Early Years and Childcare

Behaviour Support Guidance

September 2014
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Rationale for Suffolk Early Years and Childcare Behaviour Guidance

- We see ‘Behaviour’ as what children do to express how they feel and what they are thinking.
- We are committed to providing learning environments that promote positive behaviour and relationships where children and adults treat each other with care and respect.
- We have inclusive settings that support all children as they take increasing responsibility for themselves and their actions, and consider the welfare and well-being of others.

It is the responsibility of all settings to follow statutory guidance for ‘Managing Behaviour’. Please refer to: Department for Education, ‘Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five. September 2014’. Sections 3.52.

In relation to physical intervention, section 3.52 of the Statutory Framework states: “Providers are responsible for managing children’s behaviour in an appropriate way. Providers must not give corporal punishment to a child. Providers must take all reasonable steps to ensure that corporal punishment is not given by any person who cares for or is in regular contact with a child, or by any person living or working on the premises where care is provided. Any early years provider who fails to meet these requirements commits an offence. A person will not be taken to have used corporal punishment (and therefore will not have committed an offence), where physical intervention (physical intervention is where practitioners use reasonable force to prevent children from injuring themselves or others or damaging property) was taken for the purposes of averting immediate danger of personal injury to any person (including the child) or to manage a child’s behaviour if absolutely necessary. Providers, including child minders, must keep a record of any occasion where physical intervention is used, and parents and/or carers must be informed on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable.”

The National Strategies | Early Years IDP: Supporting children with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties Guidance for practitioners in the Early Years Foundation Stage (page 29-30) states: ‘The Use of force guidance (DCSF, 2007) further explains: ‘There is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use force. That will always depend on the precise circumstances of individual cases. To be judged lawful, the force used would need to be in proportion to the consequences it is intended to prevent. The degree of force used should be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result. Use of force could not be justified to prevent trivial misbehaviour.’

More importantly, the guidance emphasises consideration of ways to minimise the need to use force, for example:

- creating a calm environment that minimises the risk of incidents that might require using force arising;
- using SEAL and SEAD approaches to teach children how to manage conflict and strong feelings;
- de-escalating incidents if they do arise;
- only using force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force;
- using risk assessments and individual plans for individual children, which should include details of how a child would be held if the need arose.

In order for staff to feel confident in their decision making, the setting’s policies need to be reviewed regularly and there needs to be detailed discussion of how policy translates into practice with current children.
Good Practice promotes positive behaviour

All settings are expected to:

- Ensure that children’s basic needs are met; they are warm, dry and not hungry or thirsty. They should feel safe and nurtured.
- Organise the indoor learning environment so that it has a positive impact on behaviour in terms of space, access to and choice of activities.
- Support children’s self-esteem by enabling them to be successful in play experiences; empowering children to develop confidence and resilience. (See: Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Personal Social and Emotional Development).
- Plan first hand experiences and challenges, appropriate to the development of children, which encourage sharing, negotiation and co-operation.
- Take a positive and consistent approach towards supporting children to display acceptable behaviour. Work in partnership with parents/carers.
- Through regular play and learning activities (including circle time, stories, role play, puppets) encourage children to openly express their feelings, likes and dislikes and help them to understand the consequences and effects of their behaviour on others.
- Support children to resolve conflicts with other children.
- Encourage, acknowledge and value acceptable behaviour in all interactions between children and staff as well as staff and staff, children and children.
- Ensure children are aware of routines, expectations and procedures. Encourage children to take responsibilities for caring for others and their environment.
- Set, explain and maintain clear, reasonable and consistent limits in a calm manner so that children feel safe and secure in their play. Take the children’s level of understanding into consideration.
- Use praise specifically related to children’s actions or behaviours e.g. “good sitting”
- Demonstrate that the child is valued, even if the behaviour is unacceptable.
- Respond to and record significant unacceptable behaviour at the earliest opportunity.
- Provide additional adult support by enhancing ratios, when required. This would be particularly important after serious incidents when children/people are hurt, e.g. biting.
- Work with the Early Years and Childcare Service to ensure consistency of approach and to maximise support available to staff. For Information, Advice and Assistance call 0845 60 800 33.
- Refer to the Early Years Outcomes (September 2013) Section 3 Personal, social and emotional development.
Possible underlying causes for types of behaviour

Type of Behaviour
- Anxious
- Controlling
- Victim
- Withdrawn
- Very active
- Extreme shyness
- Aggressive

- Social and Emotional Environment
- Age / Stage of development
- Health / Medical
- Speech, language and communication
- Attention
- Sensory
- Attachment
Questions to Ask When Considering Underlying Causes of Behaviour
It is advisable to consider all aspects of underlying causes. The following questions should help you do this.

Safeguarding:
- Are there any safeguarding issues in the home/setting such as; emotional abuse, physical abuse or neglect?
- Is the child witnessing domestic abuse in the home?
- Are the child’s basic needs being met (thirst, hunger, warmth) to allow learning to take place?

Suffolk Safeguarding Board:
http://suffolksafeguardingchildrenboard.onesuffolk.net/procedures/significant-harm/
Further research; ‘Hierarchy of Needs’ - Maslow

Age/Stage Development:
- Is the child learning within their relevant age/stage of development, identified in the EYFS Early Years Outcomes (September 2013) and the child’s progress tracker?
- Are the family/staff asking too much/too little of the child and therefore “setting them up to fail”? Is the child able to link actions and consequence?
- Does the child understand emotions/feelings and can they recognise emotions/feelings in others?

N.B “At 4 or 5 years old children are just beginning to realise that other people:
- have thoughts
- think things that are different from what they think
- think and act on information that others know is not true.”
Further research “Stages of Cognitive Development” - Piaget
Refer to the information on Social Emotional Aspects of Development, 2008 (SEAL)
http://www.idponline.org.uk/eybesd/elearning/launch.html

Communication:
- Are there underlying communication difficulties?
- Does the child have English as an Additional Language?

For information about links with social difficulties and communication and to support children with communication difficulties see the following websites:
http://www.ican.org.uk/en/What_is_the_issue/About%20SLCN.aspx
https://www.makaton.org/
https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/resources/resources/resources-for-practitioners/

SEN/Medical/Health:
- Are there any underlying SEN/Medical reasons?
- Has the child been diagnosed by a relevant health professional?
The National Autistic Society provides information about behaviour related to autism:
Home Factors:
- Is the child learning behaviour from siblings?
- Is the child an only child?
- Would the parents/carers benefit from parenting courses?
- Are there concerns about the parents/carers behaviour?
- Have there been recent changes: births, deaths, separations etc.?..?
- Is the family moving around frequently, a traveller family or in the armed forces?
- Is the child a Looked After Child?
- Is the personal experience of the adult influencing their approach to behaviour?
- What were the child’s early experiences?
- Are there religious or cultural influences that you need to consider?

Attachment:
- Is there a strong attachment between the child and key adults?
- Do the family/staff value the child and encourage and support the child in their development, supporting their self esteem?
- Does the family/setting promote the child’s sense of belonging by valuing the child – enabling the child to have the freedom to express their opinion and feelings and to make choices?

Further research; Bowlby/Gerhardt/Coopersmith

Environment:
- Is the child copying behaviour being seen in the home or setting?
- Have there been any staff changes, changes in routine or changes to the built environment?
- Does the home/setting provide a wide range of activities and resources to motivate and encourage the child to play and make choices?
- Do adults allow children to try things out and take risks?
- Is the child receiving negative/positive reinforcement for their behaviour and is this triggering further challenging behaviour?
- Are adults engaging, supporting, motivating and inspiring?
- Is the child in a transition from one setting/room to another?
- Are rules and boundaries consistent within the family/staff members?
- Is the environment/routine conducive to children learning about emotions and feelings?
- Does the environment/routine allow children to express themselves?
- Is the child influenced by his/her peer group?
- Is the environment leading to a sensory overload or not stimulating enough?
- Are the responses of the adults to the child’s behaviour conditioning a certain response from the child?
- Has the child learnt that challenging behaviour will get a “big reaction”?

For further research; Social learning Theory – Bandura, Skinner.  
Zone of Proximal development - Vygotsky.  
Classical conditioning/Operant conditioning - Pavlov, Watson, Skinner  
Characteristics of Effective Learning from the Revised EYFS.
## Suggested possible ‘ABC’ strategies and interventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What led up to it?</th>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>What happened next?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Changing the Antecedents</strong></td>
<td><strong>Changing the Behaviour</strong></td>
<td><strong>Changing Consequences</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Avoid situations until you have taught the child how to cope with that situation.</td>
<td>- Divert and distract</td>
<td>- Give selective attention. Ignore “unacceptable” behaviour (where it is safe to do so), praise “acceptable” behaviour.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Use distraction – offer alternative activity.</td>
<td>- Teach alternative behaviour and give praise accordingly. E.g. asking for a toy instead of snatching,</td>
<td>- Catch the child being good and praise. Be specific – e.g. good sitting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Ensure that instructions can be understood – be aware that non-compliance may indicate poor understanding of verbal instructions.</td>
<td>- State what you want, not what you don’t.</td>
<td>- Ignore and redirect. Pass no comment on the behaviour and suggest an alternative activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Give clear rules/say what the rule is/show what behaviour you expect.</td>
<td>- Model positive behaviours.</td>
<td>- Teach and reward alternative behaviours e.g. pushing to stroking</td>
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<td>- Give an early warning of activity change. Support with visual clues e.g. sand timer.</td>
<td>- Use “I” messages which communicate adult feelings. Emphasise the effect of the behaviour and not the child.</td>
<td>- Be absolutely consistent. At first, every incident of unacceptable behaviour needs dealing with, just as every example of acceptable behaviour needs encouraging.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Have realistic expectations - age/stage appropriate</td>
<td>- Provide additional adult support (particularly important with unsafe behaviour e.g. biting, when a child will need to be carefully monitored at least to the end of the session).</td>
<td>- Enhance staff ratios, (particularly after unsafe behaviour such as biting).</td>
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<td>- Look at the environment. Does the layout/routine/range of equipment need adjusting/is there enough choice/do you need signing/symbols for communication?</td>
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<td>- Offer choices, “You may do this or that”.</td>
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<td>- Get full attention before giving directions. Cue individual children in first. E.g. say their name, use touch or a visual cue card</td>
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<td>- Pre-empt with positive attention, or additional adult support.</td>
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<td>- Add an element of fun/humour.</td>
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<td>- Analyse observations: are there personality clashes/unacceptable noise levels/particular times in the session children find difficult.</td>
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<td>- Liaise with parents; find out what the child’s specific triggers/ motivators are.</td>
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<td>- Anticipate objects which may be thrown/used as weapons. Ensure these objects are inaccessible. Ensure that children are grouped with positive role models.</td>
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<td>- Establish a signal to act as a reminder about behaviour</td>
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<td>- Remove the threat of failure for the child. Take the risk yourself, try saying “I know this is difficult but let’s have a go together”.</td>
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<td>- Rehearse situations, behaviours, reactions so the child is prepared.</td>
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</table>
Suggested format for settings to use for behaviour staff meeting: GUIDANCE 1

When the focus needs to include wider issues e.g. what is acceptable behaviour, triggers, importance of room layout and routines.

In preparation for the meeting it is suggested that the meeting facilitator refers to The National Strategies Inclusion Development Programme; Supporting Children with Behavioural Emotional and Social Difficulties Guidance for Practitioners in the Early Years Foundation Stage: http://www.idponline.org.uk/eybesd/elearning/launch.html http://www.idponline.org.uk/downloads/ey-besd.pdf


How should children behave?:
If we were all asked this question there would be different answers as we all have different expectations (e.g. always sitting at table for meals). We all come from different backgrounds and have been brought up differently. So what is and what is not acceptable behaviour?
Children’s ability to develop acceptable behaviour is influenced by the messages they receive from those around them. They learn values and behaviours as a result of attitudes and experiences which they are part of. They model themselves on adults around them.

Points to consider:
- It is vital that within the setting we agree a consistent approach and expectations for children’s behaviour. All staff must give the same clear messages to children. This is achieved through what is said, how we behave and in our body language.
- It is vital that this information is shared with parents so that they can have a mutual/similar approach.

What are the triggers?:
- Is acceptable behaviour linked to particular areas of the room? (Not enough space, too much space, too many children at one activity, lack of clear area and places for resources.)
- Is there too much change in the routine or not enough? Too much leads to breaks in concentration/feelings of a lack of security. Not enough leads to boredom.
- Unexpected change; Give children plenty of warning and support during changes of activities. For example using sand timers, using the clock, (“when the big hand is at the top”) giving a two-minute verbal warning, playing the triangle, having helpers.

Resources:
- Rearrange the position of play materials within the room.
- Do we have enough play materials on offer?
- Are there enough activities and resources? – Are defined areas well labelled and easily accessible?
- Are the activities planned to meet the needs of all children? (E.g. More able children need extra challenge).
Room and Staffing – Physical and emotional environment:

- Rearrange the furniture if necessary.
- Look at deployment of staff. Are we spread out supporting different activities within the room or sitting at one table together? Are we talking to the children or each other?
- Are we using our Key Person approach effectively to respond to our children’s emotional needs?
- Consider giving a child individual support. This may only be necessary for a short period of time to help the child understand how to play and access the activities successfully.
- Provide enhanced ratios in situations where children/staff are likely to be hurt e.g. biting. For specific advice on biting, see page 19 of the National Strategies ‘Inclusion Development Programme supporting children with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties’

Strategies:

Distracting the child away from the unacceptable behaviour:

- It can be possible to anticipate unacceptable behaviour or to intervene swiftly once it starts to occur. For example “Come and play with the play dough”, just before the child knocks down another child’s tower of bricks.
- Removing the child from the situation - Calmly removing a child from the situation takes the heat out of the problem and gives the child time to calm down. For example;
- Help the child find something to do in the room and participate if appropriate.
- Tell the child it’s all right to feel cross and ask if there is anything that can be done to make them feel better.

Ignoring the unacceptable behaviour/selective attention:

- Can the behaviour be ignored? For example if it is not disruptive or harmful to themselves or other children.
- If the behaviour is attention seeking, we could be reinforcing unacceptable behaviour by giving attention to it.

Demonstrating the behaviour you want to see:

- Talk children through how to ask for a toy from their friends. For example ‘Fred please can you pass me the doll, thank you’.
- When children are observed sharing, give positive praise. For example ‘Well done Doris for sharing your play dough with Fred’.
- Keep a positive diary to illustrate what the child does well. Share this with parents/carers and ensure that information-sharing is 2-way.

Helping children to resolve conflicts:

- Approach calmly and stay neutral. Prepare yourself for a positive outcome. Acknowledge feelings (e.g. you seem angry/sad/upset/ very upset). Give children time for their feelings to subside, and then let them know that you think that they can work out a way to solve the problem.
- What do they want? Listen carefully to each child’s details and needs; they are the key to finding the solution. Identify the problem.
- Restate the problem and check that both children agree.
- Help the children to find solutions/ make plans and choose one together.
- Give follow-up support if required. Check with each child that the problem has been resolved.
The way we speak to children:

- Use positive language.
- Always keep calm, never shout or lose your temper.
- Avoid using words like ‘naughty’, ‘play nicely’ or ‘good girl’; most young children do not have an understanding of these phrases and it triggers other meanings.
- Use short and specific sentences and say what the child is doing well. For example “you have painted a lovely picture”, “that’s a lovely drawing, I like the way you have used the red”, “I like that puzzle and you managed it all on your own”.
- Do not give the chance for a negative response – Say “It’s story time”. Instead of “Do you want a story?”
- Use simple language with all children. We will avoid saying what we don’t want the child to do and focus on what we would like them to do instead.

For example:-
- ‘No running’ to ‘Fred walk’;
- ‘Don’t hit’ to ‘Fred hand down / in your lap’ or a plain ‘STOP’ with accompanying hand signal.

Points to remember:

- Concentrate on the behaviour causing most concern.
- Define the behaviour clearly.
- Be consistent, calm and clear about the message you are giving.
- Provide more of what the child does well.
- Give strategies a chance.
- Have a few simple positive rules.
- Set the standards.

Behaviour will not change overnight.
When the focus is on the use of specific techniques.

In preparation for the meeting it is suggested that the meeting facilitator refers to The National Strategies Inclusion Development Programme; Supporting Children with Behavioural Emotional and Social Difficulties Guidance for Practitioners in the Early Years Foundation Stage: [http://www.idponline.org.uk/eybesd/elearning/launch.html](http://www.idponline.org.uk/eybesd/elearning/launch.html) [http://www.idponline.org.uk/downloads/ey-besd.pdf](http://www.idponline.org.uk/downloads/ey-besd.pdf)


When working with a child who demonstrates unacceptable behaviour there is no magic wand to wave and make this child demonstrate the behaviour we want to see, but there are some strategies that we can adopt to help. Changing behaviour takes time and we should always give strategies a chance.

Before deciding which strategies to use, it is recommended that ABC observations are kept and analysed. A behaviour support plan may then be appropriate, linked to a risk assessment and always in partnership with parents/carers.

Refer to the Department for Children Schools and Families, National Strategies; ‘Inclusion Development Programme, Supporting children with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties’. (For specific advice on biting see page 19).

**Key Skills in Guiding Behaviour:**

- The way we speak to children. Keep calm. Be positive and confident. Use language carefully.
- Be consistent. All staff need to know and use the same strategies/approach.
- Manage your own behaviour. Model play, language, sharing, how to handle difficult situations.
- Plan for good behaviour. Establish simple rules. Teach expectations – be clear.
- Catch the good. Make examples of good behaviour. Give descriptive feedback.
- Be positive – focus on what you want. Describe the behaviour you want. Give choices.
- Separate behaviour from the child. The behaviour is unacceptable, not the child.
- Re-direct when you can. Distract the child away from the problem.
- Be clear with instructions and be prepared to repeat them. Get close, lower your voice, and speak directly. Use the child’s name first.

**Strategies:**

**Specific Praise:**

This is a very easy and effective strategy, stopping the child only receiving attention when something goes wrong and the child only receiving negative feedback from adults. Research shows that when adult interaction is 75% positive it has the most beneficial impact. Tip: remember the ‘hand’ rule – 4 positive comments to 1 negative.

- Encourage acceptable behaviour not only with the child concerned but with all the children, but avoid making comparisons.
- Give children lots of descriptive praise/feedback when they have worked as a group without any incidents.
Give the child praise when they have shared activities or toys.
Praise acceptable behaviour by giving descriptive feedback to the child. For example, “Well done you are keeping the train on the tracks”
Praise the child using non-verbal communication – smiles, thumbs up, high five!
Keep a positive diary to share with parents/carers. Encourage 2-way ‘good news’-sharing.

Ignoring the unacceptable behaviour / selective attention:
- Can the behaviour be ignored? For example, if it is not disruptive or harmful to themselves or other children.

NB: If the behaviour is attention seeking, you could be reinforcing unacceptable behaviour by paying attention to it.

Distracting the child away from the unacceptable behaviour:
- It can be possible to anticipate unacceptable behaviour or to intervene swiftly once it starts to occur. For example, “Come and play with the play doh”, just before the child knocks down another child’s tower of bricks.

Supporting the child to manage their feelings:
- Supporting the child to remove themselves from the situation can take the heat out of the problem and gives the child time to calm down. For example:

State what has happened and acknowledge the child’s/children’s feelings:
- Help the child who has demonstrated unacceptable behaviour to find a place away from the situation or remove the other children. Provide discreet adult support to ensure the children are safe. Allow time for the child to regain control. (The emphasis is on helping the child to become calm and not a punishment).
- Once the child is calm, praise for demonstrating acceptable behaviour. Support the child to choose appropriate activities.
- Plan to focus on building the child’s skills to manage their behaviour e.g. taking turns.

Offer choices:
- If a child is offered a choice they will feel like they still have some control and are more likely to respond to your request rather than give a blanket refusal. The choices given can all be things you want the child to do i.e they are ‘forced choices’ (I need you to sit down. Will you choose the blue or the red cushion?)
- Choices can be used as a distraction method, offering the child something you know they really like BEFORE the behaviour becomes unacceptable, for example “Doris you can give one of the trains back to Fred or you can come and paint with me”.
- If unacceptable behaviour has occurred, use choice as a way of leaving the child with some feeling of control but direct them to something you want them to do.

Helping children to resolve conflicts:
- Approach calmly and stay neutral. Prepare yourself for a positive outcome. Acknowledge feelings (e.g. you seem angry/sad/upset/ very upset). Give children time for their feelings to subside, and then let them know that you think that they can work out a way to solve the problem.
- What do they want? Listen carefully to each child’s details and needs; they are the key to finding the solution. Identify the problem.
- Restate the problem and check that both children agree.
- Help the children to find solutions/ make plans and choose one together.
- Give follow-up support if required. Check with each child that the problem has been resolved.
Teaching and rewarding alternative behaviour:
- This is achieved by teaching children acceptable behaviour. For example:

Pushing or poking to light touch on shoulder:
- Snatching things to making polite requests.

Change the adult:
- This enables staff to work as a team; to relieve pressure on individuals and to give a consistent message about expectations.

If unacceptable behaviour linked to particular times of the session:
- Have a few simple rules and routines. Be consistent in making sure they are kept and, where appropriate, demonstrate.
- State and demonstrate what you expect clearly. For example “James, water stays in the water tray, you can use this jug to pour it”.
- Make sure all children are aware of when an activity is due to change using verbal, visual and/or auditory cues. For very young children use objects of reference.
- Refer to a clear visual timetable.

Points to remember:
- Concentrate on one problem causing most concern.
- Define the problem clearly.
- Acknowledge the child’s feelings, “I can see you feel…….”
- Be consistent, calm and clear about the message you are conveying.
- Provide more of what the child does well (refer to the positive diary/observations).
- Give strategies a chance.
- Have a few simple positive rules.
- Set the standards.

Behaviour will not change overnight.
# Example: Individual Risk Assessment – Difficult and Dangerous Behaviour

Date Completed …………………... Completed by…………………….. Next review date ……………………

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Likely outcome</th>
<th>Level of risk</th>
<th>How risk is controlled</th>
<th>Action to be taken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Low/Medium/High</td>
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Date Completed …………………... Completed by…………………….. Next review date ……………………

Parent Signature …………………...
# Behaviour Support Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour Support Plan</th>
<th>Date of plan:</th>
<th>Review date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child's name:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behaviour to reduce:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Prevention:</strong></td>
<td><strong>If an incident occurs:</strong></td>
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<td><em>Staff will</em></td>
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<td><strong>Staff will</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Parents views / comments:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Practitioner:</strong> __________________________</td>
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