behavioural problem.

Compliance

To comply with state, territory and federal laws, services must develop policies and procedures that do not discriminate based on culture, religion, gender or disability. Any impact these aspects have on behaviour must be taken into account in the guidelines.

The service's guidelines must also adhere to legislation and the NQS, which is part of the National Quality Framework (NQF). They must also reflect:

▶ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly Article 19 relating to protection from all forms of violence

▶ Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics, which includes many core principles and responsibilities that contribute to the way you interact with and guide children's behaviour. Most directly the code states that in relation to children you should create and maintain safe, healthy, inclusive environments that support children's agency and enhance their learning. This is supported by the following responsibilities:
  – providing meaningful curriculum
  – allowing children to be
  – collaborating with children
  – valuing relationships
  – respecting children as being capable.

These responsibilities create a respectful and responsive environment, while ensuring that children are valued and that they are given the opportunity to express themselves and take responsibility.

It is useful to clarify the most relevant legislation and keep this in mind as a foundation for your day-to-day practice or pedagogy. It is also useful to be aware of what you can and cannot do when guiding children's behaviour.

Serious breaches

Section 166 of the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* states the following:

Section 166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline	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.
		Penalty: $10 000 in the case of an individual. $50 000 in any other case.

Examples of inappropriate discipline 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 else in isolation.

Other forms of unacceptable practice in a children's service include:

▶ negative labelling

▶ criticising

▶ discouraging

▶ blaming or shaming

▶ making fun of or laughing at someone

▶ 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.

Controversial play

At times, a child's play can become concerning as it may impact the safety or influence the behaviour of other children. Consider this play in relation to the child's developmental stage and evaluate the positive and negative values of different play types. To do so, you must research and explore the nature of the play with an open mind.

Some play types are recurring, so you should develop ideas and ongoing strategies to deal with them. Other play types are transient and change often. Remember to consider the purpose of the play and how appropriate it is to the child's development.

Two types of play that may concern you, yet have developmental significance, are superhero play and fads and collections.

Superhero play

Superhero play is often seen in children at the associative play stage. They 'fly' around demonstrating their hero actions and talents – sometimes acting aggressively or in an unsafe manner.

Superhero play may concern educators as it:

▶ can quickly become violent

▶ often becomes the main play theme, with children excluding other activities

▶ can be misinterpreted by children as a demonstration of how to solve problems.

The purpose of superhero play is often related to the development of the child, as described in the following table.

Moral development	Identifying the difference between good and evil
Emotional development	Feeling in control of the environment
Social development	The development of role-play in associative or cooperative play – a desire to be able to help or save others
Cognitive development	Exploring themes and ideas, and solving problems; for example, how to defeat the 'baddie' or save the kitten

These points represent important learning outcomes, and the intensity with which children play as superheroes can demonstrate their need to develop in these areas.

When considering strategies for guiding superhero play, be creative and consider:

▶ using alternative ways to meet the developmental needs of the children involved

▶ becoming familiar with the superheroes and encouraging their less aggressive features

▶ requesting help from superheroes to solve problems throughout the day – 'thinking' superheroes are just as important as active ones, although an active superhero may be able to solve some pack-up or construction problems, or even rescue another child who needs help or support

▶ moving the danger source of the play from a 'baddie' to an event; this way, any aggression is removed from the solution and exchanged for a more appropriate saving or fixing action

▶ restricting the play to a particular area of the play space or time of day

▶ creating your own superheroes with the children; characters to use may include 'brainy man' or 'puzzle solver'.

Fads and collections

Fads and collections are often enjoyed by children at the 'games with rules' play stage. They collect cards, figurines and other items to participate in swapping games.

Unfortunately, fads and collections sometimes concern educators as these:

▶ can cause children to become possessive

▶ often become the main play theme, with children excluding other activities

▶ can cause some children to feel left out if they do not possess their own items

▶ can cause younger children who do not understand the rules to be taken advantage of

▶ may breach the service policy of children bringing toys from home.

The purpose of fads and collections is again related to the development of the child, as the following demonstrates.

Moral development	▶ Understanding and following rules ▶ Learning how swapping and bartering work ▶ Understanding what is right and wrong ▶ Learning about other people's values and how they may differ from their own
Emotional development	▶ Feeling proud of their collection ▶ Feeling success or learning how to manage loss
Social development	▶ The development of play in a play-with-rules stage ▶ Enjoyment in interacting with others with similar interests ▶ Understanding of ownership and responsibility for belongings ▶ Sometimes dramatic play or role-play is incorporated
Cognitive development	▶ Exploring themes and ideas ▶ Solving problems ▶ Making decisions ▶ Counting ▶ Reading ▶ Critical thinking

These points also represent important learning outcomes. The intensity with which children play with fads and collections can demonstrate their need to develop in these areas.

When considering strategies for guiding fads and collections, be creative and consider:

▶ using alternative ways to meet the developmental needs of the children involved

▶ becoming familiar with the fads and collections, and encouraging their less aggressive or competitive features

▶ restricting play to a particular area of the play space or time of day, and perhaps have it supervised by an adult

▶ creating your own fads and collections with the children that suit the children's needs, include all interested children and meet your policy requirements.

Example

Ensuring collection games are beneficial

The children in the long day care service are heavily involved in game play using popular collection cards. Many of the children are extremely passionate about this play and arguments often arise.

The educators want to ensure this play is beneficial. They find that if the children keep to the rules of the game, they are practising:

- ▶ adding and subtracting – life points
- ▶ organisation and matching – setting up their deck
- ▶ social skills – children are meant to shake hands before a game, take turns and show respect during the game
- ▶ physical skills – shuffling and dealing the cards
- ▶ cognitive skills – following rules and steps to play; remembering the value and 'ability' of each card; setting up plans and plots; using and understanding symbols.

Unfortunately, they will also be:

- ▶ battling each other
- ▶ involved in competitive play
- ▶ bringing toys from home
- ▶ excluding others without cards
- ▶ taking advantage of younger children who do not know the rules.

After gathering this information, the educators identify how to resolve the issue. Some ideas include:

- ▶ banning the cards altogether and having the children become involved in developing and implementing other activities of interest
- ▶ starting another type of collection or activity group with a similar purpose, but without competition or exclusion; children who are interested in the cards could take a leading role in its development and implementation
- ▶ excluding cards belonging to the children themselves and having cards that belong to the service for children to play with
- ▶ putting a time limit on the play so the children are also involved with other activities
- ▶ restricting the play to one game per age group per day, having either a random or organised way of selecting opponents
- ▶ providing supervision during play in which the educator ensures the rules of play are followed
- ▶ insisting that children only play against other children of their age.

Controversial strategies

Element 5.2.2 of the NQS leads you to consistently guide all children's behaviour in the following ways:

- ▶ Focus and support children to develop skills to self-regulate their behaviour.
- ▶ Preserve and promote children's self-esteem.
- ▶ Never use corporal punishment at the service.
- ▶ Only use food for eating, never as a reward or punishment.

Controversial strategies are ones that challenge your beliefs or understanding of these standards and laws.

Four common controversial support strategies include describing all children in the group as friends, and using tangible rewards, incentive charts and time out.

Describing all children as friends

Educators often refer to a whole group of children as 'friends'. This implies that all children are in friendship groups and indicates that any people who are sharing a space are friends. 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:

▶ Do the children understand the concept of friendship?

▶ Are educators using the word 'friend' in ways that misinterprets what a friend is?

▶ How do we demonstrate and celebrate the special relationships between children if they are all labelled as friends?

▶ 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?

Often educators are using the word 'friend' instead of using the child's actual name. This is in a way disrespectful and removes the child's identity from the situation.

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	Non-controversial strategy
Gloria approaches Ted who is working in a construction area. He has just hit another child on the head with a block. Gloria states, 'Ted, we need to be gentle with our friends. What should you say to your friend now?'	Kellie approaches Ted who is working in a construction area. He has just hit another child on the head with a block. Kellie states, 'Ted, we need to be gentle. What should you say to Hammond?'

Tangible rewards

Tangible rewards (such as stickers, lollies and toys) are given to reward a specific behaviour or action. The reward is usually given immediately or shortly after the child complies with the adult's request.

We are all intrinsically and extrinsically motivated. Some things we do because we enjoy them, we feel good about doing them and we want to be part of the outcome – this is intrinsic. However, some things we do only because someone or something else motivates us – this is extrinsic. A tangible reward is an extrinsic motivation. Studies have shown that people whose main motivation is extrinsic usually exert minimum effort for the maximum reward.

Tangible rewards have immediate results. They appeal to the child as the reward is immediate. However, these immediate results do not always have a positive effect on the

child's self-esteem. This is because the child is completing tasks for reward rather than for enjoyment – whether that enjoyment comes from helping others, succeeding, doing a good job, being part of a team, trying, participating or learning.

> **Example**
>
> **Offering a tangible reward**
>
> Ryan (five years) is asked to pack up the dramatic play area. His educator tells him that if he does this quickly, she will give him a sticker. Ryan packs up the area quickly and rushes to the educator, asking for a sticker.
>
> The next day, another educator is working with Ryan. She asks him to help pack up the play space. Ryan says, 'Will I get a sticker?' The educator explains to Ryan that everyone is packing up to help each other rather than to get a sticker. Ryan sits on the mat watching everyone pack up without joining in.

Incentive charts

Incentive charts are sometimes used to encourage a child to achieve something or to demonstrate behaviour consistently. Unfortunately, if the child is not in control of their abilities, then the incentive chart is just another way to demonstrate how they fail.

However, incentive charts are useful when children are tracking activities they are in control of; for example, practising a musical instrument, feeding a fish or drying the dishes. Incentive charts are also useful if the child is able to measure the success of a newly learnt behaviour or action.

> **Example**
>
> **Using an incentive chart**
>
> Cooper (six years) squeals loudly, runs in circles and flaps his arms when he is excited. His educator has developed an incentive chart; every time Cooper is excited and does not squeal he receives a sticker on the chart. Cooper has noticed that he only has one sticker, so he starts to avoid situations that he is interested in to control his excitement.
>
> The incentive chart is not working as Cooper is unable to control his emotional reaction when he is excited. Cooper needs to learn how to recognise his feelings and control his reaction first. His educator should keep in mind the importance of excitement and its value on learning and self-esteem. The incentive chart may be more appropriate when Cooper is more able to control his emotions.

Time out

Time out is generally not considered an acceptable practice in education and care services. Element 5.2.3 of the NQS states that unless prior parental consent has been obtained, 'children must not be isolated for any reason other than illness, accident or a prearranged appointment'.

Young children are not capable of taking time out to think about their behaviour or reflect on what they have done. They also need to recognise that solitude can be enjoyable rather than just a negative experience.

If we accept that time out is mostly used as a punishment, it must then be viewed as inappropriate in education and care. Time out used as a punishment often sees children being provoked into secondary behaviours, such as destroying the area they are placed in. Some children may come to the conclusion that time out for doing something isn't so bad. Other children are sensitive to the isolation and may perceive time out as a personal attack, lowering their self-esteem and making them more timid in play.

Young children, however, sometimes deal with their anger or frustration by using a self-initiated time out strategy. They learn to identify their own need to remove themselves from a situation and take themselves to a place where they can be alone, with the knowledge that this will be respected.

Obviously this is not a forced situation and the space they go to should be safe and private. Some users of this technique call it 'time away', 'quiet time' or 'safe time' to differentiate it from the stigma that has been attached to 'time out'. When children choose to take this time, they should use it to calm down and manage their feelings and emotions, rather than to think about the situation.

This 'time away' can also be linked to logical consequences and redirection; for example, you may say, 'Barry, you are throwing things at others. Please go and have a throw with the bean bags or at the basketball ring instead'.

When time out is recommended by a specialist or your supervisor, you may need to clarify which type of time out strategy they are referring to, then clarify how it fits with your service and personal values and pedagogy.

> **Example**
>
> ### Using a 'time with' strategy
>
> Martin (aged five) watches others building block towers. When they are built to waist level, he enters the play area and pushes the towers over.
>
> His educator chooses to use a 'time with' method as she thinks Martin needs assistance to become engaged in an activity and to gain her positive attention.
>
> The educator approaches Martin, moves to his level and asks if he can help her build sandcastles. Martin agrees and takes her hand. The educator makes sure that she interacts frequently during their sand play and that she remains with Martin for as long as possible. She also encourages Martin to push down his own castles. When she needs to move away from the sandpit, she asks Martin if he wants to stay in the sand or come to the next activity with her.

Practice task 2

1. Interview **two** different families. Your aim is to identify the behavioural expectations of each family. Provide their responses to these questions:

    ▶   What are your beliefs about children's behaviour?

    ▶   What limits and guidelines for behaviour do you use with your own children?

    ▶   How does your culture or lifestyle influence your style of discipline and beliefs about behaviour?

2. Write a short report about the way you deal with the behavioural expectations of different families. Include the following information:

   ▶ a summary of a service's policies, procedures or work practices that relate to the limits and guidelines you set with children

   ▶ how these guidelines comply with the NQS and reflect the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics

   ▶ how you respect different family expectations and cultural values, using the two families you interviewed as an example. For instance:

      – Do the families use practices at home that you may consider inappropriate within a service? If so, explain why.

      – How does your service deal with these differences as you consult with the families to establish and apply limits and guidelines for behaviour?

1C Responding to incidents

If a child's behaviour results in an injury or incident, you need to know how best to respond to the situation. The way you respond, how quickly you act and the limits and consequences you set are all important to the child's immediate learning and wellbeing. You must ensure you promptly and effectively defuse the situation and discuss the actions taken by children.

Types of incidents

A range of incidents may occur depending on the age of children involved, including those detailed in the following table.

Age	Types of incident
0–2 years	▶ Biting, hitting, snatching, kicking, pulling hair ▶ Crawling or walking over others or toys they are using ▶ Spilling drinks and other resources on each other ▶ Climbing on furniture
2–3 years	▶ Biting, pulling hair, slapping, kicking ▶ Throwing toys, snatching toys from each other, using physical force to get a toy ▶ Pushing their way into the personal space of others ▶ Losing their temper in a tantrum ▶ Throwing themselves on the floor, holding their breath, banging their head on the floor and screaming
Over 3 years	▶ Yelling, swearing, kicking, punching, pushing ▶ Throwing materials at others ▶ Laughing at others ▶ Being aggressive, boisterous, bullying and overly loud

Act promptly

Regardless of a child's age, you must act promptly and use positive guidance and redirection skills to resolve the issue. This may mean first attending to a child who is hurt. Remain calm regardless of the stress you may feel and use a tone of voice that is firm, yet friendly. Remember the children are learning from your responses.

It is natural to sometimes feel frustrated or upset about an incident. If this occurs, seek help and take a break. If you do get emotional, yell or show frustration in some way (for example, picking up a child by the arm and dragging them), the best course of action is to remove yourself from the situation and take time to relax. A build-up of these feelings can cause you to act irrationally and could cost you your reputation or career. If you are in a centre environment, call for help and take a break. If you are working alone (e.g. as a nanny or in family day care), work out a safe way to defuse the situation.

Example

An educator defuses her emotions

Carrie is a family day care educator. She works with four children under five years. Today the children all arrived at 7.00 am. It is now 5.30 pm. There is still another hour until any of the children go home.

The children have had a busy day and the weather was hot, so they stayed inside most of the day. They have all finished their dinner, but Sean (three years) has been irritable all day and didn't sleep very long.

Carrie thinks it may be wise for the children to participate in some quiet activities, so she can have a short break and so that Sean in particular can relax and have a rest. However, two minutes into the quiet play, Sean starts screaming, pushing other children and telling them they are in the way.

Carrie is tired and feels emotional about the situation. She picks Sean up gently and cuddles him. She realises that it is only a short time until the children leave, so it is no use calling her supervisor, but she is exhausted. She decides it may be a better idea to offer outdoor time as the heat has subsided so there are no UV issues. The children run out and each takes off into their own play area.

Carrie asks Sean if he wants cuddles or play. He wants to play, so he runs off to the sandpit. Carrie watches the children play while she catches her breath. After 15 minutes she feels much better, and it seems Sean does too. They all play together until dusk brings them inside and their parents start to arrive.

How to respond

At all times, your response to children's behaviour should be supportive, positive and take a positive view of learning. The strategies in section 1A will help you do this, including:

▶ positive reinforcement

▶ encouragement

▶ positive language

▶ nonverbal strategies

▶ role-modelling

▶ choices

▶ problem-solving

▶ setting clear limits and guidelines.

Using positive approaches helps to reduce children's difficult behaviour. It should be consistently used by all educators and clearly communicated through policies and procedures.

Despite your best intentions and your supportive and positive approach to learning, there will be times when you may be required to respond to an incident. If this happens, there are several effective strategies to use. The most common are redirection, 'I' messages and consequences.

Using redirection

As children experiment and learn, they all 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 focuses on the desired behaviour by helping the child release the inappropriate behaviour.

Redirection can be used with all children. It means responding to a child's current behaviour and then redirecting them into more appropriate actions or interests, or defusing a concerning situation.

Effective redirection helps children to develop self-control and self-direction as they learn 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.

Redirection is often useful to prevent harm in situations where drawn-out explanations are not appropriate, particularly for infants. When redirecting, the following strategy is often successful:

1. Use a quiet even tone of voice, with a low pitch and volume. Be positive at all times.
2. Briefly verbally acknowledge the child's feelings or purpose; for example, commenting, 'You seem angry'.
3. Redirect the child to an activity with a similar outlet for their feelings or purpose; for example, 'Let's hit with the hammer'.
4. Help the child move to the new location.

Once you become familiar with individual children, you can identify when they may be moving into a situation that could cause behaviours of concern to occur. Redirection is useful when you can predict this, as intervening prior to an incident and redirecting the child to another activity removes the potential difficulty.

Redirection is also a useful strategy for older children who may be threatening to enter a power struggle with you or may be about to choose an unsafe action, even when they understand other options are more acceptable.

Example

Defusing a situation

Five-year-old James is laughing and doing a silly dance. Other children are looking at him and laughing. Ruth, his educator, is concerned that he will fall onto the table nearby.

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

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

Using 'I' messages

An 'I' message refers to the way you can phrase a statement to give children a clear message about their behaviour without blaming or judging them. This is an excellent way to express limits as it is very clear and positive.

Unfortunately, many of us are more used to using other, more self-focused types of communication. For example:

▶ A 'you' message blames the other person for what happened:
 – 'You are making me angry.'
 – 'You can't do that.'
 – 'You are being annoying.'

▶ A self-focused message focuses on your needs instead of what you want to happen:
   – 'Do this for me.'
   – 'I need you to . . .'
   – 'I want . . .'

'You' messages and self-focused messages tend to make children feel resentful and argumentative, and may even make them want to seek revenge. 'You' messages do not communicate respect for other people and do not help children develop trusting relationships.

Try to replace the 'you' messages and self-focused messages with 'I' messages, which usually consist of three parts:

1. How the behaviour is affecting you – your feelings
2. Which behaviours are unacceptable without blaming or judging
3. 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.

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 respond appropriately and 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 consequences and logical consequences.

Natural consequences

A natural consequence is when an action happens and the natural outcome guides the child. For example:

- If a child is left to throw sand, it will hurt other children.
- If a child continues to hurt other children, there will be injuries and complaints.
- If a child doesn't wear a hat outside, they will get sunburnt.

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 four-year-old 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, 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

Applying a logical consequence

Tony (five years) takes out all the blocks from the shelf. When he moves to another activity, he leaves the blocks all over the floor.

A logical consequence may be that Tony must pack all the blocks up when it is pack-up time. His educator should support him by giving encouragement and positive reinforcement. The educator may even slowly help him pack up too, so Tony does not feel overwhelmed.

When the pack-up is complete, the educator may remind Tony that if he plays with toys and equipment, he must also pack it up when he is finished.

Allowing children to make their own positive choices

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 a behaviour
- commence a behaviour, but realise and stop
- react with a behaviour but, when helped to stop, they understand what they need to do next.

Example

Allowing a child to make a positive choice

Sherma (four years) is playing in the water trough. Beau (two years) approaches to play in the trough too. Sherma notices Beau approaching and turns towards him. She yells, 'No water play for babies!' and shoves him backwards. Beau falls to the floor and looks at Sherma. She responds by sticking her tongue out and again yelling, 'You listen, you baby!'

An educator, Calista, approaches and asks Sherma if she thinks that pushing Beau and yelling at him is the right thing to do. Sherma responds that she thinks it isn't. Calista asks what she should do instead. Sherma says, 'If I am worried about babies I need to tell you.' Calista agrees and asks Sherma, 'What do we need to do if we push someone?' Sherma looks at Beau. She moves to him and holds her hands out to pick him up off the floor. She bends down to his face and says, 'I am sorry, baby, I just don't want you to spill water.' Calista praises Sherma and together they work out how Beau can safely join in.

Practice task 3

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Alex (four years) is playing with blocks, when Ben (three years) comes over to join in. Alex throws his hands up in the air, then picks up the blocks in front of him. Yelling for Ben to go away, he throws a block at Ben's head. Alex continues yelling while Ben cries, holding his head.

Farah, the educator, approaches and consoles Ben, checking whether his head is wounded. Alex approaches and, as he does, Farah quietly says, 'What should we do if we hurt someone?' Alex bends to Ben's face and says, 'Sorry, Ben, are you okay?'

Farah thanks Alex and says, 'What could you say to Ben instead of hurting him?' Alex says, 'I could tell Ben what I want.'

Farah agrees that it is a great idea. She asks Alex if he can tell her what he wanted. She says, 'What words might you use?' When Alex doesn't reply, Farah suggests that maybe he could say, 'Ben, I am playing here. Please be careful of my work.' Alex agrees.

Farah asks Alex to help Ben find an activity he would like to do. Together the children move towards the painting easels.

1. Identify **two** strategies that Farah uses to respond to this incident.

2. How is Farah's response appropriate to Alex's age/stage of development?

3. Would you have used a different response? If so, explain why.

4. How does Farah provide support to Alex so he learns from the experience?

5. What does Alex do that shows he is learning?

6. Do you support children to apologise if they hurt others? Why or why not?

Summary

▶ When you help children learn about their behaviour and reactions to events, it helps to defuse certain behaviours and situations and helps children take ownership for their behaviour.

▶ As an educator, you need to guide and direct children's behaviour. You require an understanding of children's needs and abilities, and should recognise your own beliefs about implementing behaviour guidance strategies.

▶ Appropriate expectations of behaviour are based on a sound knowledge and understanding of children's individual development.

▶ To help children manage their behaviour positively, you need to use strategies that are developed with the best interests of the child in mind.

▶ When children successfully express their feelings and needs, it provides an opportunity to give positive reinforcement and praise, and to collaborate and interact with them at their level.

▶ You need to respect all differences within families and aim to provide a clear link between the home and care environment.

▶ If a child's behaviour results in an injury or incident, you need to know how best to respond to the situation.

Learning checkpoint 1
Establishing and applying limits and guidelines for behaviour

Part A

Record **two** times that you responded to a behavioural incident in a timely manner using a clear, consistent and calm approach.

You may use the following tables to record information, ensuring confidentiality is maintained, where necessary.

Log entry 1	
Child: Date: Age: Setting:	
Who else was involved	
How you responded to the incident (For example, using redirection, 'I' messages or consequences)	
How you supported the child to manage their own behaviour (For example, positive reinforcement, encouragement, positive language, nonverbal strategies, role-modelling, choice or problem-solving)	
How you interacted with the child to involve them in decision-making and planning	

Log entry 2	
Child: Date: Age: Setting:	
Who else was involved	

How you responded to the incident (For example, using redirection, 'I' messages or consequences)	
How you supported the child to manage their own behaviour (For example, positive reinforcement, encouragement, positive language, nonverbal strategies, role-modelling, choice or problem-solving)	
How you interacted with the child to involve them in decision-making and planning	

Part B

Choose an activity. Work with a group of children to develop limits and guidelines for the activity.

Answer the following questions.

1. What is the activity and why did you choose it?

2. How many children participated and what was their age and stage of development?

3. What limits and guidelines did the children identify?

4. Describe one occasion where the limits and guidelines were referred to during the activity.

Part C

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

> **Case study**
>
> A child listens to the directions of male educators, but not to female educators. The child's behaviour is not difficult. However, you are aware that if all of the children are to be safe, everyone must follow the limits and guidelines set for the group. As the child does not listen to all of the educators, sometimes this is not achieved.
>
> You speak with the parents and find out that the child's behaviour is cultural. The parents acknowledge that perhaps the child should behave differently at the service and suggest putting him in time out on his own for five minutes every time he does not listen.

1. How would you consult with the child's family?

2. What impact does the child's culture have on his behaviour?

3. What behaviour guidance strategies might you use to support the child? Would you implement the parents' suggestion (time out)? Why or why not?

4. How would you communicate these expectations to the child?

5. How would you use relationship-based strategies to help the child learn about appropriate behaviour?

6. How might the following standards and frameworks help your understanding of how to resolve this incident?
   ▶ National Quality Standard: Elements 1.2.1, 5.1.2 and 5.2.2
   ▶ The Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics
   ▶ The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
   ▶ Service policies and procedures

Topic 2

In this topic you will learn about:

2A Gathering, documenting and analysing information about behaviour

2B Consulting with others and seeking advice

2C Discussing incidents with families and colleagues

2D Other children affected by behaviours of concern

Identifying and reviewing behaviour as required

Gathering information regarding a child's behaviour is a key element to understanding why they act in a certain way. By collecting observation records, you can gather evidence to assist you in analysing a child's behaviour.

Analysing records of behaviour helps determine appropriate strategies to deal with behaviours of concern. It provides information to use as part of your collaboration with parents and shows parents you are treating their child with respect and concern. This helps establish a partnership of practical and continuous monitoring of the child within the home and education environments.

Information gathering also assists other educators to become familiar with children and understand why you are suggesting particular guidance strategies.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
✓	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
✓	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
✓	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership

Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	
✓ Partnerships	
High expectations and equity	
Respect for diversity	
✓ Ongoing learning and reflective practice	
Practice	
Holistic approaches	Holistic approaches
Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
Learning through play	Learning through play
Intentional teaching	Intentionality
✓ Learning environments	Environments
Cultural competence	Cultural competence
Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
✓ Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
Outcomes	
Children have a strong sense of identity	
✓ Children are connected to and contribute to their world	
Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	
Children are confident and involved learners	
Children are effective communicators	

2A Gathering, documenting and analysing information about behaviour

You may be required to gather information about a child's behaviour due to an incident, a change in behaviour or a behaviour of concern. Your service policies and procedures will guide you in this process, and outline how to observe and document behaviour. There may also be specific templates to use, and guidelines or formatting procedures to follow.

By analysing the data collected, you can often gain a better understanding of the situation. You may be able to determine the cause of the child's actions or at least assess how to cope with and guide the concerning actions being displayed.

Sources of information

When gathering information about a child, you may need to communicate with a range of people involved in caring for the child, including:

▶ other educators

▶ service coordinators or directors

▶ parents or other family members

▶ outside specialists.

Parents are an important source of information about a child's behaviour and will often approach you to confirm their knowledge of a concerning behaviour. At other times, you may find the child's behaviour is different at home than at your service. Working with parents allows you to identify any issues and establish strategies for guidance, and may help to understand:

▶ what is causing the concerning behaviour

▶ what may work in different settings

▶ how you can work together to provide the best possible guidance for the child.

Watch this video about gathering information from families.

The following table outlines the type of information each source can provide.

Information source	Type of information provided
Educators in contact with the child	▶ Types of behaviours being displayed and times of day they occur ▶ Children involved when incidents arise ▶ Frequency of a particular behaviour occurring

Information source	Type of information provided
Service coordinator or director	▶ Your role in dealing with a situation ▶ Specific implementation methods to undertake according to service policies and procedures
Parents and family members	▶ Behaviours occurring at home ▶ Changes to the home environment or routine ▶ Current strategies used for behaviour guidance in the home ▶ Current routine ▶ Inappropriate past behaviours
Outside specialists such as a speech or occupational therapist	▶ Current methods they are using with the child ▶ Child's progression ▶ How to incorporate methods into the current program ▶ Areas in need of focus ▶ Strategies to implement ▶ Support offered

Observing behaviour

Observational data can be collected in a variety of ways, and many workplaces encourage a combination of methods to create a more holistic view of the child's performance and development.

The observational information you collect relating to concerning behaviour is used differently from your regular records. Behavioural information should be kept confidential and be based on fact so that concrete evidence is provided and actual occurrences are identified.

The following table describes some common observation and recording methods used in education and care services.

Observation method	Details
Event samples	Event samples can be used to record your observations each time a particular event occurs. You specify what event is important to record and, each time this event occurs, you add a record of what happened before, during and after the situation. An event sample allows you to consider all things that happen during the event, which allows you to provide an unbiased account.
Learning stories	Learning stories may be subjective as they are written as a narrative. The child's own words can be used to make the record more meaningful. There are many ways to write a learning story.

Observation method	Details
Anecdotal records	Anecdotal records are brief narratives describing a specific incident or behaviour that is important. They are written in a factual, objective manner.
Running records	Running records describe everything that occurs to a particular child over a specific period of time and include all behaviours displayed.
Jottings and incidental records	Jottings and incidental records note: ▶ children's actions ▶ brief transcripts of their conversations or comments ▶ details of a situation ▶ questions ▶ ideas. This information can be provided to you by another person, such as the child's parents.
Photos or recordings	Photos need to be linked to anecdotal records or learning stories to provide the background information about what is happening. When recording concerning behaviour, photos are not usually useful unless they are illustrating an environment or a conclusion. Taking photos or a video of a child's concerning behaviour may be humiliating for the child and should only occur if a specialist requests it to help support the child, with the permission of the child's parents.
Checklists	Checklists record behaviours, actions or attitudes. The actions and interactions can be checked off against a predetermined list, which records the presence, attainment or absence of these.
Sociograms	Sociograms are webs that demonstrate who children interact with, how often and in what ways.

Recording specific details

For observations to be useful, you must collect the right information. The following table outlines the specific details and information you may need to collect.

Type of information	Description	How to identify
Behaviour	What occurred; what specific behaviour did the child display?	Consider the following questions: ▶ What happened? ▶ Where did it happen? ▶ How long did it last for? ▶ Who else was involved?

Type of information	Description	How to identify
Antecedents	Antecedents are the things that happened directly before the behaviour occurred; they may trigger the behaviour.	Consider the following questions: ▶ What was the child doing before the behaviour occurred? ▶ If there were other children nearby, who were they and what were they doing before the behaviour occurred? ▶ What do you think may be the trigger?
Consequences	What happened as a result of the incident.	Consider these questions: ▶ What did you and others do after the behaviour occurred? ▶ What were the outcomes for the child?
Setting events	Setting events are the things that occur in the environment or the routine that could cause the behaviour. You should consider: ▶ any expectations ▶ how the environment is presented ▶ how time, space, people, materials, safety and aesthetics are considered ▶ interactions and approaches ▶ limits and guidelines.	Consider the following questions: ▶ Did anything happen in the environment or routine that may have contributed to the behaviour? ▶ Could anything in the environment contribute to the behaviour?
Function/ consequence	Functions or consequences are what the child gained from displaying this behaviour.	Consider the following questions: ▶ What did the child achieve by displaying this behaviour? ▶ Did they gain something or avoid something, or did you notice another outcome?

Frequency, intensity and duration

You must also measure and record the frequency, intensity and duration of the behaviour to determine the full extent of the behaviour of concern.

Element	Description	Ways this may be recorded	Why
Frequency	How often behaviour occurs	▶ Using day, date or time ▶ Based on routines; for example, indoor play, meal time, outdoor play and rest periods	▶ The frequency of the behaviour can indicate times the behaviour occurs and if there is a pattern or similarity between the events. ▶ Frequency also helps you to see if the behaviour is common. ▶ Without recording frequency, you may feel like the behaviour is happening more or less often than it really is.
Intensity	The extent that the child acts out the behaviour	▶ On a scale; for example, low intensity, medium intensity, high intensity, or from 0 to 10 ▶ Based on the level of: – disruption – violence – distress to the child – recovery time	▶ Intensity helps to identify any linked behaviours; for example, does an event link with intensity? ▶ It also helps measure improvement or decrease in progress.
Duration	How long the behaviour lasts for	▶ Usually recorded in minutes ▶ Schedule-related; for example, the mealtime routine, during the whole of group time	▶ To identify any link with an event. ▶ To measure any improvement or decrease in progress.

Example

Recording information about behaviour

Otto (five years) is experiencing temper tantrums. These are not age-appropriate and the strength of them is concerning. His educators use an event sample to collect information about his behaviour. This report uses a template and provides the specific details required.

Event sample

Child: Otto
Date: 26.11.17
Setting: Indoor play

Age: 5 years
Recorded by: Harriet

Behaviours being observed:
▲ Reactions to events
▲ Biting

Time when behaviour occurs	Setting	Behaviour details	What is happening just before the behaviour	Who else is involved	Intensity of behaviour Low = no aggression to others Med = aggressive with environment High = aggressive with other children			Duration of behaviour
					Low	**Med**	**High**	
9.35 am	Sandpit	Otto threw a handful of sand, then fell into the sandpit. He cried and would not respond to any educator who asked him if he needed help. Otto recovered when Gordon entered the sandpit and began to work with the sand.	Building a castle, but the sand was not wet enough.	No one	X			10 mins
10.15 am	Train set	Otto bit Jim and threw the train carriages at Celina, hitting her in the face. He then threw the train track into the book corner at other children. Educators tried to calm Otto down, but he ran from them and spat on Margaret (an educator). Otto calmed down when Fiona (another educator) asked if he would like a drink of water. He was red-faced and crying.	All children wanted to play with Thomas the Tank Engine.	Jim, Celina and Gordon			X	20 mins
11.13 am	Collage	Otto grabbed the paste pot and tipped it upside down onto his work. The paste splattered onto the table and chair, as well as Otto's clothing. Otto reacted to this by jumping up and down and trying to wipe the paste from his top. He then swept the chair away, knocking it over, and fell to the floor and cried. Educators tried to console him, but he would not respond. When Gordon approached the table and started to paste, Otto stopped crying and watched what he was doing.	Gordon took the scissors that were near Otto and Celina took the last paste brush.	Celina and Gordon		X		15 mins

Analysing behaviour

There are many reasons why a child may display a behaviour of concern, and any number of factors can contribute. By analysing the information you collect, you can create a profile of the child and their behaviour to help you identify the causes, functions and influences of the behaviour.

The ultimate goal of analysis is to identify any issues so you can develop a plan for resolution. Implementing this plan is aimed at supporting and guiding the child to move forward positively, with strategies in place for dealing with the child's emotions and needs.

Analysis may take place in an informal way, with parents and educators working together to investigate issues; or within a formal situation that includes parents and family members, other educators and sometimes external specialists.

Whatever the method, analysis involves taking the information you have collected and working out what it means or what it tells you about the child. If there are no obvious patterns or links, you may need to gather more information.

All children respond to and cope with situations in different ways, and may exhibit behaviours of concern due to various factors.

Environment and curriculum

When considering the cause of a child's out-of-character, inappropriate or concerning behaviour, consider the environment and curriculum conditions. Think about how the environment and curriculum appears from the child's point of view and how your philosophy and pedagogy may be contributing.

Here are some environment and curriculum factors that may impact a child's behaviour, and strategies for dealing with them.

Environment/ curriculum factor	Strategy
An environment that is too noisy and overstimulating can encourage behaviour that leads to conflict.	Adults should 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) as 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.
Activities that are too crowded can encourage conflict.	Set up activities so the number of children taking part is limited. For example, if you have enough 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.

Environment/ curriculum factor	Strategy
An environment where children are not offered time for working and playing uninterrupted by other children may cause some children to become involved in conflict more easily.	Provide areas for an experience where one child can choose to work alone. For example: ▶ building blocks ▶ books on a cushion ▶ a table with just one chair for drawing, pasting, etc. ▶ felt board and figures. Create these areas by using screens and furniture. Children can learn that they need to ask others 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.
Children who are overtired may be unable to cope with other children and conflict may occur. Overexcited and boisterous behaviour is often an indication of tiredness in young children.	Provide rest periods in the daily routine to cater for these needs that will fluctuate and change according to age, weather, time of year, etc. Children need a space to rest, which can include having a sleep, lying quietly with or without a book, or even just playing quietly by themselves. Listening to music or a story tape can also provide rest time.

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

Example

Changing the environment to change the behaviour

Harrison (four years) arrives every morning happy and ready to play, but as soon as his mum tries to leave, Harrison begins to cry. He holds onto her legs so tightly that she can't move. The educators have tried some separation strategies, but these have been unsuccessful.

After observing Harrison for a few days, educators notice that he enjoys outdoor play the most. They change their routine so that when Harrison arrives, the group is outdoors or at least have the option of going outdoors. This suits Harrison well and he now settles every day without concern.

Temperament

Temperament refers to the behavioural characteristics that shape reactions and responses, and is believed to be a trait individuals are born with. Temperament is mainly referred to when discussing infants and toddlers, as the natural forces of their character depict their temperament.

Each child has their own personal expression and communication skills. Apart from age and stage expectations, personality and temperament can influence the child's ability to communicate and how they do so.

As children develop socially and emotionally, various positive and negative life experiences impact on them, and their temperament may change as they begin to develop a personality that is based on more than just inborn traits.

The temperament of a young child affects the way you interact with them and may also alter your expectations of them. For some children, temperament influences how well they bond with another child.

Four temperaments to understand when observing behaviour are outlined in the following table.

Temperament	Related behaviour
Sanguine	Can be: ▶ arrogant ▶ cocky ▶ indulgent ▶ prone to daydreaming ▶ impulsive ▶ unpredictable.
Choleric	Can be: ▶ dominating ▶ easily angered ▶ bad-tempered ▶ mean-spirited ▶ suspicious ▶ angry.
Melancholic	Can be: ▶ overly preoccupied with tragedy and cruelty in the world ▶ depressed ▶ unsatisfied in their own work ▶ constantly critical of themselves.
Phlegmatic	Can be: ▶ resistant to change ▶ lazy ▶ unenthusiastic ▶ unemotional.

Matching the environment with the temperament

To meet the emotional and psychological needs of a child, you need to match the environment and your interactions with their temperament. When attempting to provide this 'goodness of fit', you need to consider the following aspects.

Sensitivity	How sensitive is each child to particular situations and experiences? Noise, room temperature, pain, smells, colours and textures affect everyone differently, so consider these when planning changes or actions.
Activity level	Each child may require a different amount of activity – some children can manage to 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, can cause new children to become upset if they are unfamiliar with the routine and unaware of what will occur.
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 their parent 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. 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 behaviours of concern occur in response to specific circumstances or lifestyle stressors. These may be causing the child to react in a particular way and can relate to events. Consider the information in the following table, which describes some lifestyle stressors and possible linked behaviour.

Situations/lifestyle stressors	Behaviour
Family problems, including: ▶ separated or hostile parents ▶ a death in the family ▶ loss of a family member, friend or pet ▶ a new baby ▶ a sick parent or family member ▶ visitors staying in the family home ▶ sibling rivalry ▶ joint custody ▶ parents working extended hours.	▶ Crying ▶ Temper tantrums ▶ Lack of motivation ▶ Unwillingness to participate or play with others ▶ Unable to follow direction 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
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 redirection

Each child's response to lifestyle stressors will be different, and their level of concern will also be unique. The behaviour exhibited by one child may be unconcerning, whereas if another presents with the same behaviour it may be deemed completely out of character or inappropriate.

Example

Reactions to a lifestyle stressor

Tricia (12 months) has a new educator and she 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.

David (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, David should be able to express his uncertainty in a less intense manner and would be expected to be better able to manage this type of change, particularly when the familiar educator is present.

Cultural implications

Sometimes behaviours of concern are related to the child's cultural background, family dynamics, beliefs and values. Cultural implications may impact a child if they affect how the child:

▶ follows directions and service limits

▶ understands what is being asked of them

▶ follows rules

▶ socialises with others

▶ plays with others

▶ communicates.

Developmental challenges

A child's behaviour capabilities link with their developmental milestones, which provide educators with a benchmark of expectations for children at each age.

These expectations usually allow for variations due to external influences on the child's life. You must not judge too quickly if you notice that a child is not within the range of expected development, as a personal situation or a medical condition can temporarily affect social, emotional, cognitive and language skills.

The following table outlines some of the signs that may indicate a developmental delay in a preschool child. Many of these behaviours are completely normal in a younger child.

Area of development	Signs that may indicate a developmental delay
Vision and hearing	▶ Does not respond to your speech unless they see you. ▶ Asks you to repeat what you say often; for example, saying 'What?' repeatedly. ▶ Holds books or activity materials close to their face. ▶ Bumps into furniture or knocks things over as they move around.
Language and speech	▶ Continued and ongoing stuttering. ▶ Uses words incorrectly. ▶ Has difficulty expressing ideas. ▶ Cannot follow directions.

Area of development	Signs that may indicate a developmental delay
Social/emotional	▶ Has difficulty expressing feelings. ▶ Never helps others. ▶ Cannot label their own feelings. ▶ Demonstrates extreme and violent tantrums or protests.
Cognitive	▶ Is forgetful. ▶ Has a very short attention span. ▶ Lacks curiosity. ▶ Lacks communication skills. ▶ Does not understand consequences.
Motor skills	▶ Cannot walk properly. ▶ Has difficulty balancing. ▶ Cannot complete tasks that use small muscles and/or hand–eye coordination, such as threading, sewing or cutting.

Causes and impact of developmental delay

As children become more aware of others, they begin to identify differences in their peers, such as developmental delays or learning difficulties. Children often show this knowledge in behavioural terms; for example, a child who recognises their own delay may become frustrated or angry, while a child who notices a delay in another child may resort to bullying or competitive comparison.

Watch this video for more about children understanding differences in people.

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

Cause of difficulty	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

Cause of difficulty	Potential impact
Unduly violent 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/or social problems

Many behaviours of concern are linked to mental health in some way. Emotional and/or social problems can sometimes be the cause or the outcome of a mental health concern.

The feelings that children express must always be taken seriously and supported. Like adults, children have good and bad emotional days, and this influences their abilities to deal with problems and enjoy their learning and play.

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

▶ make friendships

▶ 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 the KidsMatter website at: http://aspirelr.link/kids-matter-early-childhood.

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 adulthood.

Here is a list of common disorders and how they 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
Oppositional defiant disorder (ODD)	Constant 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

Child abuse

When child abuse is suspected as the cause of a behaviour of concern, you must 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.

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, reporting may even require specialist or legal involvement.

If you do report serious incidents, ensure that you follow your service guidelines relating to:

▶ accurate documentation

▶ confidentiality

▶ reporting incidents to colleagues and more senior workers or supervisors.

Example

Reporting suspected child abuse

A four-year-old has been found twice in cubby spaces with other children asking the others to take off their clothing, and has attempted to touch the other children's genitals. The educators want to make a plan for managing this situation, as they know this behaviour is not age-appropriate and is of serious concern.

A four-year-old would not usually be interested in this type of exploration, so the educators must consider:

▶ Is the child being abused?

▶ Is the child observing the actions of adults that are inappropriate?

▶ Is the child accessing inappropriate materials and information in another way?

The educators discuss the issue with the child's parents, who say the child is fine and there is nothing to worry about. Following this discussion, the child does not return to the service. The educators decide, based on service procedure, to report this situation to ensure the four-year-old is safe.

Trauma

Trauma can also impact on a child's mental health and behaviour. Trauma can only be defined in severity by the impact it has on each individual. Trauma in one family may involve the health or safety of a family member; in another family, it may relate to 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.

Function or consequences of behaviour

As well as looking for a possible cause, it is also useful to identify the function or consequences of what the child is trying to achieve through their behaviour. This too can be a trigger for behaviours of concern.

Some children communicate through their behaviour as they have:

▶ limited vocabulary

▶ quick tempers

▶ strong emotions

▶ difficulty understanding the actions of others.

Other children may demonstrate a behaviour of concern purely out of habit – it is what they know how to do or is something that always works.

To identify the function or consequences the child is trying to achieve, look for the reason behind the behaviour. Consider the information in the following table.

Function/ consequence	Example	Analysis of the example
Gain attention	Percy (three years) speaks to other children loudly and close to their faces. If they don't respond to him immediately, he holds their shoulders and shakes them while speaking loudly again.	The function/consequence of Percy's behaviour is identified as his need to have other children listen to him. Percy does not know other techniques and feels his opinion is important and that other children should let him know if they have heard him.
Communicate a need or want	Jenna (three-and-a-half years) falls to the ground and screams, throwing her body around violently.	The function/consequence of Jenna's behaviour is identified as her wanting to use the tricycle. There are only three tricycles available and Jenna is communicating her desire to ride one.
Gain a consequence	Cindy (four years) often plays in the block corner. Her educators notice she is often alone playing happily. They notice that Cindy often enters the block area when other children are also in the area. She watches the other children and occasionally knocks their roads and towers over. Whenever this happens, Cindy says, 'Oh sorry, it was an accident'.	The function/consequence of Cindy's behaviour is identified as her wanting to have the block area to herself. Cindy deliberately but carefully damages the work of others, then apologises immediately so there are no arguments and educators are not called to resolve the issue. Cindy has identified that her behaviour causes the consequence of children leaving the play area.
Escape from an unpleasant situation	Sheila (18 months) screams until her face turns bright red. She clambers up the educator's body and holds tightly with her fingernails digging into the educator's skin.	The function/consequence of Sheila's behaviour is identified as her fear of the highchair. Although most other children are comfortable in the chair, Sheila once caught her finger in a highchair and is now afraid of it. When Sheila demonstrates this behaviour, her educators allow her to sit in a regular chair.

Function/ consequence	Example	Analysis of the example
Gain a sensory consequence	Jairo (five years) lies in the book corner on a cushion humming and sucking his thumb. He watches other children playing and stays while they all pack up. He lies there for long periods of time until an educator suggests another activity.	The function/consequence of Jairo's behaviour is identified as his positioning next to the fish tank filter. Jairo finds that the filter hums and vibrates slightly, and when he lies on the cushion in this place, he can feel the vibration and hum to it. He seems to enjoy this sensory experience.
Self-regulate	Talia (four years) removes herself from play at unusual times. She will be playing with a group in what seems to be age-appropriate and enjoyable play, then suddenly she will remove herself to a quiet corner for a period of time.	The function/consequence of Talia's behaviour is identified as relating to the rules of play at home. Talia is told that if she plays noisily inside, she must go to the naughty corner and sit there for four minutes. Once this information is known to educators, they can recognise when she is managing her own behaviour by removing herself after being loud in play as would happen at home.
Release tension	Reed (three years) plays enthusiastically with the train set with his peers. They concentrate hard as they set up their tracks and play alongside each other in an intense session of building, train driving and imagination. At a point in the play, Reed unexpectedly stops playing and watches. He then starts growling and uses his arms like windmills, spraying the play pieces over the floor and making his peers move quickly out of the space.	The function/consequence of Reed's behaviour is identified as a release of tension. If the play remains under 20 minutes, Reed plays uninterrupted. If play goes over this period, the likelihood of Reed demonstrating this behaviour is very high.

When faced with concerning or undesirable behaviour, always consider the reason or function/consequence behind it. It may be quite different from the behaviour itself. You may initially look at the function or consequence of the behaviour and attempt to make sense of what is happening, or you may consider all other possible causes, seek advice from others and then piece together the information to identify the function or consequence.

Practice task 4

Choose a child that you can observe and analyse their behaviour.

1. Ask the parent if their child demonstrates any reactive behaviour. This does not need to be a behaviour of concern, just age-appropriate behaviour that occurs regularly for this child. Note what the parent tells you.

2. Ask another educator if they have noticed this behaviour. Note what they tell you.

3. Have you noticed this behaviour? Record what you have noticed.

4. Choose **three** of the following variables and explain how they may impact or trigger the child's behaviour:

   ▶ the environment

   ▶ others in the environment

   ▶ recent events

   ▶ the child's temperament

   ▶ culture and lifestyle, including family styles of discipline and beliefs about behaviour

   ▶ developmental challenges

   ▶ emotional and/or social problems

   ▶ behaviour disorders

   ▶ child abuse

   ▶ trauma

   ▶ the curriculum.

5. What do you believe is the function/consequence of the child's behaviour? Give a reason for your response.

2B Consulting with others and seeking advice

Before you can decide 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. You may also need to seek the advice of a specialist before selecting the best option for the situation.

People to consult

Consider the information in the following table that lists who to consult, what they can tell you and how to gather this information.

Who to consult	What they can tell you about	How to gather this information
Parents or guardians	▶ Home life, including values, cultural practices, expectations and beliefs ▶ Out-of-character behaviour, expected behaviour and behaviours of concern ▶ How the child behaves differently in various environments ▶ Who the child responds to ▶ Triggers ▶ What strategies they use ▶ What strategies do and don't work ▶ What strategies they disagree with you using	▶ Discussions ▶ Meetings ▶ Surveys ▶ Forms
Other educators	▶ Their observations ▶ Their experiences with the family and child ▶ Out-of-character behaviour, expected behaviour and behaviours of concern ▶ Triggers ▶ What strategies they have used either successfully or unsuccessfully ▶ Training or experience in any area ▶ Your ability to provide 'goodness of fit'	▶ Observation records ▶ Portfolios ▶ Notes from past information-gathering ▶ Behaviour plans ▶ Discussions
Specialists	▶ Diagnosis ▶ Triggers ▶ Key features ▶ Links to other developmental areas ▶ Situations to avoid	▶ Discussions ▶ Assessments ▶ Reports ▶ Meetings

Using a support system

Ultimately, you must deal with the behaviour of concern as part of your recognition of the rights of the child.

If others are involved in gathering information and interpreting behaviour, you will already have set up an appropriate support system for yourself and the child.

However, these systems may not always meet your expectations. The information you gather can be distracting by providing too many alternatives or options for response. A good support system provides a sounding board and a means for reflection, which is particularly 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.

The following examples demonstrate the importance of consulting with others to seek information and implement an appropriate response.

Example 1

Arthur (six years) is unable to concentrate for long. He is impulsive and is extremely reactive emotionally. His educators think he may have ADD and would like to have him assessed. His parents agree.

Arthur is not diagnosed with ADD. The specialist is unsure what is causing Arthur's behaviour, but suggests the role of the educators will remain the same – to provide a caring and supportive environment. Arthur will still demonstrate impulsive actions, be emotionally vulnerable and have a short concentration span.

The specialist says that despite any label Arthur may be given, changes must be made to meet his needs and resolve his behaviours of concern.

Example 2

Gary (four years) socialises with all children in the group apart from Lee. Whenever Lee is part of Gary's play, Gary becomes aggressive and upset, and demands that Lee goes away.

The educators put a plan into place. They agree that whenever Lee and Gary are playing together, an educator will closely supervise the play to ensure it stays appropriate.

In the short term, this strategy seems to solve the problem between Lee and Gary.

However, Gary's mother feels that this plan does not take into account all the issues. She wants to know what causes Gary to become upset with Lee. She is worried it will happen if another child is involved. She wants Gary to learn to manage his own emotions and solve his problems, rather than having the issue resolved through avoidance.

In these examples, behaviours of concern occurred and were discussed, and different people had different concerns about how the behaviours should be guided. When this happens, facilitated discussion and gathering information can help to identify the best response and maintain a positive attitude in all the people involved.

Specialist advice

When advice is required from outside of your service, the parents or guardian of the child must first give their permission.

Parents often take the initiative to seek support and advice from specialists such as:

▶ paediatricians

▶ general practitioners (family doctors)

▶ maternal and child health nurses

▶ speech therapists

▶ psychologists

▶ psychiatrists.

If you are required to locate a specialist, contact the Inclusion Support Programme (ISP), which is available to all government-approved education and care suppliers (including long day care, occasional care, family day care, in-home care, school age care and vacation care programs). This program can assist you in gaining appropriate funding, advice and/or services to support all children. You can find out more about your ISP at this website: http://aspirelr.link/inclusion-support-programme

Your state or territory ISP can be found at: http://aspirelr.link/isp-contacts

The aim of the ISP is to remove access barriers for:

▶ children with disability

▶ children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

▶ children from refugee backgrounds

▶ Indigenous Australian children.

Records of consultation

The purpose of consultation is to identify the reason behaviours of concern are occurring and how best to respond. It is essential to keep clear and accurate records of the consultation process and end results.

Following is an example of how you may record the information you have gained from consultation. It demonstrates how the collection of information results in an action.

Example

Child's name	Henry
Age	Five years
Behaviour	Henry carries a small wooden block with him at all times. He holds the block in one hand while he spends short periods of time participating in tasks. Henry almost never puts the block down. If another child touches the block or if Henry cannot find the block, he becomes very distressed, breathing quickly and searching in a panicked manner.
Who was involved	Henry's mother, educator, director of the service

Variables that may impact behaviour		
	Temperament	Henry demonstrates a phlegmatic temperament. His mother says that he is usually resistant to change and takes time to get used to new situations. She was worried that he would have difficulty making the move into the service.
	Lifestyle stressors	Entry to the service.
	Environment and curriculum influences	Education and care away from home. The room is quite large and there are 22 children altogether.
	Developmental challenges	Henry has no developmental issues that his parents or educators have noticed.
	Emotional/social problems	It seems Henry is using the block as a security item while at the service; no other issues are present.
	Behaviour disorder	None.
	Trauma	None.

Cultural implications	None that we could identify.
Trigger	Being in the service – Henry's mother says that he does not hold the block at home.
Function/consequences analysis	We believe that Henry is feeling insecure. This is why he holds the block. This is his first time away from his mum.
Needs of other children affected	No effects noticed at this stage.
Actions taken	Henry's mum will spend extra time at drop-off participating in the program with Henry. She will also demonstrate her confidence in the educators by conversing with them and helping them during the time she is there. A primary educator will be chosen for Henry. He will attend when she is present. The educator will build a rapport with Henry and find out more about his interests and extend the program (spontaneously if needed) so he is engaged. When Henry appears to be participating well in activities, another meeting will be set to discuss his need for the block and plans for the next step.
Advice sought	No outside advice is required at this point.

Practice task 5

1. Talk to a colleague about behaviours of concern they have previously dealt with. Record their responses to the following questions:

   a. What documentation and procedures did you use to support the child with the behaviour of concern?

   b. Are these in line with service policy?

   c. How did you involve the child's parents in the situation?

   d. What other services do you use to support your work with children who display behaviours of concern? If a service is not used, identify one you could contact.

2. Document your colleague's experience. You may use the table below or similar. Include the following information:

   ▶ the environment and curriculum influences

   ▶ other contributing factors (including the child's history and actions of others)

   ▶ recent events

   ▶ the child's temperament

   ▶ cultural and lifestyle implications (including family styles of discipline and beliefs about behaviour)

   ▶ developmental challenges

   ▶ emotional and/or social problems

   ▶ behavioural disorders

   ▶ child abuse

   ▶ trauma.

Record of consultation		
Child's name		
Age		
Behaviour		
Who was involved		
Variables that may impact behaviour	Temperament	
	Lifestyle stressors	
	Environment and curriculum influences	
	Developmental challenges	
	Emotional/social problems	
	Behaviour disorder	
	Trauma	
Cultural implications		
Trigger		
Function/consequences analysis		
Needs of other children affected		
Actions taken		
Advice sought		

2C Discussing incidents with families and colleagues

At times you will be required to discuss an incident with the families of the children involved. Keep in mind that you can't predict how someone will respond and that it is your role to maintain a positive manner and offer support.

What to report

It is not reasonable to report every minor behavioural occurrence to parents and colleagues, especially when these are age-appropriate and not of concern. If you do this you may be:

▶ transferring your responsibility

▶ demonstrating your inability to manage the child

▶ causing others to feel uncomfortable or lack faith in your caring abilities.

You may also be demonstrating your unwillingness to accept that children are learning and that they will make mistakes. This may cause parents to have unrealistic expectations.

However, behaviours of concern do need to be discussed with parents. If concerning behaviours are not dealt with, they can and will continue, perhaps increasing in severity and repetition, or even becoming a habit for the child.

Injuries and incidents involving other children may also become an issue, which can result in a range of issues and concerns within the service.

Demonstrate confidentiality and show respect for the feelings of the family members involved. When behaviours of concern occur, your focus should be on how to communicate specific information clearly and calmly. This requires you to plan what you need to discuss and how best to discuss it.

Possible reactions

When you report a child's behaviours of concern, their parent will react in a manner involving positive or negative feelings and responses.

Positive responses include:	Negative responses include:
▶ Thanking you for supporting their child ▶ Dealing with the incident capably ▶ Being calm and in control ▶ Following up after the consultation	▶ Being defensive or accusatory about how you have handled the situation ▶ Questioning how their child was cared for or reacted to ▶ Questioning whether your reactions met their expectations ▶ Questioning whether policies or procedures are adequate

Sometimes shock and concern cause people to react differently from how they would usually act. It is therefore essential to think about how you disclose information about an incident to ensure the family is supported and that their reactions are respected. Taking the time to sit down with the family and talk without interruption is often the best way to share information.

Your response

Make sure that you maintain a positive manner and that your primary motivation in reporting the issue is to offer support or share information about the child's development. For example, you could comment as follows:

'Graeme was upset today and had a short tantrum, but we did what we agreed with you and just sat nearby and made sure he didn't hurt himself. He was fine within a couple of minutes and was really great at getting back into play. Most of the two-year-olds have a tantrum at some time in the day.'

The following table outlines some other useful strategies for responding.

Strategy	Explanation
Use a calm tone of voice	If your voice is panicked, you will portray a situation of panic, which may encourage the parent to feel panicked. If you can't maintain a calm tone of voice, have someone else inform the parent and you can follow up when you are better able to.
Give the parent time to listen and react	The parent may become angry, scared, unsure of what to do, overwhelmed or relieved, but it is better that they do so with you than to go home and express these emotions in an environment where they may have no support and no additional information.
Show empathy for the family	Empathy means that you try to identify with and understand the other person's situation. This doesn't mean that you say, 'I know how you feel' as you do not know how they feel unless you have experienced the same situation. It also does not mean that you should feel sorry for the family; rather, show genuine concern and commit to resolving the issue.

Each incident and family is different – some families will be devastated by an event, while others will feel supported and cope well in the same situation.

Example

Parents react to an incident

Helga, an educator, is assisting a small group of children to hang up their paintings. When she looks up, she sees Jack (four years) holding a tie from the dress-up corner around Kimberly's neck. Kimberly is red-faced and pulling at the tie with her hands while trying to catch her breath. Helga quickly moves to help Kimberly and calls for assistance.

When Helga relates the situation to the children's parents, she ensures they are in a confidential space. The following occurs:

Kimberly's mother starts yelling, saying, 'You are meant to be looking after my child!' She wants to know who the other child is and how to contact their parents. She says she will report the service and demands to know what will be done to stop this from happening again.

After hearing of his son's actions, Jack's dad becomes distraught and needs some time to talk through his feelings. He asks if Helga can recommend a counselling service as he feels he can't let Jack attend the service until he knows everyone will be safe. He says he feels like his son is a monster and he needs help to stop this concerning behaviour.

The next day, Helga again speaks to the families and discusses the situation with each parent. She asks, 'Is there anything you need from us today?' to open discussion between the parents and herself about the incident and its impact.

Kimberly's mother apologises for her reaction and says that she was just shocked. She didn't report the service, but wants to know that Kimberly is cared for in a safe environment.

Jack doesn't come into the service in the morning. Helga calls his family to check if they are okay, but Jack's mum says she feels they should have a meeting together about Jack's behaviour before he returns to care. She also wants to contact Kimberly's mother to apologise.

Continuing the communication

The impact of an incident may result in a loss of confidence in you or the service. Should this occur, you must address it immediately. To do so, and to ensure your ongoing relationship with a family is successful, you must continue communication after an incident.

Good communication management techniques include:

▶ listening actively

▶ telling people what you are doing or what you need in advance

▶ providing enough information

▶ ensuring your information or message is consistent

▶ having realistic expectations.

The barriers to effective communication also need to be considered and catered for, if appropriate. For example, you may need to:

▶ use a translator or interpreter

▶ maintain privacy and/or confidentiality

▶ decrease formality

▶ consider timing (when is the right or best time to communicate)

▶ determine who is the right person to share information with

▶ think about how messages can best be relayed.

Think about all the things that could occur and then identify which of these are related to the family's specific situation. To find this out, you may observe their reactions or ask questions. Some families will be very open in telling you what is happening, while others will be less so.

Identifying options for response

Despite the fact that it may take time for parents to discuss an incident, you should be working within the service to identify options for response. Again, every family is different.

▶ Some parents will be happy to be involved in developing these options.
▶ Some may feel it is your responsibility.
▶ Some may prefer you to provide them with ideas so they can decide which strategy they feel most confident with.

Involving parents at this level is not just about doing the right thing. Parents involved in developing a solution soon see that you hold their child's (and their own) interests at heart, and that you wish to resolve the situation in a manner responsive to all their needs. This in turn creates a feeling of security and respect.

You may involve parents in the following ways:

▶ Hold a private meeting to review the situation and share information and ideas for action.
▶ Hold a group meeting with parents and other people who may be involved, including specialists and other educators.
▶ Ask them directly which solution they feel is most suitable.
▶ Ask them if the solution you decide on suits their needs.

When you do communicate with parents, make sure that you:

▶ have an agenda
▶ provide all of the recorded information
▶ access information about referral services
▶ keep a copy of the service policies and procedures close at hand.

As meetings can be very overwhelming for any family, communicate clearly. Write down everything that is discussed at the meeting, including any comments and ideas that people have made. These may be used later to:

▶ help resolve other issues
▶ reflect on if a specialist is involved
▶ discuss further
▶ put into action any decisions that have been made.

Practice task 6

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

1. How would you report this incident to Bernadette's parents?

2. How would you report this incident to Amelia's parents?

3. What method would you use to consult with parents to identify options for response?

2D Other children affected by behaviours of concern

While children displaying behaviours of concern gain appropriate support and planning, the effect of these behaviours on other children must also be observed.

In some situations, you may notice that children who are not displaying behaviours of concern need additional help to ensure they are not adversely affected, and support to allow them to develop strategies for feeling safe.

Whatever strategies are put in place for the child displaying behaviours of concern, you must also ensure that other children do not imitate or gain positive consequences from displaying similar concerning behaviours.

How others may be affected

When children regularly display a specific behaviour of concern, others in the group may be affected by it. They may begin to respond in their own ways; for example, they may become:

▶ withdrawn

▶ frightened

▶ unwilling to participate in activities when certain children are present

▶ emotional, crying and clingy towards educators

▶ upset at drop-off times, not wanting their parents to leave

▶ vigilant, watching the child and telling on them for any reason

▶ distracted.

Where it is age-appropriate, always ensure that you:

▶ care for any physical injury

▶ show compassion to the affected child

▶ discuss how the affected child is feeling

▶ explain the feelings of the child causing the situation

▶ provide strategies for avoiding the situation or incident if possible.

Some children may also:

▶ tell parents about other children

▶ display or copy the same types of behaviour

▶ work alongside the child and copy or support their behaviour

▶ try to achieve the function or consequence they think this child is achieving.

Example

Helping a child affected by another child

Rosy has just had a tantrum that lasted for 10 minutes. During this time, Rosy ran through the room pulling activities from the tables, throwing items across the room, running from educators and screaming at children and adults.

Siv was sitting at the puzzle table during the incident. She stopped her activity and watched with tears streaming down her cheeks.

An educator noticed Siv's reaction and went to her promptly. She said, 'Siv, are you okay? Do you feel scared?' Siv nodded. The educator continued, 'Rosy is very angry. She wants to tell us how angry she is, but she doesn't know how to use words yet. You are safe here. I will stay with you'.

When Siv's mother picks her up, the educator tells her that Siv had a fright today when another child was angry. She reassures her that Siv is fine physically, but may like to talk about how she felt.

Involving parents

The parents of children who may have been affected by behaviours of concern have the right to know about their child's experiences. This forms the basics of sharing information.

Once again, confidentiality is important, as is a positive interpretation and approach. Make time for this family to take in the information you provide and be ready for their response. Some families will want to know who the other child is, and may be angry that the incident has occurred. Other families may understand the situation and react more calmly.

Mostly families will want to know that you have strategies in place to ensure their child is not involved negatively again.

Talking to children

Talking to individual and small groups of children about the situation may also be beneficial, as behaviours of concern stem from children not being able to express their emotions adequately or ask for what they want. Talking to the other children in the room about these topics can assist them to do so.

The following table provides examples of how you could approach this task, based on age-appropriate strategies.

Age	Details	Example
0–2 years	Infants and toddlers often respond to extreme behaviour by expressing emotions. If one child begins to cry, it is common that others will as well. To support infants, you can talk in very simple sentences about what is happening and about the feelings involved.	You may say, 'Joanie, Gregory is very sad; he is crying. You are with me now. I will look after you.'

Age	Details	Example
2–3 years	Young children are sometimes intrigued by the extreme behaviour of others, and sometimes afraid. Due to their stage of development, they may try to replicate the behaviour, unaware of what its function is or what the consequences may be. Toddlers will respond to your discussion with them one to one, and sometimes to small group discussions. Obviously, when you talk to the children, the child who demonstrates the behaviour could be involved, although you should not focus on them.	You may conduct a discussion time or story time about a particular feeling or emotion and talk to the children about how they can express this. You may ask them what words they could use to ask for what they want, and give them examples.
Over 3 years	Older children can demonstrate a much more complex understanding. You could carry out individual and group discussions or activities as you would for toddlers; however, your activities could be much more detailed and your involvement of the children more demanding.	This may include discussion about how other children feel if you demonstrate particular actions or what a child should do if they notice another child acting in a certain way. This discussion may be backed up by a related story.

Practice task 7

Find a storybook to help you support children who witness other children expressing feelings and emotions through a behaviour of concern. Complete these tasks.

1. Name the title and author of this book.

    ....

    ....

2. Briefly describe what the story is about.

    ....

    ....

    ....

3. List the incidents you would link it to and the possible needs and concerns of the children who may be affected by the behaviour.

    ....

    ....

4. Explain how you would use this book to support these children. Make sure your strategies are appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child.

Summary

▶ You may be required to monitor and record a specific child's behaviour due to an incident, change in behaviour or behaviour of concern.

▶ To understand behaviours of concern, you must first learn about them through observing, listening and recording information. You need to collect the right information to ensure it is useful for analysis.

▶ Observational data can be collected in a variety of ways. Many workplaces encourage a combination of methods to create a more holistic view of the child's performance and development.

▶ To be able to make sense of your observations about behaviour, there are specific things that you need to know in order to analyse what is occurring.

▶ There are many reasons why a child displays behaviours of concern, and any number of factors can contribute. By analysing the information you collect, you can create a profile of the child and the behaviour to assist you to identify its causes, functions and influences.

▶ There are many reasons why children exhibit behaviours of concern, and all children respond to and cope with situations in different ways.

▶ The functions/consequences of behaviour are what the child is attempting to gain by displaying the behaviour.

▶ To gain appropriate support, you need to seek advice, interpret the child's behaviour and make decisions regarding your plan of action. It is essential that you include others involved with the child.

▶ If behaviours of concern are not dealt with, they can and will continue, and may even increase in severity and frequency.

▶ When children regularly display specific behaviours of concern, others in the group may be affected and begin to respond in their own ways.

Learning checkpoint 2
Identifying and reviewing behaviour as required

Part A

1. Observe and document the behaviour of one child. Use a format that is appropriate in your service (for example, via an anecdotal record or an observation form). Document the following details:

   ▶ The behaviour:
   – What happened?
   – Where did it happen?
   – Who else was involved?

   ▶ Antecedents:
   – What happened before the behaviour occurred?
   – What triggered the behaviour?

   ▶ Consequence of the behaviour:
   – Why did the child exhibit the behaviour?
   – What happened because of it?

   ▶ Setting:
   – Where did the behaviour occur?
   – Describe the expectations, how it was presented, the space, materials, safety, people, interactions, approaches, limits and guidelines.

   ▶ Frequency:
   – How often did the behaviour occur?

   ▶ Intensity:
   – To what extent did the child act out the behaviour?

   ▶ Duration:
   – How long did the behaviour last for?
   – Do you think this behaviour is appropriate or inappropriate? Explain why.

Part B

1. Discuss the child's behaviour with at least one other educator involved in caring for the child. Ask the following questions and record their answers.

   a. What can they tell you about the child?

b. What process would they use to seek further advice about the child's behaviour?

c. How would they facilitate an analysis of the child's behaviour with all those involved in caring for the child?

d. How would they gather this information; for example, anecdotal notes, a checklist, information discussion or a meeting?

2. Use the observational data you collected in Part A and the information you collected from the educator to complete a consultation record for the child. Set it out in the following table or similar.

Record of consultation	
Child's name	
Age	
Behaviour	
Who was involved	

Variables that may impact behaviour	Temperament	
	Lifestyle stressors	
	Environment and curriculum influences	
	Developmental challenges	
	Emotional/social problems	
	Behaviour disorder	
	Trauma	
Cultural implications		
Trigger		

Function/consequences analysis	
Needs of other children affected	
Actions taken	
Advice sought	

3. Describe how you would discuss the child's behaviour with their parents. Answer the following questions.

    a. What information would you give the parents about the child?

    ....

    ....

    ....

    b. How do you think they would react?

    ....

    ....

    ....

    c. How would you respond to their expected reaction?

    ....

    ....

    ....

d. How would you continue to communicate with the child's parents so there is open communication and information can continue to be shared?

Part C

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

1. What does your service policy say to do in this situation?

2. Discuss the situation with a colleague. What is their advice?

3. What authority would you contact for support? Include the local contact details for this authority.

Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

3A **Creating a behaviour plan**

Developing a behaviour plan

When specific concerning behaviours have been analysed, behaviour plans can be used to record long- and short-term goals, appropriate strategies and guidance techniques that all staff will implement with the child. Such plans can ensure consistency is provided, and that there are measurable and reflective materials to refer to.

When constructing and preparing a behaviour plan, you need to consult other colleagues, staff, families and parents, as well as any outside support services.

By working together with all those involved, you will enable the best possible practice and the most effective response to the child's needs.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
✓	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
✓	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership

Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	
Partnerships	
✓ High expectations and equity	
✓ Respect for diversity	
✓ Ongoing learning and reflective practice	
Practice	
Holistic approaches	Holistic approaches
✓ Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
Learning through play	Learning through play
Intentional teaching	Intentionality
Learning environments	Environments
Cultural competence	Cultural competence
Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
✓ Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
Outcomes	
Children have a strong sense of identity	
✓ Children are connected to and contribute to their world	
Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	
Children are confident and involved learners	
Children are effective communicators	

3A Creating a behaviour plan

A behaviour plan can be used for any child whose behaviour you feel would benefit from a consistent approach. In most circumstances, this will mean that you have identified concerning behaviour, attempted to implement some techniques, but continue to feel concern. This would lead you to involving others to help you approach this behaviour in a more strategic manner.

In many cases, you will arrive at the development stage of a behaviour plan feeling great concern for the child's welfare. If possible, a behaviour plan should be put into place prior to the issues increasing to a worrying degree. It is far better to jump in early with plans for the child than to wait too long and be faced with a big problem and a child and family who are distressed.

You must do the following when developing an appropriate behaviour plan:

▶ Follow the service philosophy, policies and procedures.
▶ Consider relevant cultural practices.
▶ Consult with others.
▶ Liaise with authorities.
▶ Establish a baseline for behaviour.
▶ Identify acceptable alternative behaviours.
▶ Decide on a response.
▶ Develop goals and objectives.
▶ Ensure the plan is realistic and can be resourced appropriately.

Following the service guidelines

A behaviour plan must meet the requirements of your service philosophy, policies and procedures.

Your service philosophy outlines the values and beliefs of the service in regard to confidentiality, consultation, reporting and recording, including processes that involve specialists and referral. The policies and procedures provide strategies for behaviour guidance. They may even provide an outline for developing a behaviour plan.

Together, the philosophy, policies and procedures show how your service meets external requirements and legislation. This is outlined in the following table.

Service guidelines	How a plan complies
Philosophy	▶ NQS ▶ EYLF ▶ MTOP ▶ The Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics

Policies and procedures	▶ Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations:
	  – Regulation 168: Education and care service must have policies and procedures – this includes in relation to interaction with children
	  – Regulation 155: Interactions with children – you must take reasonable steps to ensure that education and care is provided in a way that gives each child positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour and has regard to their family and cultural values, age, and physical and intellectual development and abilities.
	▶ NQS:
	  – Incident, injury, trauma and illness
	  – Interactions with children
	  – Collaboration with families
	  – Safe environment for children
	  – Protecting others from harm
	  – All children are treated equally

When developing a behaviour plan, be aware of the frameworks and legislation involved and make sure the philosophy, policies and procedures of your workplace are reflected in the plan.

Understanding appropriate cultural practices is also important as you look for the cause of the child's behaviour and establish guidelines for the child.

Consulting with others

Consulting with others is an important part of developing a behaviour plan. One person cannot have all of the relevant information. You need a more holistic view of the child to decide on the best approach to the situation and their behaviour.

As you seek information, you may end up consulting with children, other family members, colleagues, staff and even specialists or referral groups (if appropriate). It is always better to consult with too many people than not enough.

Remember, developing a behaviour plan about a child is a collaborative task. Always seek permission from parents before any consultation takes place.

Consulting with family members

You cannot develop a behaviour plan without talking to the child's family. Family members should be able to tell you about the child's:

▶ background

▶ behaviours at home

▶ medical and illness history

▶ customs, cultures and beliefs

▶ current practices implemented with the child in the home environment.

Consulting with colleagues

Other educators and staff who have been involved in caring for the child are another good source of information. They should be able to share information about:

▶ behaviours that have been observed

▶ ideas and expectations of the management plan

▶ feelings and expectations of strategies to be implemented

▶ own values and beliefs

▶ their relationship with the family and child.

Consulting with other carers

Other people may be involved in caring for the child, such as grandparents, educators from other services, foster carers or extended family members.

They should also be consulted when developing a behaviour plan. They should be able to tell you about:

▶ their ability and confidence to implement strategies outlined in the plan

▶ reasonable expectations and time frames

▶ ideas and opinions

▶ their relationship with the child.

Consulting with children

Children are a good source of information when it comes to developing a behaviour plan. They see things from a different perspective and may identify information that you have not thought of.

A behaviour that is concerning or illogical to you might be quite reasonable to a child. Most importantly, when children are involved in developing their own behaviour plan, they own the outcome. They are able to identify the strategies they feel comfortable with, suggest ideas that make sense to them and verbalise why the behaviour works for them or is uncontrolled, which may allow you to investigate alternative solutions.

Children should be able to think of:

▶ different reasons why they behave and feel the way they do

▶ alternative ideas for expression

▶ ways they might be able to help their peers

▶ things they can do when another child is having difficulties.

The following table outlines different strategies for collecting children's ideas.

Discuss things in a group	Groups can be large or small, planned or spontaneous. Make sure the group is made up of relevant children. Talk about: ▶ feelings ▶ ways to express emotions ▶ words to use to tell others what you need ▶ what to do if someone else is angry at you ▶ limits and guidelines and why/how they protect us from being hurt ▶ what to do if you cannot meet the limits and guidelines.
Talk to the child one-on-one	Children are emotionally charged during behaviour events. Try talking to them during regular times of the day. This type of interaction works best while the children are carrying out a routine task. Another opportunity is if the child is early or late to a program, or they are helping you out with a task. Chat about: ▶ their interests – develop a rapport with and an understanding of the child ▶ how they feel ▶ what makes them angry, sad and happy ▶ what you can do to support them during the day ▶ strategies for avoiding events and issues that are triggers.
Observe their behaviour	Identify: ▶ triggers ▶ functions and consequences ▶ who they work well with ▶ who they conflict with ▶ positive behaviours ▶ abilities and skills that can lead to positive outcomes.

Liaising with authorities

When advice is required outside of your service, it is recommended that you contact the Inclusion Support Programme (ISP). This program helps you monitor children's behaviour to determine strategies and support services you might require. The program also provides advice on how to include and support all children in your service. More details about the program can be found in section 2B.

If you decide to contact support personnel or governing bodies, you need detailed information about the child available for their use. This may include your observation records or behaviour plans already commenced. They may also need access to parents, educators and specialists involved. The authority may ask about:

▶ the child's family
▶ the child's cultural and/or religious background
▶ the length of time the child has been involved with the service
▶ specific behaviours of concern
▶ parent/family consent details.

Most services require you to gain parent signatures on forms intended for the authority.

Establishing a baseline for behaviour

A 'baseline' refers to the initial measurement of what is occurring – in this case, the current behaviour of concern. The baseline is a record of the details of the behaviour of concern that the child is demonstrating before a behaviour plan is implemented. This baseline behaviour can be compared with the child's behaviour after the behaviour plan has been implemented, providing some measure of the plan's success.

The observation records you take and the information you collect from others allows you to establish a baseline.

Example

Event sample

Child: Otto
Date: 26.11.17
Setting: Indoor play

Behaviours being observed:
▲ Reactions to events
▲ Biting

Age: Five years
Recorded by: Harriet

Time when behaviour occurs	Setting	Behaviour details	What is happening just before the behaviour	Who else is involved	Intensity of behaviour Low = no aggression to others Med = aggressive with environment High = aggressive with other children			Duration of behaviour	Further information
					Low	Med	High		
9.35am	Sand	Otto threw a handful of sand, then fell into the sand. He cried and would not respond to any educator who asked him if he needed help. Otto recovered when Gordon entered the sandpit and began to work with the sand.	He was building a sandcastle, but the sand was not wet enough	No one	X			10 minutes	

Analysis (based on this record): Otto has demonstrated that he is not aggressive; however, he is unable to easily recover from events where his plans are not achieved. Otto's emotional reactions last approximately 10 minutes. Otto's behaviour is not age-appropriate.

Your analysis or evaluation of this record provides the baseline. Many services include the baseline as part of their behaviour plan records.

The details that provide you with the baseline include:

- the behaviour
- who is involved
- the trigger
- influences
- the function or consequences.

Identifying acceptable alternative behaviours

All of your goals and objectives will be based on the positive alternative behaviour that you want the child to develop. Your focus should be on seeing the child develop these skills and abilities, enabling them to achieve a positive outcome. As you express this positive outlook, others will identify the progress being made and the child will be seen as capable and competent.

Acceptable alternative behaviours can be identified by following these steps:

1. Identify the inappropriate behaviour or behaviour of concern.
2. Identify the triggers/antecedents (see Topic 2).
3. Identify the functions of the behaviour – the possible reasons/consequences for the behaviour (see Topic 2).
4. Identify how the child might achieve the same function through an acceptable alternative behaviour.
5. Use that acceptable alternative behaviour as your goal. For example, 'The child will use the acceptable alternative behaviour to . . .'

Example

Setting behaviour goals

Child	Vera
Age	Four years
Behaviour	Vera pinches children extremely hard, sometimes leaving a bruise.
Who was involved	Educators and other children in the room
Trigger	Group time
Function/ consequences analysis	The function of Vera's pinching is that other children move away and she has enough space to feel comfortable.
Other information	Vera should be capable of talking to others and saying, 'I need more room, please.' She is also capable of telling an adult if she needs more space.
Goal	The goal for Vera is to tell other children that she needs more room if she is crowded and to seek adult help if no one listens to her.
Objective/s	▶ For Vera to wait with an educator until the group has settled into their places. ▶ For Vera to be supported to choose a space that she feels will allow her to have enough room.

Acceptable behaviours vary depending on the child's age, stage of development, individual temperament, lifestyle, culture and background. Variations of each child's individual needs may still have the same outcomes and expectations.

Example	**Acceptable alternative behaviours**
	Adele, four years, has very few English language skills and cannot use sentences to communicate her needs or play situations with others. Simple words and body language may be used to meet her needs, and for her to feel secure and have a sense of belonging within the environment.
	Neville is unable to play alongside others unless an educator is present. He too can be encouraged to use simple words. The words 'No' and 'Stop' when playing with others will meet his needs and ensure the safety of others within the environment.

Deciding on a response

Different support techniques are required for different children, at different times and in different situations. A behaviour plan should reflect what you want to achieve and how you are going to achieve it. Sometimes the most difficult part of developing a behaviour plan is identifying which strategy to prescribe for which behaviour, and what level of support is required. Individual children need their own specific support actions.

Basic strategies

The following table outlines some of the different strategies and when you might use them. Keep in mind that each child and each behaviour of concern requires an individual approach.

Strategy	Level of support in a behaviour plan	When most suitable
Role-modelling	▶ Used at all times	This strategy is useful in all situations. It should be prescribed in all behaviour support plans and incorporated into daily education and care interactions.
Choices	▶ Most children can respond.	This strategy is useful when: ▶ children can or are developing the skill to decide for themselves ▶ you want the child to take responsibility for their actions or ideas ▶ you know the child is able to make a safe choice.

Strategy	Level of support in a behaviour plan	When most suitable
Problem-solving	▶ This requires the child to be at a cognitive stage capable of being able to solve a problem as well as a social and emotional stage of wanting to cooperate and make a decision.	This strategy is useful when: ▶ you want to extend the child's thinking about what is happening or what could happen ▶ the child is capable of working with you to solve problems ▶ the child can benefit from seeing things from a variety of viewpoints ▶ you want the child to identify what the consequence of an action will be.
Consequences	▶ Most children can respond. ▶ Some children will challenge the consequence, so consistency is important. ▶ This can be effective in relation to many types of behaviours of concern and in many different situations.	This strategy is useful when: ▶ the child is unable to decide for themselves ▶ unsafe behaviour is occurring ▶ you need clear behaviour boundaries or outcomes ▶ children are testing boundaries.
Redirection and defusing	▶ High level of support required. ▶ When used in daily interactions, redirection is simple and a general practice (low level). ▶ When used as a prescribed technique, it often helps avert dangerous situations or stop learnt behaviour before it gets out of control. ▶ If the triggers of the child's behaviour are known, redirection can defuse this if used in a timely manner.	This strategy is useful when: ▶ a situation is not productive ▶ control is an issue ▶ you need to move from one situation to another ▶ discussions or other strategies are not suitable ▶ you need to stop what is occurring and you still have enough control to divert attention away from negative behaviour.

Techniques for acknowledging responsible behaviour

There are many techniques for acknowledging responsible behaviour. These should be included in behaviour plans as they show the child that they are on the right track. The most successful techniques are:

▶ positive reinforcement

▶ encouragement

▶ positive language

▶ nonverbal strategies.

Be sure to check your plan and include techniques that suit the child. If one is not successful, try another.

Watch this video for more about nonverbal behaviour and encouragement.

Developing goals

Goals and objectives are important. They provide guidance and direction, give structure to your planning and help you to monitor and evaluate the outcomes.

The goals of the plan should explain what you ultimately want the child to achieve. They should:

▶ reflect the alternative behaviour/s you want the child to demonstrate

▶ align with the abilities, age and developmental stage of the child.

The goals of the plan are set as a guide.

Each goal should reflect and be based on:

▶ the results of your consultation and observations

▶ behaviours you wish to alter

▶ the behaviours you want a child to demonstrate instead of their current behaviour (known as alternative behaviours)

▶ realistic expectations – for example, you would expect all children to sometimes be angry and break the rules.

Before you set a goal, you must be clear about your direction. This direction enables you to identify solutions. Consider the following:

▶ your understanding of any behaviour

▶ the environment

▶ the program

▶ skills that can be taught

▶ strategies that have been unsuccessful

▶ new strategies or altered strategies that you may wish to try

▶ the policies, procedures and philosophy of your service

▶ cultural norms and processes for responding to behaviours that are already in place

▶ resources available

▶ consultation

▶ alternative behaviours.

By considering all of these factors, you will be able to identify the direction you need to take to guide the child's behaviour successfully.

If you have gathered all the information you can about a child and considered all directions and solutions, yet you are still not clear about your goal or feel a lack of confidence in your ability to resolve the situation, gain support from an experienced and respected colleague. You could also consult your state or territory ISP.

Developing objectives

The objectives of the plan should state how you are going to achieve the goals. They should be based on the strategies and techniques used to support the child to change their behaviour. They can either focus on the actions of the child or the educator.

Objectives are the achievable steps that you take to reach your goals. Behavioural change does not happen instantly. Therefore, identify both long- and short-term objectives.

To create objectives, you should do the following.

Brainstorm	Identify each part of the goal starting from where you are now and where you are hoping to be. Ask yourself what steps the child will need to take in order to move from their current behaviour to the behaviour you envisage in your goal.
Prioritise	Identify behaviours that are a threat to the safety or health of the child and/or others, and then prioritise them from most threatening to least threatening. When you prioritise, you may need to further break down each step.

After brainstorming and prioritising, select the objectives that can be attempted immediately or within a short time. These are the short-term objectives. Other objectives may take a little longer to achieve, but are still part of the overall behavioural goal. These are the long-term objectives. Further objectives may be added to the plan as it is reviewed.

When you write objectives, it is often useful to consider the following questions:

▶ Who will read them?

▶ What do they need to include?

▶ Why are they being written?

▶ When do they need to be used and how soon do they need to be implemented?

▶ How will they be shared with others?

If your objectives are too large or challenging, the child may experience failure or not understand what is happening. This can lead to further concerning behaviour. Tell the child what you want them to achieve and ensure that your objectives are achievable.

Objectives should always indicate what you want to happen rather than what you do not want to happen. Ensure the objectives are measurable so you know whether you are experiencing success. To write a measurable objective, you can use the acronym SMART:

▶ Specific – it must specify what you want to achieve.

▶ Measurable – it should measure whether or not you are meeting the objectives.

▶ Achievable – it must be achievable and attainable.

▶ Realistic – it must be realistically achievable with the resources you have.

▶ Time – specify when you want to achieve the set objective and/or the period of time in which you wish to achieve this objective.

Example

Setting behaviour goals

Libby, an educator, is caring for a child who kicks other children if they do not do what she asks them to. The child has been observed and consultation has taken place with the child's mother and the supervisor. Libby has found that:

▶ the child only kicks girls

▶ kicking only occurs after the child makes a second request

▶ the function of the kicking is to make the other child leave the play area.

Libby sets a goal:

▶ For the child to share her ideas and listen to the ideas of others when in a group.

Libby sets the following objectives:

▶ For an educator to move to any group the child enters to assist her to ask questions to solve problems she faces.

▶ For the child to contribute one idea toward problem-solving when an educator asks.

▶ For an educator to remove the child to an individual activity if she kicks others by taking her hand firmly and saying in a friendly way, 'Let's go to this other activity.'

Ensuring the plan is realistic

Any plan must take into account the resources available to you. Its intentions will not be achieved if you expect or hope for time, space, people or material resources that you do not have. Plans must be realistic for them to work. You can adjust the plan at a later time if you gain the resources you were hoping for.

The types of resources you may need are outlined in the following table.

Human resources	▶ Additional staff ▶ Extra qualified staff ▶ Specialists ▶ Support staff or services ▶ Parents ▶ Other significant people relevant to the child ▶ ISP
Time	▶ Meeting time ▶ Planning time ▶ Discussion time ▶ Relaxation or stress-relief time ▶ Set-up time ▶ Handover time ▶ Research time
Environment	▶ Quiet areas ▶ Larger activity areas ▶ Increased number of activity areas ▶ Clear areas ▶ Defined areas

Materials and equipment	▶ Communication boards ▶ Reference books ▶ The internet ▶ Research tools ▶ Posters
Financial resources	▶ Wages ▶ Equipment funding for general materials and resources

These resources may also be affected by the safety and legal requirements of your service, such as:

▶ staff ratios

▶ behaviour problems

▶ medical problems

▶ duty-of-care responsibilities

▶ sun safety policy

▶ staff ratios for excursions

▶ high-risk activities

▶ weather.

Example

Behaviour plan

Name: Billy	Age: 3.5 years	Plan no: 1	Date: 14/02/18
Those involved in developing the plan	Billy's parents, room leader, qualified educator		
Name and contact details of relevant specialists, referral bodies and authorities	Not applicable		
Behaviour	When Billy approaches an activity where other children are already playing, he takes toys from the children and uses physical force to move into the play area – punching, pinching, pushing and biting.		
Who was involved	The other children in the room		
Variables that may impact on behaviour	None identified		
Cultural implications	Billy is an only child. He has little experience of other children outside of the service.		
Trigger	Billy wants to join in play with the other children.		
Function/ consequences analysis	Billy is attempting to join the play of others. We believe this as when the children move away or become upset, Billy frowns and says, 'What is it?' or 'Play!' and then continues to play at the activity.		

Acceptable alternative behaviour	For Billy to play independently with other children in the group in a range of play situations.
Goal	For Billy to play independently with other children.
Long-term objectives (possible steps to alternative behaviour)	For Billy to play parallel to other children in a variety of play spaces with adult support.
	For Billy to move into experiences independently and passively, and be able to join the current activity working parallel to other children.
Short-term objectives (what we can do now)	For Billy to enter an experience with the help of an adult, speaking about what he might do prior to moving to the area.
	For Billy to be assisted to become involved in a quiet activity with another child and an adult.
Resources and materials needed	An educator to work one-on-one with Billy
Relationship-based strategies for response	Environment: Ensure an adult is aware of Billy's actions and is available to assist as described.

Practice task 8

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

> ## Case study
>
> You have been working with Billy, but after two weeks the objectives have not been achieved.
>
> You notice that Billy is particularly aggressive when Jonah and Michael (both four-and-a-half years) are in the play area.
>
> You also notice that Jonah calls Billy 'Bully' and that he often taunts Billy before he acts aggressively towards Jonah. Jonah sees Billy coming to the space where he is playing and says, 'Get away, bully! Your name is Bully'.
>
> You feel that you need support from an outside authority.

1. Develop a new behaviour plan for Billy. Include the following:

    a. Information about Billy and his relationship with Jonah

    b. A new short-term objective

    c. Resources you will need

    d. Colleagues who will support you

    e. What you will say to Billy's parents to explain why you are revising the plan and why you want to obtain support outside of the service

    f. The name and contact details of authorities mentioned in your service policy that you could refer to for help

2. Do the following for Jonah:

    a. Identify a more acceptable/appropriate behaviour in response to Billy.

    b. Develop a goal that reflects this acceptable behaviour.

c. Develop one objective that you would focus on first.

d. If you heard Jonah's father calling him an idiot, how would this alter your expectations for Jonah? Would you change your objective? If so, what objective would you set?

3. Summarise what your service philosophy says about protecting the rights of others. How does this apply to the situation with Billy and Jonah?

Summary

▶ A behaviour plan can be used for any child whose behaviour you feel would benefit from a consistent approach.

▶ Behaviour plans must meet the requirements of your service policies, procedures and philosophy.

▶ The goals and objectives of a behaviour plan should reflect the alternative acceptable behaviours, and supporting strategies and techniques you have identified for the child.

▶ Consultation with parents is an essential part of developing a behaviour plan.

▶ When advice is required outside of your service, it is recommended that you contact the Inclusion Support Programme (ISP).

Learning checkpoint 3
Developing a behaviour plan

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

> **Case study**
>
> Pablo attends your service and you are his educator. He is two-and-a-half years old and his development is age- and stage-appropriate. His interests include trains, dinosaurs and Peppa Pig. Pablo's cultural background is Spanish, although he understands and speaks basic English.
>
> Pablo frequently bites the other children in his group, even though there is an educator in the room monitoring his behaviour. This happens mainly when he wants toys that the other children have.
>
> Your supervisor has asked you to help develop a plan that will support Pablo to use a more acceptable alternative behaviour. She also suggests that as Pablo is from a culturally and linguistically different background, you might contact the ISP for some advice. They may be able to help you determine strategies and whether any other support services are required.

1. Complete a behaviour plan for Pablo that includes all remaining sections of the example plan below.

Behaviour plan			
Name: Pablo	**Age:** 2.5 years	**Plan no:** 1	**Date:**
Those involved in developing the plan			
Who could provide ongoing professional support – specialists, referral bodies, authorities			
Behaviour	Pablo bites other children.		
Who was involved	Educators and other children in the room.		
Environment and curriculum influences			

Cultural implications		
Trigger	Pablo wants the toys that other children are playing with.	
Function/ consequence analysis	Pablo uses this behaviour to communicate that he wants something.	
Baseline behaviour		
Acceptable alternative behaviour		
Goals		
Long-term objectives (possible steps to alternative behaviour)		
Short-term objectives (what we can do now)		
Resources and materials needed		
Relationship-based strategies for response	Environment:	Curriculum:

2. Your service philosophy, policies and procedures underpin the protocols in your workplace. Name **three** aspects of these guidelines that must be addressed when developing a behaviour plan.

Topic 4

In this topic you will learn about:

4A Supporting the child to use appropriate behaviour

4B Supporting colleagues to implement the behaviour plan

4C Reviewing the child's behaviour against the plan

Implementing and monitoring a behaviour plan

When developing a behaviour plan, your key objective is to support the child to express themselves and meet their needs in a socially acceptable way. The way you implement the plan depends on the specific behaviour or behaviours being displayed, current knowledge, resources available and the additional support you have access to.

Behaviour plans should be reviewed for effectiveness within a realistic time frame. Although you cannot expect behaviour to change immediately, you must respond to any changes the child is making on a regular basis; for example, after a week, a fortnight or a month.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
✓	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
✓	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
✓	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership

Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	
✓ Partnerships	
✓ High expectations and equity	
Respect for diversity	
✓ Ongoing learning and reflective practice	
Practice	
Holistic approaches	Holistic approaches
✓ Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
✓ Learning through play	Learning through play
✓ Intentional teaching	Intentionality
Learning environments	Environments
Cultural competence	Cultural competence
Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
✓ Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
Outcomes	
Children have a strong sense of identity	
✓ Children are connected to and contribute to their world	
Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	
Children are confident and involved learners	
Children are effective communicators	

4A Supporting the child to use appropriate behaviour

Once the behaviour plan has been developed, you begin the next stage: implementation. Your role is to encourage, support and assist the child and those who are implementing the plan. The child will need you to use various strategies to help them understand the changes, and be able to implement the behaviour and communication that fits with your behavioural expectations.

Helping the child understand expectations

There are a number of ways to help a child understand the specific expectations outlined in their behaviour plan. Always consider the age and developmental stage of the child. You should:

▶ use relationship-based strategies

▶ make your objectives achievable

▶ manage the change process

▶ remember to include the child.

Age and stage of development

How you involve and support a child in a behaviour plan depends on their age and stage of development. A good example of this is how you might talk to a child to clearly outline their alternative behaviours.

If you are working with an older child, such as a preschool-aged child, you might say the following:

▶ 'Matthew, I am going to sit with you while you are playing at the train table. I can help you find the right words when you are talking with others.'

▶ 'Matthew, you seem to be having trouble talking to other children when they are near you. You need to use words to tell them what you need. What words could you use?'

▶ 'Matthew, when you hit other children, they don't want to play with you. What could you say to tell them what you want to do?'

Younger children will not have the understanding or capability to work at this level. You can show respect by talking to them about what you are doing, but you will be sharing information more than inviting them to participate and comment.

If you are working with a toddler, you might say the following:

▶ 'Dallas, how about you tell Sam, "No"? I can see you are angry at her.'

▶ 'Dallas, do you want to keep playing with those toys? Maybe you could say, "Mine".'

With infants and toddlers, a redirection technique is often used. The techniques for redirection can be found in Topic 1. Redirection essentially involves acknowledging the child's feelings and then moving them into a new activity or behaviour.

Relationship-based strategies

Always use relationship-based strategies. These strategies focus on strengthening the relationship between yourself and the child. A child who has a trusting and positive relationship will more freely accept your help and advice as they will feel safe and respected by you.

Relationship-based behaviours include:

▶ positive reinforcement
▶ encouragement
▶ positive language
▶ nonverbal strategies
▶ role-modelling
▶ offering choices.

Setting achievable objectives

To help a child understand your expectations for their behaviour, you must set achievable objectives in the behaviour plan. If your objectives are too challenging or require a significant change, the child may experience failure or not understand what is happening. This can lead to further concerning behaviour. Tell the child plainly what you would like to achieve.

Change does not happen instantly. The child may need some time to adapt to a change in the environment or the way people react. Older children may need to be told what the changes will be and how you will react differently. This gives them the opportunity to understand what is happening, show that they understand your ideas and, in some situations, come up with a better alternative.

> **Example**
>
> **Setting an achievable objective**
>
> Jan, three years, hits children who attempt to take her toys. Giselle, an educator, sets the following objective for Jan: 'For Jan to be assisted by an educator to say "No" to children who want to use her toys'.
>
> Jan is able to achieve this objective as she has support and the objective is aimed at Jan's age and stage of development. If the objective was: 'For Jan to tell other children "No, these are my toys" when they want to use her toys', she would not have enough support, and the words would be too difficult for her to remember and use. It is likely that Jan would not succeed at this objective.

Involving the child in developing a behaviour plan

The child can sometimes be involved in the decision-making and planning of their behaviour plan. Children suited to this type of activity are those who understand their own behaviour, are nearly at school age or are advanced and able to communicate at this level.

A child capable of understanding your plans may state that, if you do what you plan to, they will respond with an equally concerning behaviour. For example, if you threaten to take away a toy if the child misbehaves, they may say, 'If you do that, I'll scream.' If this happens, it is a strong sign that the child needs to be more involved in strategy development.

Your best response is to discuss your concerns with the child and ask them to help you work it out. They may have some useful input.

Example

Involving a child in developing a behaviour plan

Each day Hilda, five years, takes toys home from the service without the educators noticing. She places them in her bag and takes them with her at the end of the day. Stan, an educator, identifies that items are missing, but does not link Hilda to the toys until she needs a change of clothing one day and he finds a toy train in Hilda's bag.

Stan speaks to Hilda about the toys and explains that they belong to the service and, if she took them all home, there would be no toys for everyone to play with during the day. This does not change Hilda's behaviour.

Stan decides to implement a behaviour plan that includes checking Hilda's bag before she leaves the service each day. This is successful for the first two days, but then Hilda is found to be hiding the toys in her clothes.

Since Hilda understands the plan Stan was making, Stan decides to involve Hilda in resolving the situation. He asks her about taking the toys and why she takes them. He asks Hilda if there is something that he can do so she does not feel the need to take the toys.

Hilda explains that she does not have new toys and that she wants things to do at home.

Stan suggests that maybe she should ask if she can take toys home first. He also asks Hilda if having a toy library to borrow toys from would make a difference. Hilda seems pleased with Stan's suggestions.

Stan contacts the local council toy library and arranges for them to come to the service once a week for parents to borrow toys for their children. In the meantime, Stan allows Hilda to take a toy home as long as she brings it back the next day. Stan is pleased to see Hilda return almost all of the toys that were missing. He notices Hilda's parents accessing the toy library a few weeks later.

Monitoring and evaluating the plan

Sometimes your plan does not work out the way you imagine it will. There may be many reasons for this. Some reasons are easy to identify and will become obvious as you regularly monitor and evaluate the plan; others are not so obvious.

Regular review of a behaviour plan is very important. It allows you to reflect on its effectiveness by identifying the strategies that are not appropriate or not working as well as desired. It also highlights any issues regarding implementation or resources. Regular review allows you to remedy the situation and adjust your approach so you can minimise the factors that may lead to or maintain inappropriate behaviour as much as possible.

During the review process, the following questions may be helpful:

▶ Did I support and train other educators enough to implement the plan?
▶ Did I gain further information about the behaviour or about the child's background?
▶ Were the objectives achievable?
▶ Were the strategies appropriate and successful?
▶ Were there any issues in regard to the resources, environment and program?
▶ Were the child and parents successfully involved?

Identifying possible issues

The following table outlines some of the possible issues that may be causing a behaviour plan's ineffectiveness, and how you can address these.

Issue	How to address
You are intimidated by the child's behaviour.	▶ You probably need some extra help from a support service or specialist. ▶ You may need some strategies to become more confident in dealing with this child's behaviour. ▶ Sometimes you may have greater success if you delegate to another educator who is not intimidated by the child's behaviour. ▶ Try to implement some stress-relieving strategies prior to dealing with the behaviour of concern. Taking a few breaths or speaking quietly may help.
You are too patient.	▶ You may be ignoring situations that lead to the behaviour occurring or you may feel that you need to repeat requests a number of times before expecting the child to respond. ▶ Assertiveness is an important skill for all educators to model. Nagging (asking over and over) presents a negative behaviour to children and teaches them that they don't have to listen and don't need to take you seriously.
You are worried that the child will not like you.	▶ The child may have pre-existing feelings toward you, such as frustration and anger. ▶ Children need to know their boundaries; children who have enforced limits have been found to feel more secure. They also feel that their educators have concern for them, care about them and want them to be safe.
You have misinterpreted the behaviour.	▶ You may have missed some details, misunderstood something or placed your own values on the situation inappropriately. ▶ The child may have a medical condition that has not been diagnosed. ▶ You may not have considered some aspect of the child's home life or culture.
You have set too big a goal or objective.	▶ If your goals or objectives are too large or require a huge change, the child may be experiencing failure or not understanding what is happening. This can lead to further concerning behaviour or see you struggling too long to try to meet an objective without any success.
The alternative behaviour you identified does not meet the child's needs or function.	▶ This will lead to the child not adopting your new option as a replacement for the concerning behaviour. ▶ If the concerning behaviour succeeds in telling others the child is angry, so must the alternative behaviour.

Issue	How to address
You are not persistent enough.	▶ Some changes take longer than others and, when dealing with a behaviour of concern, you are usually attempting to change a pattern that has become part of a child's normal actions or reactions. ▶ Persist long enough for the plan to take effect and for you to evaluate whether positive outcomes are occurring.
You are too persistent.	▶ Some strategies just don't work. Persisting with these is useless. ▶ Be realistic about your strategies and change them if they are inappropriate. ▶ Develop a new plan if necessary.
You have made undue allowances.	▶ Some educators allow particular children to breach limits and guidelines because they feel sorry for them or think they don't need to be bothered. For example, this may occur when a child has a disability, when a child is a favourite or when a child is experiencing difficulties at home. ▶ Unpredictable and inconsistent limits and guidelines may lead to behaviours of concern.
You are focusing on the wrong child.	▶ Be sure that there are no other issues occurring, such as bullying or targeting someone. ▶ A child who is receiving stressful or frightening messages from another child may act out as a way to protect themselves.
The child associates authority with violence or verbal aggression.	▶ The child may need to be made aware of your strategies each time they are used. ▶ You may need to state openly that you will not yell at or hurt the child.
Parts of the program are working against the plan.	▶ Think about how time, space, people, materials and safety influence the environment. ▶ Consider transition times as they are the most stressful.

Practice task 9

1. Relationship-based strategies help children and educators form a positive bond. How could you make sure that the strategies implemented in a behaviour plan are relationship-based?

2. A four-year-old child is exhibiting unsafe behaviour and actions that are harmful to other children. You want them to stay with you during a play period. You plan to move to the play spaces the child enjoys, but you expect them to always be nearby.

   a. How will you communicate your expectations to the child?

   b. How will you minimise the factors that may lead them to inappropriate behaviour?

   c. How can you include the child in decision-making even though you want them to stay with you?

   d. Is this an appropriate behaviour to expect from a four-year-old child? Explain your response.

   e. What might happen to encourage you to revisit the plan and reflect on its effectiveness?

      Include your thoughts on appropriate and inappropriate behaviours.

4B Supporting colleagues to implement the behaviour plan

Once a behaviour plan has been developed, all educators and staff involved must work together to put the strategies into action. This is important if the child has contributed to the plan's development. If the child feels that the agreement they have with you has failed, they may become disheartened and feel let down. Concerning behaviour might recur, increase or alter to reflect the child's disappointment.

Clear direction

Educators and other staff supporting the behaviour plan can only implement it effectively if they are provided with the right information. The following table outlines areas that require clear direction to staff.

Clear direction	Details
The reasons or rationale for the plan	This includes your observation records and analysis of the behaviour, antecedents, consequences, setting and function of the behaviour.
The limits and guidelines set out in the plan and the strategies that you wish to be implemented	These are shown on the plan itself and other educators may find it valuable to be able to access this plan. Other educators who are involved with the child should be part of the development of the behaviour plan.
The roles you and others play in the plan	In some situations, your plan may need others to enable you to deal with the situation; for example, so an educator can take over your tasks while you implement a strategy. In other situations, you may want some or all educators to implement a strategy themselves. In either case, you need to ensure that you are clear in your expectations, including any tones of voice or levels of interaction you wish to occur, as well as any body language or other actions you feel are important.
Ways in which you can support one another	Each plan and each situation needs a different set of support mechanisms. There will be behaviours and strategies that you can handle easily yourself and others that you need assistance with. In some circumstances, you may need time away from the child to refuel or gather your thoughts, particularly if the child is aggressive. Support may also come through discussion, reflection, demonstration and training.

Clear direction	Details
Ways in which you can support parents	Educators who are in contact with parents need to be clear about the parents' feelings, and their level of understanding and involvement in the behaviour plan. Educators should be supported or provided with training on how to share information about concerning behaviour with parents to ensure they are not unduly concerned or given misleading or confusing feedback. Confidentiality must be respected in all cases and educators should be reminded of this.
Ways in which you can support the child	Your behaviour plan should include strategies on how to involve and support the child. Most importantly, educators must have appropriate expectations.

Support and training

Some of the areas you wish to address in the plan may be complex, or require specific skills or knowledge to be applied. You may need to provide options for training to make sure that all involved in the plan are well prepared and understand how to participate and why they are required to participate in a particular way. Training may involve support from yourself, another person in your service, or an external training or professional development service.

Educators learn skills through training or professional development. This professional development might be organised through an external source, through providing information to read or look at, or by you personally getting involved in staff meetings and training sessions to guide their knowledge.

Some educators may not have much experience in implementing behaviour guidance strategies. They may not understand what you mean when you tell them what you want to do. This is why you must be clear and provide ongoing support.

The following outlines an example of an educator's concerns if he is asked to implement behaviour guidance strategies.

Behaviour guidance strategy	Educator's questions and concerns
Use a firm tone of voice if the child needs to stop the behaviour.	▶ Does this mean that he has to growl or yell at the child?
Move the child away from the activity by taking his hand firmly	▶ Will it look like he is hurting the child? ▶ What if the child does not come? ▶ What should he say?
Use clear one-on-one interaction	▶ Does he have to tell the other children to go away? ▶ Does he need to use special words or speak slowly or loudly?

Example

Supporting a colleague to implement a behaviour plan

Helen recently began working with you in your preschool room where there are two children, Jake and Carly, who both have behaviour plans in place.

Helen has only been working in the education and care industry for nine months, as she completed her Certificate III early last year. She has never worked with children before this period. She understands the strategies being put into place, but she is finding it quite difficult to set limits and redirect behaviour. Both children are ignoring Helen's attempts and displaying concerning behaviours during her supervision.

Helen is becoming upset and discusses this with you, along with her feeling of inadequacy. You offer suggestions and give guidance while monitoring Helen's interactions with the two children. You give her both positive reinforcement and verbal recommendations.

You enrol Helen in an upcoming personal development workshop at the end of the month called 'Dealing with difficult behaviours'. This will hopefully build up her confidence and provide her with more knowledge on how to implement these practices.

Ensuring consistency

Consistency is a strategy in itself. The more people who tell the child in a positive way that they need to change their behaviour, the greater impact this message will have.

Consistency offers security and predictability, and allows children to react in predictable ways themselves. Where possible, consistency between all care environments works best. For example, consistency is effective in children who move between the homes of separated parents. Most children manage the rules and expectations of both households in addition to a number of care and/or education settings. They know that their mother expects one thing, their father expects another, and the education and care service has another set of guidelines and expectations.

When working with the child's family, keep this in mind. Respect the fact that some families may not have the ability to, resources for or interest in adopting your suggested strategies. They may not even see the behaviour as concerning at home.

Practice task 10

1. Identify at least one professional development activity that helps educators support children with concerning behaviour. Answer these questions.

   a. Where is this training located?

   ....

   ....

   b. How much time does it involve?

   ....

   c. How much does it cost?

   ....

d. What are the entry requirements?

e. How would you rate your current knowledge and experience in this area? Give yourself a rating of 0–5, where 0 is no experience and 5 is very experienced. Provide a reason for your rating.

2. What opportunities might you plan for sharing information about behaviour plans? How often and under what circumstances might you be able to communicate with other educators about:

    ▶ rationales, limits and strategies

    ▶ methods for implementing the plan effectively and consistently

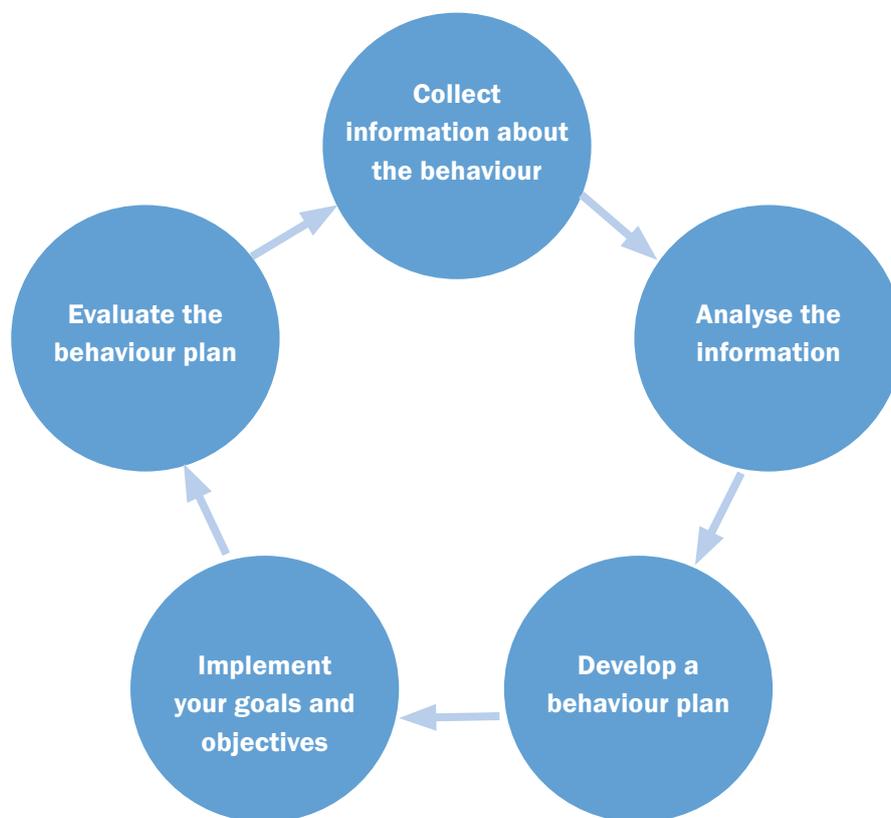   ▶ how to support and communicate with each other about the progress of the plan?

4C Reviewing the child's behaviour against the plan

Once the behaviour plan is implemented, regularly review the child's behaviour against the goals and objectives of the plan. This allows your strategies to be updated if required and the plan to remain responsive to the needs of the child.

The behaviour plan follows a planning cycle just like any other plan. It must be monitored and evaluated regularly to ensure it continues to meet the child's needs.

Collect information about the behaviour

Analyse the information

Develop a behaviour plan

Implement your goals and objectives

Evaluate the behaviour plan

When to change the plan

Changes to a behaviour plan may occur due to:

▶ an unexpected response from the child

▶ new influences in the play environment

▶ new information provided by a parent, specialist or supervisor

▶ the child's changing needs (due to normal development or outside factors, such as circumstances at home).

In any of these situations, you must look at the range of options available and decide what changes are necessary based on the child's needs and the strategies available for implementation.

Evaluative questions

When monitoring and reviewing a behaviour plan, you should involve other people. All those involved in the care of the child will have relevant information to contribute.

The following table outlines a series of evaluative questions you might ask.

Evaluative questions	Details
What worked? What didn't work?	By evaluating the changes that have occurred through implementing your strategies, you reflect on and respond to the child. When recording your findings, you will note whether there are any factors that may have influenced the effectiveness of the strategies. These influences may involve: ▶ children's needs ▶ the sequence of activities ▶ the resources or materials (including staff) ▶ the time ▶ available space (too much or too little) ▶ aesthetics (presentation of the materials, space, experience as a whole).
Was the expectation age-appropriate? What can you extend on?	Assess the age-appropriateness of the plan by looking at the things that did and did not work. Strategies may not work because they are inappropriate, they may be too complicated, not complicated enough or the child may not respond. Any ideas you have for modification and suggestions from the children and others should be noted as they are great ways to extend the children's involvement. They allow the child to take ownership of their behaviour.
What feedback have I received?	Consultation with parents and the child, where suited, is an important part of evaluation. This may occur as part of daily conversations, formal meetings and/or as part of in-depth discussions. People such as other educators, others caring for the child, and resource and referral bodies must also be included and consulted as applicable. All educators working with the child need to be consulted in order for them to provide feedback about implementation and future success.
How does this affect future plans?	A behaviour plan does not stop at evaluation; the cycle continues. Evaluation allows you to make further records and future plans. Using the information from your evaluations, you are able to gather ideas from analysis that you can use to meet a new set of objectives and to identify things that are appropriate or inappropriate for the child.

Monitoring the child's behaviour

Each child is unique, and so are their interactions with each educator. A child may react in a specific way with one educator who is implementing the limits and strategies outlined in the behaviour plan, and another way with another educator. This can vary immensely from child to child, according to their age, stage of development and the relationship they have with the educator. Some children will have a stronger sense of attachment and bond with certain educators compared to others. This is completely normal. All children favour some educators over others at different times, sometimes due to 'goodness of fit' and sometimes for no particular reason.

To accurately monitor a child's behaviour, it is useful to have methods in place that other educators can use to record notes about their experiences with the child.

These may include:

▶ anecdotal records

▶ diary records

▶ checklists

▶ forms

▶ jottings

▶ notes.

If all of the staff consistently collect data as they work with the child, the child's behaviour will be adequately monitored, and any changes can be identified as they occur.

Watch this video about collecting data and information.

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Modifying the plan where necessary

As the child's behaviour changes and objectives are met, you must continue to work alongside all of those involved to discuss how to move the child forward to meet additional goals and objectives.

In your initial communication with others, identify at what points you will regroup to assess the plan's effectiveness. Time should be set aside to regularly discuss how to modify the plan (if required) based on the information you have about the child's reaction to current strategies.

Meetings about the behaviour plan may vary. They can involve a number of people, one other educator or just the parents. Remember that decisions about a child's behaviour are not yours alone to make. Consultation is important to clarify any suggested modifications with the people directly involved in the care of the child.

Keep in mind that all modifications must align with the standards, policies and procedures of your service. If the family has different cultural/social values and expectations, you must respect these. However, the way you act as an educator in your workplace must be within the guidelines of the service policy.

Consulting with colleagues, family members and others

Just as you share information with parents about the child's everyday progress, you should share progress in the behaviour plan.

You may have confidential discussions, set times for formal reviews or have a general and open discussion. If the child is within hearing distance, the conversation should include them. It is humiliating and demeaning for a child to hear you talking about their behaviour in front of them without including them, and this may allow them to hear how effective their negative behaviours are in gaining attention.

It is also useful to gain feedback on the child's behaviour at home.

Questions to ask include:

▶ Has their behaviour altered, improved or remained the same?

▶ Have parents been implementing strategies from the plan?

▶ Have parents been using other strategies?

▶ Are there new circumstances that educators need to be aware of?

▶ Do parents need suggestions for strategies to use at home?

Practice task 11

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

The following behaviour plan has been developed for Jonah.

Behaviour plan			
Name: Jonah	**Age**: 4.5 years	**Plan no**: 1	**Date**: 14/02/18
Those involved in developing the plan	Room leader, qualified educator		
Who could provide ongoing professional support – specialists, referral bodies, authorities	Not applicable		
Baseline behaviour	Jonah refuses to participate in activities if any of the dark- skinned children are involved. He is very clear in his decision and verbalises this by saying, 'I won't play if dirty people are here' or 'If the black girl goes I will do it'. At group times he sits apart from the group.		
Who was involved	Jonah and the dark-skinned children in the service		
Environment and curriculum influences	Out of the 20 children enrolled in the service, 10 are dark-skinned. Jonah is missing out on many learning experiences due to this bias.		

Case study continued

Cultural implications	Jonah's father does not feel that Jonah's attitudes are a problem. When the cultural bias was discussed with him, he agreed that he felt the same way as Jonah. Jonah's father believes that the educators should ensure Jonah can participate in all experiences. He was not interested in becoming involved in the development of the behaviour plan. He clarified that this is the role of the educator.
Trigger	Children with a different skin colour to Jonah
Function/ consequence analysis	Jonah is demonstrating a bias against other children's physical appearance.
Acceptable alternative behaviour	For Jonah to be involved in all learning experiences despite the mix of children's cultural background.
Goal	For Jonah to play cooperatively with a range of children from different cultures
Long-term objectives **(possible steps to alternative behaviour)**	▶ For Jonah to play parallel to a range of children from different cultures. ▶ For Jonah to identify the similarities and differences between himself and each of the other children in the program. ▶ For Jonah to identify the similarities and differences between himself and some other children of Caucasian background.
Short-term objectives (what we can do now)	▶ For Jonah to participate in a small group activity with children of Caucasian background where the children identify the similarities and differences between themselves and others. ▶ For Jonah to participate in a small group activity where children from the whole group identify the similarities and differences between themselves and others.
Resources and materials needed	None (group activity materials)

Relationship-based strategies for response	**Environment:** Posters and books showing children from different cultural backgrounds playing together.	**Curriculum:** Stories and discussions about similarities and differences.

Needs and concerns of other children	Other children will feel uncomfortable if Jason is allowed to demonstrate this bias. This may also influence their development of a positive self-identity and self-esteem. The similarities and differences of all children should be celebrated and supported.

1. If you attempted to implement short-term objective 2 in this plan, but Jonah refused to participate, how might you modify the behaviour plan? Keep in mind:

    ▶ appropriate and inappropriate behaviours

    ▶ the stage of development/age-appropriate expectations of his behaviour

    ▶ relationship-based strategies used to help children learn about behaviour.

2. If you were unsure of what to suggest, who might you consult to reflect on the plan's effectiveness?

3. Describe what you would say to Jonah's father to explain your modification of the behaviour plan. Keep in mind the father's:

    ▶ stated cultural and social beliefs

    ▶ expectations about who should be responsible for the behaviour plan

    ▶ the behavioural guidelines outlined in your service standards, policies and procedures.

4. How often should you revisit this plan to reflect on how effective it has been? Explain your response.

Summary

▶ How you involve and support a child in a plan to guide their behaviour of concern depends on their age and stage of development.

▶ Sometimes your plan will not work out the way you imagine it will. There may be many reasons for this, some of which you will identify as you monitor and evaluate the plan.

▶ Educators supporting the behaviour plan can only implement the plan effectively and consistently if they have the right information.

▶ To implement a behaviour plan effectively, you need to inform workers of your plan and keep them updated. You also need to maintain clear strategies.

▶ A behaviour plan must be regularly monitored and evaluated to ensure it continues to meet the child's needs.

▶ When monitoring a behaviour plan, it is useful to have methods in place that other educators can use to record notes about their experiences with the child.

Learning checkpoint 4
Implementing and monitoring a behaviour plan

Part A

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Yesterday, you consulted with your supervisor and Pablo's mother to create the following behaviour plan for Pablo. It is now time to implement the plan.

Behaviour plan			
Name: Pablo	**Age**: 2.5 years	**Plan no**: 1	**Date**: 20/02/2018
Those involved in developing the plan	Supervisor, qualified educator, Pablo's mother		
Who could provide ongoing professional support – specialists, referral bodies, authorities	ISP contact details: Community Child Care Victoria 1800 177 017 (toll free) Website: http://aspirelr.link/viac		
Behaviour	Pablo bites other children.		
Who was involved	Educators and other children in the room		
Environment and curriculum influences	His development is age-/stage-appropriate. His interests include trains, dinosaurs and Peppa Pig.		
Cultural implications	Pablo's cultural background is Spanish, although he understands and speaks basic English.		
Trigger	Pablo bites other children when he wants toys they have.		
Function/ consequence analysis	Pablo uses this behaviour to get something he wants.		
Baseline behaviour	Pablo frequently bites the other children in his group even though there is an educator in the room. This happens when he wants toys that the other children have.		
Acceptable alternative behaviour	For Pablo to use words and ask if he can play with a toy in a range of different play situations		
Goal	For Pablo to use words to ask if he can play with a toy		

Case study continued

Long-term objectives (possible steps to alternative behaviour)	▶ For Pablo to use English words to ask nicely for something in a variety of play spaces with adult support. ▶ For Pablo to move within a room independently, using English words to ask if he can play.	
Short-term objectives (what we can do now)	▶ For an educator to show Pablo how to use English words and ask for something politely. ▶ For an educator to help Pablo use English words to ask for something from one other child politely. ▶ For an educator to help Pablo use English words to ask for something politely in a small group of children at play.	
Resources and materials needed	An educator to work one-on-one with Pablo	
Relationship-based strategies for response	Environment: Ensure an educator is aware of Pablo's actions and available to support him as described.	Curriculum: Ensure play activities are planned for pairs and small groups of children.

1. Outline what you would say to Pablo to help him understand the specific expectations and alternatives for his behaviour.

2. How will you make sure that those involved in implementing Pablo's behaviour plan are clear about the rationale, limits and strategies?

3. How will you support and communicate with your colleagues so that they implement the plan and its strategies effectively and consistently?

4. What factors in a service may lead to Pablo's biting behaviour, and how would you minimise these factors?

Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

> ### Case study
>
> After a few days, Pablo begins to respond to your strategies. Now he only bites other children occasionally. Despite this, his bites are still damaging and many parents and children are concerned. You notice that Pablo now only bites other children when you are out of the room.

1. Identify one modification you would like to introduce to Pablo's plan to minimise his inappropriate behaviour. Explain why you have chosen this modification.

2. Who would you need to consult with about the modification to Pablo's plan and why would you need to consult with these people?

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3. What new objective would you set to reflect the modification you are going to make?

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4. What policies and procedures must you observe when modifying a behaviour plan?

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