# Daisy-Chain Pedagogical Policy and Practice

This document has been written by Mrs. SL Stocktonand reviewed by both staff and the

Play group independent supervisor.

It was approved by Mrs. SL Stockton after the review process and includes any agreed amendments to this the first edition dated 1 Oct 2013

Amendments

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Page** | **Revision number.** | **Brief details of amendment** | **Effective date** | **Issued by** |
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| 03 - 05 | 2 | Transition from home and sub headings. | 19 06 16 | SLS |
| 05 | 3 | The policy for extra days/changing days | 19 06 16 | SLS |
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All suggestions for amendments are to be addressed to:

Mrs. SL Stockton

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## Pedagogical policy

## Policy statement

* At the Daisy Chain Playgroup we provide emotional and physical security and trust. This is the foundation of every act performed at our Playgroup. Every child needs to feel secure and safe. Children who feel secure are able to explore their environment and discover things.
* We promote children's right to be *strong, resilient and listened to* by creating an environment in our setting that encourages children to develop a positive self-image, which includes their heritage arising from their color and ethnicity, their languages spoken at home, their religious beliefs, cultural traditions and home background.
* We promote children's right to be *strong, resilient and listened to* by encouraging children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence.
* We promote children's right to be *strong, resilient and listened to* by enabling children to develop personal competency. Personal competency includes personal characteristics such as self-confidence, self-assurance, self-respect and flexibility and creativity when dealing with various situations. The child will therefore be able to handle problems adequately and adapt to varying circumstances. Thus children will learn and discover who they are, what they can do, what they find interesting and what skills they need to use in different situations.
* We help children with the development of social competency. We help them to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults. We help children develop skills and acquire knowledge about socializing with others, finding their way in the group, working together, taking others into account, preventing and solving conflicts and social responsibility.
* We help children to acquire values, principles and cultural awareness. To function well in society children need to acquire and learn values, principles and rules of the society in which they live.
* We work with parents to build their understanding of, and commitment to, the principles of safeguarding all our children.

## The transition from home to playgroup, how children (and mums and dads) adjust when they start attending playgroup

Like many major events in life preparation and planning in advance can make them less stressful and reduce anxiety to all those involved. We have all experienced the sensation of minutes dragging on and seeming like hours, but by the correct coordination between parent/child parent/teacher and then child/teacher a lot of the trauma and stress can be removed and be replaced for the child by the idea of doing what grownups do and going on an adventure. We of course as parents will still pace up and down and clock watch until time to pick up our children.

By following these simple steps and working with the daisy chain staff we can help your child settle into our playgroup in a happy positive way.

## First things First

Prepare your child in advance, if they have older brothers or sisters who go to school start to introduce the idea to them that when they are big they can go on these trips and adventures and enjoy themselves playing with new things. If no older brother or sister, mention how dad/mum go to work and that people have to leave home to do things, point out the postman, deliveryman, window cleaner etc. Instill within them a curiosity and interest to experience going to a building were children play and do interesting things and have fun. Develop their awareness.

Of course some children will show signs of anxiety about separation, they feel safe with mum and dad at home, understanding that they may be anxious helps you prepare them by replacing negativity with positivity… great adventure, you can tell us all of what you did etc. Talk through with them any concerns or fears they may have.

It’s a difficult area, we on one hand teach our children not to talk to strangers, to be wary and on the other need to teach them to be happy with people. If your child is very nervous with strangers, when you visit us bring them along so they can see we are friends and that mum and dad know us and the playgroup is safe. Children pick up on feelings.

## Stories

If you are watching a story on the TV, or other medium and it shows children or cartoon characters going to school go over this with your child, look for programs showing these stories and watch them with your child. A number of story books also deal with this theme and will help you prepare your child for this big step into the big world.

## ****Visit****

**We always invite parents who are looking for a playgroup to come and visit us, we will arrange with them a suitable time. On this initial visit we can answer your questions, show you the facility and of course give you the opportunity to see the staff with the children and what we do. It also shows you how to find us.**

**If not already visited, we suggest looking at our website, lots of information and testimonials.**

## ****The First Day****

**Once you have decided to join us we ask you to complete some forms so that we have information on your child, and either on your first visit, or the first day you attend with your child we will present you with an information pack. We can also email this to you if you wish. Prior to your arrival all staff will have been briefed on your child’s arrival and if needed we will have a couple of phrases to hand in your language to ease them gently into our playgroup.**

**For the first day or if needed the second we allow parents to sit in on the sessions, if it helps the child settle, normally we find they soon get involved with all the other children and activities and of course we ensure we give them a warm welcome and get involved with them from the onset.**

**It sometimes helps if they have a toy or object that reassures them, makes them happy and feel safe and think positively. They can also bring something to show the staff so they engage, a photo, a drawing they just did, it helps them focus on something positive, and get over the initial separation.**

## ****Making it special****

**It helps if you make the school day special by allowing the child to do something special on this day, choose some of the clothes they’ll wear, go through the snack they’ll bring (please see our guidelines) and tell them you want to hear all of what they have done and see what they have made.**

**Make sure you prepare all that is needed the night before; there should be no rushing around in the morning and stress. This will unsettle the child. Teaching your child preparation is good to do and the importance of punctuality are important lessons.**

## Fond Farewells

Your child will be feeling a little anxious and overwhelmed so a happy goodbye is best, no long protracted dragging out, it makes it harder for the child and you, just go and they will be fine. But do make sure not to just slip away that might cause them some distress, and do tell them you’ll be coming back! Remember our staff is well versed in looking after children, they are in safe hands.

## Talk to us

If your child see’s that you are talking to us and we are friends it reassures them. It’s also good to get to know each other. It also teaches children the importance of interaction. Be cheerful and positive.
Secondly if you have any concerns or want to know how your child is doing… talk to us.

## Read our web page and the information provided.

The information provided shows our routines and activities, explains in depth our policies covering a number of important areas and how we deal with complaints, requests, and bring to your attention any issue that requires your action and those local agencies that can assist.

Open dialogue and trust between parents and our staff is critical important and crucial.

Together we can resolve any concerns and have a joint strategy to address any issues the child may have.

## Our Actions

### We are transparent in our actions.

### Our policies are on our web site.

### We issue an information booklet

### We invite you to visit.

### We offer guidance in preparing to join us

### We carefully monitor the transition from starting to full acceptance by the child of the playgroup.

## The policy for extra days or changing days

We are happy to entertain the wishes of parents who wish to change the days when their child attends or who seek extra day’s attendance.

All playgroups within the Netherlands are governed by a code of conduct and operate by the rules and regulations stipulated by the Dutch authorities.

These rules which are there to protect the health well-being and safety of the children govern the total maximum number of children a playgroup can have in any one session and the ratio of children to teacher.

If there is a place available and we are in compliance with the rules and regulations the place for the child will be made available.

Parents should bear in mind that places can already be allocated and reserved to pupils who are due to start.

As ever our staff are always on hand to clarify any decision made.

## The presence of other people than the staff at the Playgroup (volunteers for example)

All children like to feel that they are in a safe happy caring and friendly environment. We are fortunate within our playgroup that our staff turnover is consistent and very rarely subject to any change. On occasions though a need may arise were a replacement teacher is needed whilst a staff member is away.

Our policy regarding this is to ensure that the replacement staff member is introduced to the children prior to starting and that they become familiar with her.

On occasions the common areas of the building may have other people present, if they are cleaners or regular staff from the office the children will have in most cases have seen them, notwithstanding this we tell the children at registration that they may see some other people outside, that there is no cause for concern as they are working and we know them.

It should be noted that these common areas are not part of daisy chain and that these people do not have access to our area which is closed.

If we have arranged for someone to visit to teach, instruct or entertain the children, for example musicians, police or fire brigade we introduce this to them days before and inform the parents so that they can also speak to their children about the forthcoming activities.

If we need any work to be done to our area we schedule this to be outside our operating hours so that there is no disruption to teaching or anxiety for the children.

We have a policy that governs the use of volunteers should the need arise.

## The use of Volunteers within the Daisy chain Playgroup

The screening requirements for volunteers will be in accordance of that for full time staff. They will be interviewed, on an informal basis, to ascertain their suitability for and interest in the tasks that they will be given to undertake.

Reference checks may be undertaken if deemed necessary to confirm work abilities or character attributes

The team leader and supervisor are responsible for ensuring volunteers undertake required training in their child protection responsibilities.

The volunteers must have access to the policies of the playgroup and be coached in their application. An orientation and induction process which introduces the volunteer to the playgroup environment and identifies any training needs required to successfully perform their tasks and meet legislative obligations will be taken prior to any volunteer being used.

This must include:

1. Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing
2. Confidentiality and privacy
3. Complaint management
4. The four eye principle

The team leader and supervisor must minimize and guard against any potential risks to children.

Tasks to be performed by volunteers rather than paid staff are to be clearly established.

Volunteers must not be asked to perform tasks:

1. They are untrained, unqualified or too inexperienced to undertake
2. Which puts them or children in a vulnerable or unsafe situation?
3. Where there is a conflict of interest.

The team leader, Supervisor and other staff are responsible for ensuring that volunteers are appropriately supervised.

Volunteers must not be left alone in a separate classroom or building, be involved in duties associated with change rooms, sickrooms or toileting without a supervising staff member.

If volunteers are used, prior to their employment checks should include that the playgroup insurance covers them.

## Leaving the group area / church area for activities

We are very fortunate to have a park play area right on our doorstep. You will see within our information pack a form requesting your permission for your child to attend any play sessions we may plan to hold here when the weather is fine. Like all our sessions, prior to the children arriving we carefully check the area and make sure it is safe, and in addition carry out a risk assessment so that no harm could occur to the children.

When we plan these activities we always ensure we have a higher ratio of staff to children than normal.

## Help and advise

Part of our remit is to ensure that we observe the child’s development and note any areas of concern.

Should it be an area which is educational, we will discuss amongst the staff, to see if this is a reoccurring problem and if so what might be the cause or underlying reason behind this. We will develop a strategy to address the issue. If resolved we will move on, if it seems there could be factors better dealt with by the parents they will be informed together with our findings and informed of agencies that can offer advice, help and can provide further assistance.

If the area of concern is not educational in nature, for example bullying, we have guidelines within our policies stating the course of action to follow.

For reference one of those is:

Strategies with children who engage in bullying

It can be found in this document.

The most important factor and that of paramount importance is the well-being of the children and their positive development.

We are mindful of the fact that children who are bilingual are slower initially in some areas but then suddenly catch up, once they are happy with both mother languages and likewise that most of our children are non-native English speakers and come to us to learn English as a lead up to attending English schools.

## The Four Eyes Technique

The four eyes technique is followed whereby staff monitor each other’s dealings with the children, **see below**) it ensures staff understand the do’s and don’ts in this area and gives the different organisational structures within the playgroup clearly defined and approved codes of conduct and procedure. During any interaction with the children the primary and overriding protocol is that of their safety and well being. In group activities all focus is to be on the children. In cases were the teacher and child are together, for example nappy changing, then additionally other team members are to observe so that no unwarranted activity can take place and the activity taking place is not behind closed doors. To assist, when the children go to the toilet the door is open to aid observation.

**The Four Eye Principle**

## What it means to promote children’s right to be ‘*strong, resilient and listened to’*

### To be strong means:

* to be **secure** in their foremost attachment relationships where they are loved and cared for, by at least one person who is able to offer consistent, positive and unconditional regard and who can be relied on;
* to be **safe and valued** as individuals in their families and in relationships beyond the family, such as our Playgroup;
* to be **self-assured** and form a positive sense of themselves – including all aspects of their identity and heritage;
* to be **included equally and belong** in early years settings and in community life;
* to be **confident in abilities** and **proud** of their achievements;
* to be **progressing optimally** in all aspects of their development and learning;
* to be **part of a peer group** in which to learn to negotiate, develop social skills and identity as global citizens, respecting the rights of others in a diverse world and;
* to **participate and be able to represent themselves** in aspects of service delivery that affects them as well as aspects of key decisions that affect their lives.

### To be *resilient* means:

* to be **sure** of their self-worth and dignity;
* to be able to be **assertive** and state their needs effectively;
* to be able to **overcome** difficulties and problems;
* to be **positive** in their outlook on life;
* to be able to **cope** with challenge and change;
* to have a **sense of justice** towards self and others;
* to develop a **sense of responsibility** towards self and others and;
* To be able to **represent** themselves and others in key decision making processes.

### To be listened to means:

* adults who are close to children recognize their **need and right to express and communicate** their thoughts, feelings and ideas;
* adults who are close to children are able to **tune in** to their verbal, sign and body language in order to understand and interpret what is being expressed and communicated;
* adults who are close to children are able to **respond appropriately and, when required, act upon their understanding** of what children express and communicate and;
* Adults **respect children’s rights** and **facilitate children’s participation and representation** in imaginative and child centered ways in all aspects of core services.

### Creating possibilities for development

By giving children individual and group attention, they get the opportunity to develop. Staff observes the children to see if the children are developing without problems. If staff notices a problem or a delay in the development of a child, the staff will act according to our policies.

Our main goal is to let children play, by themselves and with others, while staff gives attention to the children’s development in specific areas:

* Language development
* Social-emotional development
* Development of identity and independence
* Cognitive development
* Creative development
* Physical development

### Language development

We only speak English so all children learn to understand and speak this language. This will help them when they are old enough to move on to an English speaking international school.

The children learn the English language by reading books together with staff, by listening to stories told by staff, by doing activities in small groups, by singing songs, by naming objects, and by conversations with staff and other children.

### Social-emotional development

See the first section of this policy (Children’s rights and entitlements), see the ‘Positive behavior’ policy, and see the ‘Equality, inclusion and valuing diversity’ policy.

### Development of identity and independence

- To stimulate understanding of identity we call and refer to children by their name. This way the child learns who he/she is, what his/her name is and that he/she is a person. Furthermore, staff does imitation games with the children.

- We stimulate independence by motivating the children to go to the toilet, wash their hands, and put their coats on by themselves. We let the children make a puzzle, clean up something, make a craft etc. Staffs are aware of and pay attention to what a child can en cannot do. Staffs provide help where necessary. Staff let the children know that it is okay to make mistakes.

### Cognitive development

The Daisy Chain Playgroup has many materials that help the children with their cognitive development, such as books, puzzles, games, colors and forms, a sand pit, water, blocks.

### Creative development

We stimulate creative development by:

* letting the children use their imagination and fantasy while they are playing;
* letting the children create a craftwork during most of the sessions;
* letting the children play musical instruments regularly;
* Singing songs during each session.

### Physical development

- We stimulate the development of motor skills by various activities:

The children walk, run, jump, climb, work with glue, paint, color, and make puzzles, build, and dance.

- To develop knowledge of the body we play games and sing songs about hearing, seeing, feeling, and smelling and about body parts.

## Positive Behavior

### Statement of intent

At the Daisy Chain Playgroup we believe that children flourish when their personal, social and emotional needs are met and where there are clear and developmentally appropriate expectations for their behavior.

### Aim

Children need to learn to consider the views and feelings, needs and rights, of others and the impact that their behavior has on people, places and objects. This is a developmental task that requires support, encouragement, teaching and setting the correct example.

The principles that underpin how we achieve positive and considerate behavior exist within the program for promoting personal, social and emotional development.

### Method

We will meet this aim through the following procedures:

* We require all staff to provide a positive model of behavior by treating children, parents and one another with friendliness, care and courtesy.
* We familiarize new staff with our behavior management policy and its guidelines for behavior.
* We expect all members of our setting – children, staff and parents – to keep to the guidelines, requiring these to be applied consistently.
* We work in partnership with children's parents. Parents are regularly informed about their children's behavior by the staff. We work with parents to address recurring inconsiderate behavior. Together with the parents we try to understand the cause of the behavior and we decide jointly how to respond appropriately.

We aim to use positive pro-active strategies to promote positive behavior in children, and set these strategies within our program for personal, social and emotional development. These include:

* supporting each child in developing self-esteem, confidence and feelings of competence;
* supporting each child in developing a sense of belonging in our group at the Daisy Chain Playgroup, so that they feel valued and welcome;
* acknowledging considerate behavior such as kindness and willingness to share;
* acknowledging children’s considerate behavior towards another who is hurt or upset;
* helping older children set the group’s guidelines for considerate behavior;
* providing activities and games that encourage cooperation and working together;
* ensuring that there are enough popular toys and resources and sufficient activities available so that children are meaningfully occupied without the need for unnecessary conflict over sharing and waiting for turns;
* Avoiding creating situations in which children receive adult attention only in return for inconsiderate behavior.

**We do not:**

* send children out of the room by themselves
* use or threaten to use physical punishment, such as smacking or shaking;
* use techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children, such as ridicule or sarcasm;
* remove toys or activities that are the focus of a conflict as a ‘punishment’ or means of ‘teaching children to share’;
* use physical restraint, such as holding, unless to prevent physical injury to children or adults and/or serious damage to property;
* Shout or raise our voices in a threatening way to children.

### Kinds of behaviors that require positive intervention

We make a distinction between three kinds of behaviors that require support or intervention in order to achieve the considerate and socially acceptable behavior that we expect of children according to their age and developmental maturity or whether they have any special educational need.

### These behaviors are:

Inconsiderate behavior – This includes behaviors such as taking toys from another child, not waiting for a turn, pushing, being uncooperative, disrupting a game, hitting out against another.

They are characterized by developmental immaturity whereby children are not at the stage where they can manage frustration or anger themselves; they may not have the language to express themselves, or may not understand and be able to keep to social rules.

These behaviors are seen as mistakes that the child is making on the way to developing socially acceptable ways, particularly of dealing with conflict. We regard the child to be a learner of what is acceptable and in need of support, explanation, encouragement, positive modeling and guidance – just as in learning any other skill.

Hurtful behavior – We take hurtful behavior very seriously. Most children under the age of five will at some stage hurt or say something hurtful to another child, especially if their emotions are high at the time, but it is not helpful to label this behavior as 'bullying' even if the behavior is worryingly aggressive.

For most children under five, hurtful behavior is momentary, spontaneous and often without cognizance of the feelings of the person whom they have hurt. Some children may engage in hurtful behavior because they are deeply unhappy and they require support and care.

However, hurtful behavior has an impact for the child at the receiving end which is significant and this is also taken into consideration when responding to incidents of hurtful behavior.

Bullying - We take bullying very seriously. Bullying involves the persistent physical or verbal abuse of another child or children. It is characterized by intent to hurt, often planned, and accompanied by an awareness of the impact of the bullying behavior.

A child who is bullying has reached a stage of cognitive development where he or she is able to plan to carry out a premeditated intent to cause distress to another. This is rarely the case for children under five, and therefore we do not expect bullying to occur at the Daisy Chain Playgroup.

### Children under three years

* When children under three behave in inconsiderate ways we recognize that strategies for supporting them will need to be developmentally appropriate and differ from those for older children.
* We recognize that very young children are unable to regulate their own emotions, such as fear, anger or distress, and require sensitive adults to help them learn to do this. Common inconsiderate or hurtful behaviors of young children include tantrums, biting or fighting.
* Staffs are calm and patient, offering comfort to intense emotions, helping children to manage their feelings and talk about them to help resolve issues and promote understanding.
* If tantrums, biting or fighting are frequent, we try to find out the underlying cause - such as a change or upheaval at home, or frequent change of carers. Sometimes a child has not settled in well and the behavior may be the result of ‘separation anxiety’.

###  Strategies with children who engage in inconsiderate behavior

* We require all staff to use positive strategies for handling any inconsiderate behavior, by helping children find solutions in ways which are appropriate for the children's ages and stages of development.
* Such solutions might include, for example, acknowledgement of feelings, explanation as to what was not acceptable and why, and supporting children to gain control of their feelings so that they can learn a more appropriate response.
* Staff offer comfort to both children in a dispute and encourage them to find a solution to their problem.
* When children behave in inconsiderate ways, we help them to understand the outcomes of their action and support them in learning how to cope more appropriately.
* We praise children for their efforts and achievements in resolving a dispute or learning a social skill such as waiting for their turn.

### Strategies with children who engage in hurtful behavior

We take hurtful behavior very seriously. Most children under the age of five will at some stage hurt or say something hurtful to another child, especially if their emotions are high at the time, but it is not helpful to label this behavior as ‘bullying’.

For children under five, hurtful behavior is momentary, spontaneous and often without cognizance of the feelings of the person whom they have hurt.

* We recognize that young children behave in hurtful ways towards others because they have not yet developed the means to manage intense feelings that sometimes overwhelm them.
* We will help them manage these feelings as the biological and cognitive means to do this by themselves are still underdeveloped in very young children.
* We understand that self-management of intense emotions, especially of anger, happens when the brain has developed neurological systems to manage the physiological processes that take place when ‘triggers’ activate responses of anger or fear.
* Therefore we help this process by offering support, calming the child who is angry as well as the one who has been hurt by the behavior. By helping the child to return to a normal state, we are helping the brain to develop the physiological response system that will help the child be able to manage his or her own feelings.
* Our way of responding to pre-verbal children is to calm them through comforting and simple spoken language (reassurance and explanation). We respond to verbal children by giving them reassurance, explanation and by discussing the incident with them to their level of understanding.
* We recognize that young children require help in understanding the range of feelings experienced. We help children recognize their feelings by naming them and helping children to express them, making a connection verbally between the event and the feeling. “Adam took your car, didn’t he, and you were enjoying playing with it. You didn’t like it when he took it, did you? Did it make you feel angry? Is that why you hit him?” Older children will be able to verbalize their feelings better, talking through themselves the feelings that motivated the behavior.
* We help young children learn to empathize with others, understanding that they have feelings too and that their actions impact on others' feelings. “When you hit Adam, it hurt him and he didn't like that and it made him cry”.
* We help young children develop pro-social behavior, such as resolving conflict over who has the toy. “I can see you are feeling better now and Adam isn't crying any more. Let's see if we can be friends and find another car, so you can both play with one”.
* We are aware that the same problem may happen repeatedly before skills such as sharing and turn-taking develop. In order for both the biological maturation and cognitive development to take place, children will need repeated experiences with problem solving, supported by patient adults and clear boundaries.
* We support social skills through modeling behavior, through activities, drama and stories. We build self-esteem and confidence in children, recognizing their emotional needs through close and committed relationships with them.
* We help a child to understand the effect that their hurtful behavior has had on another child. We do not force children to say sorry, but encourage this where appropriate.
* When hurtful behavior becomes problematic, we work with parents to identify the cause and find a solution together.

### The main reasons for very young children to engage in excessive hurtful behavior are that:

1. They do not feel securely attached to someone who can interpret and meet their needs, this may be in the home and it may also be in the setting;
2. their parent, or carer in the setting, does not have skills in responding appropriately, and consequently negative patterns are developing where hurtful behavior is the only response the child has to express feelings of anger;
3. The child may have insufficient language or mastery of the English language, to express him or herself and may feel frustrated;
4. The child is exposed to levels of aggressive behavior at home and may be at risk emotionally, or may be experiencing child abuse;
5. The child has a developmental condition that affects how they behave.

Where our strategies do not work, we will support the child and family by referring them to their family doctor where necessary.

###  Strategies with children who engage in bullying

We believe that it is unlikely that bullying will occur at the Daisy Chain Playgroup due to the age of the children.

However if a child bullies another child or children, we:

* show the children who have been bullied that we are will listen to their concerns and act upon them;
* intervene to stop the child who is bullying from harming the other child or children;
* explain to the child doing the bullying why her/his behavior is not acceptable;
* give reassurance to the child or children who have been bullied;
* help the child who has done the bullying to recognize the impact of their actions;
* make sure that children who bully receive positive feedback for considerate behavior and are given opportunities to practice and reflect on considerate behavior;
* do not label children who bully as 'bullies';
* recognize that children who bully may be experiencing bullying themselves, or other circumstance causing them to express their anger in negative ways towards others;
* discuss what has happened with the parents of the child who did the bullying and work out with them a plan for handling the child's behavior;
* share what has happened with the parents of the child who has been bullied, explaining that we will closely monitor the situation and that the child who did the bullying is being helped to adopt more acceptable ways of behaving;
* in cases of bullying behavior, that is racially motivated or focused towards a child’s disability, or gender, make clear immediately the unacceptability of the behavior and attitudes, by means of explanations rather than personal blame;
* Bring details (what happened, what action was taken and by whom, and the names of witnesses) of bullying behavior incidents that give cause for concern to the attention of the lead teacher and are recorded in the child's personal file. The child's parents are informed on the same day.

### Rough and tumble play and fantasy aggression

Young children often engage in play that has aggressive themes - such as superhero and weapon play. Some children appear pre-occupied with these themes, but their behavior is not necessarily a precursor to hurtful behavior or bullying, although it may be inconsiderate, or even hurtful, at times and may need addressing using strategies as above.

* We recognize that teasing and rough and tumble play are normal for young children and acceptable within limits. We regard these kinds of play as pro-social and not as problematic or 'aggressive'.
* We will develop strategies to contain play that are agreed with the children, and understood by them, with acceptable behavioral boundaries to ensure children are not hurt.
* We recognize that fantasy play also contains many violently dramatic strategies - blowing up, shooting etc. - and that themes often refer to 'goodies and baddies' and as such offer opportunities for us to explore concepts of right and wrong and alternatives to blowing up or shooting.
* We are able to tune in to the content of the play, perhaps to suggest alternative strategies for heroes and heroines, making the most of 'teachable moments' to encourage empathy and lateral thinking to explore alternative scenarios and strategies for conflict resolution.

## PEDAGOGICAL POLICY & PRACTICE

The four themes covered in this section are:

1. Emotional safety
2. Personal competence
3. Social competence
4. Transfer of standards and values

Listed below are the four themes in more detail and the practices carried out to implement this policy by the Daisy Chain Playgroup staff.

### EMOTIONAL SAFETY

Studies by Psychotherapists regarding emotional safety all concur that the creating of an appropriate ‘emotional environment’ for learning is vital.

The child’s development can only blossom and nurturing take place when children have feelings of belonging and safety. If they don’t feel safe, they will not be able to trust anybody, or themselves.

Negativity results in children feeling that they do not belong, leading to their not being open to learning. Children, when asked, are clear that, when they belong, they get more work done and they can ask for help with their learning.

Within Daisy Chain, our children range in age from 2 to 4, and the maximum size of our group during a session within the playgroup is 16, nevertheless, it is vital that the statements above are understood and acted upon to ensure the positive development of the young children, particularly so as many do not have English as a first language and come from a wide range of countries and cultures. The way we foster emotional safety is to:

1. Welcome children and parents. With the children, we get on the ground, thus being at their eye level and talk to them. If a child cry’s, we talk to them, hug them, try to distract them by giving them a toy or playing a game. We allow children to bring in a favourite toy or comfort blanket.
2. Take a personal interest in what they have to say, this encourages them to be more open and participate not only with the staff but the other children.
3. Comfort child who is new by holding the child and encouraging them to play with other children and by showing them they are safe and in a friendly environment.
4. Comfort blanket/Toy, so vital, it reassures the child and gives an opening to staff to give the child something to talk about and feel special.
5. Learn key words in their language e.g. toilet, wash hands. This helps put the child at ease by using a familiar language.
6. Always reassure the child that their parents are coming back. One must allay any feeling of being abandoned.
7. The staff is always the same. This helps create a familiar environment for the child and reassures them that they are in a safe place.
8. Smile and be happy to make the child feel safe and secure.

### PERSONAL COMPETENCE

Children need to be nurtured, to be given the opportunity to develop their personalities and mature, to discover their skills and what they like and just as importantly don’t like.

Children need to gain self-confidence and be able to meet life’s challenges. In addition, children need to be able to articulate their thoughts and be able to deal with different situations.

We achieve this by:

1. Stimulating each child according to their personal needs and developing our interaction with them to foster this. Staffs engage with the children individually.
2. Encourage the child to express themselves by acting out stories and talking about their day, this helps with their language skill, but also in giving them confidence to do so in front of others.
3. Encourage the child to make their own decisions and be able to articulate the decision and reasoning behind it, remembering of course their age and language skill.
4. Self- help – putting on their coats. Developing independence and the confidence that goes with it in mastering different skills and being able to do things by themselves.
5. Compliment and praise them on their achievements, thus introducing them to positivity, reward and feeling good about what they did.
6. Set up different activities every day to keep them from being bored and stimulate them in different ways. This also encourages them to want to come to school to learn new things.

### SOCIAL COMPETENCE

It can’t be stressed enough the critical importance in teaching a child that how they interact with others determines the response they receive. Children need to understand themselves of course, but also others and how to deal within the group in a positive and harmonious fashion. Respect not only for one’s self, but others, irrespective of background, culture gender or ethnicity.

Children need to stand up for themselves, where needed, but in a socially acceptable way. Children develop and learn these vital social skills from their peers and from both the staff and home environment.

They learn as part of a group, you need to wait your turn, help each other with tasks and work as a team. They learn the fun of doing things together within a common framework of rules and respect and most importantly how the individual is part of the team and the joy of celebrating as a group.

1. Make children feel part of the group, never leave a child on their own during group activities, help them to fit in and participate fully.
2. Teaching sharing, waiting patiently for a turn, respecting the rights of others.
3. Always be polite, no shouting, no emotional tantrums to get ones way.
4. Always explain to any child who is in conflict with another one, why they have to apologize and the importance of give and take and respect not only for self, but for others.
5. Staff leading by example.

### TRANSFER OF STANDARDS AND VALUES

In order for children to grow and mature it is important that they understand what is expected from them in a wider context and the rules and regulations of the society and culture they live in. They also need to take this a stage further and know that other cultures exist, each of which should be respected and treat equally.

Though young, children quickly grasp the concepts of right and wrong, honesty, naughty and nice, mean and kind.

They will see the need to have rules relating to different things and how these are for everybody’s benefit, creating a happy home, school or community.

Within Daisy Chain we focus teaching the children on:

1. Teaching manners, saying please and thank you, excuse me , sorry
2. To respect their teachers and other peers
3. Hygiene, washing hands, hands over mouths when coughing, putting things in the bin
4. Tidying up, respecting toys and materials, no throwing
5. House rules - no running
6. Pay extra attention and explain differences
7. Parents are encouraged to explain house rules
8. Always be polite and cheerful and listen to the children

## Informing the next school/facility about a child who is transferring to them.

When a child leaves Daisy chain, on occasion we may be requested by the new school/facility to provide a report on the child and his/her scholastic abilities and any behavioural or medical problems identified.

This request can arrive in two ways, one via the parents who present us with the required documentation to be completed or two via an e-mail request with the blank documents attached.

### Actions to be taken

 In the case of the documents being presented by the parents, the team leader will convene a meeting with the staff and together they will go through the required paperwork and provide the necessary information.

This report will then be sent to the school/facility via e-mail.

In the second case, if the parents have already informed us of a forthcoming request we proceed as above.

If we have not had any prior notification of a request being made, we will check with the parents for authentication purposes. Once confirmed we will proceed with the completion of all forms.

Prior to any email being sent, we always confirm the email address.

Irrespective of any request by the next school/facility when a child leaves we will compile a final report of the child’s development and progress for the parents. This will be the last report based on observations made and recorded by the staff during the child’s time with us.

## Periodic progress reports on the child and one on one meeting with the mentor.

 During the course of the term, staff will keep notes on the progress and development of the children and note any causes for concern.

In particular, they will be responsible for some children and compile a report specifically on them. The parents will be informed of the mentor of their child.

These draft reports will be discussed in a staff meeting before the final version is presented to the parents.

The team leader is responsible for the coordination of this and the final report.

Should a parent have any causes of concern or wish to speak privately with the team leader, she is available after all the sessions for consultation. If needed, a further meeting can be arranged with the team leader and mentor outside of playgroup hours at a time convenient for all.

The report shall cover all of the areas of development and may suggest activities that will benefit the child. It will also include a summary giving an overview.