Examples of materials to help ensure your setting is sensitive and respectful to all people include:

- Books, pictures and materials accurately depicting men, women, and children of different family structures, races, cultures, ages, abilities, and occupations living their daily lives and solving problems (avoid any books that contain stereotyping roles and pictures)
- Puzzles, pictures, and toys representing various cultures and non-traditional male and female occupations
- Music from various cultures
- Pictures representing a diversity of cultures and gender roles. Pictures will mean more to children if you discuss them before putting them up
- Dramatic play materials encouraging a variety of gender play and role playing of persons in other cultures and with differing abilities
- Male and female dolls representing a diversity of races, cultures, and abilities
- Opportunities for children to experience a variety of languages in spoken, song, or written form, including Braille and sign language
- Foods of different cultures for snack, lunch, and special celebrations
- Activities to promote understanding, well-being and acceptance of others, and
- Activities to respect cultural and linguistic diversity.

Inclusion

Your program should be designed to be inclusive of all children, including children with identified disabilities and special learning and developmental needs. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), effective 1992, states that people with disabilities, including physical, mental, and/or medical impairments, are entitled to equal rights in public accommodations, including early childhood programs.

Necessary modifications will vary depending upon the type and number of children with differing needs and abilities who are served by your program. The inclusion of children with disabilities or special learning and developmental needs may necessitate lower staff-child ratios, specialized staff training, and special environmental arrangement and equipment. Staff should be familiar with available community resources and refer families for additional help when needed.

WAC

WAC 170-295-2040
What behavior management and guidance practices must I have in place?

You must:

- Develop and implement written behavior management and guidance practices for the center.
- Guide the child's behavior based upon an understanding of the individual child's needs and stage of development.
- Promote the child's developmentally appropriate social behavior, self-control, and respect for the rights of others.
- Ensure behavior management and guidance practices that are fair, reasonable, consistent, and related to the child's behavior.
- Prevent and prohibit any person on the premises from using cruel, unusual, hazardous, frightening, or humiliating discipline, including but not limited to:
  - Corporal punishment including biting, jerking, shaking, spanking, slapping, hitting, striking, kicking, pinching, flicking or any other means of inflicting physical pain or causing bodily harm to the child
  - Verbal abuse such as yelling, shouting, name calling, shaming, making derogatory remarks about a child or the child's family, or using language that threatens, humiliates or frightens a child
  - The use of physical restraint method injurious to the child, locked time-out room, or closet for disciplinary purposes
  - The using or withholding of food or liquids as punishment.

- In emergency situations, a staff person may use limited physical restraint when:
  - Protecting a person on the premises from serious injury
  - Obtaining possession of a weapon or other dangerous object, or
  - Protecting property from serious damage.
- Staff who use limited restraint must complete an incident report. A copy of the incident report must be:
  - Placed in the child's individual record and
  - Given to the parent.

WAC

Guidance

Children are not born with inner self-controls. They learn behaviors through observing the people in their lives. But they need to learn to manage their feelings and emotions in socially acceptable ways. Child care providers are important role models for young children and are in a position to help them acquire self-regulation skills.

Guidance is teaching a child what TO DO instead of focusing on what not to do. Because children learn from their everyday experiences it is important that you respond to their behavior in respectful, developmentally appropriate and emotionally safe ways.

Developmentally Appropriate Guidance

Children go through stages of growth in certain sequences. Understanding these sequences is helpful in guiding children's behavior because it helps the caregiver to know what might be expected in each developmental stage. When developing appropriate guidance and discipline methods and strategies you should ask yourself:

- Is the guidance method appropriate for a child this age?
- Is the guidance method appropriate for this specific child?

Anything a child does is "behavior" and all behaviors of children are purposeful and happen for a reason. However, sometimes children behave in ways that are destructive, inappropriate, or otherwise unacceptable. Caregivers need to respond to these behaviors positively and respectfully.

Understanding and Supporting Misbehavior

Children often misbehave when something is bothering them. First, check if children are misbehaving because they:

- Do not feel well or they are hungry, sick or tired
- Lack knowledge or experience (they may need to learn how to act in social situations)
- Are feeling stressed (is there a new baby in the house, did they just move, was there a death in the family, are the parents arguing?)
- Feel discouraged (often children misbehave to get our attention), or
- Feel rejected (everyone wants to be loved and accepted).

In order to thrive, all children need to be shown respect for their feelings and accepted for who they are.

Further reasons for misbehavior can be broken down into four basic categories. If you understand these goals of misbehavior you can sometimes change your reaction to the behavior and in many cases can change the behavior of the child. The goals of the misbehavior are subconscious to the child. The child is not deliberately acting in negative ways. The child is using unsuccessful methods of filling unmet needs. Following are four common needs behind misbehavior.

- **Attention**
  Attention-getting is the most common type of misbehavior. The child may be feeling left out or ignored, and the goal is to get attention from the caregiver. A good example of this is the child who constantly interrupts and wants to talk to you while you are talking with someone else. Caregivers can identify attention-getting behavior by their own initial emotional response. Usually the caregiver feels irritated or annoyed. The best strategy is to ignore the misbehavior and to

"catch that child being good." An example might be that you are working with Maria who is trying to master tying her shoes. Eric is standing by you, interrupting you as you speak to Maria, and wants you to come read a story to him. You say to Eric, "Eric, I am helping Maria right now but I would love to come read a story with you. Would you like to read the story by yourself while you wait or would you like to play at the sensory table until I can read with you?" Once you are finished helping Maria, you go over to Eric and tell him, "Thank you for being so patient while I was helping Maria. Let's read that story!" This strategy allowed you to work with Maria, did not give Eric attention for his annoying behavior, and reinforced his positive, patient behavior.

- **Power**
  Power is another common goal of misbehavior. The child is asking for more control over his or her own life. Usually you can identify this goal because you feel angry, frustrated, or fearful in response to the child's actions. When a provider and child get in a power struggle, no one wins. An example of a potential power struggle is when a child refuses to help at clean up time. A strategy to work with this child would be to give the child appropriate choices, such as:
  - "Do you want to pick up the cars or the blocks?" or
  - "Would you like to put away the markers by yourself, or would you like me to help you?"

  Another potential power struggle is when a child refuses to come in after playing outside. A strategy would be to give this child the following choices:
  - "Natalia, the children are getting ready to go inside. Would you like to go in now or would you like an extra two minutes to play?" or
  - "Would you like to hold the door for everyone, or would you rather hold my hand as we go in?"

Note: *An important thing to remember about giving choices is to give only choices that you are comfortable allowing children to make. They then can choose which option they prefer.*

- **Revenge**
  Revenge is another goal of misbehavior. You usually see this in a child who is already angry and feeling hurt. The goal of the child is to hurt back. You can identify revenge as the goal because you feel hurt and angry too. This child needs lots of positive attention and choices. You should make a conscious effort to catch the child being good. Make sure to give the child choices when power struggles arise. Also, you need to work at establishing a positive relationship with this child. Once the child feels respected and accepted, receives praise for good behavior, and is allowed control over his or her life by being given choices, the behavior will gradually disappear.

- **Avoidance of Failure**
  Avoidance of failure may be the hardest behavior to change. The child feels inadequate and unable to achieve. You will recognize this behavior because you will feel at a loss as to what to do. This child has usually experienced many failures and has given up. A strategy to work with this child is to carefully plan esteem-building activities that allow the child to be successful and continue to build upon these experiences. Slowly the child will learn that she or he is capable and will gradually start taking on challenges by herself or himself.

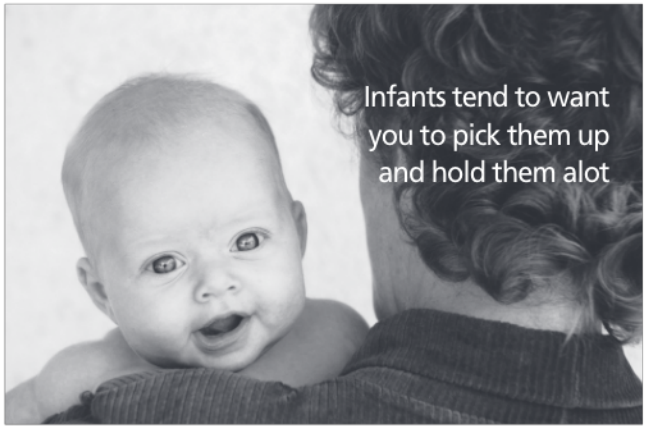
Note: *In order to thrive, all children need to feel nurtured, be accepted for who they are, and shown respect for their feelings.*

Developmentally appropriate expectations

Caregivers must understand developmental stages of growth in order to appropriately guide children's behavior. Caregivers should not expect children to do things that they are not developmentally ready to do. Nor should children be scolded for behaviors that are normal for their age. Doing so forces children to fail, to feel badly about themselves, and/or to feel anger toward the caregiver. Inappropriate expectations also make managing a group of children considerably more difficult.
The following are examples of typical behaviors caregivers can expect to see in children of different ages.

Infants (1 to 12month-olds) tend to:

- Communicate their needs through crying
- Drop things, often on purpose, and expect you to pick them up and give them back to them (this is often a game they enjoy)
- Be messy (it is inappropriate to expect them to pick up after themselves or feed themselves neatly)
- Want you pick them up and hold them a lot
- Put everything within their reach in their mouths
- Not understand verbal requests to stop what they are doing, and
- Practice new skills and repeat new experiences with enthusiasm and perseverance. When they learn to bang things together, they bang everything! When they learn to crawl, they crawl everywhere!



Note: *It is never appropriate to discipline or scold infants for their behavior.*

Toddlers (1 to 2 ½ year-olds) tend to:

- Endlessly ask "Why?"
- Repeat the same activity many times
- Say "No!" and say it often!
- Have a short memory for rules or details, requiring frequent reminders
- Want to do things for themselves
- Be frustrated when they do not have the skills to do what they want to do
- Get upset by disrupted routines
- Grab things from another child if they want it
- Test their physical limits by climbing, running, and pulling themselves up on things, sometimes getting into predicaments
- Be distracted easily
- Solve disputes physically because they have not fully mastered language, and
- Bite their playmates out of frustration, anger, or to get what they want.

Preschoolers (2 ½ to 5-year-olds) tend to:

- Increasingly feel they're "all grown up" and know everything (they want to make their own choices and have control over their time, clothes, food, toys, and friends)
- Become social (they spend increasing time playing with each other and getting silly together)
- Begin to develop friendships
- Be sophisticated enough in their language to play with words (they mimic other people and experiment with bad language)
- Be curious about each other's bodies
- Imitate violent, strong role models in their fantasy play
- Have less need for precise routines or orderly procedures, especially as they turn four or five, and
- Begin to develop a sense of personal and cultural identity.

School-Age (5 to 12-year-olds) tend to:

- Master skills
- Be more strongly influenced by their peers than by adults
- Take interest in their appearance and what other people think of them (they embarrass easily and are slow to admit that they don't know something), and
- Prefer to spend most of their time with children the same gender as themselves (often they express dislike for the opposite sex).

A Few More Words About Toddlers

Sometimes toddlers need special understanding in order to meet their needs. Below are some additional insights into the world of toddlers.

- Toddlers do not have the ability to see things from another person's point of view. They may think that the world revolves around them. With a little time and experience they will grow out of this. Sometimes they may hurt others but do not understand that they caused the hurt. You will need to help them to understand the results of their actions. "Hitting hurts. That hurt Kim-Long when you hit her. She is crying. Use your gentle touches." Or, "Miguel had the ball first. It made him sad when you took it from him. See, he is crying. Let's give the ball back to Miguel and you can play with this one."
- Toddlers have short memories and need lots of reminders. Even when told, "No," they may forget the rule just a short time later. You can kindly and gently restate the rule as you guide them to another activity.
- Toddlers have good intentions but poorly developed motor skills. Perhaps a tight squeeze may have been meant to be a hug from a toddler. Again, they need to be reminded and shown how to use gentle touches. Sometimes spilled milk is an attempt at independence without the ability to do it themselves. You should encourage the intention while showing the child a more secure way of holding the cup.

Tips for Helping Toddlers

Ask yourself these questions:

- Are my expectations for toddlers appropriate or are they too high?
- Are they experiencing consistency and routine throughout each day? Do my daily schedule and routines provide them a sense of security by knowing what will come next?
- Is the environment structured so that they can freely move about and explore? Are there any "hands off" areas that need to be modified for their safety and exploration?
- What is the noise level? Is it too loud? Can it be modified?
- Are my expectations for them to sit or be still for periods of time appropriate? Toddlers need to move, wiggle, and explore. A good time for sharing a story, song, or fingerplay with young children is during meal times, when they are sitting and you already have their attention.
- Are there plenty of toys and materials available, many of them duplicates, so that they do not have to share more than is developmentally appropriate for their age?
- Do you have enough teachers in your toddler room to meet the individual needs of the children? This age often needs lower staff-to-child ratios for their developmental needs. This is especially true during diaper changing times, eating times, and putting them to sleep at naptime.

Creating the environment

Much of behavior management and guidance happens behind the scenes. It is what the caregiver does before the children arrive to create an environment that promotes positive behavior. What is placed in an area and how it is arranged often determine the atmosphere for promoting social, emotional, intellectual, and physical growth. It also determines the behaviors, positive and negative, that happen in that space.

The following checklist can help you create an environment that promotes children's positive behavior in your center.

	The classroom has a variety of learning and activity centers to encourage choice and independence.
	Age-appropriate materials and toys are displayed on low, open shelves allowing children to get the toys and put them away by themselves.
	There are enough materials and toys available so that children can choose what they want to play with and have the ability to play with them for long periods of time. This will decrease children's fighting over toys.
	Learning and activity centers are set up for several children (up to 4 or 5) to play together. This allows them to cooperate, share, and problem solve together.
	A large space for whole group activities is provided to allow for group activities, discussion, and problem solving.
	There are small, quiet, private areas (within full adult supervision) so that children can be alone or play with just one or two other children.
	The room is uncrowded and has space for children to work and play at the tables and on the floor. Congestion is avoided and children can move about and explore.
	Centers and activity areas are well defined and placed so activities are not interrupted. Children know what to do in each area. Toys and equipment generally remain in their designated areas.
	Low dividers are used to separate areas so that caregivers can easily observe the children and supervise their activities.
	Individual cubbies are available so that children can be responsible for their own belongings.
	Placement of furniture discourages rough play or running.

Modify the environment throughout the day to meet the emerging needs of children in your care. You can add props to the dramatic play or playground areas to promote social interaction or broaden play that is already in progress. If the children are too rough or noisy in a given area, you can rearrange the area to limit the number of children or another activity can be introduced into that area. Modifying the environment is the first step to help children behave appropriately. Other considerations to help you guide children's behavior are listed below.

- **Daily Schedules and Routines**
  Children know what to expect when familiar routines are in place for them. They can predict what is going to happen and are able to move smoothly from one activity to the next throughout the day.

- **Organization of Space**
  It is important to have clearly defined activity areas. When things are organized and placed near the area of use, children are able to get materials and supplies by themselves, use them in the appropriate areas, and put them away.

- **Activities and Materials**
  Plenty of materials should be available for children to investigate, explore, and use. A good rule of thumb is that there should be about 50% more materials and play spaces than children in order to provide freedom of choice and suitable alternative activities.

- **Self Help**
  Chairs, tables, sinks, toilets, eating materials, etc. should be child-size so that children can use them independently.

Positive guidance

Positive guidance builds upon the behind-the-scenes work of creating and modifying the environment to influence children's behavior. The following are some guidance techniques that will be useful to you as you work with the children in your care.

Limit Setting

Limit or rule setting gives children safe boundaries in which to work and play. Limits and rules help prevent children from hurting themselves or others, and help prevent destruction of property. Limits and rules need to be age-appropriate and allow children more responsibility and freedom as they grow and mature.

Limits should to be few in number, firm yet flexible, and maintained with consistency. Children feel safer and are able to experience a greater sense of independence and competency when they know what the limits are. Staff should discuss with children the reasons for the rules. They should involve the children in the process of deciding what rules are necessary for the group. Children will be more cooperative when they realize staff do not make up rules and change them whenever they want to. Rules can be as simple as:

- We keep ourselves safe
- We keep each other safe, and
- We keep our things safe (Adams & Baronberg, 2005).

State the Positive

Positive guidance focuses on the positive or desired behavior. Staff should tell children what TO do instead of what NOT to do. Words like stop, no, and don't are good for an emergency, but do not give children the necessary information they need to make good choices. Examples of stating the positive are:

Say: "Please walk."
Rather than: "Stop."

Say: "You need to eat your food to keep your body healthy."
Rather than: "Don't play with your food."

Say: "Play dough stays on the table."
Rather than: "Don't play with that over there."

Say: "We take turns talking at circle time."
Rather than: "Be quiet."

Validate Children's Feelings

When you give words to what a child is feeling, they feel understood and are able to let go of the strong emotion.

- "I know it is hard to wait for a turn, but it is Maya's turn now. Your turn is next."
- "You must have been very upset. Use your words to tell Jerome, not your fists."

State the Rules and Give Reasons for the Limits

Children are more cooperative when they understand the reason behind a rule. Often, they will repeat the positive behavior in the future because of this understanding.

- "Use a quiet voice in the hall, Ana, so you don't wake up the babies."
- "Cameron, please hang your coat up so that it won't get walked on or lost."

Model the Behavior You Want from the Children

Children learn by watching others. Show them what to do along with giving an explanation.

- "We wash our hands like this and then we dry them and put the paper towel here in the garbage can."
- "I don't know if I like this vegetable or not. I will put a little bit on my plate and try it. Then if I like it I can have more."
- "Oops, I forgot to throw my gum out when I entered the room this morning. I'd better do it now."

Reinforce Appropriate Behavior
Behaviors that are followed by positive reinforcement are likely to be strengthened and repeated. Appropriate ways to reinforce behavior include a smile, a wink, a pat on the back, a hug, praise, or a special activity as a reward for the desired behavior.

Ignore Inappropriate Behavior
Sometimes children receive more attention from adults for misbehavior than for good behavior. Your job is to catch the child being good and use positive attention to reinforce the desired behavior. While you cannot ignore unsafe or hurtful actions, you can ignore those that are annoying and can be safely overlooked. By ignoring these behaviors and rewarding the positive behaviors, children will eventually continue to repeat positive behaviors and the annoying ones will disappear.

Give Choices
When children are given choices they are more likely to cooperate. Offering choices also promotes independence and gives the children some control over their own behavior.

- "I can see that you are not through playing yet, Sadie. Would you like to put that over here and finish it after lunch, or would you like two more minutes before washing up and coming to the lunch table?"
- "Mikhail has the red marker now. Would you like the green one or the blue one to use until he is finished with his?"

Sometimes children refuse to choose among the options available to them and you need to make the choice for them. Spending a lot of time with a child who refuses to cooperate focuses attention on negative behaviors. Some examples of how to bring a situation rapidly to a close are:

- "It looks like you can't decide whether you're going to put your shoes on or not. Why don't you sit here and I will help you this time?"
- "Can you decide which books you're going to look at all by yourself or should I help you? (No response.) Would you like this book or this one? (No response.) I see you'll need some help this time. Take this book to your table."

Once children get used to choices, they usually want to make their own choices without protest. Remember to give only choices that you are comfortable allowing children to make. They can then choose which option they prefer.

Redirect
Give children alternatives to their current behavior and help them to make appropriate choices.

- "James is sitting there. You need to pick another place to sit."
- "Michi, you have so much energy, but running is for outside. No one is at the water table right now; let's play over there."
- "I'm sorry there is no more room at the art table right now. You need to pick something else to do until there is a place for you."

I Messages
Using I messages is a common tool used to tell others how you think or feel without laying blame on them. Most commonly I messages use the following format: "When…., I feel… because…" The when portion must state specifically what the upsetting behavior is without blaming the child. The I feel portion lets the child know your feelings about the behavior or the result of the behavior on you. The because portion states the effect of the behavior on you. They do not have to be used in the same order or wording. Here are some examples:

- "When you stand on the chair I am afraid because you will fall and get hurt."
- "When it is noisy during circle time I am frustrated because I can't talk loud enough for everyone to hear."
- When you fill the glass too full I worry that it will spill."

I messages are a respectful way of telling children what the problem is and allows them to come up with solutions to the problems. It allows them to self-regulate their behavior and to make better choices. When consistently modeled, the children eventually will be able to use I messages themselves.

Using Consequences

Consequences come about as a natural result of the child's behavior. Consequences must be related, respectful, reasonable, and based on appropriate expectations for that child. The following are some examples of applying appropriate consequences to children's actions:

Say: "Yes, I know how much you enjoy your art time. I'm sorry you're missing it. You decided to scatter these toys all over the room and it takes a long time to get them all back where they belong."

Rather than: "You threw the toys, now you need to sit in time-out."

Say: "I see you two are having difficulty deciding who can use the computer first. When you have both agreed on a solution let me know and I will turn it on for you."

Rather than: "Neither of you can use the computer today because you were fighting over it."

Appropriate consequences are not to be used as punishment. They are to help children experience the results of their behavior, so that they may make better choices in the future.

Physical Touch

There is a range of physical touch that can be used to help guide a child throughout the day. Sometimes a hug or a pat on the back or shoulder is all a child needs in order to feel safe and secure. Infants need holding, cuddling, and rocking to calm and soothe them. Many children like to be rocked or to have their backs rubbed during rest time. This kind of human touch conveys nurturing and support.

Touch can be used, when necessary, to protect a child or others from danger. Examples are:

- Putting your hand on a child's arm to suggest slowing down
- Asking a child to hold your hand during a transition or when moving from one area of the building to another, and
- Placing your hand on a child's shoulder can be used as an intervention to keep the child from hitting someone or throwing something.

Tantrums

Individual children cope with stress in a variety of ways. In some cases, children may lose control of their bodies for a short period of time. In young children, this can result in what is commonly called a temper tantrum. It is the job of the caregiver to understand what the child needs and to help the child regain self-control. Some children will come up and nestle into your arms. Your calmness will help them to regulate their own bodies. Other children do not want to be touched. They may not even want you to talk to them. At these times you should sit by the child and use your body to separate the child from the rest of the group. It is important for you to remain calm. Explain to the other children that the child is having a hard time and that you need to stay close to help him/her. Then, redirect the other children back to their play. Tell the child you are with, "I know you are feeling really angry right now. When you are calm you can tell me about it if you like."

Caution About Using Rewards and Stickers
Behavior modification techniques are tempting to use because they are so effective when used correctly, at least initially. Children will work for the physical evidence of their good or poor behavior. But, behavior modification techniques do not emphasize the social and interpersonal reasons for cooperating. Better ways of encouraging cooperative behavior are to make it a game such as, "Who can pick up all of the red ones?" or offer choices such as, "Do you want to pick up the blocks or put away the books?" Overuse of rewards and stickers sometimes causes children to cooperate only if they are paid. Children should not be paid for doing things that should be naturally expected of them.

Removing Children from the Group: Proper Use of Time Out
Time Out is an intervention method for responding to extreme behavior. Many child development specialists discourage its use and some programs do not allow it because it is often used incorrectly or used too often.

The goal of a Time Out is to help the child gain self-control and change their behavior. It should not be used as a punishment. Children are learning self-control and it takes practice. Time Out is a time to settle down and regain composure. It should be a quiet, relaxed, neutral break to allow children to regain self-control. Time Out should last only as long as it takes for children to regain self-control and change their behavior. Keep it brief (a rule of thumb is that it not last longer than one minute per year of a child's life up to five minutes). Time Out should take place in a soft, cozy place like an easy chair with pillows. Time Out is NOT appropriate for infants or toddlers. It is appropriate only after children have some sense of how to help themselves (usually around 36 months).

Having a child sit down for a while is NOT a substitute for problem-solving. It is essential that you return to children after they have regained self-control and discuss the problem. Help children figure out what they can do differently next time.

Stay flexible. Do not get into a power struggle or try to get a child to listen to what YOU have to say. If the child appears unwilling to discuss the problem, accept that. If the child has regained self-control, let him/her re-enter the group. Later in the day, make sure you get back to the child to problem solve the situation.

Time In Instead of Time Out
Often Time Out can be avoided if caregivers are alert and attentive to children's emotional states and needs. Caregivers should observe and look for signs that a child is having difficulty or becoming upset. Sometimes a group environment can be overwhelming. When you see this occurring, you can go and ask if the child would like to do something with you. "I need a helper, can you help me…" or "Would you like to read a story with me?" The objective is to give the child some positive one-on-one attention so that he/she can quiet down and relax before re-entering the group. Sometimes a child may need to stay by you for safety and support for long periods of time, perhaps throughout the entire day.

Note: *Time In with a sensitive, caring adult can often avoid Time Out later on in the day.*

Physical Restraint
Physical restraint should be used ONLY when the child's body cannot be calmed in any other way and the actions of the child are causing EXTREME DANGER to the child or others. IT IS ALWAYS THE LAST RESORT. You should try all other ways of minimizing the present danger before you consider using limited physical restraint.

Physical restraint often sets up power struggles between a child and the caregiver when unnecessarily used. Always use verbal guidance with physical restraint. For example, to a child involved in dangerous fighting, "I know you are really angry right now,

but I can't let you hit your friend. Let's sit over here for a while and rest. We can talk about it when you are calm." Do not talk until the child is ready to listen and then avoid shaming or moralizing. When the child is calm, spend some private time with him/her. Help to name the child's feelings, "You must have been very angry." Then help the child to distinguish between feelings and actions, "It's okay to feel angry, but it's not okay to throw things." Talk about other behaviors that might have been more appropriate and let the child know that you still care about him/her. The child may need your help to re-enter the group. Stay close by until the child feels comfortable again.

Note: *Because physical restraint is such an infringement upon a child and can be dangerous, licensing requires you to document each incident, give a copy of the incident report to the parent, and placed it in the child's file.*

Use of rope, tape, or other materials to bind children is strictly forbidden. Physically restraining children is not acceptable as a routine form of discipline. It can be emotionally harmful to the child and to the other children witnessing it.

Know the Limits of Your Expertise

You will need to work with parents and on occasion, other professionals, to eliminate dangerous behavior. Know the limits of your expertise. Child guidance techniques are learned behaviors and can be gained through education and training. You may need to get professional guidance for dealing with a child whose behavior is very difficult to manage.

Inappropriate Forms of Discipline

You should distinguish discipline or guidance from punishment. Guidance has as its goal educating and redirecting children. It emphasizes cooperation. Punishment has as its goal hurting, shaming, or intimidating children. Punishment is an inappropriate form of discipline, and has no place in a child care center. You must not:

- Shame a child
- Call a child names
- Shout at a child
- Ridicule a child in front of a group
- Allow the group to make fun of a child
- Put an older child in a playpen, crib, or high chair
- Make a child wear a dunce cap,
- Make a child put his face against the wall, or
- Spank a child or slap a child's hand (any form of corporal punishment is against licensing regulations).

Inappropriate forms of discipline are a source of stress and anxiety for children. It makes them feel badly about themselves, angry at the caregiver and afraid of being punished again.

There are times when you will be genuinely angry at a child. Whenever you express your anger at what a child does, it is important that you make it clear you are angry at the child's behavior, not the child as a person. Do not let your anger be an excuse to be out of control, abusing the child either physically or verbally.

Note: *It is never appropriate for adults to lose their temper or control. Caregivers are human and may need to separate themselves from the offending child if they cannot control their own emotions. Understanding children means understanding child development. The more knowledge you have, the easier it is to provide the appropriate behavioral guidance to meet children's social and emotional needs.*

Behavior management and guidance policy

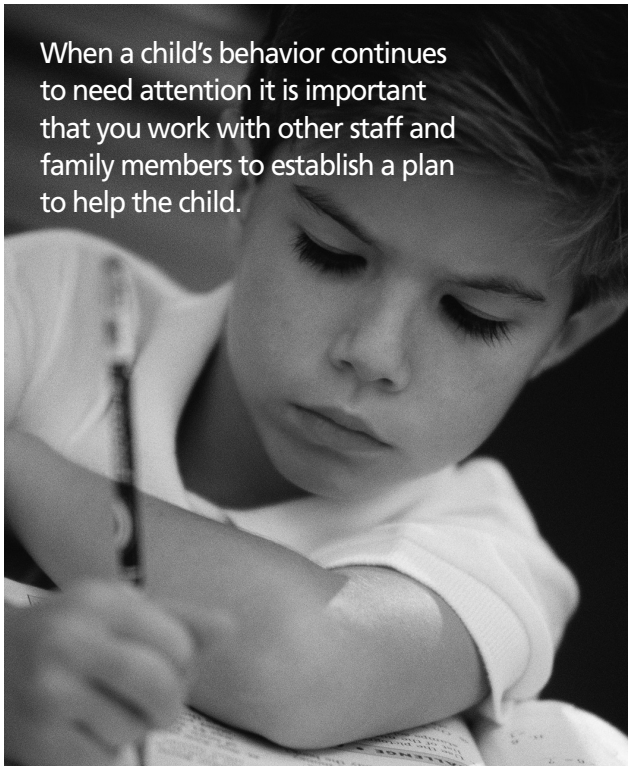
The purpose of discipline is to help children learn basic human values and problem solving skills, and to take responsibility for their own actions. Telling parents you will not spank their child is the easy part. Your staff needs clear guidelines on your center's discipline policy and training in positive discipline techniques. Orient your staff thoroughly. Give new staff members a chance to see how more experienced caregivers talk to the children and handle problems. You can:

- Have your program supervisor provide trainings in active listening, helping children problem-solve, and using positive communication with children
- Arrange for outside speakers and trainers on this topic
- Give staff useful materials to read (such as this guidebook), and
- Encourage staff to take classes and attend workshops and conferences. Probably no area of training will have a greater impact on the tone and quality of your program than training in positive guidance.

The director and program supervisor should observe all staff regularly to make sure communication and problem solving are positive and non-threatening. Offer suggestions and model appropriate guidance techniques when you think it is necessary.

Tell your staff who to go to for assistance if a discipline problem is beyond their control. For instance, you probably want to tell your aides to get the lead caregiver if they are having trouble helping a child to cooperate. Lead caregivers, in turn, should be able to call upon either the program supervisor or the director. Professional help should be sought for behavior problems you do not know how to handle.

Sometimes just handing over a problem to someone else helps to solves the problem. The other staff person is not necessarily more competent than you.


When a child's behavior continues to need attention it is important that you work with other staff and family members to establish a plan to help the child.

Sometimes children are ready to cooperate but don't feel they can give in to you without losing face. Tell staff not to take it personally. They may have an opportunity to help another staff person with a problem at another time.

If staff need help handling a problem, it is best to have the director come to the room to help, not send children to the director. Remember to model, model, model!

You are required by licensing to have a written behavior management and guidance policy. The example on the following page can be used as a model for creating your center's behavior management and guidance policy.

Making a Plan

When a child's behavior continues to need attention it is important that you work with other staff and family members to establish a plan to help the child. On the next page a Behavior Guidance Work Sheet is provided to help with this process.

Sample Behavior Management and Guidance Policy

This child care center uses indirect guidance techniques:

- We give advance notice: "You have five more minutes to play before it's time to clean up."
- We give choices: "You may paint with the other children or you may read a book in the quiet corner."
- We have a regular routine: "We always wash our hands before lunch. After lunch is story time."
- We avoid nagging: We tell the child what we expect just once, follow it by asking if the child remembers what we asked, and then offer to help the child do what was asked.
- We are consistent: We do things the same way each day so the children know what to expect and learn to trust and feel safe in their environment.

We also use direct guidance techniques:

- We use positive statements: "We use walking feet indoors" rather than "Don't run!" or "Use your words to tell us you're angry" rather than "Don't hit!"
- We get the child's attention by crouching down to his/her level, making eye contact, speaking quietly and asking the child to repeat the directions.
- We try very hard to be fair. We examine our expectations to make sure they are age appropriate, and we don't make rules just because an activity is too noisy or messy.
- We avoid arguments by following through with solutions that address the problem, but also offer the child a way to exit gracefully from the problem: "You can choose a quiet place to calm down or I can choose one for you."

If a child is unable to demonstrate self-controlling behavior, a brief time out results for the child to regain control. Time out occurs only when other measures fail, and is used as an opportunity for the child to regain self-control, not as a punishment.

By law, and by program philosophy and policy, the following forms of discipline are forbidden: hitting, spanking, shaking, scolding, shaming, isolating, labeling ("bad," "naughty," etc.), or any other negative reaction to the child's behavior. All forms of corporal (physical) punishment are strictly forbidden.

Some negative behavior is best ignored, since its goal is often to get attention. This technique can be used for some of the annoying things children do, but would not be used with unsafe or hurtful behavior.

If a child is unable to gain control and requires more individual attention than can be given within child-to-staff ratios, we may need to contact a parent. A child requiring one-to-one attention may have to leave the center temporarily for safety's sake. Repeated uncontrollable behavior can lead to discontinuation of child care services.

Behavior Guidance Worksheet

Child's Name: _____ Date of Birth:_____

Today's Date: _____

Child's strengths (what the child does well):

Describe the problem (specific behaviors):

What is the desired behavior for the child?

Changes to the environment to modify the behavior:

1

2.

3.

Positive communication to reinforce good behavior (praise, smile, special activity, time with the caregiver, etc.)

1.

2.

3.

Communication to acknowledge the child's feelings:

1.

2.

3.

Appropriate choices the child could be given:

1.

2.

3.

Appropriate Consequences:

1.

2.

Plan of Action:

Caregivers will:

Parents will:

Start date of Plan:_____ Evaluation Date: _____

Other things to try:_____