

Child Care Training and Resource Kit

Appropriate Discipline for Children

Handouts

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

FROM CHAOS TO CALM IN THE CLASSROOM

MAKE IT WORK!

- * **Communicate the positive**
- * **Establish partnerships**
- * **Change the environment**
- * **Encourage participation**
- * **Keep in close touch**
- * **Model acceptable behavior**
- * **Keep it simple**
- * **Make it fun**
- * **Set limits**
- * **Use "natural Consequences**
- * **Plan ahead for transition times**
- * **Develop simple classroom rules**
- * **Reduce waiting time**
- * **Offer many choices and a variety of toys and activities**

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR SELF WHEN THINGS DON'T GO AS PLANNED!

Do I know what I want to say and do I take the time to say it? Do I say it every time I need to say it?
Do I really let them talk and do I really listen?
Do I take the time to explain and do I use examples?
Do I let them show me they understand?
Do I let them know when "they have got it"?
Do I take advantage of "teachable moments"?
Do I allow "natural" consequences to happen?
Do I go over the classroom rules frequently?
Do I use words to describe feelings?

IDEAS FOR THE CLASSROOM.

1. Set up the classroom rules with the help of the children.
2. Go over the rules once a week or when appropriate.
3. Discuss consequences for breaking the rules.
4. Describe feelings
5. Role Play or use puppets to tell "stories"
6. Practice positive reinforcement
7. Take opportunities to relax, listen to calming music and slow down the classroom activities.

Material adapted from "Child Care Behavior Handbook", CCHP; "STAR Parenting", Elizabeth Crary; "Child Guidance Techniques", PNW Extension Pamphlet; "The Well Centered Child", Willow Tree Publications. Appropriate Discipline, 4.10.02 HE, CCHP

FEELINGS

A FEW SUGGESTIONS :

- ♥ If possible, change the environment - rest, a healthy diet, exercise affect a child's ability to cope. Protect children as much as possible from the pressures in their life without overprotecting them. Children need practice learning how to deal with difficult situations.
- ♥ Learn to recognize the signs of stress in each child.
- ♥ Teach children relaxation and self-calming skills.
- ♥ Teach children resiliency skills. Remember coping skills take time. It sometimes takes a child 6 months to adjust to a move or change in child care arrangements. A death or divorce may take a year or longer for a child to feel comfortable with the changes in their life.
- ♥ Teach children to talk about anger and other feelings. Let children know how you feel...talk about your own feelings. Allow children to express their own feelings and teach acceptable ways to express them.
- ♥ Teach communication skills and conflict resolution. Guide children toward wise decision making.
- ♥ Teach positive thinking. Maintain a normal and predictable routine. Start the day on a positive note with calm and pleasant words.
- ♥ Teach kindness and cooperation.

ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

1. Relaxation exercises
2. Exercise songs and activities
3. Role play and stories
4. Matching games
5. Play charades with feelings (non-verbal communication)
6. Play "what happens next" games (anticipatory guidance)

PREVENTING SOME BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

1. Have a good room arrangement
2. Have interesting toys
3. Present a variety of toys and activities in small groups
4. Have a balanced schedule (large and small muscle activities)
5. Plan ahead for the transition between activities
6. Maintain a pleasant tone of voice (yelling scares' the child, whisper to get their attention)
7. Develop simple classroom rules
8. Reduce waiting time
9. Offer plenty of choices
10. Pay Attention
11. Crowd control

DEVELOPING COPING SKILLS

1. Listen! Avoid hurrying children. Let them proceed in their own unique way and on their own time table.
2. Try not to pass on needless stress and worry to children. Give them an opportunity to talk about their worries but don't pass on your worries.
3. Teach problem solving skills. Guide children toward wise decision making.
4. Remember "coping skills" take time. It sometimes takes children 6 months to adjust to moving or to a change childcare arrangements. A death or divorce may take a year or longer for children to understand and accept the changes in their life. Separation from a parent is a major loss in a child's life.
5. Avoid promises for "the future" unless you are certain they will occur.
6. Let children know how you feel...talk about your *own* feelings. Allow children to express their *own* feelings and teach acceptable ways to express them.
7. Assure children they are not the source of the problem. Children sometimes take on adult emotional worries and responsibilities.
8. Maintain a normal and predictable routine if possible. Start the day on a positive note with calm and pleasant words.
9. Let children know you love them and are proud of them for exactly who they are.
10. Protect children as much as possible from the pressures in their life without overprotecting them. Children need practice learning how to deal with difficult situations.

TRANSITIONS

Moving a Group Through Transitions

The transitions involved in moving from one activity to another can sometimes be difficult for children. Problems can occur because children come to activity closure at varying rates. A few children are able to complete an activity within minutes, and others lag behind in finishing their projects. Those who finish first need to have clear messages and expectations about what they are to do as they wait. Appropriate activities during transition times can also be helpful in decreasing inappropriate behavior that sometimes takes place.

The following suggestions may help smooth out the rough edges in your day:

1. Have an established procedure and follow it consistently - i.e., after clean-up, take books and sit on the rug, or come to the piano. Allow ample time to get routine established. Give children warnings about when changes in activities are coming - i.e., "In two minutes it will be time to clean up."
2. Avoid having children wait in-line unoccupied for handwashing, toileting, or any activity. Use time as teachable moments. Review the day's accomplishments, remind of what's coming next, reflect on child's strengths. Have a few children go at a time while the group as a whole is occupied
3. Use easily interrupted transition activities. Examples: send small groups of children for handwashing, toileting, etc., without disturbing the other children's concentration. Finger plays, exercising, singing, sharing time conversation, looking at individual books are good transitional activities. A group storytime is not as good since it is not desirable to interrupt children listening to stories.
4. Plan staff time in detail to allow adequate supervision of children during transitional periods - i.e., one teacher waiting at piano ready to receive children for the story after juice, while another teacher remains to clean up after juice. One teacher goes outside as soon as some children are ready.
5. Allow plenty of time. Successful transition periods require careful planning and a relaxed pace. Rushing to get from one thing to the next produces tensions and defeats the whole purpose of allowing the child greater independence and a large role in caring for his own needs and contributing to his world away from home.
6. Be clear in explaining expectations i.e., "When you get to the gym, run all the way around and then sit on the big black circle." "When you get to the room, sit on the rug." "After you put your mat away, you may take some toys to the tables," etc. Always anticipate the next situation and prepare for it.
7. Follow the same schedule each day. Offer a variety of activities with in your time periods, but be consistent.

Punishment vs. Discipline

Punishment

An unpleasant consequence for doing or not doing something.

Purpose: to decrease the likelihood that bad behavior will occur again.

Outcomes: Effective punishment results in kids learning what behavior their parents consider unacceptable and leads to a decrease in that behavior.

Discipline

A method of guiding children that helps them learn how to control their own behavior.

Purpose: To help children learn to make good decisions on their own.

Outcomes: Effective discipline results in children feeling secure, responsible, deserving and loved; confident in their ability to make good decisions; and able to maintain caring relationships with others.

Avoiding Physical Punishment of Children

CHOICES

- Avoid situations likely to trigger unacceptable behavior.
- Provide a child with two or three alternatives and let him or her choose between them. "Do you want to wear the blue outfit? Or, do you want to wear the red outfit?"
- Children learn to take responsibility for their decisions.

EXPECTATIONS

- Parents have the responsibility to communicate household rules to children.
- Keep rules clear, concise and consistent.

REWARDING GOOD BEHAVIOR

- Children, like adults, learn better by being rewarded for good behavior, rather than being punished for bad.
- Reinforce the type of behavior you want with rewards like hugs and praise.

CONSEQUENCES

- Determine an appropriate consequence for misbehaving. Consider the child's age and maturity level. Always try to "fit the punishment to the crime."
- Describe the consequence immediately, so the child makes the connection between it and his behavior.
- Help the child understand what the behavior was that resulted in the consequence.

TIME OUT

- Remove the child from the problem situation.
- Ask him or her to sit down for a period of time. The rule of thumb is one time-out minute for every year of age.
- Briefly explain why the time out and why the child is sitting down.
- When the time out is over, talk calmly about your expectations for behavior and why it was wrong or dangerous to do whatever prompted the time out.

WHEN TO SEEK HELP

Sometimes a child's behavioral, learning, or emotional difficulties become too severe, disruptive, or long lasting to be managed by discipline techniques within the child care program. It is often not easy to know when a problem has reached a level where the "caregiver should seek outside help. We offer the following guidelines to help determine whether outside resources should be explored. (Developmental level should always be kept in mind.)

IF A CHILD HAS —

- Prolonged adjustment to child care/problem separating from parents
- Injured other children or adults
- Destroyed property
- Difficulty relating to others -peers or adults
- Difficulty attending or focusing on activities
- Signs of Depression (withdraws, appears sad, self-abusive)
- Behavior is repeatedly a problem. Usual discipline methods fail.
- Unusual family Stresses (traumatic divorce; death; violence; substance abuse)
- Caregiver/Teacher often feels stressed, frustrated, or ineffective in meeting child's needs.

If any of these questions apply to the current concern, or if you are in doubt about the need of evaluation, consult the health department, public health nurse, or other health professional.

1 ☐ Appropriate Discipline for Children:

Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers

2 ☐ Objectives

- To learn how developmental stages influence behavior.
- To learn what role temperament plays in behavior.
- To reflect on our personal experiences with discipline.
- To learn steps of effective limit setting in a child care setting.

3 ☐ Infants

- 0-3 months: No discipline
- 4-7 months: Distraction and redirection
- 8-12 months: Distraction and redirection with consistency and immediacy

4 ☐ Toddlers

- Independence: Choice
- Exploration: Modify the Environment
- Temper tantrums: Eliminate the audience
- Negativism: Choice

5 ☐ Preschoolers

- Literalism: Be careful what you say
- Be specific and follow through
- Have fair and consistent consequences
- Animism: Use puppets and humor
- Egocentrism: "How would you feel...?"

6 ☐ School Age (5-12)

- Communication
- Promote Independence and Problem Solving Skills
- Unconditional love and acceptance
- No rewards or punishments

7 ☐ Chaos to Calm in the Classroom:

- Communicate the positive
- Have appropriate environment
- Encourage participation
- Model
- Simple and fun
- Set limits
- Consistent consequences

8 ☐ Questions to ask yourself:

- Do I know what I want to say and do I take the time to say it?
- Do I say it every time I need to say it?

- Do I really let them talk and do I really listen?
 - Do I take the time to explain and do I use examples?
- 9 ☐ Questions to ask yourself:
 - Do I let them show me they understand?
 - Do I let them know when “they have got it?”
 - Do I take advantage of “teachable moments”?
 - Do I allow “natural” consequences to happen?
- 10 ☐ Questions to ask yourself:
 - Do I go over the classroom rules frequently?
 - Do I use words to describe feelings?
- 11 ☐ Ideas for the classroom:
 - Have children help set-up the rules.
 - Review rules every week.
 - Discuss consequences.
 - Describe feelings.
 - Role play or use puppets to tell stories.
 - Practice positive reinforcement.
 - Keep classroom relaxed and slow.
- 12 ☐ Punishment Discipline
 - 1 ■ An unpleasant consequence for doing or not doing something.
 - 2 ■ A method of guiding children that helps them learn how to control their own behavior.
- 13 ☐ When to seek help:
 - Prolonged adjustment to child care or problems separating from parents.
 - Injured other children or adults.
 - Destroyed property.
 - Difficulty relating to other children or adults.
 - Difficulty attending or focusing.
- 14 ☐ When to seek help:
 - Signs of depression (withdraws, appears sad, self-abusive).
 - Behavior is repeatedly a problem and usual discipline methods fail.
 - Unusual family stresses: traumatic divorce, death, violence, substance abuse.
- 15 ☐ When to seek help:
 - Caregiver or teacher often feels frustrated or ineffective in meeting the child’s needs.