

MANAGING AN AGGRESSIVE PARENT POLICY

Our Service aims to establish and maintain positive and open relationships with all parents of enrolled children. However, we understand that on occasion there may be times that a parent arrives at our Service highly annoyed or frustrated with something, that can lead to anger or aggression.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected

QUALITY AREA 6: COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES		
6.1	Supportive relationships with families	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.
6.2	Collaborative partnerships	Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.

RELATED POLICIES

Family Communication Policy Grievance Policy (Families) Code of Conduct Policy	Privacy and Confidentiality Policy Interactions with Children, Family and Staff Policy
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PURPOSE

Our Service aims to ensure that all staff members have some understanding of strategies that can be used to manage situations involving angry or aggressive parents.

SCOPE

This policy applies to management and staff of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Parents have the right to make a complaint or report a concern to our Service at any time. Complaints may be real or perceived, and of a serious nature or more trivial nature (but important to them) such as not being able to quickly find their child's shoes at the end of the day. However, on occasion a parent's feelings may escalate into anger or aggression, not necessarily due to the concern at hand, but possibly events or situations they have had to already deal with that day, or possibly due to the effect of drugs or alcohol.

Management will ensure that:

- All staff are familiar with this policy.
- Training is offered if required to assist staff in dealing with angry or aggressive parents.
- Staff involved in a situation involving an angry or aggressive parent will be allowed time for a debrief session following the event.

Nominated Supervisor/Educators/Staff:

Should a situation arise where staff are confronted by an angry/aggressive parent, they will:

- Remain calm.
- Offer and encourage the parent to move into a private space away from children and other families (This may even be outside if the children are inside). If they ignore or refuse the invitation begin moving slowly towards a private area.
- If moving into a room with the parent always ensure you have access to the exit door.
- Establish whether or not this is a situation you should deal with, or advise the parent that you will get the Nominated Supervisor/appropriate person to come and speak to them.
- If you are continuing to deal with the situation but feeling uncomfortable, request another staff member to accompany you.
- If you are feeling threatened or in danger request another staff member to ring the police.
- Calmly tell the parent that you are prepared to listen, but the interview cannot continue if he/she continues to use a raised voice / inappropriate language / threats. If the same behaviour continues, leave the room and state that you will give the parent five minutes to calm down and then return.

When you feel the parent has calmed down enough to discuss the issue:

- Remain calm. Be aware of what you say and how you say it (tone of voice).
- Do not be provoked into getting into an argument.
- Allow the parent to talk without interrupting.

- When the parent has got the main facts ‘off their chest’, restate what you believe the problem to be.
- Ask relevant questions to clarify any issues.
- As soon as the issue has been clarified begin to work on a solution: Note, do not give excuses as to why something may or may not have happened as it may anger the parent again. Instead, focus on looking forward and strategies the parent will accept to solve the problem.
- When discussing solutions clearly explain any limitations of the Service (regulations, policies and procedures).

Being involved in such a situation can be quite stressful. Following the incident:

- Have a ‘debriefing’ time: This may be talking to a manager or colleague, or simply moving off the floor for a short time.
- Report the incident to management.
- Document the incident and provide Management with a copy.
- Ensure that you follow up on anything agreed to with the parent or monitor that another staff member / management is following up in a timely manner.
- Ensure all staff/educators that will be impacted by modifications to care or procedures are notified and have a thorough understanding of the situation.
- Ensure confidentiality and/or privacy rights of the parent or family are not breached.

SOURCE:

Bryant, L., & Gibbs, L. (2013). *A director’s manual: Managing an early education and care service in NSW*. Marrickville, NSW: Community Child Care Co-operative Ltd. (NSW).

Kearns, K. (2010). *The big picture: Working in children’s services series*. Frenchs Forest, NSW: Pearson Australia.

NSW Ombudsman. (2014). *Model guidelines – Managing and responding to threats, aggressive behaviour and violence from members of the public*.

Waniganayake, M., Cheeseman, S., Fenech, M., Hadley, F., & Shepherd, W. (2012). *Leadership: Contexts and complexities in early childhood education*. South Melbourne, Victoria: Oxford University Press.

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	July 2019	NEXT REVIEW DATE	JANUARY 2021
MODIFICATIONS	New policy created		