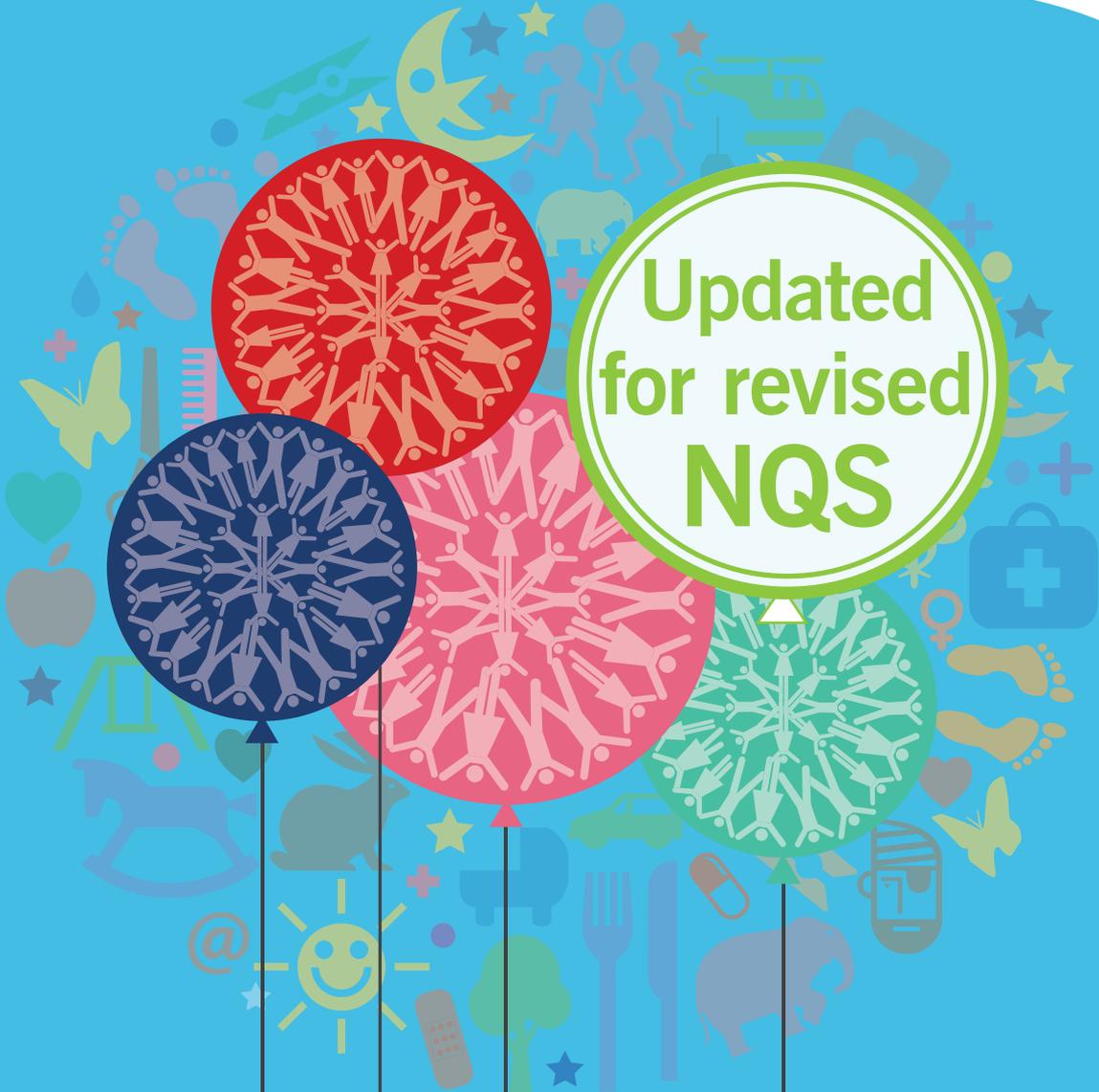


# CHCECE006

## Support behaviour of children and young people



Updated  
for revised  
**NQS**

*Learner guide*



**aspire**  
learning resources

CHCECE006

# Support behaviour of children and young people

Release 3

Learner guide

Aspire Version 2.1



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**CHCECE006 Support behaviour of children and young people, Release 3**



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## Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCECE006 Support behaviour of children and young people*, Release 3. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: [www.training.gov.au](http://www.training.gov.au)

## How to work through this learner guide

This learner guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the learner guide you need to read, and which practice tasks and learning checkpoints you need to complete.

Feature of the learner guide	How you can use each feature
<b>Learning content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ 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.</li> </ul>
<b>Examples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ These highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.</li> </ul>
<b>Practice tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Practice tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into practice. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.</li> </ul>
<b>Video clips</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Where QR codes appear, you can use smartphones and other devices to access video clips relating to the content. For information about how to download a QR reader app or accessing video on your device, please visit our website: <a href="http://www.aspirelr.com.au/help">www.aspirelr.com.au/help</a></li> </ul> 
<b>Summaries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.</li> </ul>
<b>Learning checkpoints</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ There are learning checkpoints at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which learning checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.</li> </ul>



## Topic 1

In this topic you will learn about:

- 1A Using appropriate practices**
- 1B Recognising individual issues**
- 1C Identifying environmental factors**

## Contributing to a safe and supportive environment

Children prosper in a supportive, safe and consistent environment where their learning and development is fostered by a suitable setting, appropriate resources and educators who interact in positive ways. You must understand how to identify the elements that make up this type of environment, including the environmental factors that can affect children's behaviour.

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

<b>National Quality Standard</b>		
	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice	
✓	Quality Area 2: Children’s health and safety	
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment	
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements	
✓	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children	
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities	
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership	
<b>Early Years Learning Framework</b>	<b>My Time, Our Place</b>	
<b>Principles</b>		
✓	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	
	Partnerships	
✓	High expectations and equity	
✓	Respect for diversity	
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice	
<b>Practice</b>		
✓	Holistic approaches	Holistic approaches
✓	Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
	Learning through play	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching	Intentionality
✓	Learning environments	Environments
✓	Cultural competence	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
	Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
<b>Outcomes</b>		
✓	Children have a strong sense of identity	
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world	
✓	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	
	Children are confident and involved learners	
	Children are effective communicators	

# 1A Using appropriate practices

The goals of *Belonging, being & becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia* (EYLF) and *My time, our place: Framework for school age care in Australia* (MTOF) can be achieved by providing a safe and supportive environment, understanding the needs of each child and demonstrating equitable practices.

Goals	What does this mean?
Belonging	When children feel they are important, they believe 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 can engage with their world. This is the art of 'being' – they are demonstrating that they feel safe and supported by you, which means you are providing a safe environment.
Becoming	When children feel they belong and it is safe to fully participate, they learn and grow. The depth of the child's trust in their environment and the people in it influences the rate of their development. It also includes the opportunities that are open to the child.

Always use appropriate practices in your day-to-day activities with the children. These include:

- ▶ having age-appropriate expectations
- ▶ differentiating between the needs of individuals
- ▶ taking a positive and active approach
- ▶ acknowledging responsible behaviour
- ▶ guiding and redirecting behaviour
- ▶ using positive support techniques.

These practices are meant to teach new skills and redesign the learning environment in such a way that problem behaviours are prevented or become less significant.



## The child's development

To create an appropriate environment, you need to understand how children's age and developmental stage correlate. As children progress from infancy to primary school, they experience significant change and development in their:

- ▶ physical abilities, such as motor control
- ▶ language and speech
- ▶ cognition
- ▶ emotional and interpersonal skills.

Each area of development is monitored and related to developmental milestones, which are the skills and knowledge that a child is expected to achieve by a certain age.

## Age-appropriate expectations

Knowing what to expect of a child at a particular developmental level will help you to decide whether their behaviour is developmentally appropriate. This knowledge helps you to determine how you should deal with their behaviour. For example, managing a toddler who bites another child would be different from managing a five-year-old who exhibits the same behaviour.



Here’s a short video about infant skill development in their first year.

The following is an outline of age-appropriate expectations for children from birth to 12 years.

Age	Developmental characteristics	Behaviour
Birth to 1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Depend on nonverbal forms of communication to express feelings and needs, and may resort to whatever nonverbal means are available to them</li> <li>▶ Display anger; use pulling away, squirming, crying and throwing objects to communicate needs and wishes</li> <li>▶ Have trouble regulating their emotions; can become overwhelmed by them</li> <li>▶ Develop attachments to parents and other carers, and may experience fear and/or anger at separation</li> <li>▶ Have no sense of time and require instant gratification</li> <li>▶ Respond to the distress of another infant by crying, but don’t understand that the other infant’s distress is distinct from their own feelings</li> </ul>	<p>What to expect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Crying to gain attention and to express fear, anxiety and anger</li> </ul> <p>What not to expect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Understanding of why another child or adult is distressed</li> </ul> <p>How to support them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Help infants to calm down when they are experiencing strong emotions by holding, rocking or sharing a story with them.</li> <li>▶ Respond to infants quickly and sensitively – they should not be expected to wait.</li> </ul>

Age	Developmental characteristics	Behaviour
1–2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Develop a sense of self</li> <li>▶ Start to develop autonomy and independence</li> <li>▶ May resort to nonverbal means of communicating their needs as they have limited language ability</li> <li>▶ May demonstrate empathy by offering the type of comfort that they themselves find comforting, such as offering a toy</li> <li>▶ May understand that another child is distressed, but may not understand that they are the cause</li> <li>▶ Start to develop friendships and to engage in reciprocal and complementary play</li> <li>▶ Have little sense of time and find it difficult to wait</li> <li>▶ May develop fears of imaginary creatures and physical harm</li> <li>▶ Tend to be impulsive and do not think before they act</li> </ul>	<p>What to expect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Assertion of autonomy and independence</li> <li>▶ Saying ‘no’ and refusing to comply with requests</li> <li>▶ Conflict caused by attempts to gain power and control over their lives</li> <li>▶ Frustration with the limits of their own abilities, possibly resulting in anger and temper tantrums</li> <li>▶ Making simple choices and decisions about what they want to do</li> </ul> <p>What not to expect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Showing remorse for hurting another child</li> <li>▶ Waiting to have their needs met</li> </ul> <p>How to support them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Provide toddlers with space, support and guidance during their interactions with other children.</li> <li>▶ Help toddlers regulate their emotions and calm down after strong emotions.</li> </ul>

Age	Developmental characteristics	Behaviour
2–3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Feel the need to assert their autonomy and independence, and are developing a greater understanding of their social selves</li> <li>▶ Have emerging cognitive skills, can delay gratification and are beginning to differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour</li> <li>▶ Develop sense of self and may become possessive and refuse to share</li> <li>▶ Seek autonomy and may experience intense feelings that they cannot control</li> <li>▶ Have increased language skills and the ability to use symbolic thinking</li> <li>▶ Use deferred imitation and self-evaluation</li> <li>▶ Tend to be flexible in their friendships; are beginning to take part in social pretend play</li> <li>▶ May have trouble distinguishing between accidental and intentional behaviour</li> </ul>	<p>What to expect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Developing understanding of the social rules for acceptable behaviour</li> <li>▶ Waiting for short periods</li> <li>▶ Limited degree of self-control and concern for others</li> <li>▶ Physical aggression to solve problems</li> <li>▶ Forgetting limits and guidelines even though they may be able to recite them</li> <li>▶ Imitating the behaviours of others</li> <li>▶ Simple turn-taking</li> </ul> <p>What not to expect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Spontaneous, conflict-free sharing of belongings, toys or equipment</li> <li>▶ Understanding of the difference between accidental and intentional behaviour</li> </ul> <p>How to support them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Provide children with plenty of opportunities to express their feelings.</li> <li>▶ Help them to solve problems and conflicts; your intervention may be necessary to prevent physical aggression.</li> </ul>
3–5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Able to demonstrate increasing self-control</li> <li>▶ Start to assert their rights in the group, and to openly express their likes and dislikes</li> <li>▶ Generally like to please adults</li> <li>▶ Able to distinguish their friends from their playmates</li> <li>▶ Develop the ability to empathise with others</li> <li>▶ Start to understand the perspective of another person; can imagine themselves in the other person’s position and respond appropriately</li> </ul>	<p>What to expect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Basic understanding of the consequences of their actions</li> <li>▶ Observance of simple social rules</li> <li>▶ Increasing ability to manage behaviour and demonstrate self-control</li> <li>▶ Independent attempts at problem-solving</li> </ul> <p>How to support them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Help preschoolers to rectify the consequences of their behaviour when necessary.</li> <li>▶ Help preschoolers to solve disputes fairly.</li> <li>▶ Model positive interactions, such as turn-taking, asking, listening and sharing.</li> </ul>

Age	Developmental characteristics	Behaviour
5–7 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Understand the importance of conforming to group rules</li> <li>▶ Like adults' attention and will eagerly follow directions, but may question the reason for certain requests</li> <li>▶ Like to assert their independence by saying, 'I can do it myself'</li> <li>▶ Eagerly express their likes and dislikes</li> <li>▶ Start to become conscious of right and wrong (fairness is equated with strict equality and they believe that everyone should get the same, no matter what the circumstances)</li> <li>▶ Start to understand that fairness is equated with merit and reciprocity</li> </ul>	<p>What to expect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Understanding and observance of social rules</li> <li>▶ Confusion when rules are applied flexibly</li> <li>▶ More positive responses to clear situation-specific rules; the ability to generalise social rules from one situation to another is only just developing</li> <li>▶ Belief that everyone thinks the same way they do; if they think they are in the right, then others will agree</li> <li>▶ Some understanding of the difference between accidental and intentional behaviour</li> </ul>
7–10 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Start to understand distress and emotions in the broader context, including people in a different situation to their own</li> <li>▶ Able to reflect on their own thoughts and feelings</li> <li>▶ Think fairness is influenced by different but equally valid claims and special circumstances</li> <li>▶ Think justification is based on compromise between competing claims</li> </ul>	<p>What to expect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Full appreciation of the consequences of their own actions</li> <li>▶ Acceptance that rules are applied flexibly depending on the context and person involved</li> <li>▶ Ability to abide by decisions made by consensus and to solve disputes independently</li> <li>▶ Awareness of another person's interpretation of their behaviour, even when it differs from their own.</li> </ul>
10–12 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Understand that fairness does not mean that all people get the same</li> <li>▶ Start to consider each person's claim compared with others</li> </ul>	<p>What to expect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Mature understanding of consensus and everyone's right to participate in decision-making</li> <li>▶ Use of complex conflict resolution strategies, such as voting and consensus decision-making</li> </ul>

## Different behaviours

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

The next thing you will notice is that within these developmental groupings, children also exhibit many types of behaviour. Some are appropriate, some out of character, some disruptive and some of concern. Try to recognise these differences and adapt your practices to suit the individual situation and child.

The following table provides an explanation of these different behaviours.

Type of behaviour	Definition	Example
Age/stage appropriate behaviour	The behaviour is expected and the child responds to usual guidance strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ A two-year-old is having a tantrum.</li> <li>▶ A four-year-old is crying because their work was damaged.</li> <li>▶ A 12-year-old is complaining that they are bored.</li> </ul>
Out-of-character behaviour	The behaviour is unusual for the child, but subsides when the issue or cause is resolved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ A child is hurt and only wants comfort from an adult, so they push other children away.</li> <li>▶ A child is tired from having a late night, so they cry and show frustration.</li> </ul>
Disruptive behaviour	The behaviour affects the child's ability to focus on a task and/or affects the focus of those around the child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ A child is yelling loudly. This disrupts a task and annoys the other children, reducing their ability to enjoy the activity.</li> <li>▶ A child is removing pieces of equipment that other children are using.</li> <li>▶ A child is not cooperating with a group, decreasing their ability to participate.</li> </ul>
Behaviour of concern – age/stage appropriate	<p>The behaviour type is appropriate for the child's age/stage, but the strength or intensity is of concern.</p> <p>The child does not respond to strategies that are usually successful.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ A two-year-old is hurting themselves or others and doesn't recover easily from the tantrum.</li> <li>▶ A four-year-old is aggressive and violent towards others and damages items close by.</li> <li>▶ A 12-year-old is trying to leave the program repeatedly and swears at educators.</li> </ul>
Behaviour of concern – not age/stage appropriate	<p>The behaviour type is not age/stage appropriate and may also be extreme or worrying.</p> <p>This child does not respond to strategies for guiding behaviour.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ A four-year-old is biting other children.</li> <li>▶ A five-year-old is using inappropriate language and attempting to break windows and mirrors.</li> <li>▶ A 10-year-old is breaking the toys of a younger child.</li> </ul>

## Out-of-character behaviour

Out-of-character behaviour is usually short term; it subsides once the situation is resolved. There are many situations that occur in a child's daily life that can cause this type of behaviour. For example, the child might be:

- ▶ unwell
- ▶ tired
- ▶ stressed
- ▶ afraid
- ▶ frustrated
- ▶ angry.



## Disruptive behaviour

Disruptive behaviour is when a child is uncooperative and prevents themselves and/or others from focusing on what they are doing. A disruptive child might also grab the educator's attention, distracting them from the other children and the task at hand.

It is normal for children to exhibit disruptive behaviour as they struggle to learn self-control. Not all disruptive behaviour is of concern, but it should be addressed as part of your regular support to help children develop their social and emotional skills.

Disruptive behaviour could take the form of:

- ▶ not following instructions
- ▶ talking loudly or making inappropriate noises
- ▶ leaving the area or wandering around
- ▶ throwing objects
- ▶ crying; tantrums
- ▶ isolation from peers.

## Behaviours of concern

Behaviours of concern, previously called 'challenging behaviour', are when a child does something that hurts themselves and/or other people.

These types of behaviours can prevent children from participating in activities. They can harm others and are stressful and upsetting for all involved.

Note the following:

- ▶ It is the behaviour that is the problem, not the person.
- ▶ These behaviours are not uncommon. Many children behave this way at times.
- ▶ Behaviours are only considered 'of concern' when they cause a problem to the child or those around them.

There are many types of behaviour of concern. Some of these are addressed in the following table.

Behaviour of concern	Examples
Hurting themselves	A child hits or scratches themselves.
Hurting others	A child hits, pinches or bites someone else.
Damaging objects	A child tears books and breaks toys.
Refusing to do things	A child does not eat. A child refuses to take their medicine. A child will not join in activities they used to enjoy.
Doing the same thing over and over	A child says the same thing over and over again.
Doing things that others don't like	A child screams, swears or takes their clothes off.
Hiding away from people	A child avoids contact with other children and educators.

Everybody is different. There may be more than one reason for a behaviour of concern. Nonetheless, all behaviours of concern happen for a reason.

## A positive and active approach

Take a positive and active approach when dealing with behaviours of concern in children. This includes considering the reasons for a child's behaviour, not just dealing with the behaviour itself. This type of approach relies on consistent modelling. You need to implement the following.

### Positive attitudes and actions

You can model positive attitudes and actions by:

- ▶ smiling
- ▶ giving children attention
- ▶ using verbal and nonverbal feedback
- ▶ allowing repetition for learning and practising
- ▶ allowing children to make choices
- ▶ providing encouragement or praise
- ▶ talking about feelings and appropriate ways to express themselves
- ▶ explaining expectations
- ▶ sharing responsibility for making guidelines.

### Positive interactions

You can create positive interactions by:

- ▶ bestowing trust
- ▶ providing choices and alternatives
- ▶ giving responsibility
- ▶ encouraging positive and safe suggestions
- ▶ treating children equally
- ▶ encouraging children to help with organising things
- ▶ providing appropriate environments for the child's age and stage of development
- ▶ using conflict resolution strategies
- ▶ guiding behaviour when required
- ▶ supporting cultural beliefs and values
- ▶ offering support and suggestions
- ▶ listening
- ▶ allowing time for decisions and responses.

### Positive guidance

A positive approach to guidance focuses on a child's strengths and takes a developmental view of behaviour. Rather than constantly seeking to control children's behaviour, or narrowly focusing on an inappropriate behaviour, this approach acknowledges that learning to behave appropriately is just like any other developmental task a child has to learn.

Children need to learn how to behave in a socially acceptable manner. You wouldn't punish a toddler for falling over; nor should you punish a child who makes a behavioural mistake. Treat mistakes as opportunities to teach a child appropriate behaviour.

## Practice task 1

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

### Case study

Micah, 15 months old, is grumpy, miserable and tired. He resists going into his cot or being held by an adult. Zack, his educator, tries to help Micah settle for a rest and accept that he needs sleep.

Zack plays soothing music, darkens the room and offers Micah his teddy bear. Micah rejects every effort and becomes more distressed. Zack decides that he really must solve Micah's problem. Micah needs to sleep and the other children need his attention.

Zack holds Micah gently and says, 'Micah needs a sleep.' Zack then places Micah in the cot, continuing to talk to him softly, and gently strokes his shoulder. Micah's yells turn to a murmur and he lets Zack put a blanket over him.

As Micah quietens and relaxes, Zack leaves him, saying, 'Sleep now, Micah, well done.'

1. Do you think that Micah's behaviour was disruptive or of concern? Why/why not?

.....

.....

.....

2. Do you think Zack's practices were safe, supportive and equitable? Why/why not?

.....

.....

.....

3. Were the practices appropriate to Micah's age, stage and needs?

.....

.....

.....

4. Do you think these practices contributed to Micah's feeling of belonging? How?

.....

.....

.....

# 1B Recognising individual issues

A child’s behaviour may be influenced by lifestyle stresses, cultural differences, developmental challenges, behavioural disorders or mental health issues. Recognise these factors so that you can plan an appropriate strategy in response.



## Lifestyle stresses

Sometimes the uncharacteristic behaviour of a child is their way of communicating that they are stressed. There are many situations that can cause stress for an individual, regardless of age.

When working with children, you may observe behaviour prompted by various stressors, as outlined in the following table.

<b>Social isolation</b>	The child has a lack of contact with their peers and experiences loneliness.
<b>Prejudice and discrimination</b>	The child is treated unfairly because their peers or adults do not appreciate similarities and differences in others.
<b>Exclusion</b>	The child is bullied or excluded from group play.
<b>Grief</b>	The child grieves the loss of someone close to them through death or separation.
<b>Poverty</b>	The child’s family experiences financial stress that affects the child’s ability to function normally.
<b>Abuse</b>	The child is physically, emotionally or sexually abused, or subjected to neglect.
<b>Trauma</b>	The child experiences a traumatic event such as an accident, war, crime or refugee evacuation.
<b>Illness</b>	The child, parent or other important person in their life is ill.
<b>Developmental challenges</b>	The child, parent or other important person in their life has a physical or mental disability or developmental delay.

These stressors could cause children to exhibit out-of-character, disruptive or concerning behaviours. Stressed children could also exhibit:

- ▶ shyness – the child is limited by their worries, lack of social skills or self-consciousness
- ▶ aggression – the child uses force or violence to communicate.

Monitor children's lifestyle stresses. If a child is subjected to an ongoing stressful situation, and their personal difficulties are not supported, their uncharacteristic behaviour can turn into one of concern.

## Cultural issues

Australia is a multicultural society. You cannot assume that your neighbour thinks and acts according to the same cultural norms as you. Understanding the cultures of the children and families in your service will give you greater insight into a child's behaviour, and whether or not it is behaviour of concern.

Different cultures have different beliefs about religion, family, food, gender, and the way people communicate and interact with each other. The following table shows how an issue can be viewed differently by people of different cultures.

Cultural belief	Opposing cultural belief
Children should not make eye contact with adults because it is disrespectful.	Children should look adults in the eye to show that they are paying attention or telling the truth.
Teasing and threatening is useful in managing a child's behaviour (for instance, 'If you eat that, your teeth will fall out').	Children should be independent and make their own decisions about their needs, rather than following what others do.
Obedience to adults is not important; obedience to people who are important in your life is.	Children must respect their elders and do as they are told without questioning.
Feelings should not be expressed or discussed.	Feelings should be expressed and learnt about.
It is okay to make mistakes and to learn from these.	It is better to do nothing than to make a mistake.
Male children should do different activities to female children.	Male and female adults and children are equal and should be treated the same.

Cultural differences are not solely determined by ethnic or religious backgrounds. Each family also has its own culture, with its own:

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

If you do not have knowledge of this cultural information, you are failing to meet the child’s needs, and will not be able to respond to them in a way that they will 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 adapt your communication appropriately.

## Developmental challenges

A child’s behavioural capabilities link with their developmental milestones. These provide educators with a benchmark of expectations for children at each age and stage of development.

However, you must not judge too quickly if you notice that a child is not within the expected range as natural variation, a personal situation or a medical condition may affect social, emotional, cognitive and language development.

## Developmental delay

The following table outlines some of the signs that may indicate a developmental delay.

Area of development	Signs to watch for in a preschool-age child
Vision and hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Does not respond to your speech unless they see you</li> <li>▶ Asks you to repeat things or says ‘What?’ frequently</li> <li>▶ Holds books or activity materials close to their face during use</li> <li>▶ Bumps into furniture or knocks things over as they walk around</li> </ul>
Language and speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Continued and ongoing stuttering</li> <li>▶ Uses words improperly</li> <li>▶ Has difficulty expressing ideas</li> <li>▶ Cannot follow directions</li> </ul>
Social and emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Never helps others</li> <li>▶ Cannot label own feelings</li> <li>▶ Demonstrates extreme and violent tantrums or protests</li> </ul>
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Forgetfulness</li> <li>▶ Very short attention span</li> <li>▶ Lacks curiosity</li> <li>▶ Lacks communication skills</li> <li>▶ Does not understand consequences</li> </ul>
Motor skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Cannot walk</li> <li>▶ Has difficulty balancing</li> <li>▶ Cannot complete tasks that require fine motor control or hand-eye coordination (such as threading, sewing and cutting)</li> </ul>

## Potential impact

As children become more aware of themselves and others, they begin to identify differences in their peers. This includes developmental delays and learning difficulties. Children often show this knowledge in behavioural terms. For example, a child who recognises their own delay may become frustrated or angry. A child who notices a delay in another child may resort to bullying.

The following table lists some of the signs of developmental delay and the potential effect on a child's behaviour.

Sign of developmental delay	Potential effect on behaviour
Short concentration span	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Struggles to listen</li> <li>▶ Cannot follow instructions and directions</li> <li>▶ Is unable to solve problems</li> </ul>
Delayed reaction times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Slow to respond to danger or sensory inputs</li> <li>▶ Misunderstands signs and signals from others</li> <li>▶ Doesn't notice what is happening or needs to happen</li> </ul>
Lack of control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Speaks at inappropriate times</li> <li>▶ Reacts without thought</li> </ul>
Unduly violent reactions to certain events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Has panic attacks</li> <li>▶ Hits out</li> <li>▶ Reacts quickly to an event</li> </ul>
Unexplained tiredness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Doesn't listen carefully</li> <li>▶ Responds uncharacteristically</li> <li>▶ Wants to be solitary</li> </ul>
Frustration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Gets angry</li> <li>▶ Throws the materials that contribute to frustration</li> <li>▶ Loses control of emotions</li> </ul>

## Behavioural disorders

Children demonstrating behaviours of concern may be diagnosed with a disruptive behaviour disorder. Many of these disorders are related to each other. A child may be diagnosed with one or more of the disorders at one time, or progress from one disorder in early childhood into another in adolescence or adulthood.



The following table outlines common disorders and how they affect the behaviour of a child.

Disorder	Description	Potential effect on behaviour
Conduct disorder (CD)	Repetitive and persistent violation of societal norms and rights of others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Aggression</li> <li>▶ Bullying</li> <li>▶ Destruction of property</li> <li>▶ Lying</li> <li>▶ Violation of rules</li> </ul>
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"> <li>▶ Difficulty concentrating</li> <li>▶ Forgetfulness</li> <li>▶ Inability to complete tasks</li> <li>▶ Accident-prone</li> <li>▶ Moving from one task to another</li> <li>▶ Impulsiveness</li> <li>▶ Restlessness</li> <li>▶ Fidgeting</li> </ul>
Oppositional defiant disorder (ODD)	Constant disobedience and hostility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Easily angered, annoyed or irritated</li> <li>▶ Argumentative</li> <li>▶ Refuses to obey rules</li> <li>▶ Seems to deliberately annoy others</li> <li>▶ Low self-esteem</li> <li>▶ Blames others</li> </ul>
Autism spectrum disorder	Delay in the development of social and communication skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Repetitive behaviour</li> <li>▶ Lack of social skills</li> <li>▶ Lack of imagination</li> <li>▶ Confused thinking</li> <li>▶ Poor language skills</li> <li>▶ Aggression</li> <li>▶ Anxiety</li> <li>▶ Fear</li> </ul>

## Mental health issues

Mental health describes a feeling of wellbeing. People who are mentally healthy are better able to cope with day-to-day stress and participate fully in life. Other aspects of health and development are also likely to flourish.

A mental health diagnosis is based on problems that a child experiences over time, not just uncharacteristic short-term behaviour. The specific diagnosis, made by a medical professional, will determine how the issue or illness is dealt with.

<p><b>Emotional and social problems</b></p>	<p>Many behaviours of concern are linked with mental health in some way. Emotional and social problems can be the cause or the outcome of a mental health condition.</p> <p>The feelings that children express must be taken seriously. Like all of us, children have good and bad days; sometimes they will need extra support to deal with problems and enjoy their learning and play.</p> <p>Mental health issues can affect a child's capacity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ form friendships</li> <li>▶ resolve conflict</li> <li>▶ make decisions</li> <li>▶ learn about other people</li> <li>▶ develop life skills</li> <li>▶ separate from parents and/or educators</li> <li>▶ play freely</li> <li>▶ develop confidence</li> <li>▶ deal with anger</li> <li>▶ accept behaviour guidance.</li> </ul> <p>To read more about mental health issues in childhood, go to the KidsMatter website at:  <a href="http://aspirelr.link/kids-matter-early-childhood">http://aspirelr.link/kids-matter-early-childhood</a></p>
<p><b>Trauma</b></p>	<p>The word 'trauma' describes a deeply distressing or disturbing event and the emotional shock that follows it. Trauma can seriously affect a child's mental health and behaviour. The severity of trauma is defined by the effect it has on an individual.</p> <p>Trauma may relate to various events, such as grief, loss, war or being held in custody.</p> <p>A child who has experienced trauma may show behaviours such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ difficulty sleeping or disrupted sleep patterns</li> <li>▶ loss of appetite or refusal to eat</li> <li>▶ regression in development</li> <li>▶ anxious responses to separations or unfamiliar events, situations or people</li> <li>▶ social withdrawal or restricted play</li> <li>▶ re-enacting an event in play, sometimes repeatedly</li> <li>▶ aggressive behaviour with others</li> <li>▶ fantasising about an event</li> <li>▶ expressing intense emotions inappropriately</li> <li>▶ flashbacks</li> <li>▶ hyperarousal – the child is continually alert and looking for danger or threats.</li> </ul>

## Practice task 2

1. Research Down syndrome and identify **three** common behaviours of concern.

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2. Research depression in children and identify **three** common behaviours of concern.

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3. If a child from a non-English-speaking family was attending your service, what **two** disruptive behaviours might arise?

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# 1C Identifying environmental factors

When a child behaves inappropriately, look at the environment or situation as well as the child. You may find that the environment is the cause of, or a contributor to, the undesirable behaviour.

By changing the environment (physical space, equipment and resources), you can indirectly guide children's behaviour. With careful planning and monitoring, you will learn to predict possible negative outcomes and modify the environment so that positive behaviour is more likely to occur.



## Physical space

The following table lists environmental considerations that might affect your day-to-day practice, and strategies to modify the physical environment to enhance learning.

Environmental considerations	Strategy
Noise and over-stimulation encourages behaviour that leads to conflict.	<p>Adults should use quiet voices. Children will raise their voices to be heard over loud adult voices and this can lead to a high noise level.</p> <p>Reduce background noise (for example, use music selectively). Children learn to 'tune out' if there is constant background noise. This can reduce their ability to listen carefully when required.</p>
Crowded activities encourage conflict.	<p>Set up activities so that the number of children is automatically limited.</p> <p>For example, if you have decided that you have enough play dough for two children to work at the table, put out two lumps of play dough and two chairs. If both chairs are occupied, other children can see that there is no space for them at that time. This avoids overcrowding.</p>
Children need time to work alone – they may become involved in conflict more easily if this need is not met.	<p>Offer a balance of solitary and group play.</p> <p>Provide areas for an experience where one child can choose to work alone. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ LEGO</li> <li>▶ books on a cushion</li> <li>▶ small table with one chair set up for drawing</li> <li>▶ felt board and figures.</li> </ul> <p>Use screens and furniture to create these areas.</p> <p>Children can learn that they need to ask others first before joining one who is working alone.</p> <p>A negative response needs to be respected. This is part of learning to respect the wishes of others.</p>

Environmental considerations	Strategy
<p>Children need a space to rest. Children who are overtired will have less ability to cope with other children and conflict may occur.</p> <p>Overexcited and boisterous behaviour is often an indication of tiredness in young children.</p>	<p>Provide rest periods in the daily routine. Children’s needs may change according to age, weather and time of year, so the routine needs to be somewhat flexible.</p> <p>‘Rest’ can be a sleep, lying quietly with or without a book, or even playing quietly by themselves (for example, with LEGO).</p> <p>Listening to music or a story tape can also be restful.</p>

## Equipment and resources

The following table lists environmental considerations that might affect your day-to-day practice, and strategies to modify the use and distribution of equipment and resources to enhance learning.

Environmental factor	Strategy
<p>If there is insufficient equipment, the child’s focus shifts from the activity itself to making sure equipment isn’t taken by another child.</p> <p>The younger the child, the harder it is for them to share.</p>	<p>Ensure that each child has individual equipment when possible. For example, provide six buckets and six spades in a sandpit that comfortably accommodates six children.</p> <p>If it isn’t practical to have enough items for each child, you will need to help children to resolve conflicts about sharing – it is an important part of their learning and needs gentle, sympathetic support.</p> <p>Remember, you can assist children under five to share, but you cannot expect them to share.</p>
<p>Activities need to be challenging, but not frustrating.</p> <p>If activities are above the children’s level, the children may become frustrated. This can lead to conflict and aggression.</p>	<p>Provide activities that are suited to the children’s level of development. They will then be fully involved and conflict is much less likely to occur.</p> <p>If an activity requires the adult to be doing or directing a lot of the time, it is probably beyond the children’s ability and therefore not developmentally appropriate.</p> <p>As well as structured activities such as puzzles, provide plenty of open-ended activities so children can work at their own pace and their own level. For example, provide play dough, water and soap suds, clay, a dry sand tray, box work, painting, drawing, a home corner and a block corner.</p>

# Practice task 3

Look at the photo and then answer the questions that follow.



1. Explain why you think this environment might cause conflict if it were set up for four children.

Refer to physical space, equipment and resources in your answer.

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2. How might you resolve these issues?

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## Summary

- ▶ Children prosper in a supportive, safe and consistent environment where their learning and development can be fostered by a suitable setting and appropriate resources.
- ▶ Educators who interact with children must do so in a safe, supportive and equitable way.
- ▶ It is important to understand the age and developmental stage of the child when dealing with behaviour.
- ▶ There are many types of behaviour, some appropriate and some inappropriate. Inappropriate behaviour is not necessarily of concern, but still needs to be addressed.
- ▶ Personal situations, cultural expectations, developmental challenges and mental health issues can all affect children's behaviour in the short and long term.
- ▶ Children with developmental challenges may or may not have behaviour of concern. However, they usually experience specific challenges that relate directly to their behaviour.
- ▶ The environment itself (physical space, equipment and resources) can contribute to appropriate or inappropriate behaviour.
- ▶ The best way to deal with behavioural issues is to take a positive and active approach. This involves having a positive attitude, maintaining positive interactions and using positive guidance strategies.

# Learning checkpoint 1

## Contributing to a safe and supportive environment

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

### Case study

Salina, four years old, has been diagnosed as having mental health issues. She becomes distressed when she is in an environment that is busy and loud. She has a strong preference for indoor play, and seems to feel unsafe in the outdoor area. If Salina becomes distressed, she screams loudly and attempts to leave the area she dislikes (including the service).

Sometimes, because of her mother's work, Salina arrives at the service when it is time for the children's morning tea. At this time, the children are excited, packing up activity materials, rearranging their tables and chairs, and chatting to one another. The noise and activity of the children distresses and agitates Salina. Lucy, the educator, realises this and thinks it would be much better if Salina could arrive at an earlier time when they are reading stories. However, Salina's mother says this is not possible.

1. Consider Salina's behavior and answer the following questions:

a. Is her behaviour disruptive or concerning? Explain.

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b. Salina has been diagnosed with autism, and has learning difficulties. List **four** behaviours that she might demonstrate. These must be different to those in the case study.

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2. Explain how you would help Salina to feel safe and supported by answering the following questions:

a. What changes would you make to the practices or play environment to help Salina feel safe and supported at this time?

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b. If you made these changes, do you think they would be fair to all children?  
Explain why or why not.

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## Topic 2

In this topic you will learn about:

- 2A Establishing expectations**

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- 2B Providing instructions**

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- 2C Acknowledging responsible behaviour**

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- 2D Guiding and redirecting behaviour**

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## Using positive support techniques

A positive approach to supporting children's behaviour focuses on their strengths and takes a developmental view of behaviour. Rather than constantly seeking to control behaviour or narrowly focusing on inappropriate behaviour, use positive support techniques that provide guidance and help children to behave in a socially acceptable manner.

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

<b>National Quality Standard</b>		
	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice	
	Quality Area 2: Children’s health and safety	
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment	
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements	
✓	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children	
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities	
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership	
<b>Early Years Learning Framework</b>	<b>My Time, Our Place</b>	
<b>Principles</b>		
✓	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	
	Partnerships	
✓	High expectations and equity	
✓	Respect for diversity	
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice	
<b>Practice</b>		
✓	Holistic approaches	Holistic approaches
✓	Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
✓	Learning through play	Learning through play
✓	Intentional teaching	Intentionality
✓	Learning environments	Environments
✓	Cultural competence	Cultural competence
✓	Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
✓	Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
<b>Outcomes</b>		
✓	Children have a strong sense of identity	
✓	Children are connected to and contribute to their world	
✓	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	
✓	Children are confident and involved learners	
✓	Children are effective communicators	

# 2A Establishing expectations

Each service has expectations of the children, which provide a benchmark for behaviour and guide educators in their day-to-day dealings with behavioural issues.

These expectations are usually outlined in the policies and procedures of the service and reflected in the day-to-day actions of the educators and other service staff.



## Limits and guidelines

Children learn by observing and interacting with their environment. They will always push the boundaries to find out what is acceptable and what is not.

Socially acceptable behaviours are generally learnt, not inherited. Therefore, if a child is not aware of the boundaries (either due to a cognitive condition or lack of adult direction) their behaviour may be unacceptable.

The following are some examples of limits and guidelines you might find in your service. They should always be written in a positive way, i.e. saying what must be done, rather than what cannot be done. For example:

- ▶ Stay inside the fenced area.
- ▶ Walk on the concrete.
- ▶ Always walk inside.
- ▶ Take turns on the play equipment.
- ▶ Be gentle with each other.
- ▶ Share.
- ▶ Speak one 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 should be involved in developing limits, especially for new experiences or experiences they develop themselves. They may need to have the limits and guidelines clearly communicated to them more than once, and older children may even have a written copy of their own. Sometimes it is appropriate to display these guidelines using photographs to remind children of the limits.

## Policies, procedures and standards

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

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

To comply with state, territory and federal laws, organisations must develop policies and procedures that do not discriminate in relation to culture, religion, gender or disability.

Organisational guidelines must also adhere to legislation and the National Quality Standard (NQS) that is part of the National Quality Framework (NQF).

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.

## Education and Care Services National Regulations

Regulation 155 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations addresses interactions with children and states the following:

‘In an approved service, interactions with children should:

- ▶ encourage children to express themselves and their opinions
- ▶ allow children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
- ▶ maintain the dignity and rights of each child
- ▶ give positive guidance and encouragement to each child
- ▶ consider the family and cultural values, age, and physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child.’

## Serious breaches

Section 166 of the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* addresses the offence to use inappropriate discipline:

‘1. The approved provider of an education and care service must ensure that no child being educated and cared for by the service is subjected to:

- a. any form of corporal punishment; or
- b. any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances.

Penalty: \$10,000 in the case of an individual.

\$50,000 in any other case.’

Examples of this type of behaviour 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 eat your vegetables you can’t have dessert’)
- ▶ ‘time out’ when a child is placed in an alternative place and in isolation.

### Unacceptable practices in a service 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 ‘never ...’
- ▶ using physical restraint, except in an emergency.

## National Quality Standard

The following table outlines Quality Area 5 of the NQS, ‘Relationships with children’.

Standard/Element	Concept	Descriptor
Standard 5.1	Relationships between educators and children	Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.
Element 5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel safe and secure, confident and included.
Element 5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.
Standard 5.2	Relationships between children	Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.
Element 5.2.1	Collaborative learning	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from each other and help each other.
Element 5.2.2	Self-regulation	Each child is supported to regulate their own behavior, respond appropriately to the behavior of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.

## National learning frameworks

The principles and practices that form the foundation of the EYLF/MTOP relate to your role in supporting behaviour positively. They pull together everything you know and understand about children, and support your use of positive interactions in shaping behaviour.

Due to this all-encompassing foundation, the outcomes each relate to supportive behaviour strategies.

## Seeking advice

If you identify behaviour of concern, or feel that you need advice in guiding behaviour, there are plenty of people that can help you. Making decisions about a behavioural situation is not your responsibility alone. You can seek the support of your supervisor, colleagues and service management, as well as professional organisations. Consult with these people, particularly if the behavioural issue is concerning.

If you need to seek advice from outside your service, it is recommended that you contact the Inclusion Support Programme (ISP). This program is available to all government-approved suppliers, including long day care, occasional care, family day care, in-home care, school-age care and vacation care. Remember that before you involve an outside body you must gain parental permission. You should make it clear that you are not only seeking support or assessment for the child. Your main objective is to obtain support and advice so that you can meet the child's needs.

## Consulting other sources

Consultation is another way to gather information about a child. Good sources include parents, educators, specialists that have been involved with the child, and even other children at the service. If you decide to use this strategy, make sure you have parental permission before you start.

Who	What they can tell you about	How to gather this information
Parents or guardians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Home life, including values, cultural practices, expectations and beliefs</li> <li>▶ How the child behaves in various environments</li> <li>▶ Who the child responds to</li> <li>▶ Triggers</li> <li>▶ What strategies they use</li> <li>▶ What strategies work and don't work</li> <li>▶ What strategies they would not like you to use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Discussions</li> <li>▶ Meetings</li> <li>▶ Surveys</li> <li>▶ Forms</li> </ul>
Other educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Their observations</li> <li>▶ Their experiences with the family and child</li> <li>▶ Out-of-character behaviour, expected behaviour and behaviour of concern</li> <li>▶ Triggers</li> <li>▶ What strategies they have used – successfully or unsuccessfully</li> <li>▶ Their specialist training or experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Observation records</li> <li>▶ Portfolios</li> <li>▶ Notes from past information-gathering</li> <li>▶ Behaviour plans</li> <li>▶ Discussions</li> </ul>
Specialists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Diagnosis</li> <li>▶ Triggers</li> <li>▶ Key features</li> <li>▶ Links to other developmental areas</li> <li>▶ Situations to avoid</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Discussions</li> <li>▶ Assessments</li> <li>▶ Reports</li> <li>▶ Meetings</li> </ul>

## Consulting with others

Reading through policies, procedures and standards can be a daunting task, as can remembering the many behavioural guidelines involved, particularly if you are new to a particular work role. Despite this, you will be expected to follow these guidelines consistently.

If you have any concerns in this area, please consult with someone in your service. There are many people who can help, including your colleagues and managers, particularly your supervisor. They can provide first-hand examples, suggestions and direction to help you deal with behavioural issues in a clear and appropriate way.

## Practice task 4

1. Access a copy of the following documents, then answer the questions that follow:

- ▶ policies or procedures that relate to staff behaviour
- ▶ limits or guidelines that relate to staff behaviour
- ▶ the job description for your work role.

a. Outline expected behaviour of staff.

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b. When must you consult with a supervisor in relation to staff behaviour?

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c. Do these documents help you better understand the behavioural expectations of educators? Why or why not?

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# 2B Providing instructions

As an educator, you will provide plenty of opportunities for children to make choices, negotiate, compromise and discuss. One of the skills you will use as part of these processes is providing instructions.

## Effective instructions

Finding the balance between effective communication and the comprehension level of the child is sometimes difficult. Always remember that just because communication has taken place, it does not mean it has been understood.



The following table outlines some guidelines to make your instructions more effective.

Effective instructions	Description
Be clear before you start	When giving instructions to children, be clear about what you want them to do in your own mind before you start. You can't expect children to follow muddled or ambiguous instructions, for example, 'Sally, could you take the cushions into the book corner, oh no, maybe the home corner on the bed. Thanks!'
Gain attention	To be heard you must have the child's attention. Once you have gained eye contact you can give instructions and demonstrate tasks more successfully.
Keep it simple	Your instructions will be more effective if you keep them simple, such as giving one or two steps at a time. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ 'Put the books away.'</li> <li>▶ 'Line up near the door.'</li> <li>▶ 'Pick up your pencils. Then, sit on the mat.'</li> </ul> The children's age and experience will influence their ability to filter out other information.
Be positive	When you tell children not to do something, they may listen and know what not to do. However, they may not understand what you actually want them to do. <p>Try to put instructions in a positive form. Always be polite and clear. State exactly what you expect. For example, say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ 'Walk, please' instead of 'Don't run'.</li> <li>▶ 'Feet on the floor' rather than 'Get your feet off the table'.</li> </ul>
Be flexible	Adjust your instructions to the context of the work environment and the activity. You may need to raise your voice in order to be heard, illustrate your instruction by pointing to a poster or an object, or demonstrate an action by doing it yourself or miming it.

## Developmental considerations

If you want your instructions to be understood, you must also keep in mind the children’s age and stage of development. Try to consider the guidelines in the following table.

Age/stage	Guidelines
Children under three	Give simple one-step instructions. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ ‘Put your bag away.’</li> <li>▶ ‘Wash your hands.’</li> <li>▶ ‘Take your socks off.’</li> </ul>
Preschool children	Give simple two-step instructions. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ ‘Put your bag away and then come to the mat.’</li> <li>▶ ‘Wash your hands and then sit at the table.’</li> </ul>
School-age children	Give multi-step instructions. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ ‘Clear up the bench, then set the table for lunch. After that, go outside and see what Joe has for us from the garden.’</li> <li>▶ ‘First set out your design, then glue it. Once that is done, paint the surface and let it dry.’</li> </ul>

## Practice task 5

1. What is an instruction you might give to children during a mealtime? Ensure your instructions are clear, easy to follow and positive. Include one instruction for each of the following age groups:

a. Two years old

.....

b. Five years old

.....

c. 12 years old

.....

2. If the room is noisy, how would you change the way you communicate these instructions?

.....

.....

# 2C Acknowledging responsible behaviour

As an educator is it your role to guide children towards positive and responsible behaviour. Acknowledging their responsible behaviour is a positive teaching strategy.

Findings	Example
Most child behaviour is strengthened or weakened by what happens immediately after the behaviour occurs.	A toddler who receives laughter and applause for making a funny face is likely to keep making funny faces.
Your attention is so important to young children that they will often continue with an inappropriate behaviour, despite your negative reaction.	A child continues to throw sand even after the educator calls, 'Stop throwing sand or you will need to come out of the sandpit.'
Although you may temporarily weaken an inappropriate behaviour with a negative response, it does not mean that the appropriate behaviour has been identified and encouraged.	Telling a child that she cannot go outside because she has not picked up her toys does not teach her where to put the toys away. The appropriate behaviour (putting the toys away) still needs to be taught.

There are several common ways to support and acknowledge responsible behaviour in children. These include the use of positive reinforcement, and clear verbal and nonverbal communication strategies.

## Positive reinforcement

Positive reinforcement is a technique used to increase a desired behaviour. It works because it provides a feeling of pleasure and gives children the attention and sense of reward that most children seek.

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



You can positively reinforce a child's behaviour by:

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

## Encouragement

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

- ▶ motivates the child to do things for intrinsic reasons
- ▶ focuses on the child’s efforts in or process of doing something, not the results
- ▶ helps the child feel good about what they have done, which develops their self-esteem.

You should encourage each child’s efforts, whether they succeed or fail. Make sure you are honest and consistent, and that what you say is sensitive to each child’s needs and matches their level of understanding.

Watch this video about encouraging and engaging with children.



### Example

#### Using encouragement to respond to a child

Kiara, two years old, is trying to help pack up by carrying a big basket of soft toys. Every few steps a toy falls out of the basket. She stops, puts the basket down, puts the toy back in the basket and sets off again. She does this four times. The fifth time a toy falls out, she stops, looks at it, then carries the basket to the shelf where it belongs. She then goes back to the toy on the floor, picks it up and takes it to the basket.

The educator says to Kiara, ‘Kiara, I can see you are trying very hard. Thank you for your help.’

This type of encouragement acknowledges Kiara’s efforts, but does not require her to follow a particular process as long as the job gets done.

## Positive language

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

Situation	What the educator says
An educator sees a child running in from outside.	‘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.	‘Hello, Daisy! You seem in a hurry, remember to walk safely in the hall.’

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

Use your words, tone of voice, facial expressions and body language to communicate calmness and respect. Try not to make judgments. Keep the focus on the positive behaviour you want to see, rather than highlighting any negative or inappropriate behaviour that may be noticeable at the time.

The following table provides a few guidelines on how to make your language more positive.

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

## Nonverbal strategies

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

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

- ▶ work at the child's level so they can see your body language
- ▶ are close enough to the child to gain their full attention
- ▶ use eye contact where appropriate
- ▶ provide physical touch if needed (for example, hugging a child, holding hands in a circle, being a dancing partner or helping with dress-ups).



Watch this video about nonverbal communication.

## Cultural sensitivities to nonverbal communication

People use nonverbal gestures and expressions in different ways. Therefore, you may need to adapt your approach to accommodate these differences. Research the cultural backgrounds of children in your service to find out more.

The following table highlights a few of the well-known differences in nonverbal communication.

Sensitivity	Example
Personal space	People have different standards of personal space when interacting. Some will feel comfortable with an arm's length of space between you, while others will be comfortable with close, physical contact.

Sensitivity	Example
Eye contact	Eye contact is considered a sign of honesty and respect in some cultures, and a sign of disrespect in others.
Tone of voice	Some children are used to loud and direct language for communication, while others think that a loud person is angry. At times you may need to change your tone to convey limits and use a stern voice. Some children will ignore the stern voice and others will become overly emotional if they think they have upset you.
Body language	Body language, such as hand communication, is used by many people (for instance, shaking hands or giving the thumbs up). This may be polite for some people and offensive to others. The same applies to smiling or bowing your head.

**Example** **Nonverbal communication**

Michael, five years old, looks out of his preschool window to see his mum, Mary, patiently waiting for him. Susan, 18 months old, is in the stroller, and Clive, three years, is at her feet.

Mary glances at the window and sees Michael looking at her. She smiles and waves at him. Michael’s teacher opens the door to let the children go out to meet their parents. Michael runs out to Mary.

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

Mary takes Michael’s bag from him and hooks it on to the handle of the stroller. Michael gives Clive a quick hug and peers into the stroller to make a funny face at Susan, who laughs happily and kicks her legs in response to Michael’s face.

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

## Practice task 6

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

### Case study

Gracie, two years old, is climbing on the chairs. She is walking from one to the other, balancing as she goes.

1. Is Gracie’s behaviour responsible? Why or why not?

.....

.....

2. Respond to Gracie by providing a positive instruction.

Complete a table similar to the following showing the verbal and nonverbal communication you would use.

Verbal message	Gesture	Facial expression	Tone of voice

3. Gracie follows your instruction. Respond by supporting and acknowledging her behaviour.

Complete a table similar to the following showing the verbal and nonverbal communication you would use.

Verbal message	Gesture	Facial expression	Tone of voice

# 2D Guiding and redirecting behaviour

Guiding and redirecting the behaviour of children is an approach you will use countless times each day. Unlike punishment, guidance provides children with an appropriate model for behaviour and the necessary information to behave appropriately the next time.

This approach is particularly effective with young children who, lacking words, often communicate through their behaviour. Positive support strategies can be used to guide and redirect this type of behaviour and defuse a situation before it gets out of control.



## The communicative function of behaviour

Children often communicate through their behaviour. These may be positive messages, but often they take the form of challenging behaviours. When children use challenging behaviours to communicate, they often do not start off with the purpose of communicating negatively. Their behaviour is usually a reaction, with the child using the method they might think of at the time to communicate their needs. This is a perfect example of how children make mistakes as they learn.

To identify the message that a child is trying to send, you need to look for the reason behind their behaviour – that is, its ‘communicative function’.

Communicative functions are commonly divided into two categories. These are outlined in the following table, which includes examples focused on challenging behaviours you might notice.

Category	Description	Example
Regulation	<p>Actions used to gain, refuse or avoid something. The result of the behavior is that the environment changes.</p> <p>The child is saying: ‘I don’t want that.’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ A child pushes another child away.</li> <li>▶ A child throws a cup of milk when they want water.</li> <li>▶ A child screams when they are overwhelmed by too many people in their space.</li> </ul>
Interaction	<p>Actions used to interact with another person.</p> <p>The result is that the other person takes notice.</p> <p>The child is saying: ‘I want you to listen to or notice me.’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ A child pinches another child when they ignore them.</li> <li>▶ A child bites when they don’t know how to enter the play.</li> <li>▶ A child tells another child to pack up, then pushes the child’s block tower over to communicate that it is pack-up time.</li> </ul>

When faced with a behaviour of concern, always consider the reason behind the communication. It may be quite different to the behaviour itself.

## Example

### Using behaviour to communicate

Todd has recently become aggressive toward his peers. When the educators observe his behaviour, they note that the aggression occurs when Todd's play space becomes crowded.

The function of Todd's behaviour is to keep the other children out of his way.

Todd is using behaviour to change the environment and express what he wants.

## Guiding behaviour

There are a number of positive strategies that can be used to reinforce responsible behaviour (for instance, positive reinforcement, encouragement, positive language and gestures). Other positive strategies that are used to guide a child's behaviour include:

- ▶ role-modelling
- ▶ choices
- ▶ problem-solving
- ▶ consequences.

Watch this video about modelling and guiding positive behaviour.



## Role-modelling

Children learn by observation. If you want to guide them in appropriate behaviour, you must provide a positive model of that behaviour yourself. For instance:

- ▶ If you don't want a child to hit, don't hit them.
- ▶ If you want children to use quiet voices inside, you must use a quiet voice.
- ▶ If you want children to be problem solvers, demonstrate problem-solving techniques.
- ▶ If you want children to respect you, show them respect.

## Making simple choices

When children are provided with the opportunity to make a simple choice, they begin to learn about decision-making. If children are part of the decision-making process, they gain a sense of ownership of the outcome and are more likely to follow through.

All choices offered to children must be legitimate, meaningful to them and appropriate. Only offer children choices that you are able to implement. For example, if there are no educators to supervise outside play, do not offer children the choice to play in the sandpit.

Problem-solving is part of the decision-making process that children experience as they make a selection about an appropriate choice. As they think about the options, they will consider how they feel about the choices, and how other things might impact their decision.

All children need time, support and practice, as well as patient educators, to help them learn this skill.

Often you can support a child to make choices and learn about problem-solving by applying a controlled strategy.

Controlled strategy	Description
Making a direct suggestion	This helps a hesitant child to make a choice. Some children find it difficult to make decisions. Others have little experience in making decisions. These children might feel overwhelmed by being expected to choose for themselves. You can work through the options with them, give them some ideas to think about, and in some cases, even suggest the option you feel is best at the time.
Limiting choice	This helps young children make selections. Young children (especially toddlers) are unable to make big decisions. You should provide them with simple options. For example, you might offer a two-year-old a choice of two options, but a four-year-old four or five options.

**Example** **Making a direct suggestion**

Sam, four years, has just arrived for the day. His mother has left and Dean, the educator, asks him what he would like to do today. Sam seems unsure and is looking around the room, without making a decision. Dean makes a direct suggestion by saying, ‘Sam, I know you like building in the block corner, and you like painting too – would you like to do one of those?’ Sam nods and, after a moment’s thought, he moves off to the block area and settles down to play.

## Consequences

Consequences are one of the most effective strategies for helping children to respond appropriately and to change inappropriate behaviour. Consequences help children to identify and understand the result of their actions. They also give children an opportunity to make a better decision or choice the next time.

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

Type of consequence	Description	Example
Natural consequence	<p>A natural consequence is when an action happens and the natural outcome is what guides the child. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ If a child is left to throw sand, it may hurt other children.</li> <li>▶ If a child continues to hurt other children, there may be injuries and complaints.</li> <li>▶ If a child doesn’t wear a hat outside, they may be sunburnt.</li> </ul> <p>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.</p>	<p>Athalia, four years, says that she does not need to put her coat on to go outside. When she does go out, she becomes cold and asks to get her coat.</p> <p>Getting cold is the natural consequence of Athalia’s decision. By allowing her to decide on her clothing needs, she has learnt that sometimes she will need her coat.</p>

Type of consequence	Description	Example
Logical consequence	<p>Sometimes it is not appropriate to let natural consequences serve as a guide. It might be more beneficial to think of a logical consequence.</p> <p>This type of consequence links directly to the inappropriate behaviour and shows children the possible and logical result of their decision. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ If you throw sand, you need to leave the sandpit.</li> <li>▶ If you hurt other children, you need to work and play on your own.</li> <li>▶ If you don't wear a hat, you won't be able to go outside.</li> </ul> <p>When applying consequences, you must assess each child to identify the most appropriate technique to use. A consequence must make sense and it should not be a punishment.</p>	<p>Tony, five years, takes out all of the blocks from the shelf. He moves to another activity, leaving the blocks all over the floor.</p> <p>Aziz, the educator, asks Tony to pack up all the blocks because it is nearly home time. Aziz supports Tony with encouragement and positive reinforcement. He helps Tony to pack up so Tony does not feel overwhelmed. When the pack-up is complete, Aziz reminds Tony that if he plays with blocks, he must pack them up when he is finished.</p>

## Using redirection

As children experiment and learn, they all make mistakes and occasionally engage in undesirable behaviour. An effective way to teach young children the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour is redirection.

Redirection is a method that can be used on all children and focuses on the desired behaviour by helping the child discontinue the inappropriate behaviour. It means responding to a child's current behaviour and then redirecting them into more appropriate actions or interests, or defusing a concerning situation.

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

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

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

Once you become familiar with the children in your care, you can identify when they may be moving into a situation that may cause concerning behaviour to occur. Redirection is useful when you can predict this, as intervening prior to any incident and redirecting the child to another activity removes the possible difficulty.

Redirection is a useful strategy for older children who may be able to understand what safe actions are, but choose not to do them.

**Example**

**Redirection**

James, five years, is laughing and doing a silly dance. Other children are watching him and laughing. Ruth, his educator, is concerned that he will knock over the art easels nearby.

Ruth approaches James and tells him he is very funny. She asks if he would like some music so that he can keep dancing, and suggests that the other children might want to dance too. ‘Shall we all move to the mat space where there is lots of room?’ she says.

James is happy with this idea, and moves to the mat space where he dances with other children to some music until they are all puffed out.

## Practice task 7

Complete a table similar to the one below, showing how you understand the communicative function of behavior and how to redirect it.

<b>Child’s behaviour</b>	<b>Category (regulation or interaction)</b>	<b>The desirable result</b>	<b>What you would say or do to achieve the result</b>
Sam has taken a block that Harry was playing with.		For the children to share resources and communicate their needs verbally.	
Willy laughs as he splashes Alice with water from the sink.		For Willy to realise how Alice feels and to help her get dry. For Willy to move to the next routine activity.	
Ben pushes in front of Freda as she begins climbing up to the slide.		For Harry to understand that Freda was first and that he needs to wait in line.  For Harry to take interest in what Freda is doing.	

## Summary

- ▶ Each service has behavioural expectations of the children in its care, and for the educators and other staff who work there.
- ▶ Behavioural expectations provide a benchmark for behaviour and guide educators in their day-to-day dealings with behavioural issues.
- ▶ These expectations are usually outlined in the policies and procedures of the service, and reflected in the day-to-day actions of the educators and other staff.
- ▶ As an educator, you will provide plenty of opportunities for children to make choices, to negotiate, to compromise and discuss. One of the skills you will use as part of these opportunities is effective instruction.
- ▶ It is your role to guide the children in your care towards positive and responsible behaviour. Acknowledging their responsible behaviour is a positive teaching strategy that is often used in this context.
- ▶ Positive reinforcement strategies, encouragement, positive language and gestures are all methods of encouraging positive behaviour.
- ▶ As children experiment and learn, they all make mistakes and engage in undesirable behaviour. An effective way to teach young children the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour is redirection, which focuses on the desired behaviour by helping the child discontinue the inappropriate behaviour.

# Learning checkpoint 2

## Using positive support techniques

### Part A

Access a copy of a behaviour guidance policy, behaviour management policy or responsible behaviour policy.

1. List any specific behaviour guidance strategies identified as inappropriate or unacceptable practice.

.....

.....

.....

2. Choose one of the points in the policy that supports your positive guidance of behaviour. What does this point say and how does it help you know how to guide behaviour?

.....

.....

.....

### Part B

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

#### Case study

Simon, five years old, is at the bathroom sink. He has been washing his hands for a few minutes. He accidentally drips some water on the floor. He then uses his cupped hands to add more water and make a puddle, which he spreads across the floor with his foot.

The educator asks him to stop playing with the water inside. Simon says, 'No!' and continues to pour water onto the floor.

1. Is the communicative function of Simon's behaviour aimed at regulation or interaction?

.....

2. What is the desirable result?

.....

3. How would you respond to Simon’s behaviour? Give an example of what you would say to provide the following actions:
  - a. A positive language statement that gives an instruction and explains what Simon should do rather than what he should not do.  
.....
  - b. A redirection that provides Simon his desirable result.  
.....
  - c. Positive reinforcement that follows Simon’s move to a positive behaviour.  
.....
4. Choose one of the actions you have provided for Simon. Complete a table similar to the following to show the verbal and nonverbal communication you would use to provide Simon with positive guidance.

Verbal message	Gesture	Facial expression	Tone of voice

## Part C

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

### Case study

A number of children are building with blocks. Tess, seven years old, is building towers. Mia, two years old, toddles over to Tess and knocks one of her towers over. She then smiles at Tess. When Tess builds a new tower, Mia helps to build too, but when the tower gets six blocks high, Mia again knocks over the tower and looks at Tess, smiling. Tess appears to be upset and tells Mia, ‘Go away!’ You call Mia over to work with you at building a tower, but Mia stays with Tess.

1. Is the communicative function of Mia’s behaviour aimed at regulation or interaction?  
.....
2. What is the desirable result?  
.....

3. How would you respond to Mia’s behaviour? Complete a table similar to the following to show an example of a positive language statement that gives an instruction and explains what Mia should do rather than what she should not do.

Verbal message	Gesture	Facial expression	Tone of voice

4. If Mia continues to interrupt Tess’s building, what redirection could you give that provides Mia with a similar outcome to her desirable result?

.....

5. If Tess begins to push all the children away from her aggressively, hurting them, and this occurs regularly during the day, you would be required to seek advice. Answer the following questions.

a. Why does Tess’s behaviour require you to seek advice?

.....

b. Who might you seek advice from within your service?

.....

.....

.....





## Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

### **3A Observing and collecting data about behaviour**

---

## Collecting data to develop strategies

To establish the details of a child's behaviour of concern, it is essential to gather information. To gain the best possible view, you must choose a variety of recording methods, and consider the situation in a number of ways.

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

<b>National Quality Standard</b>		
	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice	
	Quality Area 2: Children’s health and safety	
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment	
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements	
✓	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children	
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities	
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership	
<b>Early Years Learning Framework</b>	<b>My Time, Our Place</b>	
<b>Principles</b>		
✓	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	
✓	Partnerships	
	High expectations and equity	
	Respect for diversity	
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice	
<b>Practice</b>		
✓	Holistic approaches	Holistic approaches
✓	Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
	Learning through play	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching	Intentionality
	Learning environments	Environments
	Cultural competence	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
✓	Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
<b>Outcomes</b>		
	Children have a strong sense of identity	
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world	
✓	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	
	Children are confident and involved learners	
✓	Children are effective communicators	

# 3A Observing and collecting data about behaviour

The information you gather from observational data will clarify concerns, help you gain a greater understanding of the behavioural situation, and identify any connected issues. The perspective of other children is also valuable.



## Providing evidence

When a child is identified as having behaviour of concern, it means that you have observed their behaviour over a period of time, and it has been identified that you and the child need support.

Before any action can be taken, the behaviour of concern must be assessed. Collect accurate and unbiased data about the child’s behaviour that has been gathered over a period of time. This evidence ensures that an appropriate decision can be made about the type of support required.

## Collecting observational data

Observational data can be collected in a variety of ways. Some methods you use may focus only on the observations that are relevant to the situation. Other methods may be more suited to capturing the overall contextual picture of a child’s performance and development. The reason for the data being collected will influence the collection method you use. For instance, if you are focusing on the child’s communication and social skills, anecdotal recording may be suitable; however, if you are looking for specific information for monitoring a behaviour of concern, a tailored checklist may provide more reliable data.



Watch this video about collecting observational data.

The following table describes common methods used in education and care services. Many workplaces encourage a combination of these methods to build a holistic view of the child’s performance and development.

Method	Description
Anecdotal records	Anecdotal data is information not based on formal evidence. Records based on anecdotal evidence are usually based on observations. As an educator, you must ensure that the observations you document are objective, factual and accurate.
Diary entries	Diary entries are regular records of activities and experiences. They are useful for providing contextual information leading up to an occurrence. As an educator, when looking at diarised data, you may be able to isolate or identify recurring factors that contribute to behaviour or an incident. Diaries, journals, logs and communication books are commonly used to pass on information between people.

Method	Description
Events or time samples	<p>An event sample records your observations each time a particular event occurs. You or your supervisor decides on the event to be recorded. Each time it occurs, you create a record of what happened before, during and after the event. Consider everything that happens during the event. This allows you to provide an unbiased account.</p> <p>A time sample records observations taken at a time (or times) specified by you or your supervisor. It may be every five minutes, every hour or at a set time each day (such as during a daily routine). A time sample is useful for recording patterns of behaviour or interaction.</p>
Checklists	<p>Checklists must be carefully designed to collect the data that you require. You must identify why you want the data and what it is going to be used for before you design the checklist. For instance, if you are using a checklist to collect data on the concerning behaviour of a child, you might construct your checklist around the characteristics of the behaviour, and the triggers or environmental factors. The checklist will help you isolate patterns and contributors.</p>
Sociograms	<p>A sociogram is a web-like diagram that maps out who a child interacts with and who interacts with the child. It is a graphic representation of social and relational patterns that occur in a group of children. A sociogram may be used to record emerging communication skills, new relationships, changing dynamics in a group or the types of behaviour shown when a child is interacting with different people.</p>

## Details of behaviour

You can identify the important details to record by using the prompts outlined in the following table.

Detail	Description	What to identify
Behaviour	The behaviour that needs to be recorded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Who was it?</li> <li>▶ What happened?</li> <li>▶ Where did it happen?</li> <li>▶ How long did it last?</li> <li>▶ Who else was involved?</li> </ul>
Antecedents	The things that happened before the behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ What was the child doing before the behaviour occurred?</li> <li>▶ If there were other children nearby, who were they and what were they doing before the behaviour occurred?</li> <li>▶ Can you identify the trigger for the behaviour?</li> </ul>
Consequences	The things that happened because of the behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ What did you and others do after the behaviour occurred?</li> <li>▶ What were the outcomes for the child?</li> </ul>

Detail	Description	What to identify
Setting events	The things in the environment or the routine that affected the behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Did anything happen in the environment or routine that may have contributed to the behaviour?</li> </ul>
Function or desired result	The outcome the child gained from displaying this behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ What did the child want to achieve with this behaviour?</li> <li>▶ Did they gain something or avoid something?</li> <li>▶ Did you notice another outcome?</li> </ul>

## Frequency, intensity and duration of behaviour

When collecting evidence of behaviours of concern, you must document the frequency, intensity and duration of the behaviour.

Data point	What to record	Why to record it	How to record it
Frequency	How often the behaviour occurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ To reveal a pattern, such as a similarity between the events</li> <li>▶ To see whether the behaviour is common throughout the day</li> <li>▶ To have an objective record, as you may remember the behaviour as occurring more or less often than it actually does</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Day, date, time</li> <li>▶ Based on routines; for example, during indoor play, mealtime, outdoor play or rest periods</li> </ul>
Intensity	The extent to which the child acts out the behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ To identify any linked behaviours; for example, does an event link with intensity?</li> <li>▶ To measure improvement or decrease in progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ On a scale: low, medium or high; or from 0–10</li> <li>▶ Based on the level of:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– disruption</li> <li>– violence</li> <li>– distress to the child</li> <li>– recovery time</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Data point	What to record	Why to record it	How to record it
Duration	How long the behaviour lasts for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ To identify any link with an event</li> <li>▶ To indicate how disruptive the behaviour is</li> <li>▶ To measure any improvement or worsening of behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Duration in minutes</li> <li>▶ How the duration relates to the schedule; for example, the behaviour lasts for the whole of group time</li> </ul>

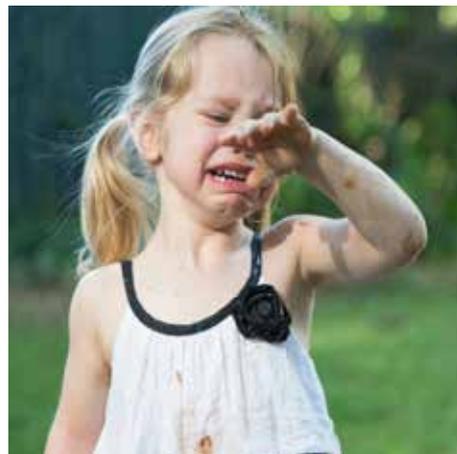
## Recording behaviour

It is not possible to remember in detail the behaviour of every child over a period of time. The data required to make informed decisions regarding a child must be based on evidence. If you collect and record relevant data regularly, you will be better equipped to make decisions that relate to behaviours of concern.

How you record observations will depend on the policies and procedures of your service. There will be existing processes and documents in the form of:

- ▶ anecdotal records
- ▶ event samples
- ▶ time samples
- ▶ checklists
- ▶ communication books or logs.

For behaviours of concern, you may be asked to use a format that includes specific details of the behaviour.



# Practice task 8

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

**Case study**

<b>Child:</b> Otto <b>Age:</b> 5 years <b>Date:</b> 26.1.18 <b>Setting:</b> Indoor play				<b>Recorded by:</b> Harriet <b>Event:</b> Otto's behaviour				
Number	Time	Setting	What is happening just before the behaviour	Who else is involved	Intensity of behaviour *			Duration of behaviour
					Low	Med	High	
1	9.35 am	Sandpit	Building a castle but sand is not wet enough	No one	X			10 minutes
2	10.15 am	Train set	All children want to play with Thomas the Tank Engine	Jim, Celina and Gordon			X	20 minutes
3	11.13 am	Collage	Gordon takes the scissors that are near Otto and Celina takes the last paste brush	Celina and Gordon		X		15 minutes

\* Low = no aggression to others, Med = aggressive with environment, High = aggressive with other children

- Otto threw a handful of sand, then fell onto the sand. He cried and would not respond to any of the educators who asked him if he needed help. Otto recovered when Gordon entered the sandpit and began to work with the sand.
- Otto bit Jim and threw train carriages at Celina, hitting her in the face. He then threw the train track into the book corner at other children. Educators Margaret and Harriet tried to calm Otto, but he ran away from them and spat on Margaret. Otto calmed down when Fiona, another educator, asked if he would like a drink of water. He was red-faced and crying.
- Otto grabbed the paste pot and tipped it upside down onto his work. The paste splattered onto the table and chair, as well as his clothing. Otto reacted to this by jumping up and down and trying to wipe the glue off his top. He then swept the chair away, knocking it over. Then he fell to the floor and cried. Educators attempted to console him, but he would not respond. When Gordon approached the table and started to paste, Otto stopped crying and watched what he was doing.



## Summary

- ▶ If you identify any behaviour that is of concern, or feel that you need advice on guiding a child's behaviour, there are plenty of people who can help you.
- ▶ To best understand the child and their behaviour, you need to observe them and collect data about them.
- ▶ The information you gather about a child's behaviour should include information from others involved with the child.
- ▶ There is a range of data needed to analyse behaviour of concern and develop useful strategies for supporting children.
- ▶ Your service policy will guide you as to what method you should use to record concerning behaviour.

# Learning checkpoint 3

## Collecting data to develop strategies

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

### Case study

It is 3.45pm. The children have just moved from afternoon snack time to indoor play. Billy, three years, approaches an activity where Caleb and Antony have just settled to play. He takes toys from them and uses physical force to move into the play area, punching, pinching, pushing and biting. The incident lasts for three minutes before you are able to intervene.

You recognise that each time Billy has demonstrated these behaviours of concern, it has occurred at the point when a routine has changed to play time. For instance, today this occurred when the group moved from morning snack time to play, group activity to play, then lunch time to play.

Each time, the incident lasts until you intervene.

1. Research a recording method used to document observational data. Submit a copy with the details of Billy's behaviour included.
2. Use a table similar to the following to document the details of the incident.

<b>Child:</b> <b>Age:</b> <b>Date:</b> <b>Setting:</b>				<b>Recorded by:</b> <b>Event:</b>				
Number	Time	Setting	What is happening just before the behaviour	Who else is involved	Intensity of behaviour *			Duration of behaviour
					Low	Med	High	
Behaviour information:								
* Low = no aggression to others, Med = aggressive with environment, High = aggressive with other children								

3. How would you describe the frequency of Billy's behaviour (very frequent, frequent, not very frequent)? Explain your choice.

.....

.....



## Topic 4

In this topic you will learn about:

**4A Implementing support strategies**

**4B Identifying areas of concern**

**4C Contributing to behaviour support plans**

## Implementing strategies to support children

Children with additional needs, including those who exhibit behaviours of concern, often require support strategies. Developing these strategies requires reference to information and data that has been collected by educators, and open and honest consultation with parents, supervisors and other professionals.

A support plan is often developed to help all those working with the child to use consistent responses, techniques and methods.

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

<b>National Quality Standard</b>		
	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice	
	Quality Area 2: Children’s health and safety	
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment	
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements	
✓	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children	
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities	
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership	
<b>Early Years Learning Framework</b>	<b>My Time, Our Place</b>	
<b>Principles</b>		
✓	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	
✓	Partnerships	
	High expectations and equity	
	Respect for diversity	
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice	
<b>Practice</b>		
✓	Holistic approaches	Holistic approaches
✓	Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
	Learning through play	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching	Intentionality
	Learning environments	Environments
	Cultural competence	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
✓	Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
<b>Outcomes</b>		
	Children have a strong sense of identity	
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world	
✓	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	
	Children are confident and involved learners	
✓	Children are effective communicators	

# 4A Implementing support strategies

Developing a support plan requires knowledge of the child, the conditions of their care and the goals you are aiming for by implementing the strategy. It must be developed and implemented in consultation with your supervisor, other educators, specialists (if required) and parents. Support strategies are usually documented in a behaviour support plan.



## Behaviour support plans

Behaviour support plans are developed for children who display difficult or disruptive behaviour, and for children who could benefit from additional wellbeing support.

Although you may not be personally responsible for developing a behaviour support plan, you may be part of the team that puts one together. You may also, with instruction and support from your supervisor, need to understand and implement its strategies.

Watch this video about working with a child with additional support needs.



A behaviour support plan usually includes the following elements.

Element	Description
Rationale	This is the reason for the plan. It is based on evidence or data, and an analysis of the behaviour, antecedents, consequences, setting events, and the function of the behaviour.
Specific goals and objectives	Goals are broad and specify the outcome you want to work toward in the future. Objectives are small steps that are achievable over short periods of time. If the objectives are too challenging, the child may experience failure or not understand what is happening. This can lead to further concerning behaviour. Let the child know what you want to achieve.
Methods	Various methods may be required to achieve a particular objective. For example, to improve a child's listening and language skills, a support plan may suggest stimulating the child with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ rhymes, poems, stories, language games or music</li> <li>▶ dramatic play</li> <li>▶ film, video or television</li> <li>▶ everyday conversation</li> <li>▶ everyday transactions (greetings, shopping, directions, instructions, etc.).</li> </ul>

Element	Description								
Strategies	<p>The child may require specific support strategies to help modify their behaviour. For instance, you might use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ positive reinforcement each time a child achieves something</li> <li>▶ a specific logical consequence when a child demonstrates a behaviour</li> <li>▶ a specific tone of voice</li> <li>▶ communication methods more suited to the child's needs (such as Auslan, Key Word Sign, posters and demonstrations).</li> </ul>								
Safety	<p>The environment should be assessed to identify whether anything can be added, removed or altered to increase safety. For instance, you might need to remove furniture that obstructs an area, organise additional supervision in the outdoor play area, or arrange higher educator ratios for certain activities.</p>								
Resources	<p>The following resources will be required to implement the plan.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="443 813 1359 1294"> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="443 813 628 943">Time</td> <td data-bbox="628 813 1359 943">This may include meeting time, planning time, discussion time, relaxation or stress relief time (when you are under pressure), set-up time, handover time or research time.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="443 943 628 1072">Space</td> <td data-bbox="628 943 1359 1072">Consider having quiet areas, larger activity areas, increased number of activity areas, clear areas and defined areas.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="443 1072 628 1202">Materials and equipment</td> <td data-bbox="628 1072 1359 1202">Ensure these are suited to the special needs of a child (for example, communication boards, reference books, adaptive or assistive technology and posters).</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="443 1202 628 1294">Budget</td> <td data-bbox="628 1202 1359 1294">Consider additional staff wages and funding for equipment, materials and resources.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Time	This may include meeting time, planning time, discussion time, relaxation or stress relief time (when you are under pressure), set-up time, handover time or research time.	Space	Consider having quiet areas, larger activity areas, increased number of activity areas, clear areas and defined areas.	Materials and equipment	Ensure these are suited to the special needs of a child (for example, communication boards, reference books, adaptive or assistive technology and posters).	Budget	Consider additional staff wages and funding for equipment, materials and resources.
Time	This may include meeting time, planning time, discussion time, relaxation or stress relief time (when you are under pressure), set-up time, handover time or research time.								
Space	Consider having quiet areas, larger activity areas, increased number of activity areas, clear areas and defined areas.								
Materials and equipment	Ensure these are suited to the special needs of a child (for example, communication boards, reference books, adaptive or assistive technology and posters).								
Budget	Consider additional staff wages and funding for equipment, materials and resources.								
Roles	<p>Consider the roles of people who are already working with the child, as well as additional educators, specialists, support staff or services, parents and other significant people relevant to the child.</p> <p>You may need help from another educator who can take over your tasks while you implement the strategy, or can implement a strategy themselves. Make sure everyone involved is clear on what is required, including their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ tone of voice</li> <li>▶ levels of interaction</li> <li>▶ body language.</li> </ul>								

Element	Description	
Support mechanisms	Each plan and situation will need a different set of support mechanisms for the educators, the parents and the child.	
	Educators	Some behaviour you can deal with easily yourself; others you may need help with. You may need time away from the child to refuel or to gather your thoughts – particularly if the child is aggressive. Support may also come through discussion, reflection, demonstration and training.
	Parents	Educators who are in contact with parents need to be clear about the parents' feelings and their level of understanding and involvement in the behaviour support plan. Educators need training on how to share information about concerning behaviour with parents to make sure they are not alarmed, or given misleading or confusing feedback. In all cases, confidentiality must be respected and educators should be reminded of this.
	Child	Your behaviour support plan should include strategies on how to involve and support the child. Educators must have appropriate expectations.

By following the established policies and procedures in your service, and consulting with the appropriate people, you will ensure that the behaviour support plan is tailored to meet each child's individual needs.

## Consistency

When attempting to change behaviours of concern, the more consistent the approach, the greater the impact. A consistent approach offers security and allows children to react in a predictable way.

Areas of consistency include:

- ▶ timing and scheduling
- ▶ the level of interaction between educators and the children
- ▶ the level of monitoring by educators
- ▶ responses by educators to specific identified behaviours.

## Specialist support strategies

Children with special needs often have the support and guidance of professionals in child psychology, paediatrics, and access and equity. Any diagnosis made by the specialist must be acknowledged and noted in the existing behaviour support plan, which takes into account the wishes of the parents and the specialist's directions.

The specialist's directions might include medical notes, care schedules, lists of things to avoid, recommended activities and instructions for preparing the environment.

Make sure that you:

- ▶ clarify the goals
- ▶ confirm the instructions
- ▶ adapt the existing plan.

Due to the number of people involved in this process, you need to work together to develop a consistent behaviour support plan.

## Applying specific strategies

As you implement a behaviour support plan, you will notice that the prescribed strategies are linked to the behaviour of the child, and you will be asked to apply them at specific times. They might include common strategies (as described in Topic 2), or slightly controversial strategies.

## Common strategies

Common strategies are the strategies you use every day to guide the behaviour of children. In the behaviour support plan, they are often more prescriptively applied. For example, you might be asked to do the following:

- ▶ Redirect a child as soon as they start to use a loud voice.
- ▶ Apply a logical consequence when a child is behaving unsafely or roughly with other children.
- ▶ Work with a child to problem-solve when they take toys from other children.
- ▶ Use positive reinforcement and encouragement every time you notice a child using appropriate communication.

You will notice that these common strategies fit well with the elements of the National Quality Standard (NQS). The following table represents these similarities.

Element	Some relevant points	Linked strategies
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.	<p>Children should be supported to communicate effectively and resolve disagreements with others.</p> <p>Educators should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ encourage children to listen to other children’s ideas, consider alternative behaviours and solve problems together</li> <li>▶ talk with children about the outcomes of their actions, and the rules and reasons for these</li> <li>▶ prompt and support children to remove themselves from situations in which they are experiencing frustration, anger or fear</li> <li>▶ support children when they are trying to negotiate and resolve conflicts with others</li> <li>▶ sensitively support children with diagnosed behavioural or social difficulties to understand how their actions affect others.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Problem-solving</li> <li>▶ Positive reinforcement</li> <li>▶ Encouragement</li> <li>▶ Role-modelling</li> <li>▶ Choices</li> <li>▶ Natural and logical consequences</li> <li>▶ Positive language</li> </ul>

Element	Some relevant points	Linked strategies
<p>5.2.3 – The dignity and rights of every child are maintained at all times.</p>	<p>Children should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ allowed to make choices and to experience the consequences of these where there is no risk of physical or emotional harm to the child or another being</li> <li>▶ acknowledged when they make positive choices in managing their own behaviour.</li> </ul> <p>Educators should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ pre-empt potential conflicts</li> <li>▶ challenge behaviours by monitoring children’s play and support interactions where there is conflict</li> <li>▶ use positive language, gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice when redirecting or discussing children’s behaviour with them</li> <li>▶ respond promptly to children’s aggressive or bullying behaviour.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Choices</li> <li>▶ Natural and logical consequences</li> <li>▶ Positive reinforcement</li> <li>▶ Encouragement</li> <li>▶ Redirection</li> <li>▶ Problem-solving</li> <li>▶ Positive language</li> </ul>

There are no tricks when it comes to supporting children to learn and apply positive behaviour. Success is built on this prescriptive method of matching the appropriate strategy with the specific behaviour, as well as your consistent application.

## Controversial strategies

Element 5 of the NQS leads you to consistently guide all children’s behaviour by:

- ▶ focusing on supporting children to develop skills to self-regulate their behaviour
- ▶ preserving and promoting children’s self-esteem
- ▶ not using corporal punishment
- ▶ not using food as a reward or punishment.



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

Strategy	Description	Examples
Tangible rewards	<p>Tangible rewards (such as stickers, lollies and toys) are given to reward a specific behaviour or action. The reward is usually given immediately or shortly after the child complies with the adult's request.</p> <p>We are all intrinsically and extrinsically motivated. Some things we do because we enjoy them, we feel good about doing them and we want to be part of the outcome. This is intrinsic. However, some things we do only because someone or something else motivates us. This is extrinsic. A tangible reward is an extrinsic motivation; studies have shown that people whose main motivation is extrinsic usually put out a minimum effort for the maximum reward.</p> <p>Tangible rewards have immediate results; they appeal to the child because the reward is now. However, these immediate results do not always have a positive effect on the child's self-esteem. This is because they are completing tasks for the reward – not for intrinsic enjoyment, whether that enjoyment comes from helping others, succeeding, doing a good job, being part of a team, trying, participating or learning.</p>	<p>Ryne, five years, is asked to pack up the dramatic play area. His educator tells him that if he does this quickly he will get a sticker. Ryne packs up the area quickly and rushes to the educator to claim his sticker.</p> <p>The next day another educator is working with Ryne. She asks him to help pack up the play space. Ryne says, 'Will I get a sticker?' The educator explains to Ryne that everyone is packing up together to help each other, not to get a sticker. Ryne sits on the mat watching everyone else pack up.</p>
Incentive charts	<p>Incentive charts are sometimes used to encourage a child to achieve a goal, or to demonstrate a particular behaviour consistently. Incentive charts are reward-based.</p> <p>Incentive charts are useful when children are tracking activities they are in control of (for example, practising a musical instrument, feeding a pet fish or drying the dishes). Incentive charts are also useful if the child is able to measure the success of a newly learned behaviour or action.</p> <p>However, incentive charts can be harmful when they are used for children who are unable to control their behaviour, or for children who are not ready to show the behaviour you desire. If the child does not have the ability to achieve the goal, then the incentive chart may simply remind them that they have failed.</p>	<p>Judy, 18 months, has been unsuccessful with her toilet learning for a few weeks. An incentive chart has been implemented, and every time she uses the toilet successfully, she gets a star on the chart. This does not seem to be working well. There aren't many stars on the chart and Judy now seems to view toileting as a stressful situation.</p> <p>The incentive chart is not working because Judy has not shown signs of readiness for toilet learning yet; she is not developmentally capable of completing the task. The chart reminds her that she hasn't made progress in what is expected of her.</p>

Strategy	Description	Examples
<p>Time out</p>	<p>Time out is not an acceptable practice in an education and care service. Young children are not capable of thinking about their behaviour or reflecting on what they have done. Time out should not be used as a punishment in education and care services. Some children weigh up the choices; for example, 'Time out for doing this isn't so bad'. Other children are sensitive to the isolation and perceive time out as an attack on them as a person, lowering their self-esteem and making them more timid in play.</p> <p>If young children use a self-initiated 'time out' strategy by removing themselves from a situation, and take themselves off to a place where they can be by themselves, their need to be alone will be respected.</p> <p>It is not a forced situation and the space they go to should be safe and private. When children choose to take this time, they use it to calm down and manage their feelings and emotions, rather than to think about the situation.</p> <p>'Time away' can be linked to logical consequences and redirection by the educator. For example, 'Barry, you are throwing things at other people. Go over and have a throw with the bean bags or at the basketball ring instead'.</p> <p>Another technique you may come across is 'time with'. Some educators have recognised that when children are displaying behaviour that is of concern, it often means that they need to be near an educator. 'Time with' does not take the form of close supervision or punishment; rather, the educator provides individual support, caring and genuine interest.</p> <p>If 'time out' is recommended by a specialist or your supervisor, you need to clarify which type of time out strategy they are referring to.</p>	<p>Jacob gets angry very quickly. His educators have been helping him to recognise when he is angry and how to calm down. The educators notice that Jacob needs time on his own in a private space when he is angry. They also find that he gets angrier if they talk about the situation before he has calmed down. They set up a cushion in a quiet part of the room with a blanket that can be used to hide under.</p> <p>When Jacob starts to get angry, he clenches his fists tightly and goes red in the face. An educator comes to him when he shows these signs and says, 'Jacob, you look angry. It's okay to be angry, just come over to the cushion and take some time to yourself'. If Jacob follows this strategy, he usually calms down within a few minutes. The educator stays close by, and when Jacob starts to calm down she talks to him about how he is and what has happened. She also tells him how well he managed the situation and helps him move to a new activity.</p> <p>Martin, five years, watches others build block towers. When they are built to waist level, he enters the play area and pushes down their buildings.</p> <p>His educator, Angela, decides to use a 'time with' method, as she thinks Martin needs help to become engaged in an activity and to gain her positive attention.</p> <p>In the next play period, Angela approaches Martin and crouches down to his level. She asks if he can help her to build sandcastles. Martin agrees and takes her hand. Angela makes sure she interacts frequently during their sand play and remains with Martin for as long as possible. She encourages Martin to push down his own sandcastles. When she finally needs to move away from the sandpit, Angela asks Martin if he wants to stay in the sand, or come to the next activity with her.</p>

# Practice task 9

Read the case study and the excerpt from the behaviour support plan, then answer the question that follows.

**Case study**

Vera pinches children extremely hard, sometimes leaving a bruise. Vera uses this pinching behaviour when she is in a crowded space (such as during group time). The aim of Vera’s pinching is to make other children move away so she has enough space to feel comfortable.

Vera is capable of saying ‘I need more room, please.’ She is also capable of telling an adult if she needs more space. The goal for Vera is to tell other children that she needs more room if she is feeling crowded and to seek adult help if she is not listened to.

Vera has a behavior support plan that was developed by Vera’s educator, your supervisor and a specialist from the Inclusion Support Programme (ISP).

**Excerpt from behavior support plan**

<b>Objective</b>	For Vera to look at the space available when she first enters an activity and identify whether she will have enough space to complete the activity.
<b>Strategy</b>	When Vera is entering new play areas, an educator should enter with Vera and ask her if there is enough space. If Vera says no, the educator should help Vera to make more space.
<b>Consequences</b>	If Vera pinches another child, she should be put in time out in the main office on her own with no activity.

What is one concern you have with this support plan that should be discussed with your supervisor? Explain what the concern is and why it concerns you.

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# 4B Identifying areas of concern

Even the best-laid plans can result in unexpected outcomes. When unexpected issues are identified, respond immediately and seek advice to resolve the issue and reduce the risk to the child.



Issues of concern may include:

- ▶ unexpected changes in the response of the child or young person
- ▶ signs of distress or illness
- ▶ incidents not addressed by planned strategies
- ▶ lack of progress.

Discuss these issues with your supervisor as soon as they are identified.

## Unexpected changes of response

Children’s behaviour is generally predictable. For instance, if you smile at an infant, they will usually smile back. If you clap loudly, a child will usually look in your direction.

However, you can never be sure how a child will respond to a new strategy as part of their behaviour support plan. The child’s response may be positive or negative, or the strategy may have no discernible effect.

The following are examples of positive and negative responses to change.

<b>Positive change response</b>	<p>You are implementing a strategy for Wilbur, four years, who spits food out at mealtimes.</p> <p>Your strategy is to provide him with a platter of foods that he usually likes to eat. You will sit next to Wilbur and ask him which food he would like to eat first. You guide him to think before choosing. You expect this strategy to take at least a week to show results, but by the second day Wilbur is selecting food items and eating them happily.</p> <p>This positive change response means that you can provide Wilbur with encouragement and positive reinforcement. You can also review his behaviour support plan and introduce new strategies.</p>
<b>Negative change response</b>	<p>You are implementing a strategy for Iman, three years, who has poor social and verbal communication skills. At the snack table, she pushes other children out of the way and climbs on the table to reach food when she has an empty plate.</p> <p>Your prescribed strategy is to sit next to Iman at snack time and model how to ask other children to pass the fruit platter. When Iman’s plate is empty, you ask another child if they could pass the platter to Iman. Iman drops her head into her hands and starts to cry. Wailing loudly, she falls to the floor.</p> <p>This is a negative change response and you must support Iman to express her feelings. It also means that you must gather more information about Iman’s behaviour and try to understand what is happening, and how you can implement a suitable strategy to support her to interact at mealtimes.</p>

## Signs of distress or illness

If a child begins to show signs of distress or illness, their condition should be reported immediately according to your service's policies and procedures. Common signs of distress include:

- ▶ crying
- ▶ withdrawal
- ▶ clinging
- ▶ not engaging in play.

Illness can range from a mild cold to the onset of a serious condition. Remember that young children may not be capable of telling you when something is wrong, so all signs should be taken seriously and reported to your supervisor.

Common signs of illness include:

- ▶ tiredness
- ▶ vomiting
- ▶ high temperature
- ▶ not eating or drinking.

## Incidents not addressed

A child's concerning behaviour is complex and may be linked to a variety of environmental and social issues. This might make it difficult for the child to respond to your initial strategies or approaches. Introducing one strategy in an area of concern may highlight another area of concern that must be addressed at the same time. You might even discover that the original approach was not the best choice.

If you notice that a strategy does not address all the prominent behaviour issues, refer to your supervisor for discussion and a rethink.

### Example

#### Revising the strategy

Hope, 18 months, has been biting other children. You identify that she is attempting to communicate that she wants a toy or material that other children have. Hope is quite attached to you and at times she will not play without you nearby.

A behaviour support plan is created and a strategy is implemented. Hope is to be given positive reinforcement whenever any educator notices her playing safely with others. For example, you might say, 'Hope, you are playing happily with Clancy, well done!'

Every time you use this strategy, Hope becomes distracted and runs to you for a hug. This disrupts her play and causes her difficulty in returning to the game.

In Hope's situation, the support plan also needs to address Hope's attachment to you. This had not been addressed and your involvement influences the success of the overall strategy. An attachment relationship is important, so the strategy would need to respect this, but also allow her to move forward in her play with others.

## Lack of progress

If your strategy is not achieving results, it is probably time to rethink your approach. This is one reason why you should include time lines in the strategy to indicate when a certain response should be expected. Sometimes progress does not occur because the objectives are too difficult to achieve in a short period of time.

Other reasons for lack of progress are inappropriate or inadequate strategies, or lack of consistency.

Discuss with your supervisor whether any of the following might be preventing progress:

- ▶ You are intimidated by the child’s behaviour.
- ▶ You are too patient.
- ▶ You are worried that the child will not like you.
- ▶ You have misinterpreted the behaviour.
- ▶ The alternative behaviour you identified doesn’t work for the child.
- ▶ You are not persisting long enough.
- ▶ You are persisting for too long.
- ▶ You have made undue allowances.
- ▶ You are focusing on the wrong child.
- ▶ The child associates authority with violence or verbal aggression.
- ▶ Aspects of your program are working against the plan.

## Practice task 10

Talk with your supervisor, colleague or trainer/assessor.

Discuss the behaviour of children and ask about situations where they have supported children’s behaviour of concern. Write about examples they provide you with, including the following.

1. A time that a child responded unexpectedly to their strategies.

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2. A time when distress or illness caused a child’s behaviour of concern.

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3. A time when additional strategies were needed due to the initial strategies not linking with all behaviours of concern.

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4. A time when a lack of progress occurred because the strategies used to support a child's behaviour were not adequate.

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# 4C Contributing to behaviour support plans

To effectively contribute to a behaviour support plan, it helps to be familiar with the goals, principles and practices of the EYLF and MTOP. Meet with your supervisor and educational leader to clarify any issues and plan the approach. You may find that some support strategies require specific skills or knowledge and that you need further training.

Remember that you are part of a team. Contributing to the behaviour support plan of any child requires an informed and consistent approach.



## Behaviour and frameworks

The EYLF and MTOP frameworks provide a good foundation for supporting the development of appropriate behaviour. The goals of the EYLF and MTOP help you see the importance of a behaviour support plan to the child’s overall wellbeing.

Some of the framework goals and how they relate to behaviour are briefly described in the following table.

Goals	How this supports appropriate behaviour
Belonging	When a child feels belonging they will feel secure and understood. They will also feel accepted and part of the group.
Being	Being is about the now. Children who are accepted for who they are, without being judged or stereotyped by their past behaviour, have the opportunity to learn and grow, and be supported, educated and cared for in constructive ways. Many children with behaviours of concern suffer from anxiety about what has happened or what might happen. Being is about enjoying the moment and learning to make the most of current opportunities.
Becoming	Children are developing their identities and discovering who they are. Behaviour of concern can harm this development, particularly if the child is labelled by the behaviour or blamed for it. Children can be supported to develop a positive attitude about who they can become, creating a bright future for themselves by learning to regulate their own behaviour and develop their self-esteem.

## Principles of the EYLF and MTOP

The principles of the EYLF and MTOP help you understand why you are implementing strategies in the way you do and how they influence the children you are working with.

<b>Principle</b>	<b>How this supports appropriate behaviour</b>
Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	Children who trust in you and their environment will be more stable and feel a greater sense of belonging. Their emotional and social wellbeing will be stronger and they will feel supported and acknowledged.
Partnerships	Partnerships with parents and guardians allow the child to see that you are working together to provide the best for them. If you develop good relationships with parents, you will find out what the child understands, how they belong at home and how you can link the 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.
High expectations and equity	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 remove any barriers to their success, and their contribution to their own wellbeing will allow them to gain skills in regulating their own behaviour.
Respect for diversity	Each child and family are unique in their reactions and behaviour. When you understand a child and family, you will be able to adapt your expectations and share equally in monitoring the values and beliefs that influence expectations.
Ongoing learning and reflective practice	<p>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.</p> <p>Learning and reflection work best if they involve a team.</p> <p>This way, critical reflection can occur and you can each give feedback, observe each other's reactions and improve how you implement strategies.</p>

## Practices of the EYLF and MTOP

The practices of the EYLF and MTOP are important on many practical levels. In relation to the development and implementation of a behaviour support plan, the practices predominantly help you to think about the child, and apply any strategies according to their unique needs.

Practice	How this supports appropriate behaviour
Holistic approaches	Behaviour of concern is not isolated. It involves the whole of the child's development, in particular their emotional and social self.  Behaviour support plans must address the whole child, not just their behaviour in isolation.
Responsiveness to children / Collaboration with children	Behaviour of concern is about sending a message. Your role is to respond to this, initially by acting to resolve any issues, and then by adapting and changing your plans based on the child's response to your support.
Learning through play	Play allows children opportunities to make decisions, problem-solve and develop their self-esteem and identity. Although play times may be common times for behaviour of concern to arise, this also makes them the perfect time to model new techniques for a child, to provide positive encouragement and to engage them in new experiences of success.
Intentional teaching / Intentionality	Many behaviours of concern occur due to the child's inability to problem-solve or make decisions. Your intentional teaching can be used to incorporate these concepts into play, routines, group times, and any other time of the day. Make intentional teaching enjoyable, focused on the child's interests, and suitable for their developmental level.
Learning environments / Environments	You can provide settings that respond to children's behaviour by removing challenges that are too complex, adding parts that encourage them to develop skills, and allowing more or less choice based on the child's current needs and abilities.
Cultural competence	When you get to know a child and family you can respect their differences, and accept that each child will act and react differently and have different fears, anxieties, experiences and boundaries.
Continuity of learning and transitions / Continuity 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 for learning / Evaluation for wellbeing and learning	It is essential that you continue to collect data and evidence so that progress or failure can be monitored and that, as a team, you will be able to work consistently toward success for a child.

## Meeting with your supervisor

If you are asked to help implement a behaviour support plan, it is a good idea to request a meeting with your supervisor. This gives you the chance to ask questions, find out exactly what is required and plan your approach.

You need to find out:

- ▶ the reasons for the plan
- ▶ the limits and guidelines
- ▶ the role that you play
- ▶ how to support other staff
- ▶ how to support parents
- ▶ how to involve and support children
- ▶ who else is involved
- ▶ whether there is other information that you need to know about, such as specialist reports or guidelines.

## Further training

You may find that some support strategies require complex or specific skills or knowledge. In this case it is appropriate for you to request training. This might be through the support of a supervisor, another educator or through external training organisations.

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

## Other support services

To ensure you are contributing adequately, you should also consider gaining or using the following support services.

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

# Practice task 11

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

## Case study

Jake, three years, reacts with a tantrum when other children take toys from him. He bangs his head on the floor, holds his breath and screams intermittently. Sometimes the tantrum lasts for up to 30 minutes.

1. Choose one practice from the EYLF or MTOP that relates to this case. Explain why you think it is important to consider when supporting Jake.

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2. What training might you need to be able to manage this situation properly?

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## Summary

- ▶ Developing a support strategy requires knowledge of the child, the conditions of their care and the goals you are aiming to achieve by implementing the strategy.
- ▶ The support strategy must be developed and implemented in consultation with your supervisor, other educators, specialists (if required) and parents. It is usually documented in a behaviour support plan.
- ▶ A consistent approach offers security and predictability. It also allows children to react in predictable ways.
- ▶ Children with special needs often have the support and guidance of professionals in child psychology, paediatrics, and access and equity.
- ▶ Common strategies to guide behaviour include role-modelling, choices and consequences. Other support strategies include tangible rewards, incentive charts and time out.
- ▶ When unexpected issues are identified, it is important to respond immediately and seek advice to resolve the issue and reduce the risk to the child.
- ▶ If you are asked to contribute to a behaviour support plan, it is important to meet with your supervisor to ask questions and clarify your role. To achieve the goals of any plan you must be provided with clear directions.
- ▶ You may find that some support strategies require complex or specific skills or knowledge. In this case it is appropriate for you to request training.

# Learning checkpoint 4

## Implementing strategies to support children

### Part A

This behaviour support plan follows on from Billy's records in Learning checkpoint 3. Read through the plan, taking notice of the additional information provided, then answer the questions that follow.

<b>Behaviour support plan</b>			
<b>Name:</b> Billy	<b>Age:</b> 3.5 years	<b>Plan No:</b> 1	<b>Date:</b> 17.1.18
<b>Those involved in developing the plan:</b> Billy's parents, room leader, qualified educator, ISP support member			
<b>Behaviour details:</b> When Billy approaches an activity where other children are already playing, he takes toys from them and uses physical force to move into the play area (for example, by punching, pinching, pushing and biting).			
<b>What we understand about the behavior:</b> Through our observation and discussion we have identified that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Billy demonstrates this behaviour when moving from a routine time to a play time.</li> <li>▶ When the children move away or become upset, Billy frowns and says 'What is it?' or 'Play!' He then continues to play at the activity.</li> </ul> These observations demonstrate to us that Billy is attempting to join the play of others.			
<b>What we want to see instead (long-term goal):</b> For Billy to join experiences himself and work alongside the other children.			
<b>What we can do about this now (objectives):</b> For Billy to join experiences with the help of an adult.			
<b>Resources and materials needed</b> Educators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ An educator to work one-on-one with Billy when moving from a routine to a play time.</li> <li>▶ An educator to guide Billy using statements such as: 'What would you like to do now, Billy?', 'Let's ask Alex if we can play?' and 'Tell Alex you would like a car too.'</li> </ul> Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Materials for play experiences Billy enjoys.</li> </ul>			
<b>Strategies for achieving the objectives</b> Environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Ensure an adult is aware of Billy's actions and is available to assist as described above.</li> </ul> Program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Ensure a range of experiences are planned that reflect Billy's interests.</li> </ul>			

**How the child can be involved or supported**

Educators will discuss Billy’s choice of activities before he moves away from his current activity. Educators will ask Billy what he will do when he gets to the activity before he arrives there.

**How the parents can be involved and supported**

A communication book will be set up and educators will record occurrences as well as new information they notice. Billy’s mum will talk to Billy about his day and mention the positive outcomes of the day (from the communication book).

1. You receive a copy of this behaviour support plan from your supervisor, who says they will meet with you to discuss it and raise any concerns. List **two** questions you could ask your supervisor to clarify your responsibilities and concerns regarding the strategies.

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2. Which of the strategies do you think you would be able to implement most successfully? Why?

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3. Which of the strategies do you think you would be able to implement only with support? Why?

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## Part B

Read the case study that follows on from Part A, then answer the question that follows.

### Case study

The prescribed strategies from Billy's behaviour support plan are put into place. You are able to help Billy choose activities, and engage him in the activities when it is just the two of you participating. However, when you attempt to talk to Billy about his entry into play with other children, he becomes angry and slaps you, saying, 'Leave me alone!' When you try to support Billy's entry into play, he becomes more aggressive. At one point he kicks you, leaving a bruise.

After speaking to your supervisor, who is having the same experience, you both agree that the strategies are not working.

Billy's parents agree that a specialist should be consulted. The specialist suggests that you might be intervening too often, causing Billy to feel overwhelmed. The specialist recommends that you should direct Billy into activities with one other child, and check if he needs help to enter the play before you intervene.

Think about the strategies the specialist has suggested. Give one example of what you will do to implement these suggestions.

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## Topic 5

In this topic you will learn about:

**5A Monitoring new strategies and adapting levels of support**

**5B Providing feedback**

## Monitoring and reviewing strategies

The success of a behaviour support plan is affected by advice from specialists, unexpected responses from the child, parent requests, and changes in external policies and guidelines. Monitor the plan for effectiveness, reviewing areas that require adjustment and consulting with your supervisor to establish new goals as necessary.

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

<b>National Quality Standard</b>		
	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice	
	Quality Area 2: Children’s health and safety	
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment	
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements	
✓	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children	
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities	
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership	
<b>Early Years Learning Framework</b>	<b>My Time, Our Place</b>	
<b>Principles</b>		
✓	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	
✓	Partnerships	
	High expectations and equity	
	Respect for diversity	
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice	
<b>Practice</b>		
✓	Holistic approaches	Holistic approaches
✓	Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
	Learning through play	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching	Intentionality
	Learning environments	Environments
	Cultural competence	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
✓	Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
<b>Outcomes</b>		
	Children have a strong sense of identity	
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world	
✓	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	
	Children are confident and involved learners	
✓	Children are effective communicators	

# 5A Monitoring new strategies and adapting levels of support

You may be asked to monitor new support strategies and provide feedback. Your observations and record-keeping will be used to help evaluate the success or failure of the support strategies that are being used. Follow your workplace processes and procedures at all times.

The reason for monitoring new strategies and recording the child's response is to provide you and your colleagues with enough information to judge whether the strategy being used has been effective or not.

To do this, your records must be relevant and appropriate to the plan you are implementing. Recording activities or tasks that fall outside the plan guidelines clutters up the data and makes it difficult to see how effectively the plan is working for the child.

A strategy's effectiveness is usually measured in terms of the frequency, intensity and duration of the behaviour. The aim of any strategy should be to reduce one or all of these measures over a reasonable period of time.

Watch this video about recording children's responses to support strategies.



## Recording responses

Your service will have systems in place for recording responses from children. Make sure you follow these guidelines. To do this, you should:

- ▶ refer to existing examples
- ▶ use existing checklists and/or templates
- ▶ consult with your supervisor.

Refer to Topic 3 for more detail on recording methods you might use. You could also get children to record their own responses.

## Involving children

Once children are capable of thinking about their actions and how these might affect others, they can be encouraged to monitor and reflect on their own behaviour.

To help children become involved, try the following strategies.

<b>Set achievable objectives</b>	If your objectives are too challenging, the child may experience failure or not understand what is happening. This can lead to further concerning behaviour. Let the child know what you want to achieve.
<b>Manage change together</b>	Give the child time to get used to a change in the environment or the way people react. Tell older children about changes beforehand, and explain how you will react differently. This gives them a chance to show you they understand what is happening. The child may even come up with a better idea.
<b>Listen to the child's ideas</b>	Recognise when the child can be involved in the behaviour plan. You can involve children when they understand their own behaviour. This could be due to their age or communication abilities.

When you explain a strategy, the child may reply that if you do what you plan to, they will respond with another concerning behaviour. For example, 'If you make me share with those other kids I'm going to scream.' This is usually a strong signal that the child needs to be more involved in strategy development.

Your best response is to discuss your concerns with the child and get them to help you work out how to solve them, or how to best react in the situation. The child may give you useful input.

The best way to keep children involved is by:

- ▶ gathering information
- ▶ collecting responses
- ▶ recording responses.

### Gathering information

When you ask children to share ideas it:

- ▶ indicates that they are valued and their opinion is important
- ▶ increases their self-esteem
- ▶ gets them involved, allowing them to take ownership and gain a sense of responsibility
- ▶ assists them to tap into ideas and interests they may not have considered previously
- ▶ helps them to create and maintain a respectful relationship with you and others.

### Collecting responses

You can collect children's ideas by:

- ▶ setting up group discussions or holding meetings – planned or spontaneous – with small or large groups of relevant children
- ▶ spending one-on-one time with children while carrying out routines, when children are early or late in the program, or when they are helping out with a task
- ▶ speaking with children's families, friends and peers
- ▶ observing children
- ▶ asking for children's comments and feedback.

## Recording responses

You can record children's ideas (or allow them to record the ideas themselves) using:

- ▶ graffiti sheets, noticeboards or comments books
- ▶ profile sheets
- ▶ questionnaires
- ▶ interviews
- ▶ suggestion boxes
- ▶ surveys
- ▶ enrolment forms
- ▶ videos
- ▶ photos.

All of these methods provide children with the opportunity to give you valuable information about their needs, and to comment about how they feel about their own behaviour and the behaviour of those around them.

The success of these methods depends on what you are trying to find out – whether the methods appeal to children and how the methods are used. All methods have advantages and disadvantages, and individuals will prefer one over another.

From time to time, a behaviour support plan may need to be adapted. Changes may be due to:

- ▶ an unexpected response from the child
- ▶ new influences in the play environment
- ▶ new information provided by a parent, specialist or supervisor
- ▶ the child's changing needs (due to normal development or outside factors such as circumstances at home).



In any of these situations, you should consult with your supervisor to determine the options available and what changes might need to be made to the existing support plan.

## Levels of support

Different support techniques are required at different times. A behaviour support plan should allow for this flexibility throughout the observation period. Sometimes the most difficult part of developing a plan is identifying:

- ▶ which strategy to prescribe for which behaviour
- ▶ what level of support is required.

The following table outlines some of the recommended techniques and strategies, and when you might implement them. Each child with behaviours of concern requires an individual approach. Therefore, these are just the basic guidelines.

Details about each of these strategies can be found in Topic 2.

Strategy	Level of support when prescribed in a support plan	When is it most suitable?
Role-modelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Basic level</li> <li>▶ Used at all times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Useful in all situations.</li> <li>▶ Should be prescribed in all behaviour support plans and incorporated in daily education and care interactions.</li> </ul>
Choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Low level</li> <li>▶ Most children can respond</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ When children are capable of, or are developing the skill of, making decisions by themselves.</li> <li>▶ When you want the child to take responsibility for their actions or ideas.</li> <li>▶ When you know the child is safe making a choice.</li> </ul>
Problem-solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Medium level</li> <li>▶ Not all children can respond</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ When you want to extend the child's thinking about what is happening, or what could happen.</li> <li>▶ When the child is capable of working with you to solve problems.</li> <li>▶ When the child can benefit from seeing things from a variety of viewpoints.</li> <li>▶ When you want the child to identify what the consequence of an action will be.</li> <li>▶ Requires the child to be at a cognitive stage capable of solving a problem, and a social and emotional stage of wanting to cooperate and make a decision.</li> </ul>
Consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Medium to high level</li> <li>▶ Most children can respond</li> <li>▶ Some children will challenge the consequence, so consistency is important</li> <li>▶ Can be effective with many types of behaviours of concern and in many different situations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ When the child is unable to decide for themselves.</li> <li>▶ When there is unsafe behaviour occurring.</li> <li>▶ When you need clear behaviour boundaries or outcomes.</li> <li>▶ When children test boundaries.</li> </ul>

Strategy	Level of support when prescribed in a support plan	When is it most suitable?
Redirection and defusing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ High level</li> <li>▶ When used in day-to-day interactions, redirection is a simple and general practice (low level)</li> <li>▶ When used as a prescribed technique, it often helps to avert dangerous situations, or stop learned behaviour before it is out of control</li> <li>▶ If the triggers of the child's behaviour are known, redirection can defuse this if used in a timely manner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ When a situation is not productive.</li> <li>▶ When control is an issue.</li> <li>▶ When you need to move from one situation to another.</li> <li>▶ When discussion or other strategies are not important.</li> <li>▶ When you need to stop what is occurring and you still have enough control to divert attention away from a negative behaviour.</li> </ul>

Further to these strategies are some techniques for acknowledging responsible behaviour. These should be included in all behaviour support plans as they show the child when they are on the right track. The most successful techniques are:

- ▶ positive reinforcement
- ▶ encouragement
- ▶ positive language
- ▶ nonverbal strategies.

Check your behaviour support plan to make sure it includes techniques that suit the child. If one technique is not successful, try another.

## Needs of the child

You must understand and follow the guidelines contained in the regulations, policies and procedures. You must also be aware of the changing needs of the child. As discussed previously, these can vary enormously.

The following table outlines some of the areas of additional needs and provides a brief description of how support might be adapted.

Area of need	How support might be adapted
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Simple strategies might need to be used as the child may not have the ability to understand problem-solving, instructions or consequences.</li> <li>▶ Redirection and modelling may become basic low-level strategies that are used to encourage the child to respond positively.</li> <li>▶ Children with a high level of intelligence may wish to have more control over what strategies are used. Other children may have strategies that are well thought out, based on how they will sabotage your plans.</li> </ul>

Area of need	How support might be adapted
Personality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Children who are spirited may require more choice and will most likely challenge decisions if they are not involved in the resolution.</li> <li>▶ Children with strong emotions may become upset by seemingly minor events or interactions. They may need gentle guidance and lots of encouragement.</li> </ul>
Mood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ A child with a high mood may be excited and have difficulty listening and concentrating. Their problem-solving may be rushed.</li> <li>▶ A child with a changeable mood may have difficulty making decisions because they are unsure of how they will feel about the decision at a later time.</li> <li>▶ A child with a low mood may not show interest or be involved in decisions or choices.</li> </ul>
Disability and communication needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Communication aids may be needed, such as Key Word Sign, Auslan, posters, communication boards and microphones. All serve a place in communicating effectively with the child.</li> </ul>
Behavioural or psychological disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ A child with behavioural and psychological disorders may experience a short attention span, difficulty understanding and following rules, mood disorders and uncontrollable emotions.</li> <li>▶ You may need to simplify the expectations, or approach the child's behaviour from a point of view they understand and are not frightened by.</li> </ul>
Family circumstances, culture and needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Discipline at home may be harsh and children may be expecting you to incorporate actions such as corporal punishment as this is the norm at home.</li> <li>▶ Discipline or guidance may not exist at home and the child may not be used to having boundaries and limits. This may mean they respond in a confused way to your strategies.</li> </ul>

## Consult before you act

Whatever the behavioural issue is, you should talk to your supervisor first. Behavioural issues can be delicate and you need the support of a senior educator to:

- ▶ understand the reasons for the behaviour
- ▶ identify the parameters within which you can treat or care for the child
- ▶ decide on the best alternative.

# Practice task 12

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

## Case study

Vera pinches other children extremely hard, sometimes leaving a bruise. Vera uses this pinching behaviour when she is in a crowded space (such as during group time). The aim of Vera's pinching is to make other children move away so she has enough space to feel comfortable.

Vera is capable of saying 'I need more room, please'. She is also capable of telling an adult if she needs more space. The goal for Vera is to tell other children that she needs more room if she is crowded and to seek adult help if she is not listened to. Vera has a support plan that was developed by her educator, your supervisor and a specialist from the Inclusion Support Programme (ISP).

You have been working with Vera for a week and she has not pinched any children in that time. She is now able to tell you when there is enough space for her to play and can tell other children her concerns. However, you notice that her wording and tone is quite bossy and demanding. This morning, you hear her saying, 'Get out the way. You know I am important and have to have all the space!'

1. You have been asked to record Vera's responses while monitoring the new strategy. Write what you would record.

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2. The strategy of problem-solving has been used so far when supporting Vera. Problem-solving is a strategy with a medium level of support. Discuss Vera's situation with your supervisor or colleagues and consider her new behaviours. Answer the following questions.

- a. What area of Vera's needs are you addressing?

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- b. Identify **two** strategies that might be used to guide her new behaviours, including the level of support of each strategy.

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# 5B Providing feedback

Providing feedback on a support plan is important. Participation is required of all parties involved with the child. This open sharing acknowledges the individual role each person plays in the child's life. It also enables them to:

- ▶ create a holistic approach for success
- ▶ become aware of each other's needs and goals
- ▶ develop an ongoing, trusting relationship
- ▶ share concerns and issues openly
- ▶ show respect for each person's contribution to the child and their family
- ▶ share their specific skills
- ▶ contribute alternative points of view and ideas.



## Gathering information

Information can be gathered through:

- ▶ meetings
- ▶ communication books and journals
- ▶ evaluation forms
- ▶ questioning
- ▶ surveys
- ▶ complaints
- ▶ reactions.

Always follow the processes and procedures in your service.

## Exchanging information

Information will commonly be exchanged to determine:

- ▶ how the child, parents, educators, specialists and support service staff feel about the program and the techniques used
- ▶ what the child's level of participation is and how they relate their participation to others
- ▶ whether additional specialist services, communication support or aids are required – you must gain parental permission to access services
- ▶ whether modifications are needed
- ▶ whether monitoring procedures are in place and working effectively.

## Consulting and collaboration

The process of gathering and exchanging information will involve a range of people, such as other educators, others caring for the child, and staff from resource and referral bodies.

Consultation is an essential part of the plan review. It is better to consult too many people than too few.

Collaboration is also important. Collaboration describes the process in which two or more people work together toward a common goal by sharing knowledge and learning. To ensure your collaboration is successful, you must:

- ▶ be non-judgmental
- ▶ be open to different perspectives
- ▶ build consensus through mutual respect
- ▶ apply empathy
- ▶ demonstrate active listening
- ▶ check understanding
- ▶ follow organisational standards, philosophies, policies and procedures.

## Support plan issues

Sometimes, the support plan does not work, but the reason is not obvious. In this case, you need to consider the possibilities outlined in the following table.

Possible reason	Concerns/suggestions
You are intimidated by the child's behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ You may need extra help from a support service or specialist.</li> <li>▶ You may need to use strategies to help you become more confident in dealing with the child's behaviour.</li> <li>▶ There may be greater success if you delegate to another educator who is not intimidated.</li> <li>▶ Try to implement some stress-relieving strategies prior to dealing with the behaviour of concern; for example, taking a few breaths or speaking quietly.</li> </ul>
You are too patient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ You may be ignoring situations that are leading up to the behaviour occurring.</li> <li>▶ You may feel that you need to repeat requests a number of times before expecting the child to respond.</li> <li>▶ Assertiveness is an important skill for all educators to model.</li> <li>▶ Nagging (asking over and over again) presents a negative model to children; it teaches them that they don't have to listen to you or take you seriously.</li> </ul>
You are worried that the child will not like you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The child may already have other feelings toward you, such as frustration or anger.</li> <li>▶ Children need to know their boundaries; children who know that limits are enforced feel more secure.</li> <li>▶ Children usually understand that educators have concern for them, care about them and want them to be safe.</li> </ul>

Possible reason	Concerns/suggestions
You have misinterpreted the behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ You may have missed some details, misunderstood something you have been told, or placed your own values on the situation inappropriately.</li> <li>▶ The child may have an undiagnosed medical condition.</li> <li>▶ You may have overlooked an important aspect of the child's home life or culture.</li> </ul>
You have set too challenging a goal or objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ If your goals or objectives are too challenging, the child may be experiencing failure or may not understand what is happening.</li> <li>▶ This can lead to further concerning behaviour or to you struggling for too long on one area without any success.</li> </ul>
The alternative behaviour you identified doesn't meet the child's needs or function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The child will not adopt your new option as a replacement for the concerning behaviour. For example, if the concerning behaviour succeeds in telling others they are angry, so must the alternative behaviour.</li> </ul>
You are not persisting long enough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Some changes take longer to implement than others; the behaviour of concern you are attempting to change may be a pattern that has become part of a child's normal actions or reactions.</li> <li>▶ Persist long enough for the plan to take effect and for you to evaluate whether there are any positive outcomes occurring.</li> </ul>
You are persisting too long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Some strategies just don't work. Persisting with these is useless.</li> <li>▶ Be realistic about your strategies and develop a new plan with help from your supervisor.</li> </ul>
You have made undue allowances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Some educators allow particular children to breach limits and guidelines because they feel sorry for them or think they don't need to be bothered.</li> <li>▶ Examine your motivations: are you treating a child differently because they have a developmental challenge, because the child is a favourite of yours, or because the child is experiencing difficulties at home?</li> <li>▶ Unpredictable and inconsistent limits and guidelines may cause further behaviours of concern.</li> </ul>
You are focusing on the wrong child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Make sure that you have not missed behaviours from other children, such as bullying or targeting the child you are working with.</li> <li>▶ A child who is stressed or frightened by the behaviour of another child may act out as a way to protect themselves.</li> </ul>
The child associates authority with violence or verbal aggression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The child may need to be made aware of your strategies each time they are used.</li> <li>▶ You may need to state openly that you will not yell, smack or hurt the child.</li> </ul>
Parts of your program are working against the plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Think about how time, space, people, materials, safety and aesthetics influence the environment.</li> <li>▶ Consider transition times as they are the most stressful.</li> </ul>

## Practice task 13

1. Who must you speak to if you notice a support strategy for a child with concerning behaviour is causing a new behaviour of concern?

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2. What method would you use to report or document this observation or issue?

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3. Would it be appropriate for you to change this strategy immediately, or should you plan and problem-solve with responsible educators prior to adjusting the strategies? Why/why not?

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## Summary

- ▶ Behaviour support plans are created to support individual and group behaviour according to the service policies.
- ▶ The success of the plan is affected by advice from specialists, unexpected responses from the child, parent requests, and changes in external policies and guidelines.
- ▶ The reason for monitoring progress and collecting observations is to provide you and your colleagues with sufficient information to monitor and judge the effectiveness of the behaviour strategy.
- ▶ Your organisation will have a process in place for observations and other record-keeping. It is important that you adhere to these processes when monitoring a behaviour support plan.
- ▶ Consultation is an essential part of plan review.
- ▶ When you ask children to share ideas it indicates that they are valued and that their opinion is important.
- ▶ Information exchange relies on the contribution of all involved parties.
- ▶ Sometimes it is not obvious why a support plan isn't working.
- ▶ You should consult regularly with your supervisor to review information, determine the options available and identify any changes that might need to be made to the existing plan.

# Learning checkpoint 5

## Monitoring and reviewing strategies

### Part A

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

#### Case study

Libby, the educator, is caring for Carrie, who has been kicking other children if they do not do what she asks them to. Carrie has been observed and consultation has taken place with her mother and the Inclusion Support Programme (ISP).

Libby has identified that:

- ▶ Carrie only ever kicks girls.
- ▶ Kicking only occurs if the children do not respond immediately to Carrie's request.
- ▶ The aim of the kicking is to make the other children leave the play area.

Libby sets a goal for Carrie to share her ideas and listen to the ideas of others.

Libby sets the following objectives:

- ▶ For an educator to move to any group Carrie enters and help her to communicate with the other children.
- ▶ For an educator to ask Carrie for one idea that can help solve the problem.
- ▶ For an educator to remove Carrie to an individual activity if she kicks others by taking her hand firmly and saying in a friendly way, 'Let's go to [an alternative activity]'. The educator must stay with Carrie at the new activity and interact normally.

1. What would you monitor while the objectives are being put into place?

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2. What method would you use to record your observations?

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### Part B

The following is an observation of Carrie's behavior one week after the objectives were put into place and followed through. Read this account, then answer the questions that follow.

#### Case study

##### Observation

Carrie moves to the sandpit where three girls are playing. Carrie approaches and asks to play. The girls say 'yes', but they tell Carrie that there are only three shovels. You hear her saying, 'That's okay, I will use the bucket to dig'.

1. Describe how Carrie has responded to the behaviour support plan so far.

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2. Which positive support technique could be added to Carrie's support plan to reinforce her cooperative behaviour?

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3. How would you communicate the need to change the support level, and who would you need to consult before the level of support can be adapted?

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4. What would you document to provide evidence to your supervisor that Carrie has responded positively to the behaviour support plan?

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