

Emotional Regulation Policy (Behaviour policy)

Core value: We want our environment to be a place where everyone feels valued, supported, nurtured and has a voice.

Aims

- To maintain a safe and nurturing environment that promotes positive self-worth and behaviour
- To enable children to recognise and express their feelings, and to regulate their emotions, as is developmentally appropriate
- To provide a supportive framework for emotional regulation that is flexible in its approach to behaviour management to ensure that the needs of the unique child are met (equity)
- To provide support for parents and carers regarding their children's emotions and behaviours
- To provide a statement of good practice, and procedures as to how we support and respond to inappropriate behaviour

Information

We acknowledge that members of our community may have different experiences of and views on behaviour. However, a consistent approach is key in modelling positive behaviour strategies and creating a nurturing and secure environment in which all emotions are recognised as valid and children can develop emotional resilience. This policy is based on guidance provided by Bristol Local Authority and the principles of Emotion Coaching and Dr Dan Siegel's Hand Model of the Brain. It includes input from members of staff and parents and carers. It holds our Aims and Values at its heart.

Policy

Responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility to:

- Build respectful relationships with children, their families, and each other
- Understand the importance of attachment, and focus on promoting relationships, experiences and environments that nurture
- Interact with children as unique individuals, appropriate to their age and stage of development, to ensure that all children feel valued and respected
- Be a positive role model in valuing the ideas of others, listening to others, and speaking respectfully
- Recognise and celebrate positive behaviours such as kindness and respect towards others, including providing feedback to parents and carers
- Provide varied play opportunities and activities and plan for differentiation so as all children can be engaged and interested

- Recognise that embedded routines support emotional and behavioural regulation, and therefore provide a consistent daily routine, supported with visuals. (Appendix 1)

When presented with negative behaviour staff will:

- Take active steps to not label children (i.e. difficult) and to consider the underlying reasons
- Reflect on each incidence and work as a team to respond collectively and consistently using the procedures outlined
- Recognise, label and accept all emotions as valid, yet promote expression of them without physical or verbal aggression
- Support children to find solutions to challenging situations and to work through their intense emotions

The named member of staff responsible for the regulation of behaviour at Little Foxes is Lizzie Staite. This person will:

- Keep up to date with legislation
- Stay informed of current practices in relation to attachment and behaviour
- Provide support to staff in relation to inappropriate behaviours in children
- Identify individual emotional regulation strategies for children with additional needs (temporary or long-term) in partnership with the SENDCO, key person and family
- Access other agencies where necessary
- Ensure that all staff have relevant and up-to-date training (and record details of this) and that the setting has a unified approach to behaviour management
- Be a point of contact for parents/carers requiring further support or services

Policy Links

This Behaviour Regulation Policy links to the following policies:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Equality Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Partnership with Parent/Carer Policy
- SEND Policy

Procedures for supporting emotional regulation and minimising inappropriate behaviour

At Little Foxes, we **promote positive behaviour**. We:

- Recognise behaviour as a communication of an emotional need and are committed to promoting and supporting the emotional health and well-being of our nursery community, including children, their families and our staff
- Are proud of the loving relationships that we build with the children in our care

- Always consider the reasons why children might present certain types of behaviour (boredom or an un-stimulating play setting, feeling unsettled or unhappy, not feeling listened to, medical reasons, SEMH needs, SEND needs, ACES)
- Recognise that understanding emotions is a key aspect of promoting positive behaviour
- Regard rough-and-tumble, superhero and play-fighting as valuable and developmentally typical for young children and do not discourage it, unless it becomes hurtful (physically or verbally aggressive) or inconsiderate (impacting upon children that have not 'opted-in' to the play at which point it would be considered inappropriate behaviour). We support children in this type of play by actively encouraging discussion around sensitive topics and promoting empathy.
- Recognise that not all behaviour is a choice and therefore carefully consider the language of 'good choice'/'bad choice'. We do not use the word 'naughty'
- Promote an environment that is high in both nurture and structure by putting relationships first and having clear and consistent boundaries

We aim to integrate principles of co-regulation and conflict resolution to support children to recognise and regulate their emotions and behaviour. When dysregulation occurs staff will remain calm in their interactions with children and always consider the most appropriate response to a situation dependent on the behaviour, the circumstance, and the developmental stage of the child. This is implemented through Emotion Coaching which is an evidence-based strategy that helps children to *understand* the different *emotions* they experience, *why* they occur and *how* to handle them:

- Step 1: Recognise the child's feelings and empathise with them ('I can see you're feeling...')
- Step 2: Validate the child's feelings and label them ('You are feeling... because...')
- Step 3: Setting limits on behaviour (if needed, timing-sensitive) ('It is ok to feel... It is not safe to/not ok to...')
- Step 4: Problem-solve with the child ('I wonder...? How could I help you...?') This step might also include gathering information from a child/children involved in conflict, re-stating the problem to include all participants feelings and position, and offering suggestions where needed.

At Little Foxes, we aim to **minimise inappropriate behaviour**:

- Inappropriate behaviour refers to non-negotiable actions that are harmful to self or others, and includes discriminatory remarks, physical or verbal aggression, bullying, and destruction of equipment.
- We recognise that Steps 3 and 4 can only take place when a child is calm and able to use their rational thinking. Co-regulation and connection are key to moving on to these steps.
- We separate the adult emotion from the child's
- We do not shame children. Limit setting is communicated respectfully with phrases that positively build on Steps 1 and 2 ('I notice you find it tricky when... Next time you can try... I am here to keep you safe, so...') once the child is able to engage with the boundary without re-triggering the stress response

Physical Intervention Procedure

When emotional dysregulation puts a child or others in danger (e.g. running into a road, repeated acts of aggression towards others), safety overrides emotion coaching and an adult may need to support the child back to a position of safety. This may include physical intervention and/or moving other children and making the environment safe. For low-level intervention (e.g. holding onto a toy to prevent a situation from escalating, or removing a child's hand from another if they are finding it hard to let go) feedback to parent/carer will primarily be verbal. Physical interventions such as holding or removing a child from an environment will only be used where there are reasonable grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary to prevent a child from significantly injuring themselves or others, or to prevent serious damage to property such as repeatedly running away (Should this occur then an incident form will be completed, and parents/carers will be informed. Incident forms form part of our record-keeping and are a factual account of what happened.)

- Physical intervention will be used for the minimum amount of time and with minimum amount of force as deemed appropriate to the situation:
- It may include holding a child's hand when other strategies have been unsuccessful in regulating emotions and inappropriate behaviours such as throwing items or pushing people.
- If physical contact is necessary, staff will explain their actions ('I need to hold you to keep you safe.').
- Any injuries that occur as a result of physical intervention, or behaviours leading to physical intervention will also be recorded on an accident form
- A positive handling plan will be agreed where necessary, e.g. if a child has SEND impacting upon their ability to regulate safely
- In instances of recurring inappropriate behaviour indicating emerging SEMH needs, SENDCO involvement can be initiated in partnership with parents/carers

Appendix 1: Routine

Due to the nature of being an outdoor nursery, we recognise that a clear and consistent routine will support children to feel safe in a changing environment. To further support emotional and behavioural regulation, we include children in this routine wherever possible:

- We use 'now and next' visuals which we discuss as a group at key points throughout the day. The 'now and next' stick is visible and accessible for children whilst in the woods and at HQ
- We start each day coming together as a community in our groups, singing the 'hello song', talking about our plans for the day ('now and next'; noticing the weather and how this will shape our day; finding out what is on the menu)
- We have a number of common and setting-specific songs and rhymes which support a sense of belonging, and mark important parts of the routine

Appendix 2: Sharing

At Little Foxes, we ensure that there are sufficient high-interest resources available to engage all the children and aim to foster respect, empathy and inclusivity by providing language to support turn-taking appropriate to each child's age and stage of development. This can be done through Emotion Coaching and may include:

- A practitioner holding an item of focus and supporting children through the steps of Emotion Coaching to find a solution
- Using clear boundaries and statements such as, "Child A is holding the car in their hand. That means that they are using it. I can see that you would really like a turn. Child A knows that you are waiting, and they will share it with you when they have finished." (This can be further supported with plentiful resources and perhaps supporting Child B to find another vehicle)
- Modelling language such as, "Can I play with you?", "Could I have a go after you?", "How long will you be using that paintbrush?"
- On occasion, it may be necessary to support a child's turn-taking play (for example, if they have SEND needs) with the use of timers. This would usually form part of an Individual Play Plan (IEP) to ensure that the needs of the unique child are met (equity)

Appendix 3: Making amends

At Little Foxes, we recognise that Step 4 of the Emotion Coaching process will look different for every child. We work towards supporting children to make amends and solve problems together, by recognising their own and others' emotions and beginning to learn the impact of actions. We do not ask a child to, "Say sorry", but wonder together, "I notice you knocked Child A's tower down. I wonder how they are feeling about that? What could we do to help them?"

Appendix 4: Glossary of terms and further information

Guidance provided by Bristol Local Authority (Relationships and Belonging Approach):
www.bristol.gov.uk/files/documents/3825-relationships-and-belonging-approach/file

Emotion Coaching:
www.emotioncoachinguk.com/what-is-emotion-coaching

Dr Dan Siegel's Hand Model of the Brain:
www.drdansiegel.com/hand-model-of-the-brain

SEND: Special educational needs and disability
SEMH: Social, emotional and mental health
SENDCO: Special educational needs and disability coordinator
ACES: Adverse childhood experiences