



MSS & WAABINY OSHC

INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN POLICY



PURPOSE

Montessori Stepping Stones (MSS) aims for educators and employees to develop responsive, warm, trusting and respectful relationships with children promoting their wellbeing, self-esteem and sense of security. Positive interactions with children convey to them that they are valued as competent and capable individuals, and children develop confidence in their ability to express themselves, manage their feelings, learn new skills and take risks to extend their capabilities.

SCOPE

All people involved in providing warm, trusting, caring and respectful environment at MSS – including children, families, educators and employees who assist in the continuous improvement and implementation of relating quality practices.

DESCRIPTION/GENERAL

MSS aims to develop responsive, warm, trusting and respectful relationships with each enrolled child through taking the time to genuinely listen and talk with children and their families.

Educators/employees should relate to the children, their families, and to each other, in a friendly, caring and sensitive manner, valuing each individual and the unique contribution they make. MSS aims to create an environment in which children feel they are valued members of their community, and in which their sense of belonging and wellbeing is supported. Educators will achieve this through providing consistent emotional support that will nurture the development of children's self-esteem and assist them to acquire the skills and understandings they need to interact positively with others.

Positive and responsive one-to-one interactions with babies and toddlers are important for their wellbeing and encourage them to thrive. Babies and toddlers need a secure base of trusting relationships with adults before they are ready to explore and learn about their world.

Older children need assistance from educators and other important adults in their lives to guide their interactions with their peers and others as they explore their identity and develop more complex social skills and relationships.

CHILDREN'S NEEDS

Educators and employees develop warm relationships with children and respect children's opinions when providing children with opportunities to become self-reliant and develop self-esteem. Maintain their dignity and rights and provide them with positive guidance and support towards acceptable behaviour.

FAMILIES' NEEDS

Their children are respected and liked - and educators as well as employees develop responsive, warm, trusting relationships with their children and families. The children are happy and feel safe and secure at MSS with educators and employees being responsive to their child's strengths, interests, capabilities and background.

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EDUCATOR/EMPLOYEE NEEDS

Educators to support each other and reflect on ways to improve relationships and interactions with children and their families. Availability to access to up-to-date training and resources on effective communication and; opportunities to model appropriate communication and interactions with children. There is an organisational culture that supports and encourages open and trusting interactions.

MANAGEMENT NEEDS

Educators/employees and supervisors to interact in a respectful and cooperative manner and be positive role models for children. To plan for adequate educator/employee education and skill development.

NURTURING POSITIVE INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

As each child arrives at MSS they will be greeted by an educator.

Educators will be supportive and encouraging and engage in on-on-one and small group communications with children in a friendly, positive and respectful manner. They will form trusting relationships with each child in their care.

Educators and employees use children's names and get down to the child's eye level when interacting and communicating with them, and ensure that their interactions are meaningful and personal.

Educators/employees create a relaxed and happy atmosphere in which children experience equitable, friendly and genuine interactions with all educators, the nominated supervisor/coordinator, and other employees members at the service.

Educators instigate playful social interactions with children including conversations, songs, rhymes, finger plays, peek-a-boo games, sharing books or stories.

Educators/employees respect each child's uniqueness, are attuned to and respond sensitively and appropriately to children's efforts to communicate and will use the child's own language, communication styles and culture to enhance their interactions.

Educators/employees assist children to learn to communicate and interact positively and cooperatively with their peers, through modelling appropriate communication and responding positively to children at all times.

Educators encourage children to communicate their own ideas in a respectful and courteous way, and will respond appropriately to children's non-verbal cues.

Educators/employees show empathy, respect and understanding when communicating with children and model this in their interactions with adults.

Children will never be singled out or made to feel inadequate at any time.

Educators/employees comfort children who are upset, or are showing signs of distress, and help them to feel safe, secure and understood.

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Educators ensure routines such as toileting, nappy change and rest times are used for positive one to one interactions with children and a time when they can get to know more about the child's likes, dislikes, interests, joys, fears etc.

Babies are supported to build trusting attachments with one or two educators in order to develop a secure base for their exploration and learning.

Educators and employees interact with children during meal times in a relaxed and unhurried manner ensuring enjoyment of foods and the social aspect of meal times is promoted.

Educators/employees are genuinely interested in each child's own interests and needs, and take the time to fully understand what children are doing or saying, listening to their responses and asking open ended questions.

Educators make sure they are available to give children their full attention as they arrive after school and invite children to chat about their day and to show their news.

Children are encouraged to share their feelings or thoughts, and express different viewpoints about matters that affect them.

Educators and employees share humour with children and are joyful in their interactions

Educators and employees respect children's desire not to engage in conversations or interactions at certain times or for particular reasons.

INVOLVING CHILDREN IN DECISION MAKING

Educators will genuinely seek children's input, respect their ideas and take their suggestions on board.

Young children will be encouraged to make decisions about:

- the experiences or activities they would like to do
- the materials and resources they would like to use and how they would like to use them
- where they would like be active and interact (i.e. indoors or outdoors)
- who they want to play with, or whether they wish to play alone;
- the adult with who they feel most comfortable
- what they would like to eat, when they are hungry
- how they prefer to sleep or rest
- whether they need to use the toilet or have a nappy changed

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Older children will be encouraged to make decisions about:

- what experiences are included in the learning program
- what experiences they will participate in
- the friends they choose to spend time with
- planning the afternoon snack menu
- appropriate rules or boundaries
- planning excursions or incursions
- setting up the environment
- the introduction of hobbies or clubs

ENCOURAGING FAMILIES TO SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHILD

Educators will use information gained from families to enhance their interactions with children and continue to build children's sense of wellbeing and belonging.

Educators/employees will encourage families to share important information about their child through:

- initiating regular on-going communications with families in a manner that promotes the development of strong relationships that are based on mutual respect, trust and understanding
- encouraging families to share their thoughts, ideas, questions and concerns, and promoting supportive partnerships between families, educators and MSS
- treating all families equitably without bias or judgement
- recognising that each family is unique and valuing this uniqueness

EDUCATOR/EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS WITH EACH OTHER

MSS recognises that the way our educators and employees interact with each other effect on the interactions they have with children and families.

Educators and employees will role model warm and supportive interactions as we interact with each other.

Educators/employees will convey mutual respect and recognition of each other's strengths and skills through:

- recognising each other's strengths and valuing the different work each does
- working collaboratively to reach decisions which will enhance the quality of the education and care service
- welcoming diverse views and perspectives

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- working together as a team and engaging in open and honest communication at all times;
- respecting each other's feelings
- developing and sharing networks and links with other agencies
- resolving differences promptly and positively and using the experience to learn more effective methods of working together
- using calm, friendly voices with each other

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