

CHCECE045
Foster positive and respectful interactions and behaviour in children

Learner Guide



Updated to include National Quality Framework changes



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Release 1

Learner Guide

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CHCECE045 Foster positive and respectful interactions and behaviour in children, Release 1

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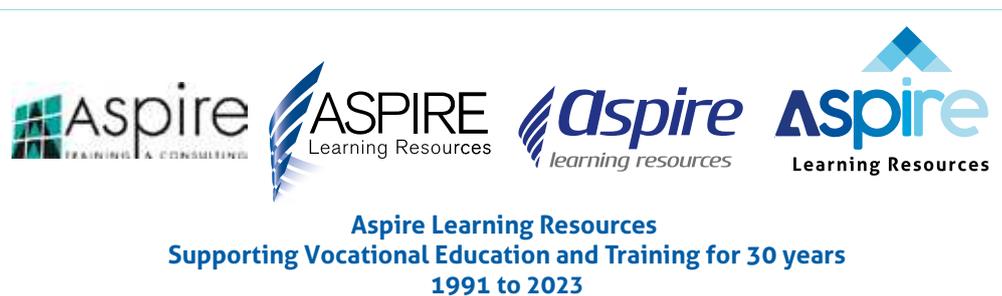
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Before you begin

This Learner Guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCECE045 Foster positive and respectful interactions and behaviour in children*, Release 1.

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

How to work through this Learner Guide

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

Feature of the Learner Guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ These highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Practice Tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which Practice Tasks to complete.
Summaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning Checkpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There are Learning Checkpoints at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which activities to complete. These activities give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

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

T = Topic

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



Topic 1

In this topic you will learn about:

- 1A** Behaviour guidelines
- 1B** Behaviour theory and research
- 1C** Factors contributing to behaviour

Understanding the foundations of behaviour

Children make many mistakes as they learn and develop social, emotional and communication skills.

Behaviour is a complex aspect of learning. By understanding its foundation, you will be able to develop an appreciation for the goal of behaviour, as well as factors that impact behaviours.

1A Behaviour guidelines

Behaviour guidance must be applied in line with your service's policies and procedures.

You must also work alongside family members to gain an understanding of the practices, beliefs and standards they have or currently implement.

Legal and ethical compliance

To comply with state, territory and federal laws, services must develop policies and procedures.

These must not discriminate based on culture, religion, gender or disability. Your service's guidelines must also adhere to legislation and the National Quality Standard (NQS), which is part of the National Quality Framework (NQF). In addition, they must reflect:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly Article 19 relating to protecting children from all forms of violence
- ECA Code of Ethics, which includes core principles and responsibilities that guide the way educators interact with and support children's behaviour. In particular, 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 of:
 - 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 showing 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.

Section 166 of the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* – Offence to use inappropriate discipline – states the following:

'The approved provider, nominated supervisor, staff members, volunteers, family day care educators of an education and care service must ensure that no child being educated and cared for by the service is subjected to:

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

Examples of inappropriate discipline include:

- hitting or slapping a child
- force-feeding a child
- yelling at or belittling a child

- humiliating a child
- physically dragging a child
- depriving a child of food or drink; for example, saying to a child, 'If you don't behave, you can't have your lunch'
- putting a child in 'time out' where they are placed somewhere in isolation.

Other forms of unacceptable practice include:

- negative labelling
- criticising
- discouraging
- blaming or shaming
- making fun of or laughing at a child
- using sarcastic or cruel humour
- using negative language, such as 'No', 'Stop that!', 'Don't ...' and 'You never ...'
- using restraint, unless used in an emergency situation.

National Quality Standard (NQS)

You can support children's behaviour and help them develop resilience and personal capabilities.

The following information from the *Guide to the National Quality Framework* describes what is required of educators in relation to Element 1.2.3: Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world.

Guidance

- 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.

Expected outcomes

- 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.

Other important elements that relate to supporting children's behaviour include:

- Element 5.1.1: Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included
- Element 5.1.2: The dignity and rights of every child are maintained
- Element 5.2.2: Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts
- Element 6.1.1: Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
- Element 6.1.2: The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing
- Element 6.1.3: Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing
- Element 6.2.1: Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing information and clarifying responsibilities
- Element 6.2.2: Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program
- Element 6.2.3: The service builds relationships and engages with its community.

You can refer to the guidance notes and expected outcomes for each of the elements at: aspirelr.link/nqf-guide.

Approved learning framework

The approved learning framework focuses on your role as an educator.

The goals of this approved learning framework, *Belonging, being & becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia* (EYLF), 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.

The goals of the EYLF are described in the following table.

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

The learning frameworks are divided into principles and practices. The principles help you to understand why you are implementing strategies in the way you do and how they influence the children you are working with. These principles are outlined below.

Principle	How this supports appropriate behaviour
Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Children who trust you and their environment will be more stable and feel a greater sense of belonging. Their emotional and social wellbeing will be stronger and they will feel supported and acknowledged.
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Partnerships with parents and guardians allow the child to see that you are working together. If you develop strong relationships with family members, you will find out what the child understands, how they belong at home and how you can link home and education settings. ➤ When behaviour is of concern, close partnerships with specialists and others mean that a consistent front can be presented and a variety of perspectives can be used to ensure the best interests of the child are identified and met.
Respect for diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Each child and family are unique in their reactions and behaviour. When you understand a child and family, you will be able to adapt your expectations and share equally in monitoring the values and beliefs that influence expectations.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ By understanding the perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, their culture and expectations for their children, educators are better able to guide children. This is important due to historical events and for developing trust within the family and also with the child. ➤ Reminds educators of the importance of Country and interaction with the environment. Curriculum that enhances this interaction may support positive behaviour for all children.
Equity, inclusion and high expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Children who are treated with respect and given responsibility at the appropriate level are more likely to be capable beings. They will develop a stronger sense of identity and self-esteem. ➤ Your belief in their abilities will allow you to reduce barriers to their success, and their contribution to their own wellbeing will allow them to gain skills in regulating their own behaviour.
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Social sustainability links to the need for a curriculum to be one that allows children and adults to maintain feelings of belonging, to feel that expectations are fair and that they are included in decisions that affect themselves and their environment.

Principle	How this supports appropriate behaviour
Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Educators will only learn if they are open to change. Each day, each child, each family and each event brings new information. You will come across different behaviours; sometimes predictable and sometimes unpredictable. They require you to think about and reflect on how to progress or how to react. ➤ Learning and reflection work best if they involve a team. This way, critical reflection can occur and you can each give feedback, observe each other's reactions and improve how you implement strategies.

The practices of the EYLF are important on many levels as they support your pedagogy as you work with children and apply strategies according to their unique needs. These practices are outlined below.

Practice	How this supports appropriate behaviour
Holistic, integrated and interconnected approaches	<p>Behaviour of concern is not isolated. It involves the whole of the child's development, in particular their emotional and social self.</p> <p>Support plans must address the whole child, not just their behaviour in isolation.</p>
Responsiveness to children	<p>Behaviour of concern is about sending a message. Your role is to respond to this, initially by acting to resolve any issues, and then by adapting and changing your plans based on the child's response to your support.</p>
Play-based learning and intentionality	<p>Play allows children opportunities to make decisions, problem-solve and develop their self-esteem and identity. Although play periods may be common times for behaviours of concern to arise, this also makes them the perfect time to model new techniques, to provide positive encouragement and to engage children in new experiences of success.</p> <p>Many behaviours of concern occur due to a child's inability to problem-solve or make decisions. Intentional teaching can be used to incorporate these concepts into the curriculum. Make intentional teaching enjoyable, focused on the child's interests, and suitable for their developmental level.</p>
Learning environments	<p>Provide settings that respond to children's behaviour by providing challenges while reducing frustration, adding parts that encourage them to develop skills, and allowing more or less choice based on the child's current needs and abilities.</p>
Cultural responsiveness	<p>When you get to know a child and family, you can respect their differences, and accept that each child will act and react individually based on their own fears, anxieties, experiences and boundaries.</p>

Practice	How this supports appropriate behaviour
Continuity of learning and transitions	Many children find transitions difficult. Different places and spaces mean different things to each child. You may identify behaviours that occur only during transitions, or you might find that a child only reacts in a particular situation or setting.
Assessment and evaluation for learning, development and wellbeing	Continually collect data and evidence so that progress or failure can be monitored and so that, as a team, you will be able to work consistently towards success for a child.

Practice Task 1

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

- Element 4.2.3
- Element 1.2.3
- Element 5.1.1
- Element 6.1.1
- Element 7.3.5
- Element 6.2.1

2. Draw a line to match each behaviour guideline on the left to its description on the right.

- | | |
|---|---|
| * Article 19 of the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child | * Offence to use inappropriate discipline |
| * Belonging, being & becoming | * Providing a safe and supportive environment, an understanding of the needs of each child and an attitude and demonstration of equitable practices |
| * ECA Code of Ethics | * Protecting children from all forms of violence |
| * Section 166 of the Education and Care Services National Law | * Core principles and responsibilities that contribute to the way educators interact with and guide children's behaviour |

1B Behaviour theory and research

Educators need to be familiar with the theory and research to effectively manage behaviour.

You will need to understand how to develop relationships with children and provide environments that support cooperative behaviour. This will strengthen the children's ability to manage their own behaviours in positive ways.



Knowing about age-appropriate behaviour will help you respond appropriately.

Self-regulation

Self-regulation refers to the ability to cope with various levels of stress.

When people are stressed, their brains naturally react, often referred to as fight, flight or freeze reactions. Some actions you might notice children displaying when they are stressed include the following:

- Fight: kicking, screaming, spitting, pushing, throwing things, punching, banging their head or self-harming
- Flight: becoming restless, running away, hiding, fidgeting, being wary, whining
- Freeze: holding breath, pounding heart, shutting down, feeling numb, not reacting, daydreaming, being unable to respond

These reactions occur when the stress being felt creates an uncontrollable action. When children learn to self-regulate, it means that they are increasing their ability to recognise stress and to reduce stress before it becomes unmanageable.

Excessive stress might occur due to situations that are perceived to be harmful or dangerous, overwhelming or extreme. This may include experiences such as:

- not understanding a situation or event
- feeling unsupported and alone
- not having the support they need
- losing possession of something important to them
- not knowing where people important to them are
- not feeling heard or understood
- being overwhelmed by sensory information such as loud noises, heat or cold, being too close to others, and not having their own space.

There are five domains of self-regulation. Each domain relates to an area where children may demonstrate or need support to develop self-regulation. These are described in the following table, along with some strategies that will be useful as you observe and monitor children's behaviours and then decide how to deal with the situation.

Domain	Related areas	Strategies
Biological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Physical health ➤ Energy levels ➤ Ability to focus ➤ Ability to complete routines and care for own health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reduce sensory overload, such as level of lighting or noise ➤ Vary spaces and dynamics ➤ Use natural environments and materials ➤ Use dividers and fidget tools ➤ Provide breaks ➤ Include safe spaces
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Excitement ➤ Frustration ➤ Anxiety ➤ Ability to focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Check in on feelings ➤ Talk about feelings ➤ Use relaxation techniques such as yoga, meditation, taking a breath, counting down ➤ Use positive self-talk ➤ Role-play how to express emotions
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Listening to others ➤ Taking responsibility for own actions ➤ Responding appropriately ➤ Reading social cues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work with others ➤ Use humour ➤ Learn about social cues ➤ Provide social activities
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Focus ➤ Managing frustration ➤ Staying on task ➤ Avoiding distraction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide quiet spaces to refresh ➤ Provide learning games ➤ Break down instructions ➤ Give choices ➤ Encourage goal setting ➤ Use digital technology ➤ Focus on interests and strengths ➤ Encourage self-reflection ➤ Maintain consistency
Prosocial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Understanding and managing the feelings of others ➤ Coping when others behave inappropriately ➤ Feeling relaxed during interactions ➤ Being involved in social situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Create social circles or buddy systems ➤ Provide responsibility through tasks and chores ➤ Reflect on behaviour ➤ Hold group discussions about feelings ➤ Discuss empathy

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

Circle of security

A circle of security is created when educators provide for children's needs.

The aim of a positive environment is to advance the child's feelings of security. This shows children that they are within a space that is secure, and that they are being cared for by people who are safe and supportive.

This can be represented to children by:

- showing them they are welcome
- demonstrating that you are excited to be part of their day
- comforting them
- protecting them
- supporting their mistakes and successes
- encouraging them to try
- watching them, enjoying what they enjoy and being part of their exploration.



Aim to create a circle of security.

Encouraging resilience

Resilience is about being able to overcome difficult situations or challenges. The ability to be resilient increases a child's self-esteem.

Resilience might also be described as:

- holding your head up
- giving things a go
- trying your best
- being strong inside
- standing up for yourself
- shrugging it off.

While some of these descriptions may imply that the person is ignoring a negative situation, resilience is really about recognising that while there is a challenge, you can work it out and move forward. With that in mind, both educators and children require resilience.

Resilience is about controlling the messages you say to yourself and changing them so that your actions are more considered, on-track and beneficial to your wellbeing. When children develop their resilience, they are better able to deal with challenges, know what to do when something goes wrong and to gather their emotions and use them in positive ways.

You can help children with the development of resilience by encouraging and leading them to do the following things:

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

These skills become possible when the child becomes self-aware. Self-awareness is developed through identifying their own:

- limits – what they are good at, what is challenging, what is enjoyable, what is annoying and what makes them happy
- priorities – what is important to them, what their goals are, what they need
- reflections – what has been successful or unsuccessful in the past, and whether there is anything that they would like to change.

Developing prosocial skills

Prosocial behaviour is about the successful and appropriate manner children interact with each other.

Prosocial behaviour also relates to voluntary behaviour that benefits another person by helping, sharing, giving, comforting, showing empathy and kindness, showing positive verbal and physical contact, showing concern, taking the perspective of another person, and cooperating.

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

- notice social cues
- interpret social cues
- formulate social goals
- generate possible problem-solving strategies
- evaluate probable effectiveness of strategies
- consider the views of others
- know and apply social rules
- remember past experiences and link these to expectations for future experiences.

Neuroplasticity

Neuroplasticity refers to the theory that human brains can adapt and change.

When behaviours or actions are learnt and used over periods of time, they form pathways in the brain. These pathways are shortcuts that are developed to succeed at tasks, but also might have been developed to avoid events or actions that are not liked or enjoyed, or to resolve an issue more easily.

When people develop behaviours in this way, they must be supported to create new pathways, or to revert to pathways they have used before. These changes take around three months of practise to achieve.

This information is relevant to our work with children's behaviour because it highlights that the longer a challenging behaviour has been used, the more difficult it will be to alter. This also means that if a change in behaviour is being attempted, it may take up to three months to fully alter the behaviour.

Example Neuroplasticity

Carter (five years) has been expressing his frustration through tantrums since he was three years old. His educators and family have put a support plan in place to help Carter work through his frustrations using more age-appropriate and socially expected actions.

They are aware that while Carter will start to understand and use the strategies they are supporting in a short period of time, it is likely to take him a number of months before he uses these strategies naturally and consistently. In this time, they will guide him, be patient and support him.



Developmentally appropriate behaviour

It is important to know what is appropriate behaviour for each child's developmental level.

Knowing what to expect of a child at a particular developmental level helps you to determine whether their behaviour is appropriate and how you should guide 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 tables outline age-appropriate expectations for children from birth to 12 years.

Age/ developmental stage	Developmental characteristics	What to expect	How to support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 0–12 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Depends on non-verbal communication to express feelings and needs; may resort to whatever non-verbal 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 adults; this may prompt fear and/or anger at separation ➤ Has no sense of time and requires instant gratification ➤ Responds to the distress of another baby by crying, but can't understand that the baby's distress is distinct from their own feelings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Crying used to gain attention, to express fear, anxiety and anger ➤ Not understanding why another child or adult is distressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Help infants to calm 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 1–2 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Starts to develop a sense of self ➤ Starts to develop autonomy and independence ➤ Has limited language ability and may resort to non-verbal means of communication ➤ May demonstrate empathy by offering 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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 ➤ Unable to show remorse for hurting another child ➤ Unable to wait to have their needs met 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide toddlers with space, support and guidance during their interactions with other children ➤ Help toddlers regulate their emotions and calm down after experiencing strong emotions

Age/ developmental stage	Developmental characteristics	What to expect	How to support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 2–3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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 expected behaviours and guidelines even though they may be able to recite them ➤ Imitating the behaviours of others ➤ Simple turn-taking ➤ Unlikely to have conflict-free sharing of belongings, toys or equipment ➤ Not understanding the difference between accidental and intentional behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide with plenty of opportunities to express their feelings ➤ Help to solve problems and conflicts; your intervention may be necessary to prevent physical aggression
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 3–5 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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 stage	Developmental characteristics	What to expect	How to support
> 5–12 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Simple conflict-resolution skills > Sharing > Struggling with losing at times > Anxiety, worry, insecurity and self-confidence affect behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 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

Example

Supporting behaviour of children at varying ages

The following table outlines how you may respond to children of different ages whose kicking hurts others.

Age	Strategy
0–18 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 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 18 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 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'

Behaviour expectations

Within each developmental grouping, children can exhibit many different 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.

Some behaviours are appropriate, some are out of character, some are disruptive and some are behaviours of concern. The following table provides an explanation of these different behaviours.

Type of behaviour	Definition	Examples
Age-appropriate behaviour	The behaviour is not uncommon and the child responds to guidance strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The behaviour is unusual for the child, ➤ 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ unwell ➤ stressed ➤ afraid ➤ frustrated ➤ angry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A child is hurt and only wants comfort from an adult, so they push other children away. ➤ A child is tired, so they cry and show frustration.
Disruptive behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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 any 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A child is yelling loudly. This disrupts a task and annoys 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. ➤ A child is not following instructions. ➤ A child is talking loudly or making inappropriate noises. ➤ A child is leaving the area, wandering around, crawling on the floor or throwing objects. ➤ A child is crying or having a tantrum.

Type of behaviour	Definition	Examples
Behaviour of concern – age-appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A two-year-old is hurting themselves or others, damaging equipment and does not recover easily from a tantrum. ➤ A four-year-old is aggressive 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The behaviour type is not age-appropriate and may also be extreme or worrying. ➤ The child does not respond to strategies for guiding behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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.

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 other children and is usually stressful and upsetting. Remember:

- It is the behaviour that is a problem, not the child.
- Many of these behaviours are common; they might be displayed by most children at some time.
- 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A child does not eat. ➤ 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 screams, swears or takes 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 why a behaviour of concern has occurred.



Practice Task 2

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

- | | | |
|---|-------|------|
| a. Resilience is about being able to come through difficult situations or challenges, facing negative life experiences and bouncing back. | * Yes | * No |
| b. You can identify characteristics or norms for a certain age group, and all children will match these exactly. | * Yes | * No |
| c. Prosocial skills you will notice emerging include helping, sharing, comforting and being aware of the feelings of others. | * Yes | * No |
| d. Educators can support children to develop prosocial behaviours by telling them when they are wrong and insisting that they share. | * Yes | * No |
| e. It may take a child up to three months to change a behaviour and make it a normal practice. | * Yes | * No |

2. Draw a line to match each domain of self-regulation on the left to its related area on the right.

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| * Emotional | * Physical health and energy levels |
| * Cognitive | * Excitement and anxiety levels |
| * Prosocial | * Listening and taking responsibility for own actions |
| * Biological | * Focus and managing frustration |
| * Social | * Stress and social relationships |

3. Which of the following statements are correct about age-appropriate behavioural expectations? Select all that apply.

- 0–12 months: Crying is used to gain attention, to express fear, anxiety and anger.
- 6–12 years: Anxiety, worry, insecurity and self-confidence affect behaviour.
- 2–3 years: Physical aggression may be used to solve problems.
- 1–2 years: Child attempts to independently solve their own problems.
- 3–5 years: Increasing ability to manage behaviour and demonstrate self-control.

1C Factors contributing to behaviour

Children's challenging behaviour does not happen in isolation. A range of factors influence their actions and reactions.

By understanding some of the factors that may impact on children and their behaviour, you can be more prepared to support children and their families in effective ways.

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

Alongside the home and service environments, your own life experiences and ideologies will play a part in your understanding of families, interpretation of behaviour and the strategies you plan. These may be influenced by your:

- upbringing: experiences you had as a child and the opportunities you were provided or sought
- personal goals and experiences: lifestyle choices, extent of involvement and interactions with others
- parenting: expectations you had of your own children, which were based on your morals and beliefs, and taking into account the temperament of your children, any challenges faced and the support you were provided
- professional experiences: modelling provided, research undertaken and educational guidance.

Family differences

Families will have varying strategies, beliefs and expectations of their children.

These differences can depend on a variety of factors, including:

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

To provide a clear link between these ideas and your own, you will need to find out about these expectations as well as identifying the practices that are unsuitable, not relevant or not accepted in your service. For example, you are unable to smack a child or sit them facing the wall.

While family strategies, beliefs and expectations play a huge part in decisions and outcomes relating to behaviour, other factors can have an effect on the behaviour of individual children too. For example, child's history influences their behaviour in many different ways.

It has been proven that when educators and families work in partnership, issues relating to behaviour are fewer and issues that do arise are more likely to be resolved quickly or more satisfactorily. One of the ways to improve this partnership is to learn about the differences of each family and to understand their cultural experiences and challenges.

Cultural differences

Cultural issues are not limited to country of origin; each family has its own culture.

This means that each family has its own:

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



Understand the cultural expectations of behaviour.

If you do not have this cultural knowledge, 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.

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.

Australia is a multicultural society where each family acts and thinks differently. By understanding some of the differences between families you can gain insight into children’s behaviour, and whether or not it 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 are examples of opposing cultural beliefs that can impact on the behaviour of children.

Common beliefs	Opposing beliefs
Children should look adults in the eye to show that they are paying attention or telling the truth.	Children should not make eye contact with adults because it is disrespectful.
Providing positive modelling and building a respectful relationship with children are good ways to manage a child’s behaviour.	Teasing and threatening is a useful way to manage a child’s behaviour; for example, ‘If you eat that your teeth will fall out.’
Children should be encouraged to ask ‘Why?’ – an inquiring mind is a learning mind.	Children must do as they are told, when they are told. There should be no questions.
Feelings should be demonstrated and learnt about.	Feelings should not be expressed or discussed.

Common beliefs	Opposing beliefs
It is safe to make a mistake. This is a good way to learn.	It is better to do nothing than to make a mistake.
Males and females are equal and should be treated the same.	Males don't have to listen to any guidance or discipline that is provided by a female.

Environment and curriculum

The environment and curriculum can influence the behaviour of each child.

In addition, your point of view and how your philosophy and pedagogy may be contributing will suit some children and not others.

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

Environment/ curriculum factor	Explanation	Strategies
Lack of belonging	Children whose needs and interests are not catered for may lack a sense of belonging.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Get to know families, develop strong relationships and work to involve family members in the service. ➤ Provide spaces and places that belong to each child. ➤ Include experiences that are based on individual interests and ideas. ➤ Include evidence of each child's family in the environment. ➤ Help children to learn about each other; use games and activities that involve names, likes, dislikes, similarities and differences. ➤ Include celebrations and events that are important to the child and their family.
Inconsistency	Lack of consistency in educator and service can lead to poor behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Attempt to roster familiar educators to work with the same group of children. ➤ When educators go on breaks or are absent, attempt to maintain as much consistency in educators as possible.
	Lack of consistency in expectations can cause confusion about what is and what is not acceptable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Children are unsure of expectations if guidelines change. Set expectations and maintain them. Clarify any changes that are made. ➤ Work together with other educators to make sure all are expecting and supporting the same expectations. ➤ Involve children in setting expectations so they feel aware, clear and that they own these expectations.

Environment/ curriculum factor	Explanation	Strategies
Overstimulation	An environment that is too noisy and overstimulating can have a negative effect on children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adults should use quiet voices. Children often raise their voices to talk over loud adult voices, and this can lead to a noisy environment. ➤ Reduce background noise (for example, encourage productive discussion rather than yelling across a room); children learn to tune out if there is constant yelling. This can have a negative effect on their ability to listen carefully when required.
Overcrowding	Activities that are too crowded can lead to poor behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Set up activities so that the number of children taking part is limited. For example, if you have enough play dough for two children to work at the table, provide two lumps of dough and two chairs. If both chairs are occupied, other children can see there is no space for them at the time. This avoids overcrowding.
Insufficient equipment	<p>When materials are few, the child's focus moves from being productive to making sure equipment isn't taken by another child.</p> <p>The younger the child, the harder they find it to share or wait.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Be sure that each child has individual equipment when possible. For example, six buckets and six spades in a sandpit that comfortably accommodates six children. ➤ Where it isn't practical to have enough for each child, expect to help children to resolve conflicts. ➤ Remember that you can assist children under five years to share, but you can't expect them to share.
Activities that cause frustration	Experiences need to be appropriately challenging; if activities are too challenging, children may become frustrated. This can lead to conflict and aggression between children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide activities that are suited to the children's developmental level. They will then be fully involved and conflict is less likely to occur. ➤ If an activity requires the adult to be doing or directing much of the time, then it is probably not developmentally appropriate. ➤ As well as structured activities, such as puzzles, provide plenty of open-ended experiences so children can work at their own pace and level. Open-ended experiences include play dough, water play, clay, painting, drawing, home area and blocks.

Environment/ curriculum factor	Explanation	Strategies
Inadequate ratios	At times, children need additional attention or support. You may not be able to respond to this if ratios are inadequate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ask other educators for supports. ➤ Make arrangements for extra staff prior to times that are regularly busy. ➤ Adjust routines and timetables to meet needs of children and abilities of educators. ➤ Be flexible. ➤ Involve children in routines, preparation, helping and supporting others (prosocial skills).
Being overtired	Overexcited and boisterous behaviour is often an indication of tiredness in young children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide rest periods in the routine to cater for 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 just playing quietly by themselves. ➤ Listening to music or a story tape can also provide rest time.
Lack of agency	Individual children are not catered for. Ideas and interests are not included.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Observe, assess and plan for experiences and interactions that reflect each child's learning and development. ➤ Take advantage of what you know and find out about children, especially when they express ideas and enthusiasm.
Lack of time alone	<p>It is valuable for children to enjoy their own company and to learn to work alone at times.</p> <p>Many children need extra time for working and playing uninterrupted by other children.</p> <p>Children who need time for solitary play may become involved in conflict more easily if this need is not met.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide areas where one child can choose to work alone. ➤ Create quiet areas using cushions, mats, screens, tents, cubbies or furniture. ➤ Encourage children to ask first before joining someone who is working alone. A negative response needs to be respected. This is part of learning to respect the rights of others. ➤ In your planning, make sure you offer a balance of solitary and group play.

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 environments to suit behaviour**

Samuel (four years) arrives every morning happy and ready to play, but as soon as his mum tries to leave, Samuel 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 Samuel for a few days, educators notice that he enjoys outdoor play the most. They change their routine so that when Samuel arrives the group is outdoors or at least has the option of going outdoors. This suits Samuel well and he now settles every day without concern.



Temperament and personality

Each child has their own personal expression and communication type, known as their temperament.

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

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 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 or adult.

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

Temperament	Strengths	Related behaviour
Sanguine	Can seem: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > talkative > humorous > curious > friendly > cheerful > spontaneous. 	Can seem: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > arrogant > cocky > indulgent > prone to daydreaming > impulsive > unpredictable.

Temperament	Strengths	Related behaviour
Choleric	Can seem to be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ a leader ➤ active ➤ strong-willed ➤ independent ➤ goal-oriented ➤ a motivator. 	Can seem to be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ dominating ➤ easily angered ➤ bad-tempered ➤ mean-spirited ➤ suspicious ➤ angry.
Melancholic	Can seem: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ thoughtful ➤ serious ➤ talented and creative ➤ artistic ➤ to have high standards ➤ neat and tidy ➤ to like routine and schedules. 	Can seem: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ overly preoccupied with tragedy and cruelty in the world ➤ depressed ➤ unsatisfied in their own work ➤ constantly critical of themselves.
Phlegmatic	Can seem: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ low key ➤ calm ➤ patient ➤ consistent ➤ easy to get along with. 	Can seem: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ resistant to change ➤ lazy ➤ unenthusiastic ➤ unemotional.

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

Sensitivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How sensitive is each child to particular situations and experiences? ➤ Consider noise, room temperature, pain, smells, colours and textures when planning changes or actions.
Activity level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Each child may require a different amount of activity – some children can be active all day without rest; others of the same age require a regular sleep or rest period. ➤ Children require both quiet and active choices throughout the day, so be aware of the needs of individual children and be flexible to ensure their needs are catered for.
Adaptability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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 minor changes, such as moving from play to snack or lunch time, can cause new children to become upset if they are unfamiliar with the routine and unaware of what will occur.

Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ For new children, use 'handles for attachment', which is a strategy where you use a familiar item or object to bridge your relationship and break down the barriers between you and the child. ➤ Respect a child's need to take things slowly when dealing with new people, places and practices. Rushing things may only cause the child to develop mistrust and create further difficulty in dealing with new situations. ➤ Slow-to-warm-up children may need a family member to stay longer than other children, so encourage this to occur.
Attention span	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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.

Recognising stress

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

Monitor these behaviours. If a child is subjected to an ongoing situation, and their personal difficulties are not supported, their behaviours can become concerning.

When working with children, you may observe the following behaviours or situations that may 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, nasty words or gruff tones are used to communicate.
Grief	These feelings often result from a loss or death of someone important.
Poverty	A family's financial situation can result in outcomes affecting the child's ability to function.
Abuse	A situation in which a child is mistreated.
Sickness	Illness relating to a child, family member or someone else significant to the child.
Developmental challenges	The child, family member or another important person has a disability.

Sometimes, behaviours of concern and stress can occur in response to family circumstances. 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 negative family circumstances and possible linked behaviour as well as loss of a sense of belonging. A positive family circumstance would produce positive learning and behaviours.

Circumstances	Possible behaviours
Lack of consistency due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ separated or hostile family members ➤ a death in the family ➤ loss of a family member, friend or pet ➤ a new baby ➤ a sick family member ➤ visitors staying in the family home ➤ sibling rivalry ➤ joint custody ➤ family members working extended hours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Crying ➤ Temper tantrums ➤ Lack of motivation ➤ Unwillingness to participate or play with others ➤ Inability to follow direction and maintain expectations ➤ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Not listening ➤ Crying ➤ Not following directions ➤ Experiencing frustration ➤ Lashing out ➤ Swearing or using other inappropriate communication methods ➤ Ignoring requests and redirection

Example**Reactions to educator changes**

The following examples outline behaviour that is either appropriate or inappropriate for the child's age.

Example 1

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.

Example 2

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 because, by the age of five, David should be able to express his uncertainty in a less intense manner.

Noticing child abuse

When you know the signs of harm, you can be aware of possible abuse.

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

Risk of harm indicators include:

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

When child abuse is suspected as the cause of a behaviour of concern, you 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's 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, mandatory reporting may require specialist or legal involvement.

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

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

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

State or territory	Are educators mandated to report?	What must educators report?
ACT	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Physical abuse ➤ Sexual abuse
NSW	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Physical abuse ➤ Sexual abuse or other exploitation of the child ➤ Emotional/psychological abuse ➤ Neglect ➤ Exposure to physical violence (for example, a child witnessing violence between parents at home)
NT	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Physical abuse ➤ Sexual abuse or other exploitation of the child ➤ Emotional/psychological abuse ➤ Neglect ➤ Exposure to physical violence (for example, a child witnessing violence between parents at home)
QLD	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Physical abuse ➤ Sexual abuse
SA	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Physical abuse ➤ Sexual abuse ➤ Emotional/psychological abuse ➤ Neglect
Tasmania	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Physical abuse ➤ Sexual abuse ➤ Emotional/psychological abuse ➤ Neglect ➤ Exposure to family violence
Victoria	All adults are mandated to report sexual abuse. Educators must follow Child Safe Standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ For full details of all reporting obligations go to: aspirelr.link/child-reporting-obligations-vic
WA	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sexual abuse

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

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

Example

Reporting 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 family members, 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 the service's procedures, to report this situation to ensure the child is safe.



Understanding trauma

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

The severity of trauma can only be defined by the impact it has on each individual. Trauma in one family, adult or child may involve health or safety; in another 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 have 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 – for example, being continually alert and looking for danger or threats.

Developmental delay

Developmental delays can impact children’s behaviour in a number of ways.

A child’s behavioural capabilities link with their developmental milestones, which provide educators with a benchmark of expectations. These expectations usually allow for variations due to external influences on the child’s life.

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 question this in ways that are confronting, resort to bullying or competitive comparison. Children who respond in this way are also demonstrating a need for behaviour support.

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

Cause	Potential impact
Short concentration span	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Difficulty in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – listening – following instructions and directions – solving problems
Lack of reaction to stimuli	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Speaking at inappropriate times ➤ Reacting slowly ➤ Reacting without thought
Unduly aggressive reactions to certain stimuli	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Panic attacks ➤ Hitting out ➤ Reacting quickly to events
Tiredness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Not listening properly ➤ Uncharacteristic responses ➤ Wanting to be in solitary spaces
Frustration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Angry reactions ➤ Throwing the materials that contribute to the frustration ➤ Losing control of emotions

Emotional and/or social challenges

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

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

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

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

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

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

Behaviour disorders

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

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

Here is a list of common disorders and how they can 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Difficulty concentrating ➤ Forgetfulness ➤ Inability to complete tasks ➤ Moving from one task to another ➤ Impulsiveness ➤ Restlessness ➤ Fidgeting ➤ Accident-prone

Disorder	Description	Impact on behaviour
Oppositional defiance disorder (ODD)	Frequent disobedience; hostility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Repetitive behaviour ➤ Lack of social skills ➤ Inability to imagine ➤ Confused thinking ➤ Inability to use language ➤ Aggression ➤ Anxiety ➤ Fear

Controversial play

At times, a child's play can become concerning as it may impact the safety or influence the behaviour of others.

Consider this play in relation to the child's developmental stage and evaluate the positive and negative values of different play types.

Some play types are recurring, so you can 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 is often seen in children at the associative and cooperative play stages. They 'fly' around demonstrating their hero actions and talents – sometimes acting aggressively or in an unsafe manner.

Superhero play may concern educators as it:

- may quickly become aggressive
- often becomes the main play theme, with children excluding other activities
- can be misinterpreted by children that violence or aggression are ways 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 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 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 a service policy of children bringing toys from home.

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

Moral development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Understanding and following rules ➤ Learning how trading 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feeling proud of their collection ➤ Feeling success or learning how to manage loss
Social development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Exploring themes and ideas ➤ Solving problems ➤ Making decisions ➤ Counting ➤ Reading ➤ Critical thinking

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

- using alternative ways to meet the developmental needs of the children
- 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

Recognising the benefits of games

The children 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 create play that 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 desk
- social skills – children are meant to shake hands before a game, take turns and show respect during the game
- physical skills – shuffling and dealing cards
- cognitive skills – following rules and steps to play; remembering the values and ability of each card; setting up plans and plots; using and understanding symbols.

Unfortunately, they will also be:

- battling each other in pretend play
- 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
- starting another type of collection game or activity group with a similar purpose, but without competition or exclusion
- excluding cards belonging to children and only having cards that belong to the service
- 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
- providing supervision during play where the educator helps players follow the rules
- insisting that children only play against children of their age.





Practice Task 3

1. Which of the following are variables that can influence a child's daily behaviour? Select all that apply.

- Service expectations, environment, experiences provided, group dynamics, ratios and curriculum
- Family beliefs, events, expectations and child-rearing beliefs including lifestyle stressors such as illness, child abuse and trauma
- The child's star sign
- Educator experiences, ideologies and family relationships
- Needs not being met and lack of consistency
- If the educators wear a uniform

2. Which of the following statements are correct about factors that contribute to behaviour? Select yes or no for each one.

- a. A child's stage of development might influence their need for sensory input. When this input is not provided for their behaviour may indicate frustration or distress. * Yes * No
- b. A child's temperament and personality may influence their need for agency. While all children need to feel a sense of agency, some children will demonstrate challenging behaviour if they are not supported to make choices and problem solve. * Yes * No
- c. Belonging and attachment are important for babies so their behaviour is influenced when this is not provided. Older children are not as reliant on belonging and attachment so they adapt over time. * Yes * No

Summary

- Any form of behaviour guidance must be in taken in line with service policies and procedures.
- Educators must work alongside family members to gain an understanding of the practices, beliefs and standards they have or currently implement.
- Educators must be familiar with theory and research to understand how to develop relationships with children and provide environments that support cooperative behaviour.
- Self-regulation refers to the level of ability to face various levels of stress, and then to work through this.
- Children use different behaviours to express themselves. Everyone has different views about what is an appropriate way to express feelings.

Learning Checkpoint 1

Understanding the foundations of behaviour

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

Case study

Cora (five years) has recently moved in with her nan as her parents are both in hospital after a car accident. Today, during her normal play, Cora becomes frustrated and begins screaming, kicking and yelling at others.

1. Draw a line to match the potential contributing variables and factors on the left to the example of some stressors Cora is experiencing on the right.

- | | |
|--|--|
| * Illness | * Experiences provided are not suited to Cora's interests. |
| * Partnerships with families | * Cora has moved into her nan's house. Her parents are both in hospital after a car accident. |
| * Personality and temperament | * Cora's educators are unwell. Casual staff have been called in. |
| * Ratios | * It is a rainy day and Cora has to stay inside. |
| * Curriculum and environment | * A group of children have been telling Cora that she is not their friend. |
| * Family beliefs and culture | * Cora has a temperature and a runny nose. |
| * Stage of development | * Cora's nan doesn't know the educators and told Cora to go into her room without her. Her nan was embarrassed. |
| * Child's need for agency and for needs to be met | * Cora has a melancholic temperament and avoids social contact. |
| * Child's history, culture and recent and current events | * An educator is preoccupied with a high-risk activity, and this has left one other educator to support the remaining children. |
| * Group dynamics and actions of others | * One Educator feels Cora would benefit from the clarity of a strict approach. Another educator believes that by giving Cora choices she will be provided consistency and understanding. |
| * Lack of consistency | * Cora's nan is a strict disciplinarian. Cora's parents are very flexible and attentive. They give Cora choices and involve her in decisions. |
| * Educator life experiences and ideologies about children's behaviours | * Cora has a speech delay and cannot communicate well verbally. |

2. If an educator noticed that Cora had a line of small burn marks along her leg, which of the following should they do? Select all that apply.

- Record what they notice.
- Call an ambulance.
- Discuss the burns with Cora's nan in line with NQS Quality area 6.
- Report this as possible child abuse.
- Understand that children get into mischief and this was probably an accident.
- Reflect on NQS Element 5.1.2, Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the ECA Code of Ethics.

3. Select true or false for the following statement. Cora's nan speaks to an educator and explains that Cora should be able to discuss her own behaviour and express her feelings clearly. She should know that her behaviour is not acceptable for any reason.

Cora's nan speaks to an educator and explains that Cora should be able to discuss the situation and express her feelings clearly. She should know that her behaviour is not acceptable for any reason. * True * False

4. Draw a line to match each example of Cora's behaviour on the left to the type of behavioural skills she has demonstrated on the right.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Cora can be supported to work with other children to solve problems. * Cora might need a quiet space to be alone or with an educator when she becomes frustrated and angry. * Cora's demonstration of frustration may link with emotional and cognitive domains. * An educator may be able to build Cora's self-esteem and assist her to learn some strategies for working through her frustration. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Self-regulation * Self-regulation * Resilience * Prosocial skills |
|--|--|



Topic 2

In this topic you will learn about:

- 2A Developing relationships
- 2B Guiding behaviours

Maintaining positive environments

A positive approach to relationships and interactions is one that focuses on building on children's strengths.

A positive approach takes each child's developmental level into account and uses techniques that provide guidance to encourage them to behave in socially acceptable ways. Most importantly, these techniques allow children to develop the skills required to understand themselves and their feelings, and to develop resilience and prosocial behaviours.

2A Developing relationships

It is important to develop positive relationships with children.

When a child develops a trusting and positive relationship with you, they will follow and more freely accept your support because they will 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 because a bond and trust has not been formed. Aim to use relationship-based strategies that focus on strengthening the relationship between you and the child, which, in turn, promote a sense of belonging.



Aim to develop trusting relationships with children.

Communicating clearly

To communicate clearly, your actions and words must mean the same thing.

Communication involves your:

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

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

verbal message	Gesture	Facial expression	Tone of voice
'Let's sit down for a puppet show.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Wave with your hand to indicate that the children should come over. 	Smile	Welcoming, happy
'It's dangerous to run with scissors.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Hold the child by the hand gently to gain their attention. ➤ Kneel at their level. ➤ Look into their eyes. 	Frown	Serious
'I will put the hammer away. It needs to be used safely.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Kneel at the child's level. ➤ Look into their eyes. 	Frown	Serious

Example**Using clear communication**

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



Active listening

Active listening means giving your full attention to the child to show that you understand their point of view.

A conversation is an exchange of ideas between two or more people. Active listening is essential if your conversation is to be meaningful and sustained.

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

To show you are concentrating and interested, you will need to:

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

Developing positive interactions

Strong relationships are built upon effective interactions.

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

To do this, take the following steps.

Talk positively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reflect on how you currently speak to and interact with children. Do you use positive instructions? ➤ Use positive language, as most children try to follow expectations. When you say not to do something, a child will listen and know what not to do, but they may not understand what it is that you would like them to do instead. You should state exactly what you expect from children, rather than what is not allowed; for example, say, 'Walk' instead of, 'Don't run', or, 'Feet on the floor' rather than, 'Get your feet off the table'. ➤ Positive language lets the child know exactly what it is you want them to do and creates a more pleasant atmosphere.
Send clear messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use language that is appropriate for a child's age, stage of development and culture so that your communication is positive and clear. ➤ Say what you mean clearly and concisely. For example, if you want to implement a group time, rather than saying, 'Stop running, you have to come and sit on the mat now,' say, 'Let's all sit down for a puppet show.' This communicates your message clearly and positively to the children. ➤ Your use of gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice will help. These aspects can be cultural, so you may need to think about the way you use them; however, simple messages that are conveyed positively usually work well.
State the expected behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ If a child displays an acceptable behaviour, encourage them; for example, 'Thank you, Anna, for picking up the blocks. I was worried someone may fall over.' ➤ If a child displays an undesirable behaviour, take them aside and explain why it is unacceptable; for example, 'Anna, you left the blocks on the floor. Someone may fall over. Please put them away if you have finished playing.'
Listen to and accept children's feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To really listen to what children have to say, get down to their eye level and use body language to show that you are concentrating. Show that you respect what they have to say and think it is important. ➤ Mirror what a child says in conversation back to them. For example, if a child says they don't want to go outside as they are cold, your response may be to use appropriate body language and say, 'If you feel cold today, you can put on your coat.' This shows you are listening and that you understand what they are saying.
Give children time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Take any opportunity you can to spend time with and communicate with children. Do this informally and regularly.

Children are more likely to express themselves in positive ways, to learn about themselves and their needs, and to develop resilience if their educators show genuine care and interest in them as individuals. When educators develop positive relationships with children and families, it has been shown that:

- behaviour issues decrease significantly
- any issues that occur are handled promptly, effectively and compassionately
- children with ongoing challenges are provided with sensitive and responsive plans for support.

Responding to needs

If a child requests help from you, demonstrate that you are responding to their needs and taking them seriously, and help them to feel safe, secure and supported.

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

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

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

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

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

Action	Examples
Set simpler challenges or provide support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Move a toy closer to an immobile infant. ➤ Provide a selection of puzzles of different difficulties. ➤ Give directions and support; for example, 'Try turning the piece this way. See how the green part matches here?'
Intervene in relationships when they seem to be developing into frustrating scenarios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 'Jamie and Easton, what are you trying to do here?' ➤ 'How could you work together?' ➤ 'There are lots of jobs to do, let's decide who will do what.' ➤ 'Let's work out what to do first.'
Support the child to use methods for expressing or dealing with frustration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Suggest they move away from the activity or person that is a problem. ➤ Provide stress-relief strategies like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 'Take a big breath.' – 'Stop and take a look at things again.' – 'Go for a walk around and then come back and see if you can do it.' – 'Maybe it will be easier if you try something else first.'
Acknowledge the frustration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 'This is frustrating; it's a very hard job to do.' ➤ 'We all get frustrated sometimes; it's part of learning.'

Acknowledgment and encouragement

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

This gives them the motivation to do things for intrinsic reasons (to please themselves or because the task is worth doing) rather than for an extrinsic reward or recognition.

Acknowledgment and encouragement focus on the child's efforts, even if the results aren't perfect. They are aimed at helping children feel good about themselves, which boosts their self-esteem. For example, after a child has helped pack away the toys, you may encourage them by saying, 'Matilda, you worked really hard to put all the toys away.'

There are a range of ways you can demonstrate acknowledgment and encouragement during or after an event, such as the following:

- Provide feedback using a comment about the effort that has been put in, what the child has created or something they have done that particularly interests you.
- Ask questions that demonstrate your interest and appreciation, such as:
 - 'How did you do that?'
 - 'What materials did you use?'
 - 'What do you think of your work?'
- Thank children for their contribution by saying please and thank you, and acknowledging the achievement.

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

So that you respond to successes, try to consider things from the child's perspective. The most effective way to do this is by providing a child-focused program.

Example

Considering a child's perspective

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

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

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

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

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



Using open-ended questions

Open-ended questions are a useful and important tool.

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

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

Compare the following examples of closed and open-ended questions.

Closed questions	Open-ended questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Is it hot outside? ➤ Did that hurt? ➤ Do you like trains? ➤ Are you angry? ➤ Did you do that? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What is the weather like outside? ➤ What happened? ➤ What do you like about trains? ➤ How did it make you feel? ➤ How did that happen?

Answering questions

It is common for children to ask questions and make comments.

You will hear a lot of 'why' questions. When a child is curious about the world, themselves and others, you can use this as an opportunity to develop their decision-making and problem-solving skills.

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

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

Engaging children during routines

Routines are excellent opportunities to be together and start discussions.

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

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

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

For example, there are many opportunities for showing interest and learning about children during mealtimes. You can provide environments suited to the routine and children's needs, as well as listening, discussing and asking questions. You might ask questions about the meal and its taste, if it is enjoyable or if the children would like to eat the foods again. You could also discuss:

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

Sharing ideas and stories

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

Children may show excitement for an idea or activity, or concern that it may not work. Sometimes their ideas are not fully formed, and your ongoing interaction can help them to develop their ideas.

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

Strategy	How to implement
Use active listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Get down to the child's eye level. ➤ Face the child.



Support children to share their ideas, skills and knowledge during routines.

Strategy	How to implement
Respond with simple comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Make comments such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ‘That’s interesting.’ – ‘What an interesting idea.’ – ‘How does it feel?’
Recognise specific feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Make comments such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ‘You seem very excited about this.’ – ‘How confident you are!’ – ‘You seem very happy.’
Ask open-ended questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ask what the child wants to do next. ➤ Brainstorm if the child is old enough. ➤ Ask questions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ‘How could we make this happen?’ – ‘Then what happens?’
Use body language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sit close to the child. ➤ Demonstrate enjoyment or pleasure if appropriate by clapping, smiling, jumping up and down or laughing. ➤ Copy the child’s reactions, if appropriate.
Provide materials or opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The child may need time, space, materials or people so that their idea or story can be expressed. ➤ The child may want to tell others or express themselves to specific people.
Redirect the child to the next experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ If the child is extremely excited or enthusiastic, help further their ideas or stories. ➤ Monitor the child’s participation so you see they are still feeling positive and enthusiastic. This involves monitoring their levels of frustration, confidence and ability to cope with challenges.

When children share their ideas and stories, there is an opportunity to develop the situation into a learning experience for them and perhaps the wider group. Children’s ideas and story sharing can be spontaneous or planned, formal or informal, or part of an individual discussion or group activity.

To help children extend their ideas:

- encourage them to listen to each other’s ideas
- encourage them to think flexibly about their options
- show children how you think about problems by explaining or demonstrating what you might do or how you do things
- accept and acknowledge children’s suggestions in a positive way
- explain things that limit options, such as safety considerations, practicality or resources
- allow children time to make suggestions; don’t rush them or decide for them
- make sure all children participate – not just those who are loud, enthusiastic or quick to speak up
- offer new ideas and encourage children to consider different interests
- provide new and stimulating materials or topics for discussion
- let the child take the lead – avoid taking over.

Example**Extending an idea**

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

Marna tells Kobi she thinks this is a great idea and suggests they create a discovery table and put some sand on the table as well. She asks Kobi what else they might add to the table. Kobi says he would like to build a boat using blocks and make fishing lines with sticks and magnets.



Consulting with children

One of the most effective ways to encourage positive involvement is to consult with children.

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

- behaviour expectations
- activity choices
- programming ideas
- behaviour expectations
- family involvement
- staff involvement.

Consultation is a basic principle of good-quality relationships, and there are many opportunities to incorporate it into your practice using verbal, written or non-verbal communication. You can consult with older children and families by holding a meeting, sending out a survey, having a group or individual discussion, or chatting informally. You could make requests or provide a suggestion box. Consultation can be undertaken spontaneously when the opportunity arises; for example, you could provide anecdotes or listen to conversations to spark an idea.

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

Try the following suggestions:

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

Being involved in play

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

If you think carefully about the play that is occurring and the messages or cues the children are sending you, you will be able to think about the roles you can take during play. This process will help you to identify when it is time for you to exit or change your type of participation. You might take on one of the following roles.

Observer	<p>An observer watches, listens and tries to figure out what the play is about by understanding the children's perspective and interests.</p> <p>Careful observation means you are less likely to say or do something that disrupts children's play, and you will have a better idea of what to say or do to extend play if the opportunity arises.</p> <p>You may be an observer initially and then move into one of the other play roles.</p>
Provider	<p>A provider identifies what the children are trying to do and then thinks about what can be provided so that play can proceed smoothly. For example, a provider may arrange:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ space ➤ special materials ➤ more time. <p>Careful provision means you will support the play and allow it to continue. You can also extend play by giving children more to think about and do in their play.</p> <p>A provider must be careful not to disrupt play.</p>
Mediator	<p>A mediator helps children solve problems when the children can't do so themselves.</p> <p>Watch for times when children get stuck. For example, when an argument threatens to stop the play, this is a cue for you to mediate. You can then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ step in and make a suggestion ➤ offer an alternative ➤ model a new way to act to solve the problem ➤ support the children to work out how to solve the problem. <p>You will extend children's skills in problem-solving when you mediate because children will often copy your problem-solving solutions in future play.</p>

Player	<p>A player joins in with the play. This seems to be the easiest role, but careful thought is needed before you join in. Adults can be actively involved in play as long as they respect that the play belongs to the children.</p> <p>Being a player lets you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ extend play by modelling new ideas ➤ support new players to find a role ➤ help children act out scenes or ideas that they don't know much about. <p>A player also supports children to keep their play going for a longer period of time. Perhaps even more importantly, it strengthens the child–educator relationship as the interaction allows both parties to learn more about each other.</p>
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Sometimes something will happen during play that means you must change your role. The table below gives some examples of cues you might notice that tell you your role should change.

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

Example

Extending play

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

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



Providing comfort

Look out for the signs when children may require comfort.

Children may express feelings of hurt or distress by:

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

If you notice these signs, you can respond using the following strategies.

Comfort

The child's level of attachment to you, their age and their own personal space requirements dictate how close you get. Comfort the child physically by sitting close, touching their arm, rubbing their back or giving a hug. Also consider the appropriateness of your actions in relation to the issue to ensure your contact is not misunderstood.

Listen

Listen to what the child has to say. Avoid leading the child with specific questions. Respond with simple comments like, 'Oh, I understand', or 'Mmm'.

Respond to feelings. If you recognise a specific feeling such as anger or frustration, say to the child, 'You seem very angry.'

Use your body to show you are listening by facing the child and looking at them.

Problem-solve

Problem-solve in simple ways, preferably by asking the child what they think they should do. This strategy depends on the age of the child, but brainstorming a resolution is a great way to resolve a negative feeling.

Provide comforters

Provide comforters to the child. They may have their own toy, blanket or dummy that they use when distressed, or you may offer them a special item to play with.

Redirect

Redirect the child to new activities. It is unwise to redirect a child when they are extremely upset, but in many cases a new, different or special activity will help them happily move to a new feeling of comfort and enjoyment. Monitor the child after redirection and participate in the activity, if you can, to ensure they are emotionally stable.

Allow expression

Ensure the environment and your relationship with the child allows the expression of feelings, as suppressed feelings can lead to greater issues.

Practice Task 4

1. Which of the following statements about developing relationships are correct? Select yes or no for each one.
 - a. You can support decision-making and problem-solving by using comments and questions that help children recognise problems and clarify goals. * Yes * No
 - b. Routines are excellent times to talk with children and find out what their parents are doing that children are unhappy about. * Yes * No
 - c. Children's ideas and story-sharing can be spontaneous or planned, formal or informal, or part of an individual discussion or group activity. * Yes * No
 - d. If you think carefully about the play and the messages or cues children are sending, you will be able to think about the roles you can take during play. * Yes * No
 - e. Children may express feelings of hurt or distress by crying, clinging, feeling sick or displaying negative behaviour. * Yes * No
 - f. By listening actively, being positive and using open-ended questions, you will nurture children and help them feel a sense of belonging. * Yes * No

2B Supporting positive behaviours

Children use different behaviours to express themselves.

Everyone has different views about what is an appropriate way to express feelings. However, there are some basic guidelines:

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



Support children to express their feelings.

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.

Putting the child first

Regardless of a child's age, you need to act promptly and use positive actions to resolve behaviour concerns.

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

To help children manage their behaviour positively, be consistent in your expectations and use strategies that are developed with the best interests of the child in mind – those that consider the child's confidence, wellbeing and individuality. Take into account the child's age and the impact of the method being used, not only on the child in focus, but on the rest of the children in the environment. This is sometimes referred to as allowing freedom within boundaries.

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

The following strategies will be used as part of any individual support plan. They will also be used by educators as they monitor children and respond to their actions and interactions.

These techniques support children to develop their prosocial and self-regulation skills, and are recognised as relationship-based guidance strategies that promote a sense of belonging.

Remaining calm

Remain calm regardless of the stress you may feel and use a tone of voice that is firm yet friendly.

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, raise your voice or show frustration in some way, 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 (for example, as a nanny or in family day care), work out a safe way to defuse the situation.

Example

Defusing difficult emotions

Carrie is a family day care educator. She works with four children, all aged under five years. Today the children all arrived by 7am. It is now 5.30pm. There is still another hour until any of the children go home.

The children have had a busy day and the weather has been hot, so they stayed inside most of the time. They have all finished their dinner, but Harvey (three years) has been irritable all day and didn't sleep for 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 Harvey, in particular, can relax and have a rest. However, two minutes into the quiet play, Harvey starts screaming, pushing other children and telling them they are in the way.

Carrie is tired and feels emotional about the situation. She picks Harvey 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 and there are no UV issues. The children run outside and each takes off to their preferred play area.



Modelling behaviours

Modelling is one of the most powerful ways to teach children appropriate behaviours.

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

Children will quickly pick up behaviours and attitudes in the environment – both positive and negative. Always use encouraging and positive language, and model good social and communication skills in all your interactions.

If you want to guide children toward appropriate behaviour, model the correct way yourself. For example:

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

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 positive behaviour and then consistently every time the behaviour is demonstrated until it is considered learnt.

Positive reinforcement does not need to be a tangible item or reward. 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.

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

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.'

Positive language demonstrates 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 occurring 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 but professional tone	This shows you are taking each child seriously.
Describe the behaviour; avoid personal opinions	Focusing on a child's positive behaviour and what it helps them achieve motivates them much more powerfully than focusing on whether you personally like or dislike their behaviour.
Find positives in all children	Acknowledging each child's success lets them know you are watching and encourages them to keep practising those behaviours.

Setting behaviour expectations

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

Children learn by observing and interacting with their environment. 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 behaviour expectations 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.

Examples of expectations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stay in the fenced area. ➤ Walk on the concrete. ➤ Always walk when inside. ➤ Take turns on the play equipment. ➤ Be gentle with each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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.

Children need to respect other children and give everyone an opportunity to learn, play and develop without feeling insecure or threatened by others. Appropriate behaviour for different environments (such as indoor and outdoor environments) may vary greatly, as will the expected behaviour on an excursion or an incursion. Consider the information in the following table.

Indoor behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Within the indoor environment, children should be made aware of the housekeeping rules, such as using quiet voices, walking and asking for toys. ➤ 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 this equipment.
Outdoor behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ When setting outdoor expectations, 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Set strict expectations 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 excursion. ➤ Discussions about behaviour expectations need to be set with children prior to taking them to a new place.

Children should be involved in developing expectations, especially for new experiences. Children can work together to discuss what they believe are rules that need to be put into place. Setting behaviour expectations 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 behaviour expectations are broken helps them to:

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

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

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

Example

Communicating behaviour expectations

Noah, Milly and Lexi, all four years old, are playing in the sandpit. Unexpectedly, Noah raises his shovel and throws sand on the girls. As Noah prepares to do it again, Milly turns to him and says, 'Noah, don't throw sand. Remember, if you do that, you have to go and play somewhere else.' Noah puts the shovel down and moves to help dig the trench they were working on.



Redirection

An effective way to support young children is to use redirection.

As children experiment and learn, they all make mistakes and engage in undesirable behaviour. Redirection 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 moving 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.

The following table outlines some common forms of redirection.

Form of redirection	Description	Example
Preventing harm	<p>Redirection is often useful to prevent harm when drawn-out explanations are not appropriate. When redirecting, the following steps are often successful:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Briefly, verbally acknowledge the child's feelings or purpose; for example, 'You seem angry.' 2. Redirect the child to an activity with a similar outlet for their feelings or purpose; for example, 'Let's hit with the hammer.' 3. Help the child move to the new location. <p>Once you become familiar with individual children, you will be able to identify when they are heading for a situation that may lead to concerning behaviour. This is called 'recognising the triggers'.</p> <p>Redirection is useful when you can predict this situation, as intervening prior to an incident and redirecting the child to another activity removes potential harm.</p>	<p>James (two years) is climbing on the chairs. Ruth, his educator, says, 'Don't climb on the chairs, James.' James looks at Ruth and smiles. He stands up on top of the chair and starts to stamp his feet. Ruth gets annoyed and says angrily, 'I told you not to climb on the chairs. It's too dangerous.' James continues to stand on the chair and smiles at Ruth.</p> <p>Ruth takes a deep breath and decides to use positive statements and redirection. She switches to a pleasant but firm tone of voice and says, 'Come down on the floor, James.'</p> <p>As he starts to climb down, she takes his hand gently and says in a happy voice, 'Let's go climb on the climbing frame!'</p> <p>The steps Ruth took are applicable for older children as well. Even though they can understand an instruction not to do something, they may stop listening to adults who always give them directions.</p>

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

Example

Redirecting to defuse a situation

Mia is laughing and doing a silly dance. Other children are looking at her and laughing too. Eve, her educator, is concerned that she will fall onto the table nearby.

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

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



Using 'I' messages

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

This is an excellent way to express expectations as it is clear and positive. Unfortunately, many of us are more used to other, more self-focused types of communication. For example:

- A 'you' message blames the other person for what happened; for example:
 - '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; for example:
 - 'Do this for me.'
 - 'I need you to ...'
 - 'I want ...'
 - 'I feel sad when ...'
 - 'I feel happy when ...'

'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 results 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 an 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

Understanding consequences

Leo takes out 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 Leo must pack up all the blocks 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, so Leo does not feel overwhelmed.

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



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.

When you add consequences to the behaviour expectations 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, understand what they need to do next.

Example

Making a positive choice

Sherma (four years) is playing in the water trough with her friend, Bonnie. 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 yelling, 'You listen, you baby!'



An educator, Calista, approaches and asks Sherma if she thinks that pushing Beau and yelling at him helps him understand. 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'm sorry, I just don't want you to spill water.' Calista praises Sherma and together they work out how Beau can safely join in.

Problem-solving

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

Problem-solving is part of the decision-making process that children experience as they face challenges throughout the day or select from the appropriate choices you offer them. As they think about the options, they consider how they feel about each choice and how other things impact their decision.



Work through options with children to help them problem-solve.

Often, you can support children to make choices and learn about problem-solving by applying some controlled strategies, such as the following.

Making a direct suggestion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This helps a hesitant child make a choice. ➤ Some children find it difficult to make decisions. Others have little experience in making decisions and may feel overwhelmed by being expected to choose for themselves. ➤ You can work through options with children, give them some ideas to think about and, in some cases, suggest the option you feel is best at the time.
Limiting choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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 Problem-solving

Ashleigh, an educator, has observed Tim and Robbin playing for long periods in the block area, and considers block play to be an interest for these children.

To encourage a problem-solving approach and help the children see that a consequence of working together would be creating a greater outcome, she sets up the block play and adds animals and tractors. She then displays posters of farms in the block space, which she moves to the bark area outdoors.



To encourage problem-solving, she:

- is present in the block area when Tim and Robbin arrive, and discusses the area, supporting them to talk together and identify what they would like to achieve – together they set a goal
- observes Tim’s and Robbin’s reactions to the experience to ensure they are both interested in the activity and the goal
- checks that any additional materials are provided, and supports Tim and Robbin to talk about new ideas and how to solve issues as the goal is being achieved
- discusses the children’s progress, takes photos of their work and encourages others to have a look
- encourages Tim and Robbin to step back and look at their progress frequently.

Tim and Robbin set a goal to create a farm. During the time spent achieving this goal, they set other objectives. They:

- build a farmhouse
- make fences
- make a barn
- make a road to the farm
- clear areas for animals
- collect food for animals
- make a tractor and a four-wheel drive
- create a fishing pond.

Upon completion of their work, Ashleigh asks them how it feels to have worked together and how different the outcome is because of this collaboration.

Resolving conflict

You should make suggestions to children rather than give directions.

So that decision-making, problem-solving and conflict-resolution processes are cooperative, your interactions must be encouraging. You can do this by:

- encouraging children to interact with each other – introduce open-ended activities; this encourages children to feel important and to develop their own ideas
- helping children clarify or adapt their shared goals – to successfully make a decision all participants need to have the same or a similar goal; you can help them talk about what they want to achieve
- involving children who are unlikely to initiate – quieter children are less likely to initiate and state their ideas, so support their involvement
- avoiding demonstrating or solving problems for the children – allow the children to think about their options and consider all outcomes.

To extend children's ability to make decisions, solve problems and resolve conflicts, you can implement a common decision-making strategy. When implementing the steps of this strategy, you can encourage children to work with others to gain a broader view or support them to work through the steps themselves.

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

When decisions need to be made, problems solved or conflicts defused, apply appropriate skills immediately. There are times when you can use a group discussion to involve children in learning about expectations, barriers, choices and relationships. When used regularly, these skills become part of everyday thinking, which helps the children deal with other issues when they arise.

To support decision-making, problem-solving and conflict resolution, you can:

- recognise when problems are developing and intervene before issues arise
- clarify goals by talking children through what they want to achieve
- plan strategies for supporting children to learn about and use decision-making, problem-solving and conflict resolution, and plan experiences that require these skills
- find solutions to issues that occur
- support children to share their ideas with others
- use everyday events as a basis for discussing how others may have made decisions, solved problems and dealt with conflict
- encourage children to consult each other
- give children a strategy to use when they are faced with decisions, problems and conflicts; for example, breaking the issue into manageable tasks
- help children identify what issues to tackle and in which order
- supports children to see other people's points of view.

The child's age and developmental stage influence the way they are able to engage in the conflict situation. Here are some examples of different stages of involvement.

Stage	Description	Example
Educator-led	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The educator works through the stages of conflict resolution themselves, yet they verbalise this to show the child how the problem is solved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Educator: 'I can see you want the toy, Jasper. You need to wait until Peyton is finished. Let's find another toy.' ➤ A toy is found. ➤ Educator: 'There, Jasper, this one is fun too, isn't it?'
Shared responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The educator works with the child to resolve the conflict. They ask questions and help to solve the situation when support is needed. The educator stays engaged with the process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Educator: 'I can see you want the toy, Jasper. What could you do?' ➤ Jasper suggests he finds another toy or waits for Peyton to finish. ➤ Educator: 'Great ideas, Jasper. Which would you like to choose?' ➤ Jasper chooses to find another toy. ➤ Educator: 'Would you like help to find a toy?'

Stage	Description	Example
Child-led	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The child resolves the conflict with educator support and involvement if needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Educator: 'I can see you want the toy, Jasper. Do you remember what to do?' ➤ Jasper begins the conflict-resolution process. ➤ Educator: 'Great work. Do you need help to do what you have decided?'
Independent resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The child resolves the conflict independently. The educator is available if needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Educator: 'Looks like you know how to solve this, Jasper. Let me know if you need help.'

Supporting all children

While children who are displaying challenging behaviours 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 challenging behaviours need additional help so they are not adversely affected, and support to allow them to develop strategies for feeling safe.

When children display a disrupting, challenging, out-of-character or concerning behaviour, others in the group 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 arrival, and not wanting their family member to leave
- vigilant, watching the child and telling on them for any reason
- distracted.

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.

When you talk to individuals and small groups about behaviours, the children are given an opportunity to express their emotions adequately or ask for what they want.

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

Age	Response	Example
0-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Infants and toddlers often respond to extreme behaviour by expressing emotions. If one child begins to cry, it is common that others will too. ➤ To support infants, you can talk in simple sentences about what is happening and about the feelings involved. 	<p>You may say, 'Joanie, Gregory is very sad; he is crying. You are with me now. I will look after you.'</p>
2-3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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 its function or consequences. ➤ Toddlers will respond to your discussion with them one to one, and sometimes to small group discussions. ➤ When you talk to children about behaviours, discuss this generally rather than focusing on a particular child. 	<p>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.</p> <p>You may ask the children to suggest some words they could use to ask for what they want, and give them examples.</p>
Over 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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 the involvement of children more demanding. 	<p>This may include discussions about how other children feel when they are observing or are the victim of 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 or research.</p>

Example
Supporting children

Raelynn ran through the room pulling activities from the tables, throwing items across the room, running from educators and screaming at children and adults. This lasted for 10 minutes.

Siv (four years) 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? You seem scared.' Siv nodded her head. The educator continued, 'Raelynn is very angry. She wants to tell us how angry she is, but she doesn't know how to tell us. You are safe here. I will stay with you.'

When Siv's mother arrives, 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.



Controversial strategies

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

Controversial strategies may also highlight differences in beliefs and perspectives of educators. They may not be seen as relationship-based.

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.

Four common controversial support strategies are:

- describing all children in the group as friends
- using tangible rewards
- using incentive charts
- using time out.

Describing children as friends

Describing all children in a group as 'friends' is a controversial strategy.

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

When guiding behaviour, an educator might use statements such as:

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

This is controversial because it raises a number of questions:

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

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

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

Controversial strategy	Recommended strategy
<p>Alisha, an educator, approaches Riley, who is working in a construction area. He has hit another child on the head with a block.</p>	<p>Alisha, an educator, approaches Riley, who is working in a construction area. He has hit another child on the head with a block.</p>
<p>Alisha comments, 'Riley, we need to be gentle with our friends.'</p>	<p>Alisha states, 'Riley, we need to be gentle.'</p>

Using tangible rewards

Using tangible rewards (such as stickers, lollies and toys) for a specific behaviour or action is another controversial strategy.

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, feel good about doing them and 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 maximum reward.

Tangible rewards appeal to the child because 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 (these are all intrinsic).

Example

Using tangible rewards

Ryan (four years) is asked to pack up his activity. 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.



Using incentive charts

Using incentive charts to encourage a child to achieve something or to demonstrate behaviour consistently is a controversial strategy.

Unfortunately, if the child is not in control of their abilities or has not yet mastered the skills, then the incentive chart is just another way to demonstrate how they fail.

However, incentive charts can be useful when children are tracking activities they are in control of; for example, practising a musical instrument, feeding 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 Incentive chart

Cooper (three years) squeals loudly, runs in circles and flaps his arms when he is excited. His educator has developed an incentive chart so that 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 so as to control his excitement.



The incentive chart is not working because Cooper is unable to control his emotional reactions when he is excited. Cooper needs to learn how to recognise his feelings and control his reactions first. His educator should keep in mind the importance of excitement and its value for learning and self-esteem. The incentive chart may be more appropriate when Cooper is able to control his emotions. This will support his success.

Using time out

Time out is not considered an acceptable practice in education and care services.

Element 5.2.3 of the NQS states that '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 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. Using time out as a punishment often sees children being provoked into secondary behaviours, such as:

- damaging the area they are placed in
- deciding that time out for doing something isn't so bad
- feeling that a negative behaviour outcome is worth time out.

Other children are sensitive to the isolation and may perceive time out as a personal attack, which can lower their self-esteem and make them more timid in play.

Young children 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

'Time with' strategy

Martin (three years) watches others building block towers. When they are built to waist level, he enters the area and pushes the towers over.

His educator chooses to use a 'time with' method as she thinks Martin needs support to become engaged in an activity positively.

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 the 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 5

1. Which of the following statements are correct about guiding behaviours and relationship-based guidance? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|---|-------|------|
| a. Educators each have their own ideas about behaviour expectations. Children will get to know what each educator expects. | * Yes | * No |
| b. Educators should collaborate with children in developing expectations, especially for new experiences. Setting behaviour expectations with the children allows them to take ownership and to discuss and understand the reasons for decisions. | * Yes | * No |
| c. Consequences help children understand what happens when their behaviours are concerning. Consequences might be natural or logical. | * Yes | * No |
| d. By explaining to children that they should all be friends, educators will be helping them to understand that they need to care for all people and show respect. This is part of developing prosocial behaviours. | * Yes | * No |
| e. Children's needs, culture and background influence their ability to regulate their behaviour and understand prosocial behaviour. Each child will need different strategies and degrees of support. | * Yes | * No |
| f. When a child displays dangerous or frightening behaviours, let other children work out how to manage the situation themselves so they become resilient. | * Yes | * No |

2. Which of the following are ways to provide children with clear and consistent support to encourage positive interactions and behaviour? Select all that apply.

- Observe children.
- Offer lots of choices.
- Give children suggestions on how they might solve problems.
- Set up a reward chart.
- Use 'I' messages.
- Model appropriate behaviours.

3. Number each step from 1 to 5 in the order you would follow to support children to resolve conflicts.

Check that the issue is resolved and give feedback.

Search for solutions.

Support children to implement the solution.

Find out what the issue is.

Select a solution.

Summary

- When a child develops a trusting and positive relationship with you, they will follow and more freely accept your support because they feel safe and respected.
- Children are more likely to express themselves in positive ways, to learn about themselves and their needs, and to develop resilience if you show genuine care and interest in them as individuals.
- Acknowledgment and encouragement show children that you value them and their achievements, giving them the motivation to do things for intrinsic reasons.
- One of the most effective ways to encourage positive involvement is to consult with children.
- Children use different behaviours to express themselves. Everyone has different views about what is an appropriate way to express feelings.
- The longer a behaviour is ignored or treated in a negative way, the greater the risk of the behaviour becoming concerning.
- To help children manage their behaviour positively, you must be consistent in your expectations and use strategies that are developed with the best interests of the child in mind – those that consider the child's confidence, wellbeing and individuality.
- Controversial strategies are ones that challenge your beliefs or understanding of the standards and laws.

Learning Checkpoint 2

Maintaining positive environments

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

Case study

Milo and Clara have begun working at a service that has recently opened. They had not met before and are working in their first week with children.

1. Select true or false for the following statement.

If Milo wanted to use tangible rewards and Clara felt this was inappropriate, they should each follow through in the way they feel most confident.

* True * False

2. Which of the following should Milo and Clara expect as positive, respectful and appropriate interactions and behaviours? Select all that apply.

- Babies should be asked to be involved in problem-solving with preschoolers.
- Toddlers should be given incentive charts. If they start to have tantrums and can self-regulate, they will get a sticker.
- All children will know what is expected of them if expectations are presented in positive ways.
- While children will have particular friends, they will be encouraged to care for each other as part of their prosocial development, despite their level of interest in each other.
- Children should be involved in developing expectations. They will feel ownership and belonging if they are included. They will also understand the expectations more clearly.
- What is expected of a baby will be different to a toddler, preschooler or school-aged child.

3. Which of the following positive expectations could Milo or Clara use when a child is running through the hallway? Select all that apply.

- 'That is a very fast run!'
- 'We walk inside.'
- 'You are clever at running.'
- 'Walk slowly inside.'

4. Which of the following are appropriate redirections that Milo or Clara might give when a toddler throws sand? Select all that apply.
- 'Would you like to come and throw the ball?'
 - 'Please throw sand away from children's eyes.'
 - 'Do you think these children will like you if you throw sand?'
 - 'Can you put sand in the bucket with that spade?'
5. Which of the following are appropriate consequences that Milo or Clara might use when a preschooler tips water over the bathroom floor? Select all that apply.
- The child could help to clean up the water.
 - The child will need to be supervised by Clara or Milo if they need to go to the bathroom.
 - The child could stand at the door and let other children know it is dangerous until the water is mopped up.
 - The child could be expected to tell their parent what happened.
6. Which of the following are appropriate 'I' messages that Milo and Clara might use when a preschooler tries to exit the room alone? Select all that apply.
- 'I feel worried when you try to leave the room. I cannot make sure you are safe if you leave the room.'
 - 'When you leave the room, I worry as I cannot see where you are and check you are safe.'
 - 'I feel you are misbehaving by leaving the room alone.'
 - 'You need to stay in the room so you are safe.'
7. Which of the following responses will support children to develop their emerging prosocial skills?
- 'We walk inside.'
 - 'Can you put sand in the bucket with that spade?'
 - 'Can you help to clean up the water?'
 - 'You need to stay in the room so you are safe.'

8. Draw a line to match the developmental stage of the child on the left with the conflict-resolution strategy Milo and Clara could use on the right if there are two children fighting over the same toy.

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| * Baby | * 'How will you solve this?' |
| * Toddler | * 'What do you think you might do? Maybe you can think of some ideas and then work out which is the best one?' |
| * Preschooler | * 'You both want the toy! Shall we get another one the same or find something else to play with?' |
| * School-age | * 'I can see you both want the toy. How about we find another one?' |

9. Select true or false for the following statement.

When a preschool child yells loudly across the room, a baby starts to cry. Milo and Clara could collaborate; one comforting the baby and the other explaining to the preschool child that loud voices are for outside.

- * True * False



Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

- 3A** Documenting and analysing behaviour
- 3B** Consulting others about behaviour

Gathering information about challenging behaviour

Collaboration about behaviour should be a natural and ongoing feature of all education and care services.

This collaboration should occur between all stakeholders, including:

- families
- educators
- other service staff
- specialists
- other carers and people important to the child.

Communication exchanges between these people ensure that insights are shared as to how each person feels about behaviour and expectations. This means that children will be better understood and respected based on their individual circumstances.

Children often behave differently in different situations. For example, a family member may say they are having difficulties with their child listening and following through with simple directions at home, but the child may behave differently in the service.

3A Documenting and analysing behaviour

You can use records to gather information based on what has been seen, as well as details that have been gained through collaboration with others.

The information you record can provide an insight into behaviours that are challenging, allowing reflection to occur on a range of factors, including patterns of behaviour.

Records can demonstrate to families that you are treating their child with respect and concern. This helps to establish a partnership of practical and continuous monitoring of the child in the home and education environments.

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 so you can develop a support plan.

Recording incidents

You may gather information about a child's behaviour due to an incident, a change in behaviour or a behaviour of concern.

Sometimes, a child may not respond to normal guidance strategies, and this may lead you to record relevant events.

Your service's policies and procedures will guide you in this process, and also outline expectations for observing and documenting behaviour. There may be specific templates, guidelines or formatting procedures you need to use.

A range of incidents may occur depending on the age of the children involved, including those detailed in the following table. In addition, behaviours of concern may include events where children are harming themselves.

Age	Types of incident
0–2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Yelling, swearing, kicking, punching, pushing ➤ Throwing materials at others ➤ Laughing at others ➤ Being aggressive, boisterous, bullying and overly loud

Records of observation can be expanded when you collect information from others. The following table outlines the type of information each source can provide.

Information source	Type of information provided
Educators in contact with the child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Types of behaviours being displayed and times of day they occur ➤ Children involved when incidents arise ➤ Frequency of a particular behaviour occurring
Service coordinator or director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Your role in dealing with a situation ➤ Specific policies and procedures
Family members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Behaviours occurring at home ➤ Changes to the home environment or routine ➤ Current strategies used for behaviour guidance in the home ➤ Current routines ➤ Inappropriate past behaviours
Outside specialists such as a speech or occupational therapist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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

Record types

You can collect observational data in a variety of ways.

Many workplaces, through their policies and procedures, encourage a combination of methods to collect data so as to create a more holistic view of the child's performance and development.

The observational information you collect relating to concerning behaviour 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 for behaviours of concern.

Observation method	Details
Event samples and checklists	<p>Each time a particular event occurs, add a record of what happened before, during and after the situation.</p> <p>An event sample allows you to consider all things that happen during the event, which gives you an unbiased account.</p> <p>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.</p>
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, including all behaviours displayed.
Jottings and incidental records	<p>Jottings and incidental records note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ children's actions ➤ brief transcripts of their conversations or comments ➤ details of a situation ➤ questions ➤ ideas. <p>You might observe this information yourself or the information might be provided to you by another person, such as the child's family.</p>
Checklists	These provide a specific list of behaviours or development that is ticked off when observed.
Sociograms	Sociograms are graphic webs that demonstrate who children interact with, how often and in what ways.

For records to be effective, they must include details that are relevant to the behaviours being observed. In addition to an example of the actual behaviour being presented, data should include the following:

- frequency
- intensity
- duration
- triggers
- function or consequences.

Frequency

Frequency relates to how often the behaviour occurs.

Frequency is usually recorded to measure the number of times a day or hour the behaviour is noticed, but may identify a particular time or routine such as during group time, indoor play, meal time, outdoor play or a rest period.

By looking at the frequency and times the behaviour occurs, you will be able to see whether there is a pattern or similarity between the events. Frequency 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

Intensity is the extent that the child acts out the behaviour.

Intensity might be recorded on a scale from 1–10, 0–5, or as a level; for example, low intensity, medium intensity or high intensity. At times, it may be appropriate to record intensity based on the level of disruption, violence, distress to the child or recovery time.

When intensity is recorded, it helps to identify any associated situations; for example, is there an event that links with the intensity? It also helps to measure improvement or a decrease in progress.

Intensity might be identified as follows:

- Low intensity: Disrupting and concerning, but not a danger to the child or others.
- Medium intensity: Disrupting and concerning and a danger to the child and others.
- High intensity: Halts events and others must be removed from the area. The behaviour is aimed at hurting others and may result in serious injury.

Duration

Duration is a record of how long a behaviour lasts for.

Duration is usually recorded in minutes; however, it may be schedule-related, such as linking to a whole mealtime or group time. Duration might identify a link with an event or measure any improvement or progress in behaviour.

Triggers

By analysing records of behaviour, you are often able to understand why a particular behaviour occurred.

This is one of the most important aspects of recording. When you are aware of triggers, or events that cause behaviours of concern, you are able to plan and act in ways that are clear and purposeful.

The following are some questions to ask that will support you to learn more about the triggers behind concerning behaviour.

Type of information	Description	How to identify
Behaviour	What occurred; what specific behaviour did the child display?	Consider the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What happened? ➤ Where did it happen? ➤ How long did it last for? ➤ Who else was involved?
Antecedents	Antecedents are the things that happened directly before the behaviour occurred; the things that possibly caused the behaviour.	Consider the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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?
Setting events	Setting events are the things that occur in the environment or the routine that could cause the behaviour. You should consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ any expectations ➤ how the environment is presented ➤ how time, space, people, materials, safety and aesthetics are considered ➤ interactions and approaches ➤ behaviour expectations. 	Consider the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Did anything happen in the environment or routine that may have contributed to the behaviour? ➤ Was anything changed in the environment or routine that may have contributed to the behaviour? ➤ Could anything in the environment contribute to the behaviour?

Function or consequences of behaviour

Look for the reason behind the behaviour to identify the function or the consequence a child is trying to achieve.

This, too, can be a trigger for behaviours of concern.

Some children communicate through their behaviour because 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 something that always works or the only way they know how to get what they want.

Function/ consequence	Example	Analysis (what the behaviour seems to achieve)
Gain attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Percy wants children to listen to him and feels his opinion is important.
Communicate a need or want	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Shanti (three years) falls to the ground and screams, throwing her body around aggressively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Shanti wants to use the tricycle. There are only three tricycles available and Jenna is communicating her desire to ride one too.
Gain space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Chika (four years) likes to play in the block corner. Her educators notice she is often alone playing happily. ➤ When Chika enters the block area and other children are also in the area, she watches them and knocks their roads and towers over purposefully. Whenever this happens, Chika says, 'Oh sorry, it was an accident' immediately. On most occasions the other children leave the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Chika wants to have the block area to herself.
Escape from an unpleasant situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Saffron (18 months) screams until her face turns bright red each time she is placed near the highchair. She clambers up the educator's body and holds tightly with her fingernails digging into the educator's skin. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Saffron has a fear of the highchair. ➤ Although most other children are comfortable in the chair, Saffron once caught her finger in a highchair and is now afraid of it.
Gain a sensory input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Jairo (five years) lies in the book corner next to the fish tank filter. He is 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Talia (four years) 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. Prior to moving away, Talia may be attempting to express her ideas for play and not being listened to. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Talia may be self-regulating as she is frustrated and wishes to avoid becoming angry or frustrated.

Function/ consequence	Example	Analysis (what the behaviour seems to achieve)
Release tension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reed (three years) sets up train tracks with his peers. They play alongside each other in an intense session of building, train driving and imagination. ➤ If the play is under 15 minutes, Reed plays happily then moves onto another activity. ➤ If the play exceeds 15 minutes, Reed will unexpectedly stop playing and watch. 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. ➤ Reed then lies in the space, curled up, crying softly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reed is releasing tension. Intense play for long periods of time exhausts him and he finds it overwhelming.

When considering the function or consequence behind behaviour, be open to possibilities. At times, the reasons are quite different from the behaviour itself. Sometimes, you may easily identify a function or consequence; other times, you may need to consider a range of possible causes and seek advice from others before piecing together the information to identify the function or consequence.

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

Age: 5 years

Date: 26.1.20

Recorded by: Harriet

Setting: Indoor play

Behaviours being observed:

- Reactions to events
- Biting

Time when behaviour occurs	Setting	Triggers: What is happening just before the behaviour?	Behaviour details	Who else is involved	Intensity of behaviour	Duration of behaviour
9.35 am	Sandpit	Building a castle, but the sand was not wet enough.	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 Benjamin entered the sandpit and began to work with the sand.	No one	Low (no aggression to others)	10 minutes
10.15 am	Train set	Play with Thomas the Tank Engine. All children wanted the same trains.	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 by catching him, but he ran from them and spat on Margaret (an educator). Otto calmed down when Lydia (another educator) asked if he would like a drink of water. He was red-faced and crying.	Jim, Celina	High (aggressive with other children)	20 minutes
11.13 am	Collage	Mohammed took the scissors that were near Otto and Celina took the last paste brush.	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 by taking his hand, but he would not respond. When Mohammed approached the table and started to paste, Otto stopped crying and watched what he was doing.	Celina and Mohammed	Medium (aggressive with environment)	15 minutes



Practice Task 6

1. Which of the following are correct for documenting and analysing information about behaviours according to service policies and procedures? Select all that apply.
 - The information you record provides an insight into behaviours that are challenging, allowing reflection on a range of factors including patterns of behaviour.
 - You may gather information about a child's behaviour due to an incident, or when you notice a change in behaviour or a behaviour of concern.
 - All children must have documented information about their behaviour, and this must be analysed so you are aware of each child's poor behaviours.
 - Records of observation can be expanded if educators collect information from others.
 - By analysing records of behaviour, you will have an automatic solution on how to deal with all behaviours.
 - To identify the function or consequence of a behaviour, look for the variables and influences behind the behaviour and what the child is trying to achieve.

2. When considering the function or consequence of behaviour, which of the following would you take into consideration? Select all that apply.
 - A child is trying to gain your attention.
 - A child is trying to communicate a need or want.
 - A child is wanting to gain a consequence.
 - A child is behaving badly.
 - A child is self-regulating.
 - A child is just unhappy.

3B Consulting others about behaviour

Think about who to consult, what they can tell you and how to gather this information.

Before you can complete your recording process and 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 need to seek the advice of a specialist before selecting the best option for the situation. Consider the information in the following table.



Consult with others who are involved with the child.

Who to consult	What they can tell you	How to gather this information
Family members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Discussions ➤ Meetings ➤ Surveys ➤ Forms
Other educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Observation records ➤ Portfolios ➤ Notes from past information-gathering sessions ➤ Support plans ➤ Discussions
Specialists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Diagnosis ➤ Triggers ➤ Key features ➤ Links to other developmental areas ➤ Situations to avoid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Discussions ➤ Assessments ➤ Reports ➤ Meetings

Discussions with families

Family members are an important source of information about a child's behaviour.

Family members 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 families allows you to identify any issues and establish strategies for guidance, and may help everyone 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.

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

- transferring your responsibility
- demonstrating your inability to support the child
- causing others to feel uncomfortable or lack faith in your abilities.

You may be demonstrating your unwillingness to accept that children are learning and that they will make mistakes. This may cause family members to have unrealistic expectations. However, behaviours of concern do need to be discussed with family members. If concerning behaviours are not dealt with, they can and will continue, perhaps increasing in regularity and intensity, and 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.

When you hold discussions with family members, demonstrate confidentiality and show respect for the feelings of the people involved. 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. Maintain a positive manner and show that your primary motivation in discussing the situation is to offer support or share information about the child's development.

The following table outlines some other useful strategies for responding to situations.

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 follow up when you are better able to.
Provide 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	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.

Understanding reactions

When you discuss a child's behaviours of concern, their family member is likely to react in a certain way.

The manner in which they react will involve positive or negative feelings and responses.

Positive responses include:	Negative responses include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ thanking you for supporting their child ➤ dealing with the incident capably ➤ being calm and in control ➤ following up after the consultation ➤ being relieved that it wasn't just them that noticed the issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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, upset 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 them and talk without interruption is often the best way to share information.

Example

Reactions of family members

When Francesca, an educator, looks up she sees Jude 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. Francesca quickly moves to help Kimberly and calls for assistance.

When Francesca 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're 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, Jude's dad becomes distraught and needs some time to talk through his feelings. He asks if Francesca can recommend a counselling service as he feels he can't let Jude 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, Francesca again speaks to the Kimberley's mother. Francesca asks, 'Is there anything you need from us today?' to open the discussion. 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.

Jude doesn't come to the service in the morning. Francesca calls his family to check if they are okay, but Jude's mum says she feels they should have a meeting together about Jude's behaviour before he returns.



Options for response

Despite the fact that it may take time for a family to discuss an incident, you should be working within the service's guidelines to identify options for response.

Again, every family is different; for example:

- some family members 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 family members at this level is not just about doing the right thing. Family members 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 family members in the following ways:

- Hold a private meeting to review the situation and share information and ideas for action.
- Hold a group meeting with 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 communicate with family members, make sure you:

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

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

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

Continuing communication

Continue communication after an incident to ensure your ongoing relationship with a family is successful.

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. 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 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 the right person is 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 open in telling you what is happening, while others will be less so.

Seeking specialist advice

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

Family members 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
- occupational therapists
- psychologists
- psychiatrists.

If you decide to contact support personnel or governing bodies, you need to have detailed information about the child available for their use. This may include your observation records or any support plans that have already commenced. They may also need access to family members, 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 or guardian signatures on forms intended for the authority.

Inclusion Support Programme

When advice is required outside of your service, or if you are required to locate a specialist, it is recommended that you contact the Inclusion Support Programme (ISP).

This service 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 programme helps you monitor children's behaviour to determine strategies and support services you might require. The programme also provides advice on how to include and support all children in your service.

The ISP can assist you in gaining appropriate funding. You can find out more about your ISP at this website: aspirelr.link/inclusion-support-programme.

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.

Support systems

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

Ultimately, you must deal with behaviours of concern as part of your recognition of the rights of the child. If others are involved in gathering information and interpreting behaviour, then you have already set up an initial support system for yourself and the child.

A good support system 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.

Examples

Support systems

In the following examples, behaviours of concern occurred and were discussed, and different people had different thoughts how to guide the behaviours. When this happens, facilitated discussion and gathering information can help to identify the best response and maintain a positive attitude among all the people involved.

Example 1

Arthur (six years) is only able to concentrate for short periods. He is impulsive and extremely reactive. His educators would like to have him assessed. His parents agree.

Arthur is not diagnosed with a disorder. 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 near to each other, an educator will closely supervise the play to ensure it remains 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.



Practice Task 7

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

- | | | |
|--|-------|------|
| a. Before deciding on an appropriate response to a child's behaviour, consult with others who are involved with the child, such as parents or guardians and other educators. | * Yes | * No |
| b. It is reasonable to discuss every behavioural occurrence, even when these are age-appropriate and not of concern. | * Yes | * No |
| c. When you discuss a child's behaviours of concern, their family member may react with positive or negative feelings and responses. Some family members will be happy to be involved in developing options to assist with their child's behaviours. | * Yes | * No |
| d. When advice is required about a child from outside of your service, a parent or guardian of the child needs to give their permission. | * Yes | * No |
| e. A good support system provides a sounding board and a means for reflection. | * Yes | * No |
| f. The impact of an incident may result in a loss of confidence in you or the service. | * Yes | * No |

2. Which of the following statements are correct about consulting and communicating with others about behaviour? Select all that apply.

- A collaborative approach should be used when analysing and planning for behaviour.
- A specialist must be included in discussions that identify a child's behavioural triggers.
- When communicating about a child's behaviour with families, educators must plan what they need to discuss, how best to discuss it and have strategies for responding.
- Families will always react in a negative way to discussions about behaviour. If there is a loss of confidence, educators should not communicate about an incident/behaviour until the family is ready.
- A good support system will come from ongoing communication, gathering information and reflection with others.

Summary

- Observation records gather information based on what has been seen as well as details that have been gained through collaboration with others.
- The information you record provides an insight into behaviours that are challenging, allowing reflection on a range of factors, including patterns of behaviour.
- For records to be effective, they must include details that are relevant to the behaviours being observed.
- Before you can complete your recording process and decide on an appropriate response to a child's behaviour, you need to consult with others who are involved with the child, such as parents or guardians and other educators.
- Good communication management techniques include listening, preparing, providing enough information, giving consistent messages and having realistic expectations.
- When advice is required from outside of your service, the parents or guardian of the child must first give their permission.
- If you decide to contact support personnel or governing bodies, you need to have detailed information about the child available for their use.

Learning Checkpoint 3

Gathering information about challenging behaviour

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

Case study

Clara, an educator, has been observing Aarav (four years) because his behaviour is of concern. Aarav has been attending the service for two weeks.

In the last week Aarav has begun lashing out physically, hitting and throwing things at educators and other children. On one occasion, a block hit another child on the head, giving him a bruise.

These incidents last up to five minutes and are occurring at least two times each day. Aarav displays this behaviour when it is pack-up time and other children try to pack up his materials.

The children have been told that if they are not finished their work at pack-up time, they should either place it in a safe storage area or gate the area off and place the 'work in progress' sign on the gate.

1. Draw a line to match the type of record on the left with the information Clara might be able to gather on the right.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| * Anecdotal record | * What is happening before and after the incident of Aarav lashing out, which children are involved and any pre-determined behaviours or indicators that are noticed |
| * Running record | * The behaviours that were observed during the lashing-out incidents |
| * Sociogram | * Aarav playing in a setting near pack-up time, recording all actions, signs and interactions of Aarav |
| * Event sample or checklist | * Notes about the time and event that occurs when Aarav lashes out |
| * Jottings | * Listing the children playing near Aarav at a particular time and identifying who Aarav is communicating with, and who is communicating with Aarav |

2. Analyse the information about Aarav using the following frameworks and processes for identifying challenging behaviours.

a. What seems to be the frequency of Aarav's behaviour?

.....

.....

b. What seems to be the intensity of Aarav's behaviour and why have you selected this intensity?

.....

.....

c. What seems to be the duration of Aarav's behaviour?

.....

.....

d. What seems to be the trigger for Aarav's behaviour?

.....

.....

e. What seems to be the function or consequence of Aarav's behaviour?

.....

.....

.....

f. What physical and social environment variables, influences or factors may be contributing to or influencing Aarav's behaviour?

.....

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.....

.....

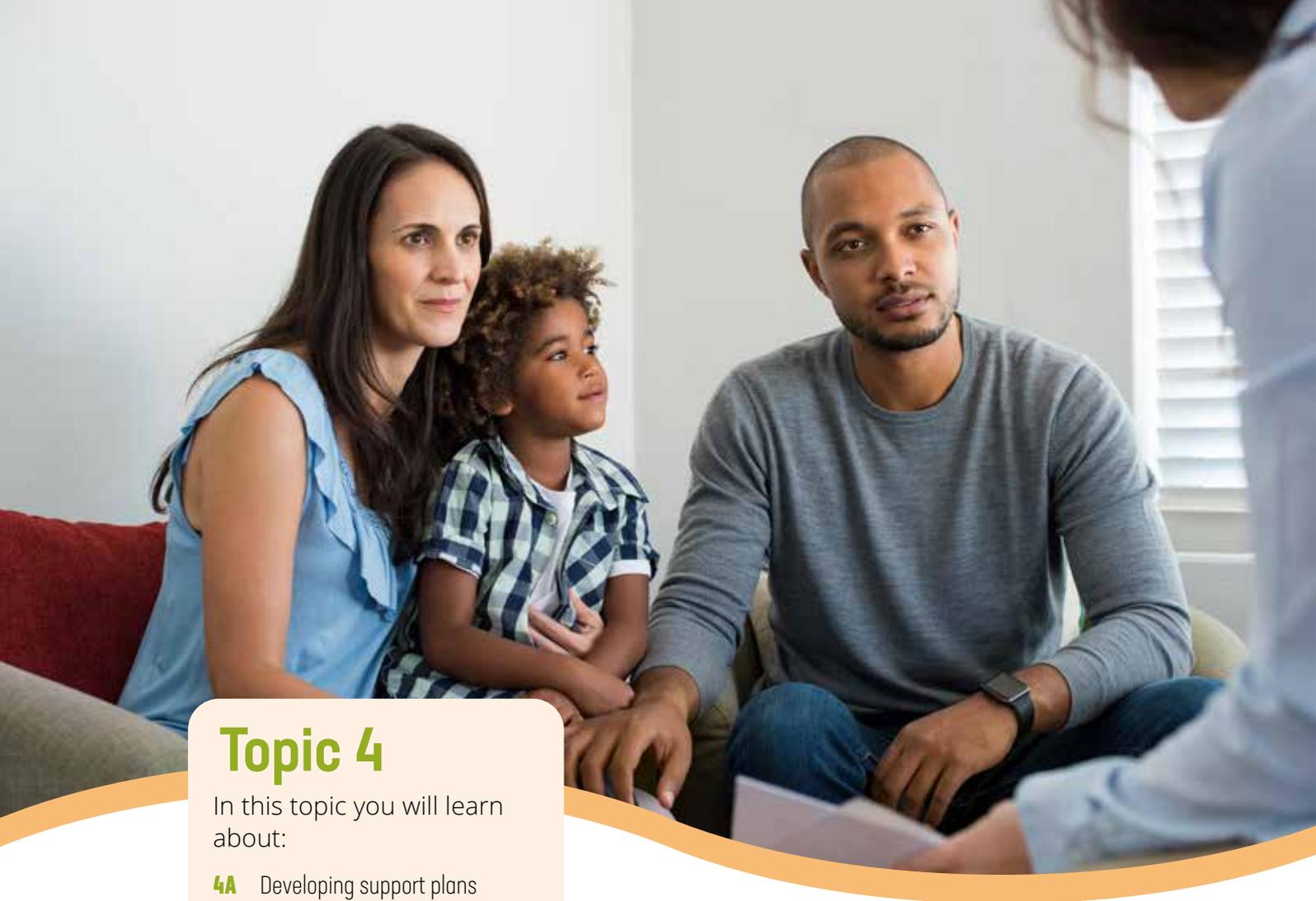
.....

3. Which of the following people might Clara consult with to find out more about Aarav's behaviour and decide on an appropriate response? Select all that apply.

- Other educators working with Aarav
- Mental health worker
- Inclusion Support Programme
- Aarav's parents
- Parents of children that have been bitten by Aarav

4. Which of the following options would be the most appropriate way for Clara to communicate with Aarav's family about his behaviour and review any existing information they have about his behaviour?

- Organise a formal meeting with Aarav's parents, all educators working with Aarav and the manager of the service.
- Have a chat with Aarav's dad at arrival. The children are busiest at this time and there is time available to chat while still supervising the children.
- At arrival or departure time, ask Aarav's mum or dad if they could have a word with her. Ask if they would like to talk now or make a meeting time.



Topic 4

In this topic you will learn about:

- 4A Developing support plans
- 4B Implementing support plans
- 4C Reviewing support plans

Creating and implementing support plans

Support plans can help with specific behaviours that continue to be a concern.

Support plans record long- and short-term goals, appropriate strategies and guidance techniques that all staff will be required to implement with the child. Such plans can ensure consistency is provided, and that there are measurable and reflective materials to refer to.

4A Developing support plans

A support plan can be used for any child, or group of children, whose behaviour you feel would benefit from a specific approach.

In most circumstances, this will mean that you have identified concerning behaviour, attempted to implement techniques, but continue to have concerns.

Support plans should be developed in consultation with other colleagues, staff and families as well as any outside support services. By working together, you will gain the best possible and most effective response to the child's needs.

If possible, a support plan should be put into place prior to an issue increasing to a worrying degree. It is far better to start early with plans than to wait too long and be faced with a child and family who are distressed.

Service guidelines

A support plan must meet the requirements of the service's philosophy, policies and procedures.

Your service's philosophy outlines its values and beliefs, including those relating to behaviour guidance. Policies and procedures provide strategies for behaviour guidance. They may even provide an outline for developing a support plan. In addition, they guide you in regard to confidentiality, consultation, reporting and recording, including processes for involving specialists and referral.

When developing a support plan, refresh your knowledge of the National Quality Framework (NQF) components and check that the philosophy, policies and procedures of your workplace are reflected in the plan.

Consulting with others

It is always better to consult with too many people than not enough.

One person cannot have all of the relevant information. To gain a holistic view and to decide on the best approach to a situation and behaviour, seek information and consult with children, family members, colleagues, staff and specialists or referral groups (if appropriate).

Remember, developing a support plan is a collaborative task. Always seek permission from families before any consultation takes place.

Consulting with family members

Support plans must involve the child's family. Family members should be able to tell you about the child's:

- background
- behaviours at home
- medical 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 with the child, or have experience working with challenging behaviours, are another good source of information. They should be able to share information about:

- behaviours that have been observed
- ideas and expectations of the support plan
- feelings and expectations of strategies to be implemented
- their 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 be able to tell you about:

- their ability and confidence in implementing strategies outlined in the plan
- reasonable expectations and time frames
- their ideas and opinions
- their relationship with the child.

Consulting with specialists

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. 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: aspirelr.link/inclusion-support-programme.

Consulting with children

Children are an excellent source of information when it comes to developing a support plan.

Children 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 support plan, they own the strategies and are learning about relationships, belonging, self-regulation, prosocial behaviour and problem-solving.

Children 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 in a group	<p>Groups might be large or small, planned or spontaneous. Make sure the group is made up of relevant children, particularly the children who are involved and who are interested. Talk about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > feelings > ways to express emotions > words to use to tell others what you need > what to do if someone else is angry at them > behaviour guidelines and why/how they protect us from being hurt > what to do if they cannot meet the behaviour expectations.
Talk to the child one on one	<p>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.</p> <p>Another opportunity is if the child is early or late to a program, or are helping you out with a task.</p> <p>Chat about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 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	<p>Identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > triggers > functions and consequences > who they work well with > who they conflict with > positive behaviours > abilities and skills that can lead to positive outcomes.

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

A child capable of understanding plans may provide information that helps you make positive decisions and may even give you better ideas than you originally considered.

For example, if you explain to a child that you feel it appropriate to remove them from a situation if they are speaking nastily to others, the child might tell you that if you do that they will respond in an equally, if not more challenging way. This saves you from experimenting with this and allows you to ask the child how they feel the situation should be resolved instead.

Example

Involving children

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



Feng speaks to Sadie 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. Sadie continues to take toys home.

Feng decides to implement a support plan that includes checking Sadie's bag before she leaves each day. This is successful for the first two days, then Sadie is found hiding toys in her clothes.

Since Sadie understands, Feng decides to involve her in resolving the situation. He asks her why she takes the toys. He also asks if there is something that he can do so that she does not feel the need to take the toys. Sadie explains that she does not have new toys and that she wants things to do at home.

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

Feng contacts the local toy library and arranges for them to come once a week for families to borrow toys. In the meantime, Feng allows Sadie to take a toy home as long as she brings it back the next day. Feng is pleased to see Sadie return almost all of the toys that were previously missing. He also notices Sadie's parents accessing the toy library.

Recognising immediate behaviour

Immediate behaviour is what the child is demonstrating before a support plan is implemented.

Immediate behaviour, or 'baseline' behaviour, refers to the initial measurement of what is occurring – in this case, the current behaviour of concern. This baseline behaviour can be compared with the child's behaviour after a support plan has been implemented, providing some measure of the plan's success.

The observation records you take and the information you collect from others allow you to establish this baseline. Your analysis or evaluation of this record provides the baseline. Many services include an analysis of the baseline behaviour as part of their support plan records.

The details that provide you with the baseline behaviour include:

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

Example**Baseline behaviour**

Otto (three years) is filling a bucket of sand. When he tips it over to make a castle, the dry sand collapses. Otto throws a handful of sand, then falls into the sandpit. He cries and thrashes about and does not respond to any educator who asks him if he needs help. After 10 minutes, Otto recovers when Benjamin enters the sandpit and begins to work with the sand. Otto works with Benjamin to build roads.



The educator does the following analysis of baseline behaviour:

'Otto is unable to recover easily from events where his plans are not achieved. Otto's emotional reactions last approximately 10 minutes. Otto's behaviour is not age-appropriate. He was easily distracted by the activity of another child, Benjamin.'

Identifying alternative behaviours

The goals and objectives of a support plan will be based on the achievement of positive alternative behaviours for the child.

Your focus should be on seeing the child develop these skills and abilities, enabling them to achieve positive relationships, to express themselves appropriately and to gain skills in self-regulation. As you express this positive outlook, others will identify progress being made and the child will be seen as capable and competent. This action is called reframing the behaviour.

Acceptable alternative behaviours, or reframed behaviours, can be identified by following these steps:

1. Identify the behaviour of concern – the baseline behaviour.
2. Identify the triggers.
3. Identify the functions and consequences – focusing on what you believe the child is attempting to communicate or control.
4. Identify how the child might achieve the same function or consequence through an acceptable alternative or reframed behaviour.

Example**Identifying acceptable alternative behaviours**

An educator observes Avery and makes the following notes about acceptable alternative behaviours.

Child	Avery
Age	Four years
Baseline behaviour	Avery 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 consequence of Avery's pinching seems to be that other children are encouraged to move away and she has enough space to feel comfortable.
Acceptable alternative behaviour	It would be expected that Avery 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.

Deciding on a response

Different support techniques are required for different children, at different times and in different situations.

A support plan should reflect what you want to achieve and how you are going to achieve it. Sometimes, the most difficult part of developing a support 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.

Examples**Influences on acceptable alternative behaviours**

The following examples show how to use simple words and body language to meet children's needs.

Example 1

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.

Example 2

Neville, also four years, is unable to play safely 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.

Using basic strategies

Certain basic strategies can be used in all situations.

Topic 2 of this resource provided a list of relationship and guidance strategies. Some of these strategies are suited to particular situations. The following strategies should be used with all children at all times:

- Modelling – children learn from watching others.
- Positive reinforcement – children need to know when they are successfully using appropriate behaviours.
- Positive expectations – children need to know what is expected of them. Positive expectations allow them to know what to do rather than what not to do.
- 'I' messages – children need to be supported to understand behaviour. 'I' messages help the child to see that they are not being labelled.

Other relationship-based strategies, as outlined in the table below, may be necessary in particular situations.

Redirection	<p>This strategy is useful when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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. <p>Be aware that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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 ➤ a high level of one-to-one support is required.
Consequences	<p>This strategy is useful when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the child is unable to decide for themselves ➤ unsafe behaviour is occurring ➤ you need clear behaviour boundaries or outcomes ➤ children are testing boundaries. <p>Be aware that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ most children can respond to consequences ➤ consequences can be effective in relation to many types of behaviours and in many different situations ➤ some children will challenge the consequence, so consistency is important.

Choices	<p>This strategy is useful when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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.
Problem-solving and conflict resolution	<p>This strategy is useful when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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. <p>Be aware that problem-solving and conflict resolution requires cognitive, communication, social and emotional development to be at a stage that allows the child to achieve the task.</p>

Long-term objectives

A long-term objective will be your ultimate goal.

It is where you want the child to be when your strategies have been successful and the alternative behaviours have been achieved.

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 objectives 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.

Short-term objectives

Short-term objectives should be developed as a guide to how you will achieve your long-term objective.

Short-term objectives help you to create a pathway to success. They also help you to feel you are progressing.

To develop short-term objectives, you can do the following:

- Brainstorm:
 - Break down the long-term objective.
 - Start from the immediate or baseline behaviour and list the small achievements that can be made to show the child is moving in the right direction.
- 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. Other objectives may take a little longer to achieve, but are still part of the overall behavioural goal.

If your short-term 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 short-term objectives are achievable.

Example

Setting objectives

Libby often kicks other children. She has been observed, and consultation has taken place with her mother and a supervisor. Camila, the educator, has found that:

- Libby only kicks girls.
- Libby often asks the other child for something, then kicks if the request is not provided for or satisfied.
- The function or consequence of Libby's kicking seems to be to make the other child leave the play area.



Camila sets a long-term objective:

- For Libby to share her ideas and listen to the ideas of others when in a group so she is able to achieve her goals through verbal communication.

Camila sets the following short-term objectives:

- For an educator to move to any group that Libby enters to support her to ask questions to solve the problems she faces with others.
- For Libby to contribute one idea toward problem-solving when an educator asks so that she develops problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills.
- For an educator to remove Libby to an individual activity if she kicks others by taking her hand firmly and saying in a friendly way, 'Let's go to play with the ...'

Developing objectives

Objectives provide direction and structure; they help you to monitor and evaluate outcomes.

The objectives of a support plan should explain what you want the child to achieve. They should:

- reflect alternative behaviour/s
- align with abilities, age and developmental stage
- be considerate of any cultural practices or factors that influence the behaviour.

When deciding on objectives, consider:

- your understanding of immediate or baseline behaviours
- the physical and social environment and other factors that influence behaviour
- skills that can be taught or supported, such as relationship development, self-regulation and prosocial skills
- strategies that have been successful and unsuccessful in the past

- new 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.

Objectives should always indicate what you want to happen rather than what you do not want to happen. Ensure the objectives are measurable so that you know whether they are successful.

Clear objectives

Clear objectives usually follow a pattern. One of the easiest patterns to use for a support plan is the 5W1H rule. This rule includes the following questions:

1. Who?
2. What?
3. Where?
4. When?
5. Why?
6. How?

The rule helps you remember all the details that are important to include in an objective.

When you write objectives, consider the following questions, again using the 5W1H rule:

- Who will read them?
- What do they need to include?
- Where will they be used?
- When do they need to be implemented?
- Why are they being written?
- How will they be shared with others?

Self-concept and self-esteem

Self-esteem encompasses the various impressions we have of ourselves.

The closer our self-concept (what we think we are) is to our ideal self (what we think we should be), the greater our self-esteem. Self-esteem refers to our personal judgment and feelings about who we are. In particular, it refers to how we feel about ourselves based on these judgments.

The child's self-concept might be shaped by a range of successes and challenges they face in various environments. Self-esteem might change in these situations also, based on how the child feels they fit with, understand or are accepted.

This must be taken into account as expectations are set and objectives are developed. When short term objectives are small and achievable, the child's self-esteem will be more likely to grow as they feel success and gain new and positive outcomes based on their learnt reactions.

Example**Developing clear objectives**

Tamron has been biting other children.

A long-term objective might be for Tamron to stop biting.

This type of objective is not focused on what you want to happen.

A positive, measurable objective might be for Tamron to ask other children for toys instead of biting them.

The educators apply the 5W1H rule:

1. (Who) Tamron
2. (What) To ask other children for toys
3. (Where) When he is playing indoors
4. (When) During the whole morning session
5. (Why) So that he is able to develop relationships with other peers
6. (How) Through verbal communication



Setting realistic plans

Plans must be realistic for them to be effective.

Any plan must take into account the resources available. Its intentions will not be achieved if you expect or hope for time, space, people or materials that you do not have. 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Additional staff ➤ Extra qualified staff ➤ Specialists ➤ Support staff or services ➤ Parents ➤ Other significant people relevant to the child ➤ ISP
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Meeting time ➤ Planning time ➤ Discussion time ➤ Relaxation or stress-relief time ➤ Set-up time ➤ Handover time ➤ Research time

Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Quiet areas ➤ Larger activity areas ➤ Increased number of activity areas ➤ Clear areas ➤ Defined areas
Materials and equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Communication boards ➤ Reference books ➤ The internet ➤ Research tools ➤ Posters
Financial resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Wages ➤ Equipment funding for general materials and resources

These resources may 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
Support plan

Some educators have been noticing Lucas’s behaviour and have come up with the following support plan.

Support plan	
Child’s name	Lucas
Age	Five years
Immediate behaviour – Baseline	<p>Lucas 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.</p> <p>Lucas almost never puts the block down.</p> <p>If another child touches the block or if Lucas cannot find the block, he becomes very distressed, breathing quickly and searching in a panicked manner.</p>
Who was involved in developing the plan	Lucas’s mother, educator, director of the service

Factors that may impact on behaviour	Family and culture	This is Lucas's first time away from his mum.
	Environment and curriculum	The room is quite large and there are 22 children altogether. It seems Lucas is using the block as a security item while at the service; no other issues are present.
	Temperament and personality	Lucas 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	New at service, commenced four weeks ago.
	Development	Age-appropriate development
Triggers	Being in the service – Lucas's mother says that he does not hold the block at home.	
Function/ consequences	We believe that Lucas 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.	
Long-term objective	For Lucas to separate from his mum at arrival using a goodbye routine, then participate for the whole day without a wooden block.	
Short-term objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ For Lucas to be introduced to a separation ritual when his mum leaves so he is able to understand the routine and feel a sense of belonging. ➤ For Lucas to become familiar with a primary caregiver (educator) who will be available as part of the separation ritual so he feels a connection to an educator throughout the day. 	
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Re-framing behaviour (A) ➤ Relationship needs (B) ➤ Self-regulation (C) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ (A/B) Lucas's mum will spend extra time at arrival participating in the program with him. She will also demonstrate her confidence in educators by conversing with them and helping them during the time she is there. ➤ (A/B) A primary educator will be chosen for Lucas. He will attend when she is present. The educator will build a rapport with Lucas and his mum and find out more about his interests and extend the program (spontaneously if needed) so he is engaged. 	
Advice sought	No advice required at present.	
Follow up	When Lucas shows to have achieved the short-term objectives.	



Practice Task 8

1. Draw a line to match the beginning of each sentence about support plans to the correct ending.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * National Quality Framework (NQF) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * should be developed in consultation with children, family members, other colleagues, staff and outside specialists, support services or support groups. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Long- and short-term objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * is reflected in the service's philosophy, policies and procedures, and should guide the development of a support plan. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Support plans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * is a record of the initial measurement of what is occurring – the current behaviour of concern. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Relationship and guidance strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * are based on the achievement of positive alternative behaviours for the child and are consistent with the child's culture, age, abilities, developmental level, self-concept and self-esteem. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Immediate behaviour or 'baseline' behaviour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * include modelling, positive reinforcement, positive expectations and 'I' messages. |

2. Which of the following should be included as part of a collaborative discussion with colleagues about a child's behaviour? Select all that apply.

- Behaviours that have been observed
- Ideas and expectations of a support plan
- How much each educator likes the child so that the appropriate educator can manage the child's behaviour
- Relationships with the child and the family
- How the child can be involved so they learn about relationships, belonging, self-regulation, prosocial behaviour and problem-solving
- Pre-existing information about the child's interactions and behaviours

3. List five points that should be included in a support plan.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. Select true or false for the following statement.

When educators discuss behaviour and feelings in a group, the individual child involved will not gain the information needed. This means they are not involved in their support plan. * True * False

4B Implementing support plans

Consistency can be achieved if everyone implementing support plans works together and attempts to achieve the same objectives.

Consistency offers security, and allows children to react in predictable ways.

To implement strategies positively, you need to be open to new ideas, be reflective and use ideas that have been successful in the past, as well as reconsidering strategies that have previously been unsuccessful. Taking time to reflect on your practices and those of others is an effective way to move forward.



Be consistent with your plans to ensure children know what to expect.

Critical reflection

Critical reflection can help you to understand your own ideas relating to interaction and behaviour guidance, as well as identifying areas you may find challenging.

This reflection might lead to an evaluation of how well you deal with difficult situations and use verbal and non-verbal communication.

Critical reflection can occur in a number of different ways. Some models for self-evaluation will be required as part of your work practices. You may discover others that are useful for your own personal reflection.

Some models for self-evaluation and information about how you may implement them are outlined in the following table.

<p>Journal documentation, diaries or reflection logs</p>	<p>The main thing about a journal is that the content is meaningful to you.</p> <p>Journals and logs record your thoughts and feelings, and allow you to look back and evaluate your ideas and actions. They also demonstrate your progress.</p> <p>You can use critical reflection questions or write about your thoughts on the techniques you use, materials you need, the context of your work, or the ideas you have.</p> <p>A journal may include research, personal comments, notes from professional development seminars, conferences or workshops, quotes, photos or sketches.</p>
<p>Structured discussion</p>	<p>A performance review is a structured discussion that occurs as part of the quality process in your service. Structured discussions may also occur in meetings and during professional development activities.</p>
<p>Unstructured discussion</p>	<p>Unstructured discussions occur every day at work – whether you are talking to other educators, parents or community members – and all provide opportunities for self-reflection.</p>

Checklists	A checklist may be part of your service's practice or something you develop yourself. The checklist may include various actions you can undertake to review your skills and abilities, or it might be a list of skills you want to achieve that you can check off when completed.
SWOT analysis	<p>A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning system. It encourages you to look at your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.</p> <p>Here are some points you may reflect on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strengths or weaknesses: capabilities, resources, management, processes, innovation, location, reliability, etc. ➤ Opportunities or threats: industry developments/ trends, other educators' practice/pedagogy, contacts/ partners, demand, new technology, new staff, lifestyle trends, finance, legislation, etc.
Questioning	<p>Before and after questions are useful for self-evaluation.</p> <p>Think about what you feel and think before you start something, implement an idea or make a decision for change. Be clear about your plans and intentions.</p> <p>You should then reflect after the implementation. Think about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ how you feel and think now ➤ what you understand after this experience ➤ how this affects your future practice ➤ what you need in order to move forward; for instance, research, skills, support or cooperation ➤ what you want to achieve next.

Improving skills

Through critical reflection, you may find that some of the skills and knowledge you require to provide positive physical and social environments and guide behaviour are complex or specific.

If you find this is the case, it is appropriate for you to request professional development. This might be through the support of a supervisor, another educator or through external training organisations.

Professional development helps you to feel prepared. It will help you to understand how to participate, and why you need to participate in a particular way.

The following table provides some examples of ways you might increase your skills and knowledge.

Type of support	Support services
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Attend education workshops. ➤ Access books and audiovisual materials from specialist libraries. ➤ Seek mentorship from staff members with specific skills. ➤ Consult families and community groups.
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Attend meetings. ➤ Advocate for and support each other. ➤ Familiarise yourself with the service's philosophy, policy and procedures. ➤ Develop programs of activities.
Community outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Source information and referral services available in the community. ➤ Use a variety of strategies to reach out to adults, families and children of all ages, races and socioeconomic backgrounds in the community. ➤ Encourage local civic and service groups to become involved in mentoring, volunteering and fundraising.

Provide clear direction

Other educators and staff who are supporting the 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.

The plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Educators and other staff involved in the plan must be able to read it, see the strategies and how they are involved. Ideally, they will have been participants in its development.
Reasoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This includes observation records and analysis of the behaviour, triggers, consequences, setting and function of the behaviour.
Behaviour expectations and strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Outline the expectations and who is responsible for implementing each action.
Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In some situations, a plan may need others to take on tasks; for example, so an educator can take over your role while you implement a strategy. In other situations, you may want some or all educators to implement a strategy themselves. In either case, this must be clear. ➤ Include tone of voice or levels of interaction you expect as well as any body language or other actions you feel are important.

Group support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Each plan and situation needs a different set of support mechanisms. There will be behaviours and strategies that you can easily handle yourself, and others that you will need assistance with. ➤ In some circumstances, you may need time away from a child to refuel or gather your thoughts, particularly if the child is aggressive. ➤ Support may come through discussion, reflection, demonstration and training.
Family support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Educators who are in contact with families need to be clear about their feelings, as well as their level of understanding and involvement in the plan. ➤ Educators should be supported or provided with training on how to share information about concerning behaviour so 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.
Child support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The plan should include strategies on how to involve and support the child. ➤ Educators must have appropriate expectations.

Supporting educators to implement the plan

There will be times and situations when you may be able to provide other educators with your expertise, another opinion or information backed by research.

When you provide information to colleagues, you are demonstrating professional practice and contributing to your own development.

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, by providing information, 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.

Examples of information that you may need to make clear to other educators include the following.

Behaviour guidance strategy	Examples of educators' questions and concerns
Use a firm tone of voice if the child needs to stop the behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 'Does this mean I have to growl or yell at the child?'
Move the child away from the activity by taking their hand firmly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 'Will it look like I am hurting the child?' ➤ 'What if the child does not come?' ➤ 'What should I say?'
Use clear one-on-one interaction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 'Do I have to tell the other children to go away?' ➤ 'Do I need to use special words or speak slowly or loudly?'

Educators and staff may also require support in the form of coaching or mentoring, as outlined below.

Coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Coaching is the assistance you may give regarding the achievement of a specific goal. This can be an informal or formal relationship between a more experienced person who offers support or guidance to the other person based on a certain task or objective. It focuses on what the individual needs to do more of to develop in a specific area. It is a one-on-one process normally implemented in a personalised approach. ➤ A coach will work to break down barriers that may exist for the person trying to achieve a goal. This will allow them to gain clarity. ➤ Coaching is a process of self-leadership that enables individuals to gain an understanding of who they are, what and why they are doing something, and where they want to go.
Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mentoring can be either formal or informal depending on the type of support others need. Informal mentoring relationships occur naturally when a staff member finds they connect well with another more experienced or more knowledgeable person. Informal situations may include working alongside the other person, offering support and encouragement as they show improvements or mastering a specific task. The relationship may continue for a long period of time and occurs naturally. ➤ In a formal mentoring situation, you first establish a positive relationship with the staff member you are working with. You then need to have knowledge and skills that benefit the other person. Without these, the mentoring will not be effective, and the relationship will be strained and inevitably unsuccessful. Formal situations may include private meetings, setting goals with time frames and meeting regularly to discuss progress and further skill requirements. When you document these goals, you can use this for later reflection and evaluation purposes.

Example

Supporting others

Hannie, an educator, recently began working in a preschool room where there are two children, Jake and Carly, who both have support plans in place.

Hannie has so far only worked with children on placement. She understands the strategies being put into place, but she is finding it quite difficult to set expectations and redirect behaviour. Both children are ignoring Hannie's attempts and displaying concerning behaviours during her supervision.



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

You enrol Hannie in an upcoming professional development workshop at the end of the month called 'Guiding difficult behaviours'. The aim is to build up her confidence and provide her with more knowledge on how to implement these practices.

Supporting children

There are a number of ways to help a child understand the specific expectations outlined in a support 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.

How you involve a child in a support 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 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're playing at the train table. I can help you find the right words when you're talking with others.'
- 'Matthew, you seem to be having trouble talking to other children when they're near you. You need to use words to tell them what you want. 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.

For example, if you are working with a toddler, you might say the following:

- 'Dallas, how about you tell Paisley "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 useful. The techniques for redirection can be found in Topic 2. Redirection involves acknowledging the child's feelings and then moving them to a new activity or behaviour.

Practice Task 9

Which of the following support the successful implementation of support plans? Select all that apply.

- Gathering and documenting information on the relationships other educators have with each other.
- Collaborating and attempting to achieve the same objectives with families, children, educators and others.
- Critically reflecting on your own actions, values and reactions, then improving skills and knowledge through further training.
- Supporting, coaching and mentoring others.
- Discussing support plans with children and asking them if they are working.

4C Reviewing support plans

You need to closely review the support plan at all stages of implementation.

Your role is to encourage and support the child and others 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 expectations.



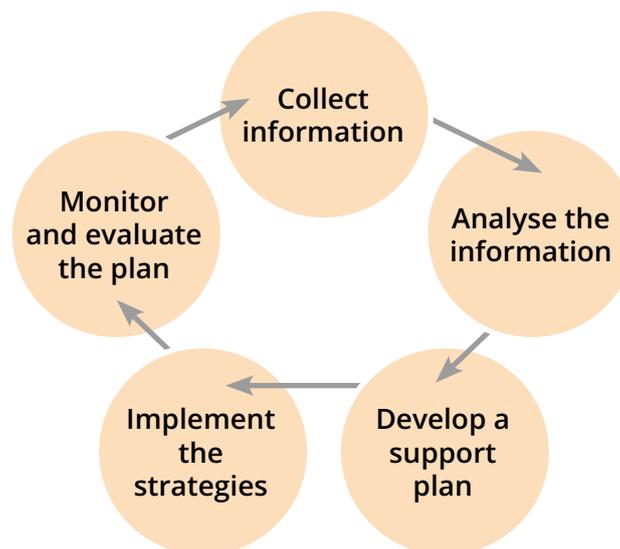
Monitor behaviour against the objectives of the plan.

Monitoring behaviour

Once the support plan is implemented, regularly review it by monitoring the child's behaviour against the 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. All those involved in the care of the child will have relevant information to contribute.

The support 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.



Each child is unique and so are their interactions with each educator. A child may react in a specific way with one educator and another way with someone else. This can vary immensely from child to child, according to their age, stage of development and the relationship they have with each 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 everyone consistently collects data as they work with the child, the child's behaviour will be adequately monitored, and any changes can be identified as they occur.

Monitoring the plan

Regular monitoring of a support plan allows you to reflect on its effectiveness by identifying the strategies that are not appropriate or not working as well as desired.

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

Regular review will highlight any issues regarding implementation or resources. Reviewing allows you to reflect on 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?
- Have I consulted with the child adequately?
- What does the child feel or think?

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

Evaluative questions	Details
What worked? What didn't work?	<p>By evaluating the changes that have occurred through implementing your strategies, you are able to reflect on and respond to the child.</p> <p>When recording your findings, note whether there are any factors that may have influenced the effectiveness of the strategies.</p> <p>These influences may involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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 or experience as a whole).
Was the expectation age-appropriate? What can you extend on?	<p>Assess the age-appropriateness of the plan by considering what did and did not work.</p> <p>Strategies may not work because they are inappropriate, too complicated or not complicated enough.</p> <p>Any ideas you have for modification and suggestions from the child and others should be noted as they are great ways to extend the child's involvement. They allow the child to take ownership of their behaviour.</p>
What feedback have I received?	<p>Consultation with families and the child, where suitable, is an important part of evaluation. This may occur as part of daily conversations, formal meetings and/or as part of in-depth discussions.</p> <p>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.</p>
How does this affect future plans?	<p>A support 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 enables you 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.</p>

Consulting with others

Just as you share information with families about the child's everyday progress, you should share the progress of the support plan.

You may have confidential discussions, set times for formal reviews or have a general and open discussion with others. 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. If the child is not ready for this or the discussion may provoke other behaviours, make a time and set up a private space.

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

Questions to ask include:

- Has the child's behaviour altered, improved or remained the same?
- Has the family been implementing strategies from the plan?
- Has the family been using other strategies?
- Are there new circumstances that educators need to be aware of?
- Does the family need suggestions for strategies to use at home?

Identifying possible issues

When the plan does not go as expected, use your critical reflection skills to re-evaluate.

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

Issue	How to address
You are intimidated by the child's behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ You may need some extra help from a support service or specialist. ➤ You may need strategies to become more confident in dealing with this child. ➤ You may have greater success if you delegate to another educator who is not intimidated by the child's behaviour. ➤ Try to implement stress-relieving strategies prior to dealing with the behaviour of concern. Taking a few breaths or speaking quietly may help.
You are too patient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The child may have pre-existing feelings towards you, such as frustration and anger. ➤ Children need to know their boundaries; children who have been set clear expectations 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.

Issue	How to address
You have misinterpreted the behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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 factors that are contributing to the behaviour.
You have set too big a goal or objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ If your 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This will lead to the child not adopting the new option as a replacement for the concerning behaviour. ➤ For example, if the concerning behaviour succeeds in telling others the child is angry, the alternative behaviour must do the same.
You are not persistent enough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Some strategies just don't work. Persisting with these is useless or even damaging ➤ Be realistic about your strategies and change them if they are inappropriate. ➤ Develop a new plan if necessary.
You have made undue allowances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Some educators allow particular children to demonstrate inappropriate behaviours 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, or when a child is experiencing difficulties at home. ➤ Unpredictable and inconsistent behaviour expectations may lead to behaviours of concern.
You are focusing on the wrong child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Be sure that there are no other issues occurring, such as bullying or targeting. ➤ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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 curriculum are working against the plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Think about how time, space, people, materials and safety influence the physical and social environment. ➤ Remember that transition times are the most stressful.

Modifying the plan

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

Changes to a behaviour plan may occur due to:

- an unexpected response from the child
- new influences in the physical and social 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.

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.

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's policy.

Practice Task 10

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

- | | | |
|---|-------|------|
| a. When a plan doesn't go as expected, you should use your critical reflection skills to re-evaluate. | * Yes | * No |
| b. Changes to a behaviour plan may occur due to an unexpected response from the child, new influences in the physical and/or social play environment or new information provided by a parent, specialist or supervisor. | * Yes | * No |
| c. It is important for you to change or alter a support plan as soon as you notice an issue. Colleagues, family members and others can be updated and can begin to use the new strategies as soon as possible. | * Yes | * No |

- d. Families can be communicated with as plans are implemented. The best way is via emails so they have this in writing. * Yes * No
- e. Regular reviews of a support plan allow educators to reflect on its effectiveness and identify what is working and what can be improved. * Yes * No

Summary

- A support plan can be used for any child, or group of children, whose behaviour you feel would benefit from a specific approach.
- You should develop a support plan if you have identified concerning behaviour, attempted to implement techniques, but continue to feel concern.
- A support plan must meet the requirements of the service's philosophy, policies and procedures.
- One person cannot have all of the relevant information. To gain a holistic view and to decide on the best approach to a situation and behaviour, seek information and consult with children, family members, colleagues, staff and specialists or referral groups (if appropriate).
- Consistency can be achieved if everyone implementing support plans is working together and attempting to achieve the same objectives.
- Critical reflection helps you to understand your own ideas relating to interaction and behaviour guidance, as well as identifying areas you may find challenging.
- At all stages of implementation, the support plan must be closely reviewed.
- As the child's behaviour changes and objectives are met, continue to work alongside all of those involved to discuss how to move the child forward to meet additional goals and objectives.

Learning Checkpoint 4

Creating and implementing support plans

Read the case study (from Learning Checkpoint 3) and then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Clara, an educator, has been observing Aarav (four years) because his behaviour is of concern. Aarav has been attending the service for two weeks.

In the last week, Aarav has begun lashing out physically, hitting and throwing things at educators and other children. On one occasion, a block hit another child on the head, giving him a bruise.

These incidents last up to five minutes and are occurring at least two times each day. Aarav displays this behaviour when it is pack-up time and other children try to pack up his materials.

The children have been told that if they are not finished their work at pack-up time, they should either place it in a safe storage area or gate the area off and place the 'work in progress' sign on the gate.

1. Draw a line to match each stakeholder with the information they might contribute to Aarav's support plan as part of development, monitoring and evaluation.

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| * Aarav's other carers | * Reasons for the behaviour and some strategies that might work to resolve the behaviour or match the physical and social environment to his needs. |
| * Aarav | * If Aarav's behaviour is new or existed prior to attending the service. |
| * Specialists | * If they have noticed Aarav's other behaviours of concern. |
| * Family members | * If they have noticed similar behaviours and past strategies they have used. |
| * Colleagues | * Coaching and mentoring for educators so they have stronger skills in understanding and supporting Aarav. |

2. Describe Aarav's baseline behaviour.

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3. Which of the following are appropriate long-term objectives that reframe Aarav's behaviour and look beyond his immediate behaviour to think about meeting genuine relationship, self-concept and self-esteem needs? Select all that apply.

- For Aarav to pack up at the end of play, helping other children and moving to the next routine.
- For Aarav to learn to cope with pack-up time as this is age-appropriate.
- For educators to get better at learning to cope with children who lash out.
- For Aarav to either place unfinished work in the safe storage area or gate his work off if he wishes to continue it later.
- For Aarav to tell other children if his work is to be saved.

4. Which of the following are appropriate short-term objectives that reframe Aarav's behaviour and look beyond his immediate behaviour to think about meeting genuine relationship, self-concept and self-esteem needs? Select all that apply.

- For an educator to move to any group that Aarav enters in the play space to support him to interact verbally with the other children by giving him words to use.
- For Aarav to be physically picked up by an educator and taken to a quiet space when he lashes out so that other children are safe and so that he can calm down and learn to self-regulate by being told what he needs to do.
- For Aarav to be given a five-minute warning by an educator so he is aware that it is nearly pack-up time.
- For Aarav to tell an educator if he wants to save his work and continue it later so he feels comfortable leaving his activity.
- For Aarav to show an educator how he might use the safe storage area and how to gate off his area with a 'work in progress' sign, so the educator can support his knowledge of this process and help him to develop confidence in using the process.

5. Which of the following would be appropriate ways for Clara to collaborate with Aarav to support him to self-regulate? Select all that apply.

- Write Aarav a note letting him know what is expected.
- As Aarav begins his work, quietly remind him how to save work if he wants to.
- Develop a communication book.
- Talk about how to save work with all children as she is supervising and engaging with them.
- Discuss emotions in a group time and talk about ways emotions can be safely shared with others.

6. Which of the following might be needs of other children? Select all that apply.

- Children may need first-aid support if they are harmed.
- Children may need emotional support.
- Children may need a reminder of what to do if they feel angry.
- Children may need to have their family members involved in their relationship with Aarav.
- Children may need a doctor and psychologist to attend the service and talk about what their job is.

7. After consultation, Clara decides on specific relationship-based strategies that look beyond Aarav's immediate behaviour and reframe the behaviour with consideration for his self-concept and self-esteem. Draw a line to match each strategy on the left with the action on the right.

- | | |
|---|---|
| * Choices | * Just before pack-up time, Clara will remind Aarav about the safe storage area and help him if needed. |
| * Consequences | * When Aarav is aggressive, Clara will wait until he has calmed down, and will then show him how his work has been damaged. Clara will explain that throwing the pieces means that his work will be damaged. |
| * Problem-solving and conflict resolution | * When it is pack-up time, Clara will ask Aarav if he would like to save his work or pack up. If Aarav starts to become upset, Clara will suggest he either moves to the cushions or ask for help to save his work. |
| * Redirection | * When it is nearly pack-up time, Clara will ask Aarav what he should do when it is time to pack up. If Aarav says he wants to keep his work, Clara will ask him what he might do so that his work is safe. |

8. Which of the following statements about the support plan and Clara's actions are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- a. If Aarav starts to become upset and Clara suggests he either moves to the cushions where it is safe or ask for help to save his work, Clara is helping Aarav to self-regulate. * Yes * No
- b. The most effective way for Clara to record the support plan is through anecdotal records and event samples. These are documents that can be shared with all those involved and record all aspects of the support plan. * Yes * No
- c. If Aarav's behaviour increases in intensity, Clara could ask a specialist service for support without his parents' permission as they have agreed to the support plan already. * Yes * No
- d. Clara can evaluate the support plan each week and then let others know her decisions. This is the most efficient method for monitoring and review. * Yes * No

9. Part of developing, implementing and monitoring the support plan includes educators critically reflecting on Aarav's reactions and behaviour, as well as on their knowledge, skills, values and perspectives. Draw a line to match the most appropriate type of support method Clara should provide Tucker, another educator at the service.

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| * Education | * Tucker asks Clara to give feedback on whether he is implementing the redirection strategy appropriately. |
| * Self-evaluation | * Tucker is not sure about how to deliver the strategies in the support plan. |
| * Coaching | * Tucker is confused about behaviour strategies and cannot remember how to redirect or support conflict resolution. He is not clear about what self-regulation is. |
| * Collaboration | * Tucker wants to gain insight into how his skills are progressing and how he can improve over time. He wants to share information with Clara as he progresses. |
| * Mentoring | * Tucker notices that Aarav is confused about strategies in the support plan and does not understand that his work can be saved. Tucker tells Clara of his concerns. |