



Complex Behaviour Support



in Outside School Hours Care

EDUCATOR WORKBOOK

The National Outside School Hours Services Alliance (NOSHSA) acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to culture, land, waterways and communities. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

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Behaviour. A constantly evolving and at times divisive topic. As you progress through this workbook, it is likely that, you'll need to question your perspectives on behaviour and evaluate certain practices you have been exposed to, or even implemented. This willingness to reflect on your own perspectives and be open to new ways of practice is an important part of growth mindset and essential to our work as critically reflective educators.



Take a moment to reflect on your beliefs about behaviour.

Why does behaviour occur?

What is the educator role in behaviour guidance?

Where do your beliefs come from?

Often what we find is that our beliefs about behaviour stem from when we were children; how the adults in our life responded to us and supported (or punished) us in instances of escalated behaviour. This workbook will give you the opportunity to draw from contemporary research and literature to better anticipate, support and respond to challenging behaviours as an educator in OSHC.

Adult Attitudes Towards Behaviour

If a child doesn't know how to read – we teach.

If a child doesn't know how to swim – we teach.

If a child doesn't know how to multiply – we teach.

If a child doesn't know how to behave – we punish?

Tom Herner (NASDE President) Counterpoint 1998, p. 2

Behaviour & The National Quality Framework: A Rights Based Lens

The Best Interests of the Child are Paramount: In thinking about behaviour, we can see that it is in children's best interests to understand their behaviour through learning the language of emotions, conflict resolution, advocating for their needs to be met and understanding how to respect the rights of others. These skills are learnt from positive relationships with adults, watching adults model these skills and being provided with the opportunity to learn and practice these in a safe environment.

Children are Competent and Capable Learners: This means that educators take the view that children can learn from their mistakes when given the right supports.

Equity and Inclusion Underpin the Framework: Do our expectations and practices value letting children be who they are; their authentic self? For example, if we have an expectation that children must use whole body listening, who does this advantage and disadvantage? For neurodivergent children this can be an impossible task and actually makes listening harder. Who says that there's only one way to demonstrate to someone that you're listening? Whose methods of doing things are valued? Which groups of children are being told that they need to change?

Regulation 155 of the National Regulations

Children are encouraged to express themselves and their opinions and are allowed to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem. Education and care is delivered in a way that maintains their dignity and rights, gives each child positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour, and has regard to children's family and cultural values, age, physical and intellectual development and abilities.

Section 166 of the National Law

A staff member of, or a volunteer at, an education and care service must not subject any child being educated and cared for by the service to—

- (a) any form of corporal punishment; or
- (b) any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances.

Many “traditional” discipline practices are inappropriate. They do not provide children with positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour, nor do they have regard to children’s individual needs, self-esteem or self-worth.



What discipline do you consider to be unreasonable discipline?

Did you experience any of these as a child?

Do you still see any of these techniques used today?

ACECQA provides the following examples of inappropriate discipline:

- hitting, pushing, slapping, pinching or biting a child
- excessive use of negative language to a child, such as, “no” “stop that!” “don’t...” “you never...”
- humiliating a child
- yelling at or belittling a child
- physically dragging a child
- locking children away (or isolating them)
- depriving a child of food or drink OR force-feeding a child
- unreasonable restraining of a child
- excluding children from events
- consistently moving children to the office or other space away from the play areas
- moving children to another room as punishment
- verbally or physically threatening a child
- negative labelling of child or family
- criticising a child’s actions or behaviours
- discouraging a child from taking part in activities
- blaming or shaming a child
- making fun of or laughing at or about a child
- using sarcastic or cruel humour with or to a child

(ACECQA, 2020)

These inappropriate disciplinary strategies don’t support children to learn about their behaviour or their needs and are usually about enforcing compliance. This unthinking and unwavering compliance with adult demands is dangerous to reinforce from a protective behaviour perspective.

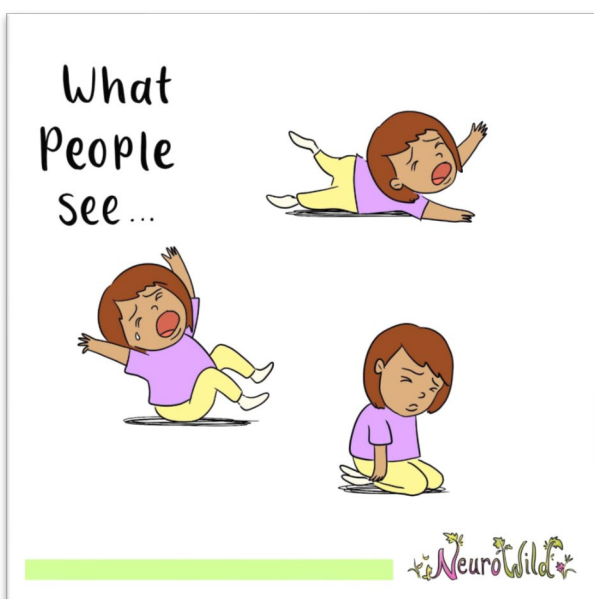
While the examples listed above may seem obviously inappropriate, consider the use of rewards and punishments in managing children’s behaviour. Are these focussed on helping children understand their behaviour and advocating for their needs, or are these solely focussed on gaining compliance? Rewards and punishments don’t teach children the skills they need and may result in damaged relationships.



Understanding Behaviour

Previously adults used to believe that children do well when they WANT to. Some of us may have been raised by adults who held this belief and used punishments and rewards to “motivate” children to “want” to do well. Research tells us now, that children do well when they CAN. This means that it’s up to educators to create environments, interactions and activities that support children to achieve success (Greene, 1998).

Behaviour is children’s response to things that are happening both internally and externally. When children are displaying escalated behaviour, we’re taught to find “effective” strategies without considering what “effective” actually means. Without the traditional practices mentioned above, how do we respond? Some people believe that in the absence of punishment what we’re left with is permissiveness. But if our goal is to support children’s growth, keep children safe and develop relationships, a “free for all” is hardly the best way of doing this.



We need to consider that the behaviour we're seeing is the tip of the iceberg. What really matters are the child's thoughts, feelings, needs, perspectives, motives and values; what the behaviour is communicating.

When we understand that each child has different thoughts, feelings, needs, perspectives, motives and values, we can recognise that we will need to take an individualised approach with children. This focusses on EQUITY rather than equality, an important principle from My Time, Our Place (MTOPI).

In some settings there can be tension between equal and fair. For example, one child may need 15 minutes bouncing on a mini trampoline to regulate themselves across the afternoon. How many of us would be inclined to say "why do they get to do that when other children don't?" Change trampoline to iPad and there's even more uproar. Not all children need those tools to regulate. Some children talk to an adult, others go for a walk, some sit by themselves, some run around and play sports. We hopefully have never heard a teacher say "I'm not going to help you work out this maths equation because not everyone else gets that help from me" – not everybody else needs that help. Equity ensures fairness.

Proactive Approaches to Behaviour

The best work we can do in the behaviour space is to meet children's needs proactively and consider how we can support them to achieve success within our program. This may involve considering the types of environments, activities and interactions that this child has access to and making modifications to these, in order to support this child's engagement and learning.

Remember: Children do well when they CAN.



One of the best places to start in understanding children’s behaviour is to think of what they look like when they’re calm i.e. When is the behaviour **NOT** occurring? Around which people? Which activities and in which environments? This tells us a lot about how we can proactively create opportunities to meet children’s needs, support skill development and facilitate participation. Remember the child who was struggling to reach the box on the shelf in the previous images?



In a group consider a child in your service where you’ve observed escalated behaviour. The prompts below will help you to reflect:

- What does this child look like when they’re calm?
- When is the behaviour NOT occurring?
- What environment/s do they like to play in?
- What activities do they prefer?
- Who do they like to spend time with?
- Other relevant information (have they had afternoon tea? a good night’s sleep? a good day at school?)

After jotting down this information read the following “reflective audit” to identify what steps can be taken to create positive environments and interactions for this child at your service.

1. Relationships: Does this child have access to positive relationships with educators and peers?

At the foundation of the work that we’re doing we need to strive for positive respectful reciprocal relationships.

Brene Brown says “We’re hardwired for connection – it’s what gives purpose and meaning to our lives. The absence of love, belonging and connection always leads to suffering”.

Research highlights the power of relationships to behaviour, learning and engagement.

- “Children are more likely to be respectful when important adults in their lives respect them. They are more likely to care about others if they know they are cared about” (Kohn, 1996).
- “Relationships that are; empathic, warm, encouraging = increased participation, increased satisfaction, reduction in disruptive behaviour” (Cornelius-White, 2007).
- “Students will resist rules and procedures along with the consequent disciplinary actions if the foundation of a good relationship is lacking” (Maranzo, 2003).

Rita Pierson an American Educator states “Children don’t learn from people they don’t like.” It sounds like a strange statement to make, but think about how that applies to your own life (Ted, 2013).

Additional Video Provocation: Watch the following video on Every Kid Needing a Champion

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFnMTHhKdkw>

Learning is a vulnerable process, because you need to be able to make and learn from mistakes. If you don’t feel psychologically safe to engage that way, learning is not able to occur. Earlier we considered that children are competent and capable learners and can learn from their mistakes, but this is ONLY the case if there is the foundation of safe and respectful relationships.



Which teachers made the biggest positive impact on you?

What qualities did they have?

Which teachers had a negative impact on you? Why?

We should never underestimate the importance of relationships in the behaviour space.

Believe it or not there is a “magic” ratio for positive relationship building (Cook et al., 2017). Research suggests that you need five positive interactions for every one negative or corrective interaction, to build a positive relationship. Children who are regularly receiving negative feedback about their behaviour may be at risk of not getting this ratio met. What about those children that “fly under the radar”?



The Magic Ratio - 5 positive interactions for every 1 negative

Are you meeting this ratio for all children?

Are there any relationships that need work?

The word belonging features prominently in the approved learning framework MTOP. Children need to experience a sense of belonging and connectedness, a sense of being part of something, caring and being cared for by others. This is also a powerful protective factor in mental health (Aldridge & McChesney, 2018). Children feel connected when they feel they are treated fairly; they feel safe, accepted respected and included. When a child or young person feels lonely, isolated, unsupported or like they don’t fit in, a range of negative consequences, both physical and psychological, can develop.

For many children, developing positive relationships with adults is a difficult task. Prior negative history and behaviour often have an ongoing impact on relationship quality. Educators will need to devote consistent effort and time to relationship building. The most straightforward way to achieve this is to embed opportunities for positive interactions throughout the OSHC program. If children are consistently displaying inappropriate behaviour, educators should consider what this is communicating about the availability of positive relationships for this child (Allen, et al., 2018).

Example: Sylvie is running in the quiet room, throwing books and toys around the room and squealing.

Unhelpful Assumption: Sylvie is “attention seeking” doing the wrong thing to get a reaction.

Behaviour as Communication: Sylvie is with her third foster carer. She does not feel a sense of belonging or connection in ANY of her environments. Her interactions with educators are only based on her behaviour. She is having difficulty making friends and is expressing her loneliness, looking for a way to engage with others.

2. Strengths-Based: Is this child actively engaged and using their strengths in the program?

The underlying principle of strengths-based practice is that all children have inherent strengths that they can draw upon. When supporting children who demonstrate escalated behaviour, educators often zero in on deficits and problems. The focus becomes all the things the child needs to change to improve. Focussing on traits and skills children don't yet have can lead to them developing negative perceptions of themselves and becoming disengaged.

In implementing a strengths-based approach, educators focus on the talents and passions of children and their support system. This approach consists of analysing what works for each child and how it works so that those strategies can be continued and developed to allow children to achieve success (Department of Education & Early Childhood Development, 2012). A strength may include a specific skill (maths, sport) or a character trait (leadership or curiosity).

In order to identify children's strengths, educators should:

- Focus on observations, listening closely as children play and interact. Notice where children choose to spend their time and when they are engaging positively.
- Ask children what they are good at and what they enjoy doing. When children are viewed as competent and capable learners, educators give them opportunities to exercise self-awareness. Appreciate though, that some children may not have an understanding of their strengths or have never had these recognised by others.
- Ask parents or caregivers for their insights and observations as these provide valuable information on children's strengths and how they like to spend their time.

When educators focus on the competencies and strengths a child already uses as the building blocks for child engagement, they can help children master new skills. Educators can:

- Provide children with lots of opportunities to participate in activities that align with their strengths.
- Ensure the availability of materials or resources that match with what the child likes to do.
- Identify the range of behaviour and skills the child is able to use in interactions with toys, materials, and people; things the child does well and things the child is just learning to do.

- Extend upon children’s learning by demonstrating slightly more complex behaviour, making suggestions and encouraging.
- Provide resources that extend upon children’s strengths and interests.
- Use this information to decide how activities should be modified to ensure new learning opportunities that maintain the child’s engagement with materials, peers, or adults.

(Department of Education & Early Childhood Development, 2012)

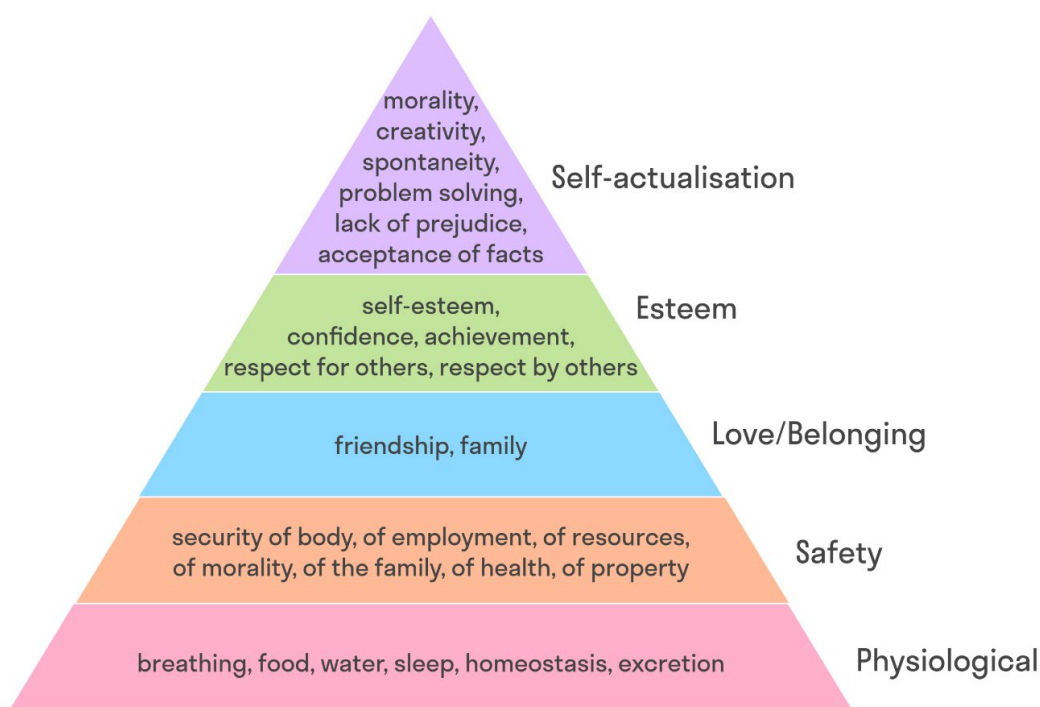


How do you recognise and develop children’s strengths?
 Could you name a strength for every child in the program?
 Are there further observations required?
 How do you learn about children’s strengths from:

- The Child
- Your Colleagues
- The Family

3. Children’s Basic Needs: Are children’s basic needs being met?

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (below) shows us that the needs lower down in the hierarchy must be satisfied before children can attend to needs higher up. For example, children need to have food and water and feel safe, before they can engage in connection and use their strengths.



Could the child’s behaviour be communicating that they:

- are feeling unwell
- are tired or overwhelmed
- have had a disruptive day
- have encountered conflict with peers
- have found it difficult to find someone to play with
- need a break ?

(Mcleod, 2022).

Example: Charlie has yelled at his friends and thrown the tennis racket across the courts.

Unhelpful Assumption: Charlie doesn't like to lose and is being a "bad sport".

Behaviour as Communication: Charlie dropped his iPad at school today. The screen smashed and he was unable to do his presentation that he worked really hard on. He's also worried about getting in trouble at home.



Can you think of any examples of when meeting children's basic needs has changed that child's behaviour and the course of their morning/afternoon at OSHC?

4. The Environment: What impact is the environment having on children's behaviour?

When challenging behaviour is present it is useful to examine what is going on in the child's environment. Some useful reflection questions are:

- Are we only seeing this behaviour in a particular environment?
- Are there any behaviour "hot spots" at your service? These are the locations or instances where behaviour regularly occurs?
- If yes - What is it about this environment that is making it difficult for children to participate?

Some children may have differences in the way they process sensory information from their environment and the world around them. This includes information about sight, sound, touch, taste, smell, balance and movement.

In busy and unstructured OSHC environments, differences in sensory processing may lead to challenges with attention, emotional regulation and social interactions. Educators need to give consideration to how children's interactions with the environment can contribute to behaviour. Some children may "over respond" to sensory input (e.g., a child who won't enter the toilet for fear of a hand dryer going off). Other children may "under respond" and require extra sensation (e.g., a child who requires a lot of movement) (Miller, 2006).

Sensory processing differences in OSHC may present as:

- Showing heightened reactivity to sound, touch or movement.
- Being under-reactive to certain sensations (e.g., not noticing their name being called, being touched, a high pain threshold).
- Appearing lethargic/disinterested or appearing to mostly be in their "own world".
- Having difficulty regulating their own behavioural and emotional responses (e.g., meltdowns, being reactive, need for control, impulsive behaviours, easily frustrated).
- Being easily distracted and having challenges with attention and concentration.
- Having delayed motor skills, appearing clumsy, having differences with coordination, balance and motor planning skills.
- Displaying restricted eating habits, may be labelled a "picky eater".
- Becoming distressed during self-care tasks (e.g. hair-brushing, hair-washing, nail cutting, dressing, tying shoelaces, self-feeding). (Miller, 2006).



Are there any behaviour “hot spots” at your service? Those locations or instances where challenging behaviour regularly occurs?

What can you identify in these environments that may be escalating behaviour?

Consider:

- Noise levels, lighting, textures, temperature, humidity
- Competition, timeframes, urgency
- Not enough opportunities for movement and activity

Example: Keira is not being safe in the toilets. She’s turning the light switches and hand dryers off and climbing under the toilet doors. This scares the younger children who become very upset when the lights go off.

Unhelpful Assumption: Keira is being silly to get a reaction from her friends. She’s deliberately antagonising the younger children because she finds it funny.

Behaviour as Communication: Keira processes sensory information in a different way. The flickering lights and the sound of the hand dryers, make going to the toilet very difficult. Keira turns these off to avoid the distressing input. She climbs under the toilet door because when they open, they can slam shut and cause the stalls to shake.

5. The Program – Is this child actively engaged in the program? Would they feel like they have a voice? Would they feel like an active participant?

Lack of engagement has been associated with the development of challenging behaviour. Offering an engaging, child-directed program is essential in supporting children’s participation. Children being active participants and having their preferences and choices acknowledged can decrease the occurrence of challenging behaviour. Research has found lower levels of engagement occur in adult directed activities as opposed to child-initiated activities (Prykanowski et al. ,2018).

What opportunities do you give to all children to direct their play?

Example: Will has been making unsafe choices across the program. He tackles younger children, uses equipment unsafely to “fight” others, hides in the garden and climbs trees in out of bounds areas. When educators try to speak to him, he ignores them or tells them to go away.

Unhelpful Assumption: Will is deliberately defiant. He’s allowed to do these things at home and doesn’t want to respond to structure or instructions.

Behaviour as Communication: Will is not engaged in the program and doesn’t like attending. He says the educators don’t let him do anything he wants to do. He likes AFL, camping and laser tag, but says there’s no cool stuff at OSHC. He is feeling disengaged and unheard. He thinks the educators aren’t interested in his suggestions.



Australian children consider Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to be one of their least upheld rights. Consider:

- Would children at your service feel that adults listen to them?
- Would the child you're thinking about feel like they are an active participant?

6. Routines & Transitions: Do routines and transitions advantage or disadvantage certain children?

OSHC is well known for the number of transitions involved for children – arriving at before school care, transitioning to school, arriving at after school care and going home. Add into these micro transitions between various routines and activities across the session and it becomes apparent that children are required to stop, start and pack up many times during the day – mostly governed by adult agenda's rather than their own.

Transitions can be challenging for many reasons. Moving from a preferred activity to something that may be challenging, a chaotic sensory environment, anxiety about what happens next, executive functioning (organisational) skills and time constraints all make withdrawing from hyperfocus challenging. Educators should prepare children for times of transition using their knowledge of children, including their communication preferences and support needs (Martinelli, n.d.).

Transition Support Strategies	
Prior Warnings:	“The oval is closing at 5:00pm today because AFL is using it then.” “20 minutes until the oval closes”, “10 minutes”, “5 minutes” etc.
Visuals:	Timers can be used to visually countdown to transitions. “When the timer finishes, we need to go to school.”
Prompts:	“The timer has gone off, what do we need to do first?” “When the bell goes, what should we do?” “When it's pack up time, where would you like me to keep this?” “What comes next?”
Identifying Natural End Points:	Sometimes there are obvious end points of activities that make transitioning easier. E.g., instead of “15 minutes on the gaming device” try “play until 2 races are complete”. Instead of “10 minutes more of Lego” try “when you've finished making this car, then we'll put the Lego away”. This is not always possible but is often less stressful for children.
Remind Children When They Can Participate In That Activity Again:	“It's pack up time now, but when you arrive this afternoon, I'll make sure the Lego is out.” “I can see you have more work to do on this creation. Would you like me to put out the materials again tomorrow?”
Reminder About What Is Next:	“Remember that in 10 minutes we are practicing a fire drill. We will need to pause the activity while we complete that”. “Remember that you have a chess lesson at 3:30 pm today, we can continue this after”.

(Moore, 2020)



- Are there any routines or transitions that are challenging for children to participate in?
- Who is advantaged and disadvantaged by these current procedures?

7. Skill Development: How can we support this child with realistic skill development?

Children are continuously learning how to manage their emotions, respond to challenges and get their needs met. Therefore, children will undoubtedly express their emotions or try to achieve their goals in ways that may be challenging to others. Through tailoring explicit strategies to children's level of development, modelling social and emotional skills and offering opportunities to practice these, educators can support children's acquisition of these core competencies. Remember an important part of MTOP is Identity. The skills we support children to develop should not imply the child is broken or make the child change who they are. They should be meaningful to the child.

Example: You hear a loud scream and turn to see Harriet, a five-year-old girl, crying at the craft table. She is upset because she can't get her creation to stick together.

Unhelpful Assumption: Harriet is oversensitive and isn't used to things not going her way.

Behaviour as Communication: Harriet is still learning to manage her emotions and persevere in the face of difficulty. Developmentally this is to be expected. Harriet is not achieving a lot of success at school and views OSHC as her opportunity to showcase her strengths.



- What age appropriate skill development can we support in OSHC?
- How do we ensure that it still respects children's cultural, linguistic, neuro-diversity and their overall identity?



Complete the following reflective behaviour audit for a child at your service. For each area answer "yes or no" and write your observations about what is occurring in this space for the child. You may find you need to spend more time making observations. If necessary, develop an action item to further support this child's participation.

Reflective Behaviour Audit

Audit Area	Yes/No	Observations	Action Items
<p>Relationships: Does this child have access to positive relationships with educators and peers?</p>			
<p>Strengths-Based: Is this child actively engaged and using their strengths in the program?</p>			
<p>Basic Needs: Are this child's basic needs being met?</p>			
<p>The Environment: Is the environment having an impact on this child's behaviour?</p>			
<p>The Program: Is this child actively engaged in the program? Would they feel like they have a voice? Would they feel like an active participant?</p>			

<p>Routines & Transitions:</p> <p>Is this child able to participate in routines and transitions? Do they advantage or disadvantage this child's participation?</p>			
<p>Skill Development:</p> <p>Can we support this child with realistic skill development?</p>			

Supporting Emotional Regulation Skills

In this next section of the workbook, educators will explore emotional regulation and consider how they might effectively support children to co-regulate and develop social and emotional competency.

There are a variety of reasons that some children may not process and regulate emotions in the same way as others. In their work with children, educators may notice indicators that a child is dysregulated. Signs of emotional dysregulation include:

- Intense emotions (in comparison to the situation that triggered them)
- Challenges in regulating emotions
- Swift movement between the far ends of the emotional spectrum
- Avoiding difficult emotions
- Behaving in an impulsive manner
- Reduced ability to focus and re-focus on tasks
- Suicidal ideation

Children with sensory processing differences can also become dysregulated in response to the sensory input in various environments. Signs of sensory dysregulation may include:

- Avoidance of particular environments
- Difficulty participating in certain environments
- Shrieking or high-pitched yelling
- Impulsivity and risk taking
- Meltdowns
- Difficulty following instructions

Practical examples of dysregulation in children may include:

- Excessive crying
- Swift escalation of behaviour

- Meltdowns
- Anxiety and fear
- Challenges resolving conflict
- Challenges in making and maintaining friends (due to emotional regulation)
- Challenges complying with requests
- Extreme anger
- Impulsivity that can result in harmful risk-taking

(Mclean, 2018)

Children’s social and emotional development is built on the foundation of responsive, consistent and sensitive relationships. This knowledge is reflected in the principle of MTOP “secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships”. In building positive relationships with children, educators should consider how they model calm gentle behaviour, even when children’s emotions escalate.

Within these relationships it is important that children feel heard, and that includes when they’re experiencing strong emotions. Traditionally, we were taught to “ignore” undesirable behaviour in order to get it to stop. However, children don’t feel secure if they are distressed and no one responds to them. This strategy does not afford children the opportunity to learn how to get their needs met in safer or more appropriate ways. Nor does it validate or support their understandings of emotions.

Self-Regulation is a skill that begins to develop in the pre-school years but continues developing into adulthood. Educators have an important role to play in supporting the development of regulation skills. This support starts as co-regulation, educators sharing their calm. Educators can engage in the following “emotion coaching” steps as one way to support the development of self-regulation (Stillar, et al. 2018).

1. Attend to the emotion
2. Name the emotion
3. Listen with empathy and validate children’s feelings
4. Meet the need of the emotion
5. Problem solve and pinpoint decision making

Attend to the Emotion

When educators are actively supervising, it allows them to pick up on important non-verbal indicators that children may be grappling with their emotions. Reading the “emotional current” of the room can help educators implement proactive strategies to support a child to regulate their emotions and behaviour. Educators attend to children’s emotions by approaching the situation calmly and acknowledging the presence of emotion.

Example: “Jane, I can tell that something is bothering you right now”.

Name the Emotion

Educators should then put into words the emotions or range of emotions that they think the child could be experiencing. This supports children to connect what their body is communicating to a physical emotion.

Example: “You seem very angry/frustrated/frightened/irritated/confused to me”.

Listen Empathetically & Validate Children's Feelings

Educators should communicate that they understand children's experience. It's important to remember that all emotions are valid, even if the accompanying behaviour is not appropriate. With this step, educators should accept, allow and validate emotions that are different from what they expected or are hard for them to understand.

Example: "I can understand why you might feel angry. It really hurts when people break something important of ours, especially when you've been working so hard on the Lego".

Meet the Need of the Emotion

Each emotion has a corresponding need and, in this stage, educators need to support children to meet that need. As articulated in MTOP, children need secure respectful and reciprocal relationships. Children do not feel secure if they are experiencing big emotions and no one responds. As an example, educators should comfort children who cry or show signs of distress. This respects the child's right to be and feel heard.

Example:

- Sadness – needs comfort and understanding
- Anger – needs patience and boundaries
- Fear – needs safety and security

Problem Solve & Pinpoint Decision Making

Problem solving communicates that educators are available to offer support. It is important that problem solving occurs after the other steps. In this stage educators can support children to develop strategies to regulate emotions in the future and discuss the outcomes of any action's children have taken. This is where educators can support children to examine the cause and effect of their actions and encourage appropriate responsibility and accountability.

Example: "If you're feeling angry or someone else makes a choice that you're not happy with, what else could you do?" "You threw the Lego out the window, so what do you think we might need to do now?"

Strategies developed in this stage will be dependent on the individual needs of the child but may include:

- Supporting children to choose a safe space to access when upset
- Introducing visuals to support children to communicate emotions
- Role playing responses to various situations
- Developing conflict resolution strategies
- Identifying who to go to for help
- Understanding children's preferred activities and interests to use as a de-escalation strategy



Case Study: Jayden was playing a game of Go Fish. You witnessed him throw the cards and he is now crying at the card table. The other children say he's sad because he lost the game. Consider how you'd implement the following steps:

- Attend to the emotion
- Name the Emotion
- Listen with empathy and validate children's feelings
- Meet the need of the emotion
- Problem solve and pinpoint decision making

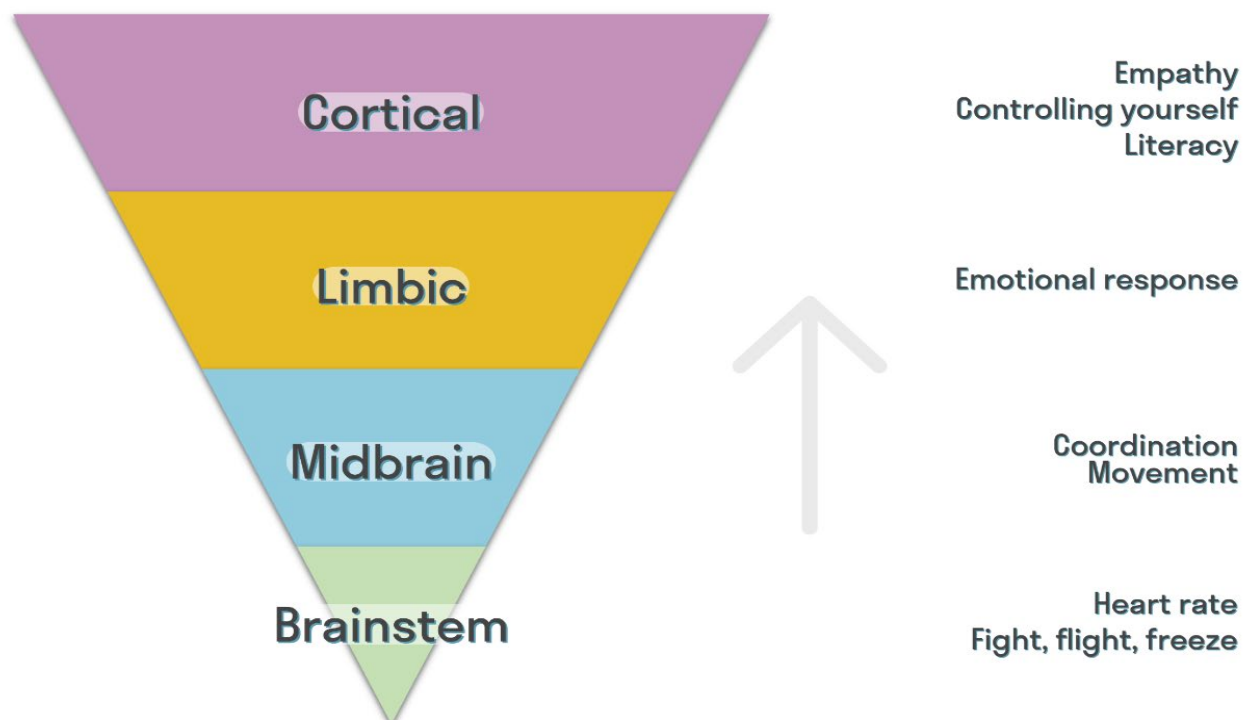
Responding to Escalated Behaviour

Behaviour and the Brain

In order to effectively respond to children's behaviour, we must understand the role the brain plays when children experience strong emotions or stress. In this next section, educators will explore how to respond to escalated behaviour using an understanding of brain development and neurological approaches to regulation.

The brain is organised and developed in a hierarchical way as seen in the picture below.

Perry's Neurosequential Model



(Perry, 2020)

Brainstem: Survival Brain

This part of your brain is responsible for keeping you alive. It controls things like:
Heart rate, breath, body temp, sleep/wake cycle, movement.

Limbic: Emotional Brain

Responsible for regulating emotions, attachment and behaviour.

Cortical: Thinking Brain

Responsible for higher functioning and deep thinking. It controls things like:
Communication processing – reading, writing, talking, listening, critical thinking, problem solving, inhibiting, planning, and learning.

These regions of the brain can have noticeable changes when someone experiences stress.

Brainstem: Survival Brain

Prioritises some survival functions (e.g., heart beats faster, so you can breathe in more oxygen, which is essential if you need to fight or run away). Extra energy goes to your limbs so you can move faster or be stronger.

Limbic: Emotional Brain

Emotions become more intense, this acts like a warning system to help us respond to threats quickly.

Cortical: Thinking Brain

Goes offline – the energy used in the thinking brain is sent to other prioritised brain and body systems.

(Beacon House, 2019).

In the modern era, many of the threats we face are symbolic, however, evolutionarily, our brains evolved to deal with physical threats to our survival that required a quick response. As a result, our body still responds with biological changes that prepare us to fight/flight/freeze. When a threat is detected, the brain will respond accordingly, maybe by shutting down and isolating, maybe by increasing aggression. This is our brain's automatic response to stress. This is not a decision that is made using rational thinking.

When children are dysregulated and upset, they have little access to the thinking brain's insight and reasoning. Unfortunately, what many of us have been taught is that when children are distressed or experiencing a meltdown, we need to view these as deliberate choices and respond by targeting the "thinking brain". These techniques put us at odds with the brain's natural survival functions and WILL NOT work. No amount of talking, reasoning or reminding the child of the rules will end a meltdown. Until that child is regulated, they cannot reason (Perry, 2021).

Employ Diffusing Techniques

In understanding the brain's response to stress, Dr Bruce Perry, a neuroscientist has shown that heading straight to the "reasoning" part of the brain in times of crisis, is not the best approach in these moments. If a child is dysregulated or disconnected, educators will need to intervene in a simple sequence (Perry, 2020).

Regulate: calming children's physiological stress response

- Limited, soothing language
- Safe spaces
- Intentional regulation of non-verbals
- Quiet tones
- Allow extra time for processing
- Ensuring safety

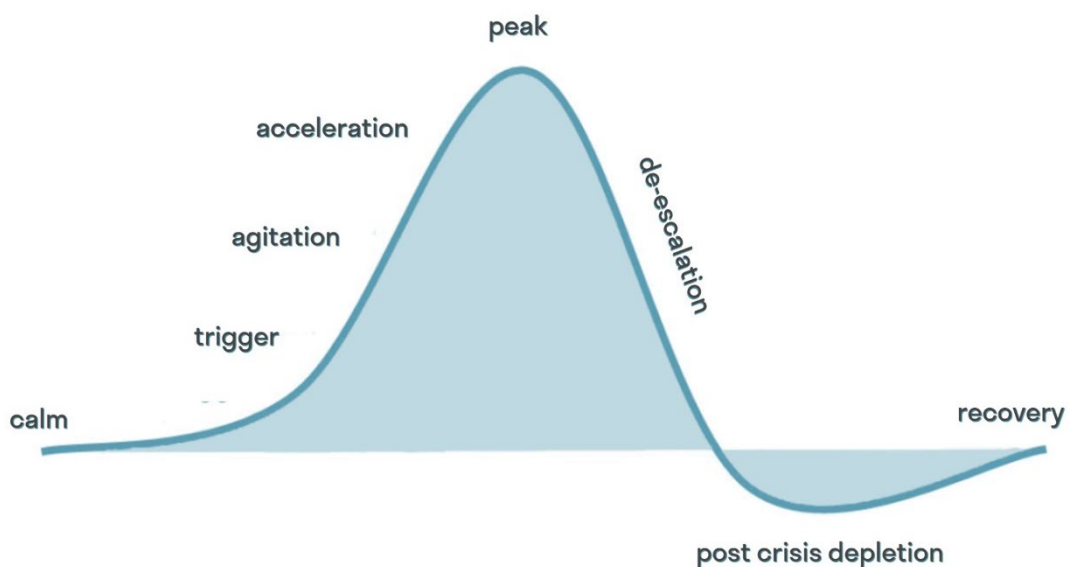
Relate: connecting with the child through an attuned and sensitive relationship

- Acknowledge children's feelings
- Share your experiences of that emotion
- Calm, sensitive dialogue
- Find truth in what they're saying

Reason: supporting the child to reflect, learn, remember, articulate and become self-assured.

- Discuss and practice regulation techniques
- Remind children of safe spaces and people
- Teach children the language of emotions
- Connect feelings with decision making
- Develop individualised strategies

Pattern occurring before, during and after meltdown



(Colvin & Terrance, 2015).

The escalation (sometimes referred to as the de-escalation) cycle is a way of understanding and predictably responding to children’s behaviour. Below is an example of responses that Educators may be able to draw upon at each stage of the cycle (Perry, 2020).

Stage and Explanation	Educators Response
<p>Calm:</p> <p>Calm looks different for everybody, but typically involves children engaging, learning new skills, having conversations, accepting corrective feedback and ignoring irritants.</p>	<p>Reason:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on maintaining consistent environments • Communicate expectations • Conversations about emotions • Develop an awareness of challenging situations and practice response strategies • Build positive relationships • Understand children’s interests & strengths
<p>Trigger:</p> <p>Activities or events that increase anxiety and frustration e.g., a series of unresolved conflicts, the environment, a sudden change in routine.</p>	<p>Reason / Relate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove trigger • Reduce stimuli • Strategy reminder • Use humour or distraction • Relate to feelings • Validate feelings
<p>Agitation:</p> <p>Behaviours that signal disengagement, children finding it difficult to participate e.g., flushed faces, clenched fists, moving in and out of group activities.</p>	<p>Relate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educator empathy • Labelling and validating emotions • Specific calming strategies (developed during the “calm” phase) • Re-direction to preferred activities • Find an opportunity for the child to experience success
<p>Acceleration:</p> <p>Behaviours that are designed to test limits and get a reaction – behaviours designed to engage in a power struggle e.g., ignoring instructions, name calling, low level destructions, refusal.</p>	<p>Relate / Regulate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow additional time to process instructions • Disengage from power struggles • Distraction • Non-confrontational limit setting • “Let’s” statements

<p>Peak:</p> <p>When children have lost control and are in the fight, flight or freeze response. Children have no access to their “thinking brain” during this time.</p>	<p>Regulate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow space • Call for support • Ensure safety of others • Be intentional with posture, tone, cadence • Follow previously developed response plan
<p>De-Escalation:</p> <p>A reduction in peak behaviours. Children may seem scared, confused, try to minimise the problem, may appear to be back at baseline.</p>	<p>Regulate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove excess attention • Reduce stimuli • Additional time to calm • Intentional regulation of non-verbals.
<p>Recovery:</p> <p>A return to baseline that may be characterised by a readiness to re-engage, have a conversation. Children may be tired or withdrawn.</p>	<p>Reason:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to children • Debrief and pinpoint decision making • Record incident • Refer to earlier limits • Reinforce positive behaviour

In helping children to regulate and calm their stress response (fight, flight, freeze), educators must be ready and willing to respond to children in distress. This requires educators to be regulated as well - **dysregulated adults dysregulate children**. Emotional contagion speaks to the way our emotions can calm or escalate those of the child. One of the best ways to support regulation is to be present, calm and centred ourselves. This is why educator wellbeing is such a high priority when being responsive to children.

An example scenario has been included below:

Case Study: At Mystery OSHC, the Grade 2’s and up are sent to school at 8:30am and the preps and 1’s remain for a further 15 minutes before being walked to class. The educators have been discussing how difficult it has been to get Sam (prep) to settle during prep roll call and group time. This morning there was a significant escalation in Sam’s behaviour.

When pack up time was signaled, Sam threw his toys into the box and stood up quickly, standing near the bag racks watching the activity around the room. **(Trigger)**. The educators decided to ignore Sam and focus on the rest of the group.

The prep’s voted on reading a story that morning and all went to sit down. Sam began muttering about how he didn’t want to read a story and was pacing around the back of the room, lying on couches and quickly standing back up to resume pacing. **(Agitation)**. One of the educators told

Sam he needed to be sitting down and listening to the story so the rest of the educators could begin tidying the area.

Sam began to call out across the room “this is such a stupid story, shut up, blah blah blah, not listening to this story.” He began throwing Lego onto the couch as the educators continued to tidy up around him. Educators kept trying to stand in front of him and prevent him from throwing the Lego. **(Acceleration)**

Sam approached one of the educators and said, “I’m going to help you tidy up now”. The educator responded, “no you’ve been very rude, you need to go and sit down and listen like all the others are doing.” Sam snatched toys out of the educators’ hands and began throwing them at the group of preps listening to the story. As educators moved the other children away, Sam ran out of the room and onto the oval **(Peak)**.

A teacher aide from Sam’s classroom and an educator monitored Sam as he walked around the edge of the oval, kicking rocks and picking flowers **(De-escalation)**.

Twenty minutes later, Sam approached the educators and teacher aide and initiated a conversation about a bug he saw on his walk around the oval **(Recovery)**.

How could things have been done differently with knowledge of the escalation cycle?

Step 1 – Calm: When Sam is calm, he enjoys building things with Lego and using these in imaginary games with his peers. The educators had already identified that Sam was having difficulty settling at prep roll call. While Sam was calm, this would have been a good opportunity to have a conversation about why prep roll call was so difficult and help Sam identify strategies to make his participation easier. Does he need help packing his bag? Does he need a safe space to store his Lego? Is sitting on the ground difficult? Is the chaotic environment making him anxious?

Step 2 – Trigger: At first glance it appears that packing up may be Sam’s trigger, maybe he doesn’t want to stop doing something fun. Maybe it’s the story that he didn’t want to read? In this situation, Sam was actually really anxious to go to school. The call to pack up indicated that it wasn’t long until he had to head to an environment that was really challenging for him. Knowing what was coming next was his trigger.

If they had identified this, educators could have used distraction and calming techniques to support Sam. When pack up time was signaled, Sam could have been given a job to do, he might have had a “calm box” to access to regulate himself while the transition was occurring. Down the track, Sam and a classmate were collected by a teacher aide avoiding group time and supporting him to settle into class earlier and to allow time to regulate before the other children arrived. By choosing to ignore Sam after he encountered a trigger, the educators allowed the escalation cycle to progress by not offering the support he needed to regulate.

Step 3 – Agitation: When the educators ignored Sam pacing and jumping on the couches down the back of the room, again, they failed to support him to help regulate. Educators could have used Sam’s strengths and interests in a calming activity – “before you listen to the story, do you

think you could take some photos of your Lego creation please”, “while you listen to the story, could you build me a Lego car please”.

Educators could also have used emotion coaching “it looks like you’re frustrated, that makes sense if it’s not a story you wanted to listen to.” Acknowledging and validating Sam’s feelings may have gone a long way in preventing further escalation. Instead, the educator tried to “reason” with Sam by telling him the expectation. At this point in time though, approaches needed to focus on “relating” rather than “reasoning”.

Step 4 – Acceleration: When Sam began to call out the educators could have removed him from the triggering environment, “let’s go water the garden quickly”. They could have offered a distraction. “Can you count how many children are here for roll call please?” They might have the opportunity to use non-confrontational limit setting. “When you stop calling out, I can give you a job to do” or “first put down the toys then I’ll get you the yoga ball”. “If you keep throwing the Lego, they’ll break or go missing and we’ll be unable to use them”. Sam actually attempted to regulate himself by engaging in the pack up routine. The actions involved in packing up can support regulation (walking, lifting etc.). The educator who intervened using an authoritative approach, did not recognize the stress that Sam was under in the moment and viewed his behaviour as a “choice”.

Step 5 – Peak: When Sam arrived at peak, there’s little educators can do other than ensure the safety of Sam and others. They did this by removing the other children from the area and following Sam calmly onto the oval, allowing additional time and space for Sam to calm down. In this moment, educators needed to be intentional with their posture and facial expression. Using an educator that Sam has a good relationship with may have helped him regulate faster.

Step 6 – De-Escalation: As Sam walked around the oval, educators allowed time for him to return to baseline. This could have involved using specific resources if available, minimizing language and demands placed on the time, allowing additional time to calm and process, reducing stimuli where possible.

Step 7 – Recovery: When Sam arrived back at baseline, this is when it’s important to have a debriefing conversation. These conversations are outlined below.



Have you ever, unintentionally escalated a situation?

How do you regulate your own emotions when responding to children’s?

Debriefing Conversations: Social and Emotional Learning & Behaviour

Following an escalation, the alternative to punishment is problem solving. Often intervention will be required to support children, but we need to keep reminding ourselves and our stakeholders that intervention doesn't have to mean punishment. In fact, punishment is going to make it far more difficult to have an effective conversation.

Having conversations with children about the implications of their behaviour can be an effective part of the teaching process, only if these conversations are framed around meeting needs, promoting children's social, ethical, and intellectual development rather than simply getting them to do whatever they're told. Reflecting on questions like:

- How did my action affect people?
- What kind of person do I want to be?
- What kind of support do I need?
- What kind of OSHC service do we want to have?"

For children who have learnt over time that if you displease the adults with power, they'll make you miserable, having these sorts of conversations can be difficult. They need to unlearn previously held beliefs about the role of adults in these situations.

The types of conversations that we need to be having with children are grounded in an understanding of social and emotional learning. According to Yale University (2022), research shows that emotions influence:

- Attention, memory, and learning
- Decision making
- Creativity
- Mental and physical wellbeing
- Ability to form and maintain positive relationships
- Academic and workplace performance

In conversations and guidance with children, educators need to acknowledge the value of emotions and the influence these have on children's participation and behaviour.

RULER is a social and emotional learning program that helps professionals who work with children support social and emotional development. RULER is an acronym for the 5 skills of emotional intelligence:

- Recognizing emotions in oneself and others
- Understanding the causes and consequences of emotions
- Labelling emotions with a nuanced vocabulary
- Expressing emotions in accordance with cultural norms and social context
- Regulating emotions with helpful strategies

When educators need to intervene to support children with their behaviour, the following questions may act as a guide to unpack the situation.

- What happened?
- How did I feel?

- What caused my feelings?
- How did I express and regulate my emotions?
- How might my actions have affected others?
- Next time how might I respond differently?

These questions support children to understand the consequences of their behaviour on themselves and others and provides an understanding of emotions and strategies to respond to difficult situations. As early as 1983, this type of “discipline” was found to support children to engage socially because they genuinely feel for other people, not as a result of rewards, punishments or threats (Hoffman, 1983).

Additional RULER Resources for Out Of School Time:	
https://www.rulerapproach.org/ost/	
Behaviour Guidance Sounds Like:	Behaviour Management Sounds Like:
How could Ruby be feeling after you tore up her picture? Is there anything we can do to fix the picture?	Apologise to Ruby and leave the craft table. I won't tolerate rudeness here.
If you run out of the school, I will have to let your parents know because I'm worried about your safety. Stay here and we can work together to solve the problem.	If you leave here, I'm calling your parents and the police and you won't be coming back to After School Care for the rest of the week. You'll miss out on the pizza party on Friday.
It sounded like you were feeling very angry and that's when you threw the toy. What could you do differently next time that you're angry?	Stop throwing toys and yelling at me. That's disgusting behaviour. You can find another area to play in.
How can we move on from this situation? What needs to happen now?	Pick up the toy and apologise to me right now. I won't be spoken to like that.
Please let me explain why I asked you to do this, let's talk about safety and what that means.	You ALWAYS do what adults tell you to do straight away. I shouldn't have to ask twice.

Problem Solving Approach to Conflict

The idea of social thinning is discussed frequently in relation to children who have experienced trauma. This term is used to refer to the process of children losing access to social support based on their behaviour. This social support is essential to supporting children to make positive connections and achieve success. If children are consistently displaying behaviour that isolates them or alienates them from their peers, educators may be required to support with conflict resolution and relational repair following an escalation.

Through applying a problem-solving framework to conflict resolution educators can coach school age children in these techniques. In this way, children can be taught how to use the following framework to discuss their differences and resolve problems or conflict respectfully. This framework has been adapted from Evans (2022), *You can't come to my birthday party!:* Conflict resolution with young children.

1. Stop Conflict and Attend to Emotion

Educators should direct the child/ren away from the immediate situation/problem/ conflict and allow a couple of minutes 'cool-down' for everyone to regain their composure. For example, "I can see that you are angry right now so I want you to find a space for yourself and then we can discuss... your behaviour, the problem, conflict etc.'" Knowing your children will help with this step, being able to read the emotional current of the room and prompt children to use their preferred strategies to calm down.

2. Define the Problem

In this step, the educator allows each child to present their response to the following questions (or similar questions). Active and respectful listening is critical here and educators need to facilitate this process to ensure each child involved in the conflict has an appropriate opportunity to be heard.

- What was happening before the problem/conflict arose?
- What happened next?
- Why do you think that it happened?
- How did you feel?
- Do we have a behaviour guideline/rule/limit regarding this behaviour? What is it? What are the consequences of not following the behaviour guideline/rule?
- What do you want to happen now?
- What might other people want?

Educators should encourage children to be objective and specific. They must talk about the behaviour or problem, rather than labelling any of the children. Educators can reflect back to children what they are hearing so that they can clarify their perspective if necessary. Educators can use this opportunity to pinpoint decision making "what choice did you make to manage your anger?" "So you told me you were sad, what decision did you make then?"

If children identify choices or actions that are not safe, educators can have a conversation with them about alternative strategies to manage this moving forward.

Once the problem has been defined and understood, the next step is to brainstorm potential solutions.

3. Brainstorm Potential Solutions

Educators should give children an opportunity to suggest potential solutions to the matter under discussion. Review natural and logical consequences related to the behaviour/problem.

Once the solutions have been identified, it is time to evaluate potential solutions.

4. Evaluate Potential Solutions

Encourage children to discuss and evaluate the merits of the proposed solutions. This includes considering whether or not they think each potential solution would work, is fair and what they expect would happen if they tried it. The aim is for the children to identify a solution to the problem that they all agree to.

5. The Plan

Educators will discuss how the children will implement the solution that they have agreed to. What needs to happen first? Do they need help from others (e.g. educators, other children) to make the solution work? How will they know if they have been successful?

6. Be Prepared to Offer Follow Up Support

While our aim is for school age children to be able to resolve problems and differences independently, it is important to recognise that children may require assistance from educators to understand and use the problem-solving framework. Small group discussions, role plays and reflective listening are some of the techniques that we can use to encourage children to recognise inappropriate behaviour within the group and identify what action they can take to resolve disagreements and problems using constructive and socially acceptable behaviours. Even after support has been offered, it is important to recognise that we may need to be on hand to offer follow up support if emotions heighten or conflict ensues again.

Case Study: Ben and Chris were playing video games. When it was Ben's turn, Chris decided to "help" him win the race by snatching the controller and taking over. In response, Ben kicked Chris and tried to snatch the controller back. Both boys were holding on to the controller and attempting to wrestle it out of the other's hands. The supervising educator intervened quickly to stop this situation from escalating.

Step 1 - Stop Conflict and Attend to Emotion: The educator asked Ben and Chris if she could hold the controller. This was a trigger for both of the children and needed to be removed from the situation. She paused the game so that she could better de-escalate the situation. She called for support as she still had other children in the area requiring supervision. The educator could tell that Ben still needed a moment to calm down and asked if he'd like to grab a drink before having a conversation.

Step 2 - Define the Problem: The educator moved the boys to a quiet area where conversation could take place. She explained that each person was going to have an opportunity to share what happened and when the other person is speaking, we listen. If they disagree or want to add something, they can do so when it is their turn.

She supported each child to identify what was happening before the conflict and what happened to cause a disagreement.

Chris explained that he was just trying to help Ben, because he thought Ben would like to win the game. Ben explained that when Chris grabbed the controller, he felt really angry because Chris had already had a turn and it was his turn now.

As part of this section educators can **pinpoint decision making** - this involves connecting emotions to actions. The educator asked Ben "when you felt angry, how did you manage that?"

Ben responded that he kicked Chris because he got so angry. The educator said, “How do you think Chris would’ve felt at that time”. Ben said, “Scared or angry at me”. The educator asked “If you were angry and worried about missing your turn, what could you have done instead?”

Ben identified that he could’ve asked for help or he could’ve asked Chris to stop.

Chris identified that Ben might’ve felt annoyed when he grabbed the switch controller, because he didn’t know he was just trying to help. He might have thought that he was trying to take his turn.

Remember, some children genuinely won’t know what they or other people were feeling in these moments. If you receive silence or a shrug in response, use the opportunity to engage in the “Emotion Coaching” steps from above.

Step 3 & 4 – Brainstorm Potential Solutions & Evaluate: The educator supported Ben and Chris to identify potential solutions. The educator asked Ben if there was anything he’d like to do to check that Chris’s leg was ok. Ben decided to apologise to Chris and asked if he needed an ice pack. Upon hearing Ben’s apology, Chris told Ben he wouldn’t touch his controller next time. The educator asked the boys to think about what needs to happen now for them to re-join the program safely. Educators should not force children to apologise.

Chris said that Ben should lose his turn because he kicked him. The educator explained that if that was the solution they decided, Chris will also have to miss a turn due to the choices that he made. Ben suggested that the video games get turned off all together. The educator asked the boys if that would be fair to all the other children waiting for their turn? They agreed that it wouldn’t. Ben then suggested that they could both re-join the video games together and be in the same group, instead of a verse race they could have a team race where they work together. Chris agreed that this would be a good idea because he could help Ben while still allowing Ben to have a turn.

Step 5 & 6 – Plan & Follow Up Support: The educator asked Ben and Chris how they’ll implement that solution. They discussed talking to the educator to add their name to the list, deciding what characters they will play as and sitting in line for their turn. The educator asked the boys to think about what help they might need if they start to feel angry or frustrated. Chris said that they should let the educator know or go for a walk to get a drink. When the conversation was finished, the educator communicated with the team respectfully to let them know to be on hand to support the boys to implement their solution and offer encouragement and guidance as required.

Case Study: Helen and Jackson share a friendship group, but lately there have been disagreements about the rules of various games. Jackson decides that he does not want to play with Helen and tells the rest of the group to ignore her and not let her join their game. Helen has no other friends at OSHC today and she’s asked other educators for help, but they tell her to find someone else to play with. Helen becomes frustrated and follows the group around, disrupting their games and calling them names. When the children try and walk away, she blocks the door. Jackson becomes frustrated and swears at Helen, threatening to hurt her. The two children end up yelling at each other, while the rest of the group watches on. You are the educator nearby and need to support them to resolve this conflict. How would you respond?

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Notes

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

Complex Behaviour Support



Factors Influencing Behaviour

Read the following scenarios and identify what factors are influencing behaviour (i.e. what is this behaviour communicating). Consider what proactive, preventative strategies you could use to minimise the occurrence of this behaviour. Refer to the examples in the Educator Workbook for support.

Scenario	Additional Information	Factors Influencing Behaviour	What strategies could you use to prevent this behaviour?
<p>The OSHC service has recently started using the computer lab. This becomes a very busy environment with lots of social interaction, music, the sound of chairs wheeling back and forward and the educator calling out to get people's attention.</p> <p>Victor loves playing on the computer so the educators were surprised when they started seeing behaviour in this space. Victor has begun pushing people off chairs, yelling "BE QUIET" to everyone and having meltdowns when he can't concentrate on his game.</p>	<p>Educators have been asked to observe Victor and this is the only environment that they have noticed this behaviour.</p>		
<p>Penny has been pushing other children and throwing their bags at afternoon tea. This behaviour has only started in last two weeks.</p>	<p>Penny's dad has travelled inter-state for work. He left several weeks ago and will be away for the next month.</p>		

<p>Jack is five years old and is new to the school and the OSHC program. He has been following around a group of children in his grade. He has been taking their toys and breaking their creations and then running away laughing.</p>	<p>Jack's teacher reports that Jack has found it difficult to make friends in his classroom. Educators have observed that other than these instances they don't see Jack interact with other children.</p>		
<p>Shiva has been running into the school grounds when educators try to talk to her. There is only one educator that she appears to respond to in these instances.</p>	<p>Shiva has told her mum that none of the educators like her and that they only talk to her when she's in trouble.</p>		

Preventive Strategies

For each of the below factors influencing behaviour, list one (1) preventative strategy.

Factor Influencing Behaviour	Preventative Strategy
The environment is too noisy and overwhelming.	
The child hasn't made any friends.	
The child isn't hungry at afternoon tea time, but their behaviour changes later in the afternoon if they don't eat.	

Dysregulation Checklist

Complete Part A, an observation on a child who exhibits signs of dysregulation using the template below. Identify them by first name only. Be mindful that Part B of this task requires you to outline your response to this child.

Part A

Child:

Age:

Date Observed:

Summary of behaviour:

Did the behaviour involve any of the below signs of dysregulation? (tick as many as apply)

- Excessive crying – lasting longer or more intense than the situation calls for
- Swift escalation of behaviour
- Meltdowns
- Anxiety and fear
- Challenges resolving conflict
- Challenges in making and maintaining friends (due to emotional regulation)
- Challenges complying with requests
- Extreme anger
- Impulsivity that can result in harmful risk-taking

Part B

Plan your response to the behaviour identified above using the self-regulation steps outlined in the Educator Workbook. Your response may include a “script” of what you would say or an outline of how you will implement each step.

Attend to the emotion	
Name the emotion	
Listen empathically and validate children’s feelings	
Meet the need of the emotion	
Problem solve and pinpoint decision making	

Practical Application Checklist

Provide an example of when you have done the following:

Organised spaces, resources and routines within scope of own responsibility that reduced potential for stress or frustration in children.

Showed genuine interest in, understanding of, and respect for, all children.

Modelled gentle and calm behaviour and provided reassurance even when children strongly expressed distress, frustration or anger.

What additional information do you need to help you improve these practices?