



Respect for Children Policy

Within an early childhood community and Primary school many different relationships are negotiated with and between children, educators and families. The way in which these relationships are established and maintained, and the way in which they remain visible, impacts on how the school community functions as a whole. Relationships directly affect how children form their own identity, whether or not they feel safe and supported, and ultimately, their sense of belonging.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN		
5.1	Relationships between educators and children	Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.
5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.
5.2	Relationships between children	Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.
5.2.1	Collaborative learning	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.
5.2.2	Self-Regulation	Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law NSW	
155	Interactions with children
156	Relationships in groups

PURPOSE

Our philosophy guides our interactions and relationships with children. We aim to ensure all educators develop positive relationships with children based on respect and fostering children's self-esteem and development. Much of the Montessori philosophy stems from a deep respect for children; from respecting their freedom to choose, to move, to correct their own mistakes, and to work at their own pace, to using real words to describe and categorize things, Montessori Teachers and Assistants work from a genuine place of respect

Oftentimes, adults do not see children as people to be treated with respect and dignity. This can be seen in the way adults sometimes interrupt, talk over, or dismiss something a child has to say. Or perhaps by physically grabbing a child for a hug without asking, or by commenting on the way a child looks or behaves in a public space. Even overlooking a child (for instance, only saying hello to the adults present and not greeting the child) can send the message that you do not see or respect him.

In the Montessori environment, you may notice the way a Teacher greets a child at the door every morning: by bending down to eye level, looking into the child's eyes, and gently shaking her hand while greeting her by name. Teachers encourage parents to allow their children to walk into the classroom on their own, carrying their own belongings. This is just the beginning of a morning (or full day) of decisions that lead to a mutual respect between Guide and child.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors to the school campuses.

IMPLEMENTATION

All children have a right to feel accepted and respected. This is a principle set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention emphasises the importance of children developing connections to culture and community as a means of fostering a strong sense of personal identity and belonging.

We aim for children to feel safe and secure, we believe in forming strong attachments and connections with educators at the Farmhouse Montessori School. Educators employed at the School will use techniques and strategies to establish relationships with children and their families, working in conjunction with the National Quality Standard, the Board of Studies and the Montessori ethos as we build supportive relationships.

By teaching respect for cultural diversity, educators will assist children to:

- learn about their cultural background and develop a strong sense of self identity
- learn about and appreciate cultures and traditions other than their own
- learn to enjoy and respect differences and recognise universal characteristics we all share
- learn about racial prejudice and understand why it should be challenged.

MANAGEMENT/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/CERTIFIED SUPERVISOR/EDUCATORS WILL:

- Provide a comfortable and happy environment
- Respect each child's uniqueness, displaying appreciation and respect for children as individuals
- Use a positive and non-threatening tone when interacting with children in all situations
- Ensure mealtimes are relaxed and unhurried
- Sit with children during mealtimes, engaging in respectful conversations.
- Never force a child to do something against their requests: This includes rest, eat, participation in group, experiences and activities
- Role model respect to children in every day dealings with both adults and children
- Endeavour to be aware of each individual child's values, culture and feelings and respond appropriately
- Encourage children to initiate conversations about their experiences at home encouraging them to express their ideas and feelings
- Encourage children to request assistance when taking on new challenges, inspiring children's independence and confidence.
- Regularly reflect on their relationships and interactions with children and how these can be improved to benefit each child
- Inspire, encourage and accept each child and encourage them to do the same with their peers by actively

- Fostering each child's construction of a knowledgeable, confident self-identity
 - Fostering each child's comfortable, empathetic interaction with a diverse range of people
 - Fostering each child's critical thinking about bias, and to question and enquire.
 - Fostering each child's ability to stand up for herself/himself and others in the face of bias
- Respond respectfully and appropriately to children's attempts as they participate and converse in sustained conversation about their interests.
 - Implement a predictable routine for children with interest based activities and experiences
 - Provide a range of planned and spontaneous experiences for children to challenge and maximise learning opportunities
 - Use a variety of communication strategies inclusive of verbal and non-verbal cues to support the development of relationships with children
 - Support children's home language when communicating and interacting to build trust and positive relationships
 - Respect children and families' diversity and the development of cultural competency within the Service
 - Support children and build secure attachments through a collaborative partnership with families.
 - Encourage children to develop confidence in their ability to express themselves
 - Encourage children to work through differences appropriately with guidance where necessary.
 - Respect each child's uniqueness and communicate that respect to the child.

FAMILIES:

There are plenty of ways you can show your child (and other children with whom you come into contact) respect on a daily basis.

1. Allow your child to make choices about his or her body.

Just as we would not invade an adult's physical space, nor should we do so with a child. Allow your child to decide whether or not to hug someone; do not force her or make her feel guilty if she does not feel like embracing Grandma at that moment. The message you send your child when you allow him to make choices about his body now can have a huge impact on how he feels about his rights and ability to say no in the future.

2. Use good manners when interacting with children.

This may sound silly, but it makes sense! When we model grace and courtesy we are not only teaching them the proper way to treat all people (great and small), we are also instilling in them a sense of self-respect.

3. Refrain from forcing your child to share.

We know, this one is tricky at first glance! But hear us out; instead of forcing your child to share, try to encourage a mindset of giving. Allow your child to choose when to share his or her personal items.

4. Respond to mistakes with grace.

This means refraining from laughing when your child makes a mistake, or falls down, or puts his pants on backwards, or gets the comb stuck in his hair. It may be funny to us, but to a child, it can be humiliating to be laughed at when he makes a mistake.

5. Listen.

Allow your child to speak for herself, even if it feels like it's taking quite a bit of time to get it all out. Use patience and eye contact, and refrain from interrupting or finishing her sentences. When you show your child that what she has to say matters, you show her to use her voice in all kinds of situations.

6. Show your trust in your child by allowing him to do for himself.

Dr. Montessori herself once said, *"We habitually serve children; and this is not only an act of servility toward them, but it is dangerous, since it tends to suffocate their useful spontaneous activity."* Instead of serving your child and jumping in constantly to help, first try to assume that your child can do it by herself. Allowing your child to pour her

own milk, to clean up after himself, and to get themselves dressed, carry his own bowl of soup to the table for lunch, will empower your child, boost his confidence, and increase his ability to do that particular task; after all, *learning is doing*.

7. **Respect your child's privacy.**

Part of showing respect to children is remembering that some things can be embarrassing for them, and that they count on you to keep their private lives... private. For instance, refrain from talking about your child to other adults in front of your child. Showing respect involves being aware of your child's very real feelings, and doing so will solidify the trust you have built with your child. Trust is an essential part of any relationship between people of all ages, and will continue to grow with time, given that you are honest and reliable.

SOURCE

- Dau, E. (Ed.) (2016). *The multi-bias approach in early childhood* (2nd Ed.). Frenchs Forest, Australia: Pearson Education.
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). (2009). *Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia*.
- Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).
- Stonehouse, A. (2012). *Relationships with children*: <https://www.ecrh.edu.au/docs/default-source/resources/nqs-plp-e-newsletters/nqs-plp-e-newsletter-no-36-2012-relationships-with-children.pdf?sfvrsn=4>
- UN General Assembly. (1989). *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Simplified version available at <https://www.unicef.org.au/Upload/UNICEF/Media/Our%20work/childfriendlycrc.pdf>

REVIEW

Policy Reviewed/Created	Modifications	Next Review Date
September 2017		September 2019
October 2017	Updated the references to comply with the revised NQS	September 2018
March 2018	New Logo inserted and updated	September 2018
September 2018	Added the section displaying related policies on page 1. Minor adjustments made to further support the formation of respectful relationships.	September 2019
September 2019	Grammar, punctuation and spelling edited. Some sentences reworded/refined. Sources checked for currency and correct URLs. Sources/references corrected, updated, and alphabetised. Related policies alphabetised. Reference/source added (United Nations)	September 2020
July 2020	Sources checked for currency and correct URLs. Implementation section reworded Families section inserted	September 2023