

## **9.1**

### **ACHIEVING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR**

We believe that children flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are understood, supported and met and where there are clear, fair and developmentally appropriate expectations for their behaviour.

As children develop, they learn about boundaries, the difference between right and wrong, and to consider the views and feelings, and needs and rights, of others and the impact that their behaviour has on people, places and objects. The development of these skills requires adult guidance to help encourage and model appropriate behaviours and to offer intervention and support when children struggle with conflict and emotional situations. In these types of situations key staff can help identify and address triggers for the behaviour and help children reflect, regulate and manage their actions. We appoint members of staff as behaviour coordinator to oversee and advise on the team's responses to challenging behaviour.

#### **Procedures:**

We have a named person who has overall responsibility for supporting personal, social, and emotional development, including issues concerning behaviour.

***The named Positive Behaviour Coordinators are: Emma Flaxman, Charlotte Reynolds and Chloe Roache***

The responsibility of the above coordinators are to:

- Keep her/himself up-to-date with legislation, research and thinking on promoting positive behaviour and on handling children's behaviour where it may require additional support.
  - Access relevant sources of expertise on promoting positive behaviour within each programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development.
  - Check that staff have relevant in-service training on promoting positive behaviour.
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- We recognise that codes for interacting with other people vary between cultures and require staff to be aware of, and respect, those used by members of the setting.
  - We require all staff, volunteers and children to provide a positive model of behaviour by treating students, parents and one another with friendliness, care and courtesy.
  - We familiarise new staff and volunteers with the setting's Achieving Positive Behaviour Policy and its guidelines for behaviour.
  - We expect all members of our setting – children, parents, staff and volunteers, to keep to the guidelines, requiring these to be applied consistently.
  - At no time will corporal punishment be used or threatened as a behaviour management technique.
  - We do not use techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children.

Due to the specialist needs of the children who will be attending The Ark Centre, there will be specific behaviour management strategies in place which all of the therapists will be trained in to be able to support the children effectively.

The activities within The Ark Centre will be varied and stimulating for the children who attend to reduce boredom or distraction resulting in incidents of problem behaviour.

Individual Behavioural Plans:

Due to each child's specific needs, a functional analysis of their problem behaviour will be regularly conducted and interventions put in place to support these areas. The antecedent, behaviour and consequences (ABC data) will be collected for as long as necessary and analysed to determine the function of the problem behaviour. The importance will be placed on pro-active strategies such as:

- Behaviour plans, to enable the child to practice certain behaviours and to teach coping mechanisms
- Teaching replacement skills for the functions of the problem behaviour such as communication
- Specific visuals (timetables) or vocal support such as countdowns
- Social stories/story boards
- Predictable routines within The Ark Centre
- Consistency of the behaviour therapist
- Use of reinforcement in the form of tangible reinforcers such as toys or token systems for the correct behaviour
- Desensitisation programmes
- Occupational therapy, sensory diets
- Reduction of language levels

Where necessary, reactive strategies may need to be used:

- Time out
- Extinction
- Re-direction
- Physical intervention (see further note below)

Each behavioural therapist will be made aware of all the children's individual behavioural plans. The behavioural therapist will need to be aware of the strategies, which are being used and be able to support each other as a team where necessary.

Behaviour Therapist:

Will be required to stay calm, using a neutral voice communicating in a clear, calm and positive manner. At no time will a therapist shout unless it is stated in a behavioural plan.

Any major incidents will be discussed during team meetings for a debrief, allowing the therapist to express their opinions on how situations can be dealt with in the future.

The behaviour therapists will work together to create a consistent and positive approach throughout the daily routing. Behaviour therapists will work closely with the children to establish reinforcers setting a positive example.

A behaviour therapist will be taught to recognise incidents, which could cause problem behaviour, and strategies which can be in place to be able to support the children within these situations, such as anxiety or accepting no.

Parents/carers:

Will be informed of the children's behaviour at the end of every session at The Ark Centre. Partnership and trust is an essential relationship to establish between the behaviour therapist and parents/carers. The behaviour therapist will ensure they are more positive than negative when discussing this with parents/carers but they will speak honestly about the negative incidents and the steps that will be taken to support the child in the future.

Strategies being used at The Ark Centre will be shared with parents/carers and where necessary home visits will be carried out in replacement of a session within The Ark Centre to support the student and parents/carers within this environment.

Parents/carers will be invited into The Ark Centre to come and observe their child and the strategies being used to promote positive behaviour.

Physical Intervention:

Physical intervention will only be used if the child would cause harm to themselves or others with reasonable grounds for believing that immediate action is required.

The minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied. As soon as it is safe the physical intervention should be gradually relaxed to allow the child to regain self-control.

Physical intervention is only to be used for care and control and never as a type of punishment.

If the behavioural therapist needs support they will call upon the managing behavioural therapist within this situation.

Physical intervention will only ever be used as a last resort and once all other alternative interventions have been tried. Also the behaviour plan of the student will need to be followed consistently.

If regular incidents of physical intervention are being required then a review of a child's behavioural plan will need to be done by the managing behaviour therapist to review the most suitable course of action. This will include advice from all the specialist on site professionals including Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy. If in the circumstances The Ark Centre does not feel it can meet the needs of the child, then a discussion with the parents/carers will be conducted where the most suitable outcome for the child can be discussed.

If a member of staff from The Ark Centre commits any act of violence or abuse towards a child at The Ark Centre, then serious disciplinary action will be implemented, according to the staff 'Disciplinary Policy'.

Any incidents of physical intervention will be recorded and the parents/carers will be informed on collection of the child. Recording:

- The time
- The location
- The reason for physical intervention
- Who was involved in supporting the child

- The duration of the incident
- The type of intervention used

#### Alternative placement:

- The Ark Centre understands the children attending will most likely display challenging behaviour at some point within their time at The Ark Centre. The *'Positive Behaviour' Policy* outlines strategies that will be used with each child to support this.
- Communication is a key area between The Ark Centre, the children, parents/carers and outside professionals.
- The behaviour of the children will be constantly monitored and strategies quickly put into place where there is danger for the child, the other children within The Ark Centre or to the staff.
- If The Ark Centre considers that they are unable to manage the student under The Ark Centre policies, a meeting will be arranged immediately. The Ark Centre will discuss the best form of action with all the professionals involved and the parent/carers the best form of action. If required, an alternative placement will be arranged and the *'Transition' Policy* will be followed.

#### Rough and tumble play and fantasy aggression:

Young children often engage in play that has aggressive themes, such as superhero and weapon play. Some students appear pre-occupied with these themes, but their behaviour is not necessarily a precursor to hurtful behaviour or bullying: although it may be inconsiderate at times and may need addressing using strategies as above.

- We recognise that teasing and rough and tumble play are normal for young children and acceptable within limits. We regard these kinds of play as pro-social and not as problematic or aggressive.
- We recognise that fantasy play also contains many violently dramatic strategies, e.g. blowing up and shooting, and that themes often refer to 'goodies and baddies' and as such offer opportunities for us to explore concepts of right and wrong.
- We are able to tune in to the content of the play, perhaps to suggest alternative strategies for heroes and heroines, making the most of 'teachable moments' to encourage empathy and lateral thinking to explore alternative scenarios and strategies for conflict resolution.

#### Hurtful behaviour:

We take hurtful behaviour very seriously. Most children under the age of five will at some stage hurt or say something to another child, especially if their emotions are high at times, but it is not helpful to label this behaviour as 'bullying'. For children under five, hurtful behaviour is momentary, spontaneous and often without cognizance of the feelings of the person whom they have hurt.

- We recognise that young children behave in hurtful ways towards others because they have not yet developed the means to manage intense feelings that sometimes overwhelm them.
- We will help them manage these feelings, as they have neither the biological means nor the cognitive means to do this for themselves.
- We understand that self-management of intense emotions, especially of anger, happens when the brain has developed neurological systems to manage the physiological processes that take place when triggers activate responses of anger or fear.

- Therefore we help this process by offering support, calming the child who is angry, as well as the one who has been hurt by the behaviour. By helping the child to return to a normal state, we are helping the brain to develop the physiological response system that will help the child be able to manage his or her own feelings.
- We do not engage in punitive responses to a young child's rage that will have the opposite effect.
- We recognise that young children require help in understanding the range of feelings they experience. We help children to understand emotions by teaching this through a programme, when the team recognise the child has enough understanding to participate within this type of programme.
- We help children to develop pro-social behaviour, such as resolving conflict by teaching the appropriate language and prompting our children through scenarios such as sharing. The children will require practice to ensure they know how to manage these situations.
- We support social skills through modelling behaviour and through activities, drama and stories. We build self-esteem and confidence in students, recognising their emotional needs through close and committed relationships with them.
- We support our children to understand the effect that their hurtful behaviour has had on another child; we do not force children to say sorry, but encourage this where it is clear that they are genuinely sorry and wish to show this to the person they have hurt.
- When hurtful behaviour becomes problematic, we work with parents to identify the cause and find a solution together. The main reasons for very young children to engage in excessive hurtful behaviour are that:
  - They do not feel securely attached to someone who can interpret and meet their needs – this may be in the home and it may also be in the setting;
  - Their parent, or carer, does not have skills in responding appropriately, and consequently negative patterns are developing where hurtful behaviour is the only response the child has to express feelings of anger;
  - The child may have insufficient language, or mastery of English, to express him or herself and may feel frustrated;
  - The child is exposed to levels of aggressive behaviour at home and may be at risk emotionally, or may be experiencing child abuse;
  - The child has a developmental condition that affects how they behave.
- Where this does not work, we use the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice to support the child and their family, making the appropriate referrals to a Behaviour Support Team where necessary.