

## **Distressed Behaviour Policy**

Health and Social Care Standards:

- 1.9 I am recognised as an expert in my own experiences, needs and wishes;*
- 2.15 I am enabled to resolve conflict, agree rules and build positive relationships with other people as much as I can.*
- 3.5 As a child or young person, I am helped to develop a positive view of myself and to form and sustain trusting and secure relationships.*
- 3.13 I am treated as an individual by people who respect my needs, choices and wishes, and anyone making a decision about my future care and support knows me.*

Stramash has a duty of care to ensure that all children who attend settings are **Safe, Healthy, Active, Nurtured, Achieving, Respected, Responsible, and Included** as set out by the national policy document ***Getting it Right for Every Child (2006)***<sup>1</sup>. In addition to this we have a responsibility to protect our staff and take steps to give them training and support so that they feel safe in the workplace.

We aim to create, within all our settings, environments that positively engage children in their play and learning. As the environment is shaped and moulded by the thoughts and input of the children we hope that all children feel supported by the environment.

Stramash have a healthy approach to risky play in the nursery environment. By supporting children to take risks on their own terms, experience healthy stress, but also role-model and support them to deal with that stress in a healthy way, we are creating the building blocks of self-regulating behaviour. Children will also be creating and developing their own personal strategies for recognising and managing their emotions.

Working as a staff team, we also create a nursery climate that is nurturing, empathetic and supportive of all children that attend our settings. We firmly believe that by taking a relational approach and role-modelling emotionally positive behaviours to our children, we are supporting the development of their skills to do so in their own interactions with others.

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<sup>1</sup> [Getting it right for every child \(2006\) Scottish Government](#)

We are aware that, at times, children may display distressed behaviour which may be seen as aggressive or violent. We work to the principle that **all behaviour is communication** - whereby a child's behaviour is a way to communicate how they are feeling, and how we can help. For example, a child who pushes may need space, or a child who is hitting may feel frustrated and not sure how else to express their feelings. It is the role of staff to support, model and coach how to healthily process feelings and how to look after ourselves, our friends and our resources. This places an onus on staff to build positive relationships with all children and families who attend Stramash, so that they can best understand them and their individual support needs.

Stramash as an organisation also recognises that all children are individuals and therefore there isn't one magic cure-all approach to supporting distressed behaviour. Staff work together to employ a variety of interventions, approaches, and plans to support the child based on the individual strengths and needs.

**In light of this knowledge we have some basic principles:**

If children harm another child or damage property there must be *consequences* for their actions, but not *punishments*. For example; putting a child in time out or a naughty step is a punishment, asking children to leave a play area as they are being unsafe towards other children is a consequence of their action.

All incidents of distressed behaviour are followed up using a restorative approach with both the child that demonstrated the behaviour and the children who were impacted by the behaviour. Children are given the opportunity to talk through how they were feeling, how they thought others might have been feeling, how their actions impacted on others, and are supported to find a positive way to resolve the situation. Stramash staff do not insist upon children saying sorry as to avoid feelings of blame being put on the child.

If children are in a pattern of repeatedly experiencing distressed behaviour, the team will put into place a Support Plan. The Support Plan should be created in conjunction with all staff, parents/carers, other agencies, and when appropriate the child. The plan should take into account the child's own needs and set out clear guidelines for all that work with the child on how to best support them. The plan should not only support distressed behaviour, but also help staff recognise when to intervene before

distressed behaviour occurs.

Stramash will train all staff on appropriate responses to distressed behaviour.

**Stramash will not tolerate** shouting at children, use of threats, physical punishment, insistence on eye contact, sending children to be alone or use of public shaming.

Staff will always seek to employ the least intrusive intervention first. However, we do recognise that in an extreme situation, when there is immediate fear for the safety of a child, or others around them, that we may need to physically intervene for the safety and well-being of all involved. Stramash is aware that any physical intervention of a person by another person is an emotional experience for both involved. Staff and children will be given opportunities to discuss what happened at an appropriate level and parents/carers will be informed as well. Staff will only use physical restraint if they have undertaken appropriate training such as CALM. Training in restraint only means that this is another tool that staff have to use in extreme situations, but in all situations staff should use the least intrusive intervention first.

Stramash will always seek to work in partnership with parents/carers and other agencies. Stramash will always seek training or support as appropriate for the needs and wants of the parent/carers and their child.