



Section 9

Behaviour Policies and Expectations



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The section explains operators' duties related to the behaviour that they expect – of staff, volunteers and children.

9

26(1)

An operator shall ensure that no child, while attending the child day care facility,

- (a) Is subjected to any form of physical punishment or verbal or emotional abuse, or
- (b) Is denied any physical necessity, by a staff person, another child or the parents or guardian of the child while the parents or guardian are at the facility.

Regulation 26(1)

Behaviour by Staff, Volunteers or Children

Why

- To prevent abuse of any child by staff, volunteers or other children

What it means

- The behaviours in the shaded box are examples of abuse, or abusive behaviours.
- The operator must not abuse any child, and must not allow any staff member, volunteer or child to abuse a child; the operator must not tolerate any:
 - physical punishment such as hitting, pinching, pushing, shaking or squeezing,
 - verbal abuse such as yelling,
 - emotional abuse such as name calling or being told, “You’re stupid,”
 - withholding of a physical necessity such as food, water, toileting, or clean clothing.
- Disagreements between children are usually not abusive – they simply reflect immaturity and the lack of skills to resolve disagreements without yelling, pushing, etc. These situations need to be seen as “teachable moments” to help children learn to deal with disagreements and frustration in an appropriate way.
- Abuse of a child by another child or children is also known as bullying. Bullying is behaviour that happens over and over, on purpose, and is meant to hurt the targeted victim. There are many forms of bullying – physical, verbal, social, cyber, racial, sexual. Both the targeted victim and the bully need help, such as from a counselor, to work through their feelings and reasons for behaving the way they do.

How

- Set clear expectations for the way you want staff and volunteers to treat children.
- Set clear expectations for the way you want children to treat each other.
- Set clear expectations for staff and volunteers that abusive behaviours will not be tolerated.
- Establish procedures for dealing with staff or volunteers who abuse a child, such as:
 - dismiss any staff member or volunteer who uses physical punishment, or who verbally or emotionally abuses a child, or withholds any physical necessity,
 - report the incident to a Child Protection Worker who will determine what additional follow-up is required,
 - explain the incident to parents and without naming names assure them that the situation is being addressed and won't happen again.
- As soon as possible, inform the Regional Early Childhood Officer of any abuse of a child by a staff person or volunteer so that the Officer:
 - is aware of the situation and your actions,
 - can provide support, information or other help, and
 - is not taken by surprise with a phone call from social services or an upset parent.
- Establish procedures for dealing with a child or children who abuse (or bully) another child.
- Remember that some behaviour, such as hitting a child, are abuse when committed by an adult, but they are not usually abuse when committed by a child. They are part of growing up, learning how to behave and deal with emotions such as anger in an appropriate manner.
- Understand that if a child is being bullied both the victim and the aggressor need help.
- Ask a Child Protection Worker or mental health worker to talk to staff about how to recognize and respond to abuse of a child by another child.

26(2)

Every operator shall develop, post and circulate to staff and to parents or guardians of children attending the child day care facility a written discipline policy.

Regulation 26(2)

Behaviour Management Policy**Why**

- To clearly identify expected behaviours of children and the actions that will be taken if a child does not comply

What it means

- The operator must have a written policy outlining expected discipline of children attending the facility.
- The policy must be written in positive terms. In other words it should state what children are expected to do, not what they should not do.
- The policy must include consequences – what an operator or staff will say or do – if a child does not comply with the behaviour expectations.
- The operator must post the policy and give it to all parents.
- Operators of centres must also give the policy to all staff.

How

- Establish behaviour policies that set expectations for the same, specific, positive behaviours for all children and all adults in all areas of the child care facility.
- Focus on identifying positive behaviour and acknowledging them instead of eliminating or punishing negative or bad behaviours.
- Aim for a few big expectations such as, “Be kind to yourself, be kind to others, be kind to the environment.” Under each of these big expectations you can fit smaller expectations such as taking turns, keeping hands and feet to self during circle time, and so on. Teach children what the expected behaviours actually look or sound like – e.g., what does hands and feet to self look like in circle time, what does it look like in rest time, what does use an indoor voice sound like, etc.
- It is important to acknowledge expected behaviours when children display them, especially for behaviours that are new or difficult for children. Simple statements will do, “Thanks for putting your juice box in the recycling,” or “I noticed you worked really hard today to keep your hands and feet to yourself during circle time.” Be specific. “Good job,” is not enough.

- Aim to positively acknowledge or reinforce expected behaviours at least four times as often as you acknowledge inappropriate behaviours.
- Consequences are not the same thing as punishment. They are the thing that you will say or do when a child does not behave as expected, and may include “punishment” – for example a time-out.
- Outline consequences for inappropriate or unacceptable behaviours in the policy.
- Choose the smallest consequence you can that will help a child behave as expected. For example, if “a look” or verbal reminder is enough then don’t go for something more serious.
- Choose consequences that relate to the inappropriate behaviour wherever possible. For example, if a child pushes others away from a piece of playground equipment, instead of waiting his turn, the natural consequence might be that the child cannot use that piece of equipment for a period of time.
- Choose age-appropriate consequences. Using the same example as above, the period of time that a child has to refrain from using the piece of equipment would be longer for an older child than it would be for a very young one.
- Get training, or provide staff training in how to promote and reinforce the behaviours you want children to have, or ask the Regional Early Childhood Officer to help.

Recommendation

An operator should establish and implement policies and practices for the child day care facility that:

- (a) Promote a respectful environment for all children attending the facility
- (b) Promote a cooperative approach to solving problems; and
- (c) Ensure the use of positive reinforcement to encourage appropriate responses in children attending the facility

Recommendation

Positive Behaviour Policies

Why

- To ensure that operators develop and implement behaviour policies and practices that encourage a respectful environment for children and positive interaction among all staff, volunteers and children, in all areas of the facility

What it means

- The operator should develop and implement written policies and practices that spell out what the operator and staff will consciously and consistently do to:
 - promote a respectful environment for children,
 - use a cooperative approach to problem solving,
 - use positive reinforcement to encourage appropriate behaviour.
- A policy is a broad statement of what you are trying to achieve. For example, "At ABC Child Care we use a cooperative approach for solving problems."
- Practices are more specific statements that describe what staff, and children, *will actually do or say*, or what they are expected to do or say, so the policy becomes a reality. (See example under *How*.)
- The operator must ensure that staff are aware of the behaviour policies and practices – meaning they are aware of the manner in which they are expected to interact with children.

How

- The policy statements are basically already written above. For example, "At ABC Child Care we promote a respectful environment for all children."
- For each policy statement, develop a list of expected practices. To list practices that support a respectful environment for example, think about how people would interact with each other, and the things they would say or do, that would show a respectful environment. For example:
 - We greet and say goodbye to each child by name, every day.
 - We model the behaviours that we want children to have.
 - We use calm voices and make eye contact when talking to children.
 - We recognize that each child is unique, and respond to individual differences in interests, learning styles and abilities.
 - We encourage each child to make choices.
 - We promote each child's independence.

- Do the same to set a policy and practices to promote “a cooperative approach to problem solving”, and “using positive reinforcement to encourage appropriate behaviour.”
- Invite parent and staff input into the above.
- Write policies and practices to identify the positive behaviours that you want, not the negative behaviours that you don't want. For example, “We speak in normal voices,” instead of “We don't yell.”
- You don't need long lists of behaviour practices that support each policy – just enough to “set the tone” for the way the facility operates.
- Post policies and practices on the information board and include them in the information handbook for parents.
- Provide all parents and staff with a copy of the facility's policy handbook.
- Include behaviour policies and practices in staff orientation.
- Have all staff sign a copy of the policies and practices indicating their understanding and the expectation for them to comply. Keep a signed copy in all individual staff files.
- Work with individual volunteers as needed to help them follow the policies and practices.
- Taking into account the age and development of individual children, teach children how to show respect for other children, adults and the environment, and how to solve problems cooperatively.

