



Effective From	AY 2024/25 (Fall term)
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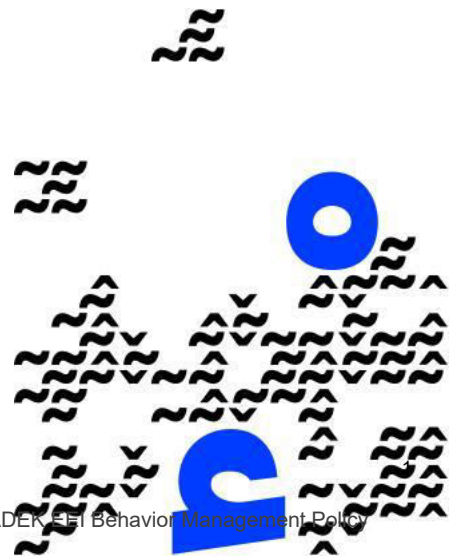
## EARLY EDUCATION INSTITUTION

### POLICY on

# BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

## Purpose

This policy sets out the approach, philosophy, and procedures for the behavior management of children while under the supervision of Early Education Institutions (EIs). It standardizes the responsibilities EEs have in supporting and promoting the development of children's social and emotional skills and sets clear expectations for all stakeholders (EEI management and staff, parents, regulators, service providers, etc.).



## Definitions

<b>Behavior</b>	The actions and conduct of individuals in a social setting. In the context of the EEI, this can include things like following ground rules and routines, interacting with peers and adults, completing tasks, and expressing emotions.
<b>Bullying</b>	Repeated physical, social, or verbal aggression exercised by children who feel they are in a position of power against other children who are perceived weaker or powerless, to achieve specific gains or draw attention, in a way that hurts the child physically and/or emotionally. Bullying can be committed by groups or individuals, in online (cyberbullying) or offline settings. While bullying is normally characterized by repetition, bullying in the early years setting includes any instance or perceived instance of emotional, verbal, or physical aggression shown by one child towards another.
<b>Bystander</b>	Any child watching an incident of bullying.
<b>Challenging Behavior</b>	Any repeated pattern of behavior, or perception of behavior, that interferes with or is at risk of interfering with optimal learning or engagement in prosocial interactions with peers and adults (Smith & Fox, 2003).
<b>Child</b>	A person under the age of 4 years as per Federal Decree Law No. (51) of 2022 Regulating Nurseries.
<b>Discipline</b>	The methods and strategies used by adults to guide and shape children's behavior, to help them learn self-control and appropriate social conduct.
<b>Early Education Institutions (EIs)</b>	All ADEK-licensed institutions that offer early years service (e.g., nurseries).
<b>Ground Rules</b>	A set of expected behaviors for children.
<b>Key Person</b>	A key staff member who is the primary contact for a key group of children and helps them feel safe and cared for.
<b>Positive</b>	Describing conduct, behavior, or actions that are appropriate, safe, supportive of the environment, and aligned with the rules, expectations, and goals of the EEI setting.
<b>Positive Reinforcement</b>	A technique used in guiding behavior that relies on providing reward, praise, or any other positive consequence following a desirable behavior.



# Policy

All EEIs shall develop and implement a Behavior Management Policy that sets out clear guidelines in the following areas, as a minimum:

1. Positive behavioral guidance by staff
2. Ground rules for children
3. Strategies to manage challenging behavior
4. Prohibited behavior management practices
5. Parental involvement

## 1. Guiding Principles

### 1.1 Positive Behavioral Guidance

EEIs shall ensure that all adult interactions prioritize safeguarding a child's dignity and self-esteem, and meet their social, emotional, and physical needs at all times. In doing so, staff shall follow these principles in interacting with children:

- a) Children shall be spoken to in a calm, friendly, positive, and respectful manner.
- b) Children's level of understanding and maturity shall be considered when allowing independence with tasks, and when explaining to them why their behavior is not appropriate.
- c) Children of all backgrounds shall be treated with respect and consideration.
- d) Children's efforts, achievements, and feelings shall be acknowledged with sincere encouragement, as this affects children's self-esteem and self-regulation positively.
- e) Children shall have a balance of free play and ground rules to enable holistic development.
- f) Children's self-expression and verbalization of feelings, ideas, and interests shall be encouraged.
- g) Children shall be motivated towards positive behavior intrinsically, by building their concepts of right and wrong through activities.
- h) Children shall be given opportunities to develop agency and responsibility through the negotiation of choices.
- i) Children shall be given enough time to respond to requests for them to behave in line with the set ground rules.

### 1.2 Setting Ground Rules

EEIs shall establish ground rules for behavior. These shall be made clear to staff, and shall only be communicated to children through positive, respectful language.

## 2. Physical Environment

EEIs shall continually review and rearrange their physical environment to adapt to the developmental needs of the children using it while ensuring their safety and allowing them freedom of movement.

## 3. Strategies to Manage Challenging Behavior

### 3.1 General Guidance

EEIs shall clearly set out the acceptable strategies to manage children's challenging behavior in line with the principles laid out under [Section 1.1 Positive Behavioral Guidance](#).

### 3.2 Conflict Resolution

EEIs shall provide staff with guidance and training on conflict management and resolution between children.

### 3.3 Tantrum Management

EEIs shall specify acceptable steps to manage tantrums and provide staff with the necessary training accordingly.

### 3.4 Biting

EEIs shall guide staff on the reasons that can cause biting and how to manage a biting incident (see [ADEK EEI Behavior Management Policy Guide](#) for more details).

### 3.5 Management of Bullying

EEIs shall clearly define acceptable strategies to address bullying behavior for:

- The child who is bullying
- The child who is subject to bullying
- The management of bystanders

## 4. Prohibited Behavior Management Practices

EEIs shall clearly define prohibited behavior management practices for staff. These shall include, but are not solely restricted to, the following practices:

- The use of physical disciplinary measures or punishment.
- The use of derogatory terms in addressing or labeling children or their behaviors.
- Isolating a child in any space or room without adult supervision.

## 5. Parental Involvement

EEIs shall regularly engage parents in discussions around behavior management, which include, but are not solely restricted to the following:

- a) Keeping parents informed in case their child displays any challenging behavior (e.g., consistent tantrums, withdrawn behavior, bullying, or biting), and how staff have managed such behavior.
- b) Requesting that parents observe behavioral challenges closely at home and report such challenges to the EEI to enable a holistic understanding of children's behavior and its drivers.
- c) Raising awareness and sharing resources around strategies to help children overcome behavioral issues.
- d) Encouraging and supporting parents to manage their children's challenging behavior in ways consistent with those practiced at the EEI.
- e) Reassuring parents that certain forms of aggressive behavior (e.g., biting) are a typical aspect of child development and should not be a cause for concern.
- f) Integrating parents' feedback and information into staff behavior management strategies and practices.
- g) Developing joint plans to address challenging behavior to be used at home and the EEI.

## 6. Compliance

- 6.1** This policy shall be effective as of the start of the Academic Year 2024/25 (Fall term). EEIs are expected to be fully compliant with this policy by the start of the Academic Year 2025/26 (Fall term).
- 6.2** Failure to comply with this policy shall be subject to legal accountability and the penalties stipulated in accordance with the ADEK's regulations, policies, and requirements, notwithstanding any other penalties imposed by Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties and its amendments or any other relevant law. ADEK reserves the right to intervene if the EEI is found to be in violation of its obligations.

## References


- Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties
- Smith, B., & Fox, L. (2003). *Systems of service delivery: A synthesis of evidence relevant to young children at risk of or who have challenging behavior*. Center for Evidence-Based Practice: Young Children with Challenging Behavior.

### Publication

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Department of Education and Knowledge, Abu Dhabi (ADEK)

This policy applies to Early Educational Institutions (EEI) in Abu Dhabi.

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