

Introduction

This policy should be read in conjunction with the OSCAR Service Operations Policy.

This policy ensures that Youthtown OSCAR programmes meet the 'Service Operations Standard' as required by the Ministry of Social Development, and the programmes comply with sections 25-27 of the Social Security (Childcare Assistance) Regulations 2004.

Purpose of policy

To ensure that all Youthtown OSCAR programmes follow the behavior management process as required, to ensure the optimal level of participant safety, privacy and efficiency of programme operations.

The Youthtown OSCAR Programme Policies and Procedures Manual contains procedural details to accompany this policy.

Scope of policy

This policy applies to all MSD accredited, Youthtown OSCAR programmes across New Zealand.

Policy

A 'strengths' based approach, focusing on environmental management to influence the behaviour of the child, is the primary strategy for behavioural management within all Youthtown's programmes.

No child will be physically punished, disciplined or treated in any manner that is degrading, humiliating or causes them fear or anxiety.

Ongoing and regular training will be provided to all staff engaging with programme participants, by both internal and external providers, on 'Behaviour Management' principles and strategies. These strategies and principles will incorporate Youthtown's 'Youth Development Philosophy'.

Preventative Planning

Many behaviour problems can be dealt with by providing a stimulating and varied programme that meets the needs of the children attending.

"Managing the environment will reduce the need to manage the behaviour."

In planning a preventative approach, staff will consider the following:

- Are the basic needs of the children being met?
- Is the physical space child friendly, set up to meet their developmental outcomes and in accordance with current Youthtown branding guidelines?
- Can the programme plan and routines be varied to influence behaviour?
- Have the children contributed ideas to the Programme and are encouraged to continue to do so?
- Is there a variety of appropriate age activities that are reviewed and replaced on a regular basis? (in line with Youthtown programming policies)
- How much responsibility are children given for implementing the programme, contributing to daily routines, and housekeeping activities?
- What are the staff doing to model and motivate appropriate behaviour in the programme?
- Are there clear rules and boundaries that everyone understands?

Setting Rules and Boundaries

Staff should create clear but fair boundaries and respond to children's issues and behaviours in a caring manner. Staff should model their behaviour around how we want the children to behave.

At the beginning of each programme year or holiday programme, staff and children will formulate a set of rules for the programme and will discuss the reasons why they are important and the reward system associated with them. These will be displayed at the programme.

Children will be given responsibility for helping new children understand the rules and boundaries.

Rules should address:

- Respect for each other
- Respect for property and equipment
- The need for safety (e.g., not leaving the building, out of bounds areas, no running in the hallways, eating only in appropriate areas)

Behaviour Guidance- Positive Reinforcement

Staff will promote appropriate behaviour by recognising the children with positive feedback and expressing appreciation of good behaviour. Staff should work consistently and observe these basic guidelines:

- Be clear about the behaviour that is being noticed, use 'I' statements and the child's name to convey positive reinforcement.
- Wordless positives can be used too; smiles, a light touch on the shoulder, a look of approval.
- Give positive reinforcement right at the time of the behaviours, especially if other behaviour may follow that should be reinforced.
- Positive reinforcement should be frequent at the start, once the child is on track, the frequency can be lessened.

Consequences for broken rules

1. Ask the child what the relevant rule is and ask them to follow through with it.
2. Remind the child (using words and tone of voice that are supportive and encouraging) of the rules and the rewards of respecting them.
3. If the behaviour continues the child will be reminded again and warned of the consequence that will result. (Child will be reminded of the rewards system and be encouraged to work towards it)
4. If the child continues to misbehave after two warnings the consequence associated to the rewards system will be enforced.
5. If corrective action is required it must never be physically, verbally or emotionally abusive.
6. "Manhandling" or use of rough physical interaction to force the child to follow an instruction is strictly prohibited.
7. If it is necessary to separate a child/young person from others, this needs to be done by the least intrusive and non-punitive practices.
8. Minimal restraint can be used to get the child/ young person to safety but cannot be used for punishment or consequence.
9. Children/ young people may not be talked to in a demeaning or threatening manner. When a child/ young person requires corrective guidance, your words and tone of voice need to be supportive and encouraging of them to change their behaviour.

10. Shaming, blaming and focusing on what they have "done wrong" have no place in this process and will only serve to reinforce self-beliefs around failure and hopelessness.
11. Focus must be on their strengths and building on their positive behaviours.
12. If behaviour is repetitive, discuss with coordinator if there are any triggers or environmental factors contributing to this behaviour.

Behaviour Agreements

When disruptive behaviour is on-going a meeting with parent/ guardian, programme coordinator and the child will be sought.

This meeting will discuss the implementation of a behaviour agreement, which will support the child to develop mastery over their own behaviour and make positive changes. The child must acknowledge the behaviour that is impacting on the programme for the agreement to have a chance of succeeding. Both the child and the parent/ guardian will be encouraged to contribute to the plan of action.

The agreement will include:

1. A statement that shows the child has discussed his/her behaviour with their parent and programme coordinator and has agreed to work on changing their behaviour.
2. Behaviours that the child agrees on changing (be specific)
3. How they will be able to achieve this (set out 2 or 3 specific things they need to do)
4. How the programme supervisors will support the child
5. Daily comments will be added to the agreement
6. Older children can sign the agreement.
7. A time frame of review for the agreement will be negotiated between the parent, child and coordinator.

Exclusion

If a child continues to behave in a manner that endangers themselves or other children, despite the above measures, parents will be notified by the coordinator and asked to remove their child.

In the case of unsafe behaviour, the Programme Manager may exclude the child from the programme immediately.