

The Child Care Providers' Almanac

This handbook is for child care providers. It will increase your understanding of how to use positive guidance practices and reduce the occurrence of child abuse/neglect in licensed child care centers and homes. The Provider's Almanac is a tool that will help you manage behavior in your facility and help guide children to self-control.

All children will present hard-to-handle behaviors from time to time. This is just a fact of life. Children need providers to help them learn how to manage the issues that cause them to act out. They need guidance that will teach them how to get along with others, how to express their feelings with words, and how to problem solve without resorting to violence.

Guiding children to self-control is not something that just happens. It is more than just handling misbehaviors as they occur. The guidance process is a plan of how to interact with children. It builds positive relationships and builds self-esteem.

Remember that behavior does not change overnight. With time, providers can help children make steps toward self-control. These steps are like **SEEDS . . .**



*. . . plant them, water them
with consistency, wait patiently,
and watch self-control bloom.*

SEEDS TO POSITIVE GUIDANCE



Style

Your personal style influences how you respond to children. Are you easy-going, sensitive, or feisty? Did you know that your style can either help or prevent positive behavior in children?



Environment

Our physical surroundings play an important role in how we respond to people. The organization and the quality of the activities/materials of the classroom can affect a provider's efforts to guide children to self-control.



Emotional-Social Development

When children feel lonely or overlooked they show their unhappiness by acting out. Children need to feel loved and have friends. Providers can reduce acting out by teaching children how to get along with their peers and how to build positive relationships with adults.



Developmentally Appropriate Guidance Practice

All children will present challenging behaviors at one time or another. Child care providers should prepare a plan to handle these situations rather than resorting to spanking, shouting, or physical restraint. These practices may lead to investigations of abuse/neglect or criminal charges. This can be avoided when providers learn how to use developmentally appropriate guidance practices. These strategies will promote cooperation and turn incidents of misbehavior into teachable moments.



Societal Influences

Families are under a lot of stress these days. Many are faced with financial problems and divorce. Children do not have the words to describe how they feel so they respond by acting out. Young children may become cranky or return to earlier behaviors such as bedwetting or thumb sucking. Older children may become violent or withdrawn. Each child reacts differently to stress. We can help them cope with open communication and positive relationships.

STYLE



*“Your heart is full
of fertile seeds,
waiting to
sprout.”*

Morihei Ueshib

Our personality, temperament, or “our style” determines how we react to the world around us. Many of us are easy-going. We can adapt to change easily. Some of us are shy. We feel most secure in a structured and predictable environment. A few of us are feisty. We respond to everything with intensity and zeal. Our unique personality can help or hinder our efforts to guide children’s behaviors.

Temperament plays an important role in how we guide children. For example, a provider who likes order may become frustrated with a child who constantly spills his milk during lunch. This frustration could trigger fear in a shy child or rebellion from a feisty one.

What makes you angry? What gets on your nerves? Prevent tension and promote positive behavior by first recognizing your own temperament. Then identify the temperament of the children in your care and develop a plan of action to guide your unique group to self-control.

Does Your Personal Style Promote Positive Behavior?

Do you set limits for children in a firm tone?

Limit setting is an important part of keeping children safe and guiding them to self-control. Children who understand the class rules are more cooperative because they know what is expected of them and how far they can go.

Providers need to set limits in a kind, firm tone of voice. A weak tone of voice sends a message to children that the adult is not sure of her authority and obedience is a choice. Children usually ignore weak requests.

When children are spoken to in a harsh tone they learn to comply out of fear. Over time they become used to being spoken to in this manner and begin to avoid the adult. They may even feel the adult is mean and does not like them. Children are more likely to follow rules when they feel cared for, respected, and free to express themselves without being scolded.

The most effective guidance technique when setting limits for children is a firm voice. A firm tone does not always come naturally. Avoid sounding weak or harsh by practicing using a calm, firm tone. A few simple words in a firm tone let children know what is expected of them. This decreases power struggles and builds cooperative relationships that guide children to self-control.

Do you guide children with simple, clear, statements?

When adults lecture or use too many words, children may become confused. Lectures work against good guidance because children will simply respond by tuning them out. Avoid confusing children. Use simple clear statements such as "Use your walking feet," "Use your inside voice," "We don't hit our friends." These statements are easy to understand and let children know what is expected of them in the classroom.

Do children find you approachable?

More than half of what we say is conveyed through our body language. Body language includes our facial expressions, posture, and the way we hold our hands and arms. Children will approach an adult whose facial expression is pleasant and friendly.

Remember that your body language lets children know that you are available and interested in them. Always sit, squat, or kneel at their level when you speak to

them. It is difficult to communicate warmth, caring, and concern when you are standing two or three feet over a child's head.

An angry face and folded arms can trigger fear or dislike from a child. Never let your anger cause you to physically abuse a child, such as spanking, dragging, or pushing him. These practices cause children to fear and distrust adults. They also violate child care rules and lead to reports of physical abuse/neglect and even criminal charges.

Do you believe that misbehavior can be changed?

All children make mistakes and act out occasionally. Don't take what children say or do personally. Children are in the process of learning how to follow rules and how to express their feelings with words. Plan to start each day with a positive attitude and with the belief that you have the skills to teach children acceptable behavior. When you label children or give up on them you set yourself up for failure and sabotage your own efforts to guide them to self-control.

Do you provide encouragement?

Take some time out of your day and count how many times you catch children doing good. Do your words of encouragement out-number your scoldings? Each time sincere praise is given it increases the chances for appropriate behavior to be repeated.

Do you model good behavior for children?

Only say or do things that you would want children to copy. Adults who are unkind to their co-workers teach children that this type of behavior is acceptable. Be sure that you model the kind of behavior you want from the children in your care. Remember, young eyes and ears are watching and listening!

Style Checklist

- Recognize your own personality style.
- Recognize the personality style of each child in your care.
- Identify the triggers that make you angry.
- Plan to handle triggers in an appropriate manner.



ENVIRONMENT



Your environment affects your behavior. A roomy, clean, area is one of the basic tools needed to provide positive guidance. When rooms are too hot people are sluggish and don't want to participate in activities. When rooms are too small people feel cramped and are easily annoyed. All of these feelings can lead to acting out and inappropriate discipline.

Activities, materials, and schedules are all a part of the classroom environment. Activities and materials need to match the age and skills of the children in the group. When a successful match is made children are more cooperative and confident.

Activities that are too hard make children angry and activities that are too easy bore them. Both anger and boredom lead to acting out.

Let's take a look at the pitfalls that may trigger acting out.



“Keep on sowing your seed, for you never know which will grow; perhaps it all will.”

Albert Einstein

Does Your Environment Promote Positive Guidance?

Room Arrangement

Can you supervise all areas of the classroom?

Children are more cooperative and take fewer risks when they know that they are being supervised. Arrange your classroom so that supervision is not blocked by furniture, doors, or walls. Providers should be able to hear and see children from all areas of the room. Providers should always be on the move, interacting and watching the behavior of the children.

Is there enough classroom space for freedom of movement and un-interrupted play?

Children need enough space for group play and private time with a special friend. There are more incidents of acting out when children are crowded. They are easily annoyed and more likely to fight, argue, or bite their classmate to get the space that they need.

Is your classroom clean, well organized, and comfortable?

Untidy rooms confuse children because they don't know where to play or how to use the materials. Busy, brightly colored rooms can over-stimulate them. A room that is clean, pastel colored, attractive, and well-organized is simply more comfortable. It sends a message to everyone that they are welcome and that people care about their surroundings.

Is your room separated into activity centers?

Large rooms are hard to supervise. They also overwhelm children. Long corridors send a message that they should run. When a room is organized into centers children play more cooperatively because they feel safe, know where to play, and how to locate materials.

Room Arrangement Checklist

- Carefully plan traffic patterns.
- Minimize large open spaces.
- Organize the room into at least four activity areas. Define each area with shelves and furniture.
- Make sure that all children can be visually supervised at all times and from all areas of the room.
- Provide as much classroom space as possible.
- Identify the areas in the room where there is consistent acting out.
- Make a plan to rearrange the areas where consistent acting out takes place.

Activities and Materials

Are your activities and materials teaching children how to get along with one another, problem solve, and label their feelings?

Learning how to get along with others can be hard for some children. Help children learn this skill by choosing activities and materials that make everyone in the group feel successful. These activities and materials should match the age and individual abilities of the children in the group. They should also make children use their imaginations and help them develop friendships.

Do young preschoolers in your classroom play together nicely?

Younger preschoolers have limited social skills. They are not mature enough to understand the concept of sharing. Prevent tears and conflicts over popular materials by providing duplicates. Avoid overwhelming younger preschoolers with too many toys. Provide toys that are simple, and encourage creativity.

Do the older children in your classroom get along with one another?

Children argue and challenge rules when classroom activities and materials bore them. They also become restless and irritable when they have nothing to do. To reduce conflict in the classroom plan enough teacher-directed activities and provide a variety of free choice materials that promote cooperation instead of competition.

Activities and Materials Checklist

Activities

- Plan activities that are interesting to the children.
- Activities should be age and developmentally appropriate.
- Limit the number of children in each activity center.
- Provide additional or more challenging activities for children who finish before their peers.
- Choose activities that promote cooperation rather than competition.
- Identify the activities where there is consistent acting out and make a plan to change them.

Materials

- Choose materials for safety and age appropriateness.
- Provide a variety of open-ended materials and cooperative games.
- Avoid boredom by changing and rotating materials on a regular basis.
- Label the materials within each activity center.
- Provide multiples of the same toys.
- Identify and replace materials that cause the children to consistently act out.
- Choose materials that promote cooperation rather than competition.

Daily Schedule

Is your daily schedule consistent?

Children are more cooperative when they know what to expect. They feel at ease to work at their own pace because they know there is enough time for routines, transitions, group time and free choice activities. When children feel rushed they argue and challenge the rules.

Daily Schedule Checklist

- Establish a routine based on the developmental level of the children
- Follow your schedule consistently.
- Create a balanced schedule that includes active and quiet times, small/large group times and time to play alone, indoor and outdoor play times, and self-selected and teacher-initiated activities.
- Provide ample time for routines such as arrival and departure, toileting, dressing, washing hands, and clean up.
- Teach children your schedule.
- Identify the blocks of time where there is consistent acting out and plan to make a change.

Transitions

Do you plan for transitions?

When children are told to stop playing abruptly they become upset. They need time to prepare themselves to move from one activity to another. Children also challenge the rules when they have to wait between activities. Avoid power struggles and signal transitions with action songs or other types of activities.

Transition Checklist

- Plan some type of signal (a song, chant, record, bell or flick of the lights) to announce that an activity is about to end.
- Allow sufficient time for the transition to take place.
- Be clear and consistent.
- Use the same routine each day so children will learn transition cues or activities.
- Identify a transition time where there is consistent acting out and plan to make a change.

Mealtime

Is your mealtime pleasant?

Mealtime can be a pleasant opportunity for the providers and children to socialize and get to know one another better. It can also be used as a tool to teach table manners and positive attitudes about food. Reduce acting out during meal time by providing tasty meals and proper supervision at the table.

Mealtime Checklist

- Remember that each child has his own unique eating pattern.
- Sit down with the children at meal time and model good eating habits.
- Organize all of your meal time supplies beforehand so that you will not need to leave the table.
- Allow enough time in the schedule to set up, eat, and clean up after each meal.
- Make sure children are not rushed to eat.
- Never use food as a reward or punishment.
- Plan menus that the children will enjoy.
- Serve the entire meal. Do not serve the meal in portions as a means of getting the children to eat more.
- Assign children mealtime responsibilities.
- Make sure that there is enough space at the table for each child.
- Identify a mealtime routine where there is consistent acting out and plan to make a change.

Naptime

Is Naptime relaxing?

Toddlers and preschoolers need 11 hours of sleep each night plus a two-hour nap during the day. School-age children need about 10 hours of sleep each night.

Sufficient sleep is very important. Children who do not get enough rest are prone to injury. They also may present symptoms that could be mistaken for attention-deficit or other types of behavior disorders. Younger children also need a nap everyday so that they will not become cranky.

Children are more likely to challenge the rules when they are cranky and tired. Although every child should be encouraged to go to sleep during the day, adults should prepare for children who squirm, make noise, and socialize before they drift off to sleep. Prevent naptime stress and make a plan to deal with children who don't fall asleep right away. Providers can create a private sleeping area with dividers or shelves and separate these children from the rest of the class. Allow the squirmers to get their wiggles out before trying to help them go to sleep. Prepare a quiet activity for children who wake up early.

Be patient and remember that sleeping is not something that children can control. There may be both physical and emotional reasons why children cannot sleep. Some children are worried due to a stressful home situation. Some have nightmares and fear going to sleep. Other children take medication that won't allow them to relax enough to fall asleep during the day.

Naptime Checklist

- Schedule naptime late enough so that most children are tired.
- Plan a quiet activity for the group right before naptime.
- Remind children of naptime rules: "Stay on your own mat. Use your quiet voice."
- Remind the children that they will only sleep for a few hours and activities will continue after the nap.
- Leave at least 3 feet of space between each cot and place children who are near to each other, head to toe. This prevents the spread of germs and minimizes talking.
- Allow the children to settle down at their own pace.
- Darken the room and play soothing music.
- Relax restless children by rubbing their backs.
- Never leave the children unattended during naptime.
- Have a planned quiet activity for children who wake up before rest time is over or who can not sleep at all.
- Identify a naptime activity where there is consistent acting out and plan to make a change.

Circle Time

Are the children actively involved in circle time?

Circle time can be a wonderful learning experience. Young children who are read to during their early years are better prepared for kindergarten because they have better listening skills and larger vocabularies. On the other hand, when circle time is too long, children will act out in an effort to let providers know that they are bored. This acting out may frustrate providers and may lead to inappropriate discipline.

Circle Time Checklist

- Plan a circle time that is age appropriate and sensitive to the children's attention span, interests, and abilities.
- Start the school year with the circle time lasting a few minutes and gradually increase the time.
- Schedule several short circle times with small groups rather than long ones with a large group.
- Avoid distractions by holding circle time away from toy shelves and busy areas of the room.
- Assign each child a seat on the rug with tape.
- Assign one staff to lead and another to sit behind the circle of children, to help with supervision and to move quickly to children who are having a hard time.
- A gentle touch on the back may calm a child who has trouble keeping still.
- Be prepared to shorten or alter circle time if children are bored or fidgety.
- Make sure that each child has enough personal space.
- Identify a circle time activity where there is consistent acting out and plan to make a change.



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT



“This very moment is a seed from which the flowers of tomorrow’s happiness grow.”

*Margaret
Lindsey*

The emotional and social development of children plays an important role in a provider’s ability to practice positive guidance. Children need to feel loved and have friends. When these basic needs are not met they feel alone. They do not have the language to express their feelings with words, so they may act out.

Plan to start a positive relationship with each child on the first day they arrive at your child care facility. This will help to reduce acting out behavior. Children are less likely to get into power struggles with adults who care about their feelings. When children

like and respect their caregivers they will seek opportunities to please them. Providers can encourage friendship-building and cooperation by choosing activities and materials that are non-competitive and make everyone feel successful.

Do you prevent challenging behaviors by supporting emotional and social development?

Do you help the shy or overly aggressive children get along with others?

Some children appear to develop social skills with ease. They can make friends and find their place in the group without difficulty. They enjoy being with other children and relate well to adults. Other children, however, need more time and help to feel comfortable in a group. Children who are unable to make friends tend to feel rejected a great deal of the time. Both the shy and the aggressive children need guidance from adults to help them learn how to make friends. When children are unable to relate positively to others they express their unhappiness by acting out.

Do you have a positive relationship with each child?

Positive relationships reduce acting out. Positive relationship building should start on the first day the child enters the facility. At first, this will take time. But in the long term the child will be more cooperative. Children will look for opportunities to please you because they feel you care about them and understand their needs. On the other hand, when adults make impossible demands, nag, or scold children, they become upset and may respond by acting out. In addition, sometimes adults lose patience with children that they can not control and resort to punishment in an effort to manage the classroom.

Do you express your anger appropriately?

Anger is an emotion that we all feel at one time or another. Regrettably, many adults do not know how to handle their anger properly. Some respond on impulse and yell, hit, or finger point. Others simply ignore their feelings and harbor resentment. Children watch how we respond to anger and copy what they see and hear. Providers can teach children how to calm themselves and talk about their feelings. But in order to do this, they must first identify the behaviors that make them angry and then develop a plan of how they will respond to those triggers.

When providers teach children how to label their feelings they help them make and keep friends, communicate better, and build self-esteem. These children are also happier and more compliant in the classroom.

Do the children in your classroom feel free to explore their environment and express themselves freely?

Providers set themselves up for power struggles when they create environments that are rigid. Young children are very sensitive to adult moods and attitudes. When

providers are harsh they trigger fear and distrust in children. These feelings lead to acting out. Children are naturally noisy, messy, and self-centered. Preschoolers are learning how to get along with others and how to make acceptable choices.

A provider determines the tone of the classroom. Plan to be calm and confident and your classroom will be a relaxed, pleasant place for children to explore their environment. When children feel free to express themselves and make choices, they are happier and more compliant.

Do you allow children to solve their own problems?

Most adults solve conflicts among children by simply separating them and advising them to forgive and forget. This strategy is a quick fix that only works for a short length of time. Unresolved conflict causes children to harbor resentment and act out. Reduce acting out and encourage open communication by teaching children how to solve their problems. At the start this will take time, consistency, and patience. But in the long-term the results will be well worth the effort. When children learn how to express their anger with words rather than aggression they are able to avoid fights and maintain friendships. They also learn how to start the problem-solving process on their own in the classroom as well as in the community.

The Problem-Solving Approach

When children have a behavior problem that seems to happen over and over again, ask yourself the following questions:

- What is happening?
- When does it seem to happen?
- What happens just before?
- What happens just afterward?
- Where does it happen?
- Who seems to be involved?
- How could I respond better to the problem?
- What could I do to prevent the problem?

Give your solution time to work, and evaluate its success or failure. If you do not find a change in behavior after several weeks, go through the process again, and try another alternative.

Emotional and Social Needs Checklist

- Make sure the children in your care feel loved and cared for.
- Make sure the children in your care feel like a part of the group.
- Make sure the children in your group feel important and valued.
- Make sure the children feel safe.
- Make sure the children in your group have their basic needs met for food, shelter, and clothing.
- Identify those children in the group who are shy or aggressive.
- Provide activities and materials that meet the needs for power, friendship, attention, and security.



DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE GUIDANCE PRACTICES



Developmentally appropriate guidance practices are based on the age, culture, needs, and language of the children served. Positive guidance is a continuing process that includes everything you do with children.

Learning self-control and how to get along with others is a part of growing up, and providers play an important role in teaching children these skills. There is not one right way to guide children. A technique that is successful in one situation may not work in another. Also, different children respond in different ways. Successful providers use a variety of techniques to deal with behavior problems.



*“If you can look into
the seeds of time, and
say which grain will
grow and which will
not, speak then unto
me.”*

William Shakespeare

Do you use developmentally appropriate practices to promote positive behavior?

Do you use punishment or guidance to change misbehavior?

Punishment is an impulsive reaction to challenging behavior. It is a quick fix that does not require any skill and may be used as a way of “getting even” with a child.

Punishment may take the form of a spanking, scolding, or removal of privileges. Most children respond to punishment by continuing the behavior. Some children do not make the connection between the behavior and the punishment. Others view the punishment as a reward for their behavior because it gives them the attention they wanted from the start.

Punishment triggers feelings of anger, fear, and embarrassment in children. These feelings lead to continued acting out. Punishment also sets the stage for abuse. It forces the adult to maintain control of the classroom by continually changing his practices to make them more severe.

On the other hand, positive guidance is a planned age appropriate practice that is used throughout the day to direct children toward acceptable behavior. This guidance process is something you do with the children and not to them. It teaches children to gain control of their own behavior and provides adults with the opportunity to build positive relationships with them.

Do the children understand the rules of the classroom?

Rules are the best way to set limits in the classroom. They should be age appropriate, clear, and few in number. They should be posted, even for children who can not read. The posting and review of rules on a regular basis can be a powerful reminder of what is expected. Children should know the consequences for breaking the rules. Consequences need to be swift and related to the misbehavior because children have very short memories and may not remember what they did wrong. Rules should always be stated in a positive manner. For example, a provider should say, “Use your quiet voice,” instead of “Shut your mouth!” or “Be quiet!” Children need to understand the rules or limits of the classroom because these keep children safe, prevent damage to material and equipment and teach children what is acceptable and how to live cooperatively with others. Classrooms without rules may have a great deal of acting out.

Do you know what behaviors to expect from the children in your care?

An important part of positive guidance is being able to identify normal behavior. For example, we know that toddlers have a hard time sharing because they are naturally self-centered. We also know that preschoolers have a short attention span and can not sit for long periods of time. Providers need to be able to predict what children will do and understand what may cause challenging behavior.

Ages and Stages

Infants typically cry because they are wet, hungry, or lonely. Crying is their only way of communicating. Don't be afraid of spoiling a baby. You can pick up a baby who cries without spoiling him or her. Studies show that infants who have their needs met quickly, and who are held and comforted when they cry, develop a strong sense of security and actually cry much less later on in life.

Infant Guidance Techniques

Set up a safe environment. Prevent problems by covering electrical outlets, locking up dangerous chemicals and storing breakable objects out of reach. Often you can see an accident waiting to happen. Fix, repair, toss, or lock up anything that might be a danger to children. A safe place to play can save you from saying "No" so often.

Reward an infant when they do something you like. A smile, a hug and soft words tell the infant that you like them.

Infant Behavior Checklist

- Consistently meet the infant's needs so that he can feel secure and develop trust.
- Routines should be performed calmly and in a caring manner.
- Infants respond to the tone of the adult's voice.
- Infants should be redirected, distracted or removed from a problem situation.
- Don't be afraid of spoiling an infant.
- Constantly reward the infant with hugs, kisses, and kind words.

Toddlers like to be held and talked to. Their limited language can make it very hard to understand their needs. They are clumsy and possessive. Toddlers spend as much time carrying around and protecting toys as they do playing with them. Toddlers are always on the go and often play until they run out of gas. They don't know how to pace themselves and can be happy one minute and cranky the next. Much of this behavior depends on the new skills they are developing. Sometimes they will scream for a toy that can't be reached, but at other times they may lead or drag you to the shelf and point. Learning how to do things in a socially acceptable way is a big step for a toddler.

Toddler Guidance Techniques

Distraction This practice works well with very young children. When a child is doing something he shouldn't, try to interest him in another activity. For example, if a toddler wants to climb on tables, simply guide him to another area. Since young children's attention spans are short, this practice is often successful. While yelling and spanking may stop the child temporarily, they do not teach the child acceptable behavior.

Redirection Sometimes the problem with behavior is not what the child is doing as much as how she is doing it. When this happens, you may need to redirect or teach the child to do it in a different way. If a child is drawing on books, remove the books and say, "Books are not for drawing on." Substitute an appropriate material, saying, "If you want to draw on something, draw on this paper." If the child is throwing blocks, you can remove the blocks and give him a ball to throw.

Rewards It is more useful to reward good behavior than to punish challenging behavior. Rewarded behavior is usually repeated. Rewarding a toddler with praise, giving pats on the back, or hugs for good behavior are important tools for practicing positive guidance.

Relationship Building Expect toddlers to test limits. This is how children try their independence. Allow toddlers to make as many choices as possible. Saying "No!" should be limited to situations that relate to safety or emotional well being. Keep an eye on activities and praise the child to motivate him to accomplish his task. Allow the toddler to do what he can. However, if the child becomes upset, help him to the point where he can continue on his own.

Toddler Behavior Checklist

- Reinforce acceptable behavior with praise and hugs.
- Distract or redirect toddlers when they misbehave.
- Monitor behavior to find out the triggers that cause misbehavior.
- Be sympathetic and understanding.
- Model kind behavior so that it can be copied.

Preschoolers are learning about the world around them. They ask lots of questions and they love to imitate adults. They are learning to share and take turns (but don't always want to). Sometimes they want to play with others and sometimes they want to be alone. Preschoolers are also quite independent. They like to try new things and often take risks. They also may try to shock you by using forbidden words. Getting attention is fun; being ignored is not.

Preschoolers test their providers to see what will happen. This can make you angry and lose patience with them.

Preschoolers like to make their own decisions. It makes them feel important.

Preschoolers can get carried away and become rather bossy, too. They have lots of energy. They play hard, fast, and furious. Sometimes they get tired rather suddenly and become cranky and irritable.

Preschoolers spend a lot of time learning how to get along with others. "Best friends" are very important, but such friendships are brief and may last only a few minutes. Hurt feelings and sometimes swift kicks from friends are a part of the learning process.

Preschool Guidance Techniques

Ignore bothersome behavior. Bothersome behavior that does not hurt anyone can be ignored. Most of the time this type of behavior will stop if the provider does not pay attention to it. When adults ignore bothersome behavior it teaches the class how to ignore the behavior as well.

Praise. Praise works well to increase the behavior we want to see more of. Catch children doing good. Let them know when they are behaving in a way that pleases you. Smiles and hugs make a preschool child feel special and encourage good behavior.

Time Out. A cooling-off period allows the provider and the child to calm down. Providers should follow up the time-out by talking briefly about the misbehavior and what behavior is expected in the future. "It's not ok to hit your friends. Next time use your words and tell her you need more space." Use time out carefully. When you use it, keep time out to one minute for each year of the child's age. Remember to bring the child back to the group so that he can show you that he has calmed down and is ready to play in the group.

Set a good example. Young children love to copy what adults say and do. If you want children to treat their friends kindly, demonstrate kindness to them and to your co-workers.

Use active listening and problem solving. Preschoolers have a limited vocabulary. Therefore, they are forced to physically act out their sadness or happiness. We can help preschool children learn how to match emotions with words by asking questions and labeling what they tell us. We can also help them problem solve by offering them options and allowing them to make choices. This helps them think for themselves and practice correct behavior.

Give children tasks. Preschoolers can do simple classroom tasks like setting the table, putting away toys, and passing out paper. Helping makes children feel important and good about themselves. Show preschool children how to do simple classroom tasks and praise them for trying even when jobs are not done perfectly.

Build relationships. Providers can help children make friends by doing group activities such as wall paintings or making cards for a sick classmate. These activities teach kindness, create team spirit, and build self-esteem.

Preschool Behavior Checklist

- Give children your attention so that they will not have to misbehave to get it.
- Set a good example.
- Catch children doing something good and let them know you noticed.
- Use time out carefully.
- Keep children busy by assigning simple classroom responsibilities.
- Do not allow the children to hurt other people, themselves, or destroy property.
- Talk about misbehavior so those children will understand and will not repeat it.

School-Agers sometimes seem to be very mature, but their social skills are not yet well developed. It is not uncommon for school-agers to argue and fight with their peers. School-agers need help learning social skills like how to make friends, trust others, work in a team, and resolve conflicts. They also need to be taught how to use good manners, ask for help and how to problem solve.

School-agers often set goals for themselves that are either too high or too low. They need adults to provide experiences that are challenging yet achievable. School-age children are old enough to help make classroom rules and appropriate consequences.

School-Age Guidance Techniques

Logical consequences. If you make a mess, help clean it up. When you are rude to a friend don't forget to apologize. Show the child the behavior you expect. Follow through with consequences and be careful to be firm, but not mean.

Show the child how to express angry feelings. Help children understand their feelings by saying “That seems frustrating,” or “You appear to be angry.” Help him or her develop ways to deal with that problem in the future by asking, “What are some ways you could handle that?”

When-then option. “When you hang up your coat then you can join us at the table.” Tie what you want to what the child wants.

Take away privileges. Match the taking away of privileges to the behavior. For example, fighting can lead to taking away the privilege of being the line leader. You simply can’t be a leader and a fighter at the same time. Remember to establish the rules for taking away privileges. Always take away the privilege quickly and set up situations where the child can regain the privilege. Taking away privileges for too long builds anger and the child will soon forget the lesson.

Help plan better behavior. Ask the child, “What did you do that was wrong?” Tell the child why the behavior upset you. Ask, “Why didn’t that help you? What can you do next time?” Make a plan together. Set a time to check how the plan is working.

Watch your Language. Use your words carefully when guiding school-age children. Focus on what to do rather than what not to do:

- Try saying “Slow down and walk” instead of “Stop running.”
- Try saying “Come hold my hand” instead of “Don’t touch anything.”
- Try saying “Keep your feet on the floor” instead of “Don’t climb on the couch.”
- Try saying “Use your quiet voice inside” instead of “Stop screaming and shouting.”

School-Age Behavior Checklist

- Let them establish their own classroom rules with consequences and a plan to improve behaviors.
- Keep children learning, active, and interested.
- Teach children how to express angry feelings.
- Implement the When-Then option.
- Assign classroom responsibilities.



SOCIETAL INFLUENCES



*“Look around
for a place to
sow a few
seeds.”*

*Henry Van
Dyke*

Children have not changed over the years but childhood has. Children watch an average of three to four hours of television a day. Hundreds of studies show that children who watch a great deal of television use aggression as a way to solve problems and may copy the type of violence they observe on television.

Providers give care to children from many different cultures. In order to practice positive guidance they need to know how to communicate without insulting or misunderstanding children.

The family’s culture shapes how they raise their children. The message children receive about their behavior should be consistent between the child care facility and home.

Family stress such as parental separation, divorce, frequent arguments, or money problems affect the behavior of children. It is important to maintain frequent and open communication with parents to understand what is happening at home and to anticipate children’s reactions.

Do you promote and encourage positive societal influences?

Do you monitor children's television and video watching to avoid negative messages?

Television exposes children to many messages that they are not mature enough to handle. News about current events like crime and war are hard to avoid. Young children may not talk directly about them, but they show their concerns by acting out. Violent television programs teach children that solving problems with your fists is okay. These programs encourage and promote the acceptance of habits that may cause children problems later on in life.

Do you understand the culture of the children in your classroom?

There are many different cultures in our society. There are cultures of race, cultures of poverty, blended family or single parent cultures and cultures based on the language spoken.

It is very important for providers to learn how culture affects a child's behavior, communication patterns, and expectations. Pay special attention to the child of a different culture so that he or she feels included and accepted in the classroom. In an effort to prevent misbehavior or inappropriate discipline, establish a classroom rule: "Only words that don't hurt people may be used." Include rules prohibiting teasing, name-calling, and excluding others because of what they look like or what culture they may represent.

Do you help children who are experiencing family discord express their feelings in an appropriate manner?

Children experiencing some type of family stress such as drug abuse, divorce, or financial hardship will exhibit behavior changes such as silliness, negativity, short-temperedness, and anger. In order to prevent misbehavior, provide outlets for the children to express their feelings such as drawing, painting, sand play, water play, play dough, creative movement, and story telling. These children require a great deal of patience. You can be a great support and source of stability for a child who is going through a very rough time in his home life.

Sometimes children act out because they may be hungry or not feeling well. Complete a daily health check when you greet each child and parent upon arrival. It usually takes less than a minute. Remember to observe children closely for changes in mood, energy and appearance.

Societal Influences Checklist

- Be familiar with the customs and beliefs of the families in your program.
- Behavior is influenced by family, culture, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, and neighborhood.
- Be familiar with the effect of violent television programming on the behavior of children.
- Be familiar with the effects of family discord on the behavior of children.
- Be familiar with the effects of political unrest on the behavior of children.
- Identify the stressors in the lives of the children that may cause them to act out.
- Train staff to recognize signs and symptoms of illness and injury.
- Do a health check of each child on arrival, through the day and at departure.
- Make sure that the children in your care are well-fed and rested.



*“Don’t judge each day by the harvest you reap
but by the seeds that you plant.”*

~ Robert Louis Stevenson

The mission of the SUPERvision Series is to protect children by reducing the occurrence of child abuse and neglect in regulated child care facilities.

When the procedures and practices cited in these training modules are used proactively, they will prevent program violations and create safe nurturing environments for our children.

RESOURCE GUIDE



STYLE

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- **Agencies and Associations**

THE PREVENTIVE OUNCE

(This interactive web site lets you see more clearly your child's temperament, find parenting tactics that work for your child) www.preventive.org.



ENVIRONMENT

Room Arrangement

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- **Internet Articles**

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- **Agencies**

National Institute of Health
National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
Attention: Website
P.O. Box 30105
Bethesda, MD 20824-0105
<http://starsleep.nhlbi.nih.gov>
Sleep Well. Do Well Sleeper Campaign PSA
NHLBI Communications Office
301) 496-4236

(In February 2001, the National Center on Sleep Disorders Research at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute launched the *Sleep Well, Do Well, Star Sleeper Campaign* to educate America's children – and their parents, educators, and healthcare providers – about the importance of adequate nighttime sleep. The goal is to reach children at a time when many of the habits affecting their life-long health, well-being, and productivity are being shaped with the message that they need at least nine hours of sleep each night to do their best in school and other activities).

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The Teachers and Children Video Tape Series: Dina Dinosaur School (Video) 1990, (training for child care providers that promotes classroom cooperation and positive relationships), The Incredible Years, Seattle Washington (1-888-506-3562.)

- **Agencies**

Center for Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
College of Education
1310 S. Sixth Street
Champaign, IL 61820
Phone (217) 333-0260
Fax (217) 244-7732
www.csefel.uiuc.edu

The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning is designed to strengthen the capacity of child care programs to improve the social and emotional outcomes of young children. The Center develops training and technical assistance (T/TA) materials that reflect evidence-based practices for promoting children's social and emotional development and preventing challenging behaviors. The Center works with professional organizations and Head Start and child care providers to ensure the use of the evidence-based practices in local demonstration sites.

Committee for Children
568 First Avenue South, Suite 600
Seattle, Washington 98104-2804
Phone 1-800-634-4449, ext 6223
Fax (206)343-1445
www.cfcchildren.org

Committee for Children, a nonprofit organization, is an international leader in social, emotional, and academic learning. Their programs and prevention curricula focus on the topics of youth violence, bullying, child abuse, personal safety, and emergent literacy.



DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE GUIDANCE PRACTICES

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American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
PO Box 96106
Washington, DC 20090-6106
Fax (202) 966-2841
www.aacap.org/publications/factsfam

(The AACAP developed Facts for Families to provide concise and up-to-date information on helping children to cope with their feelings, sadness, drug abuse, and problem solving)

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
1509 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
Phone (202) 232-8777 or 1-800-424-2460
www.naeyc.org

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is dedicated to improving the well-being of all young children, with particular focus on the quality of educational and developmental services for all children from birth through age 8.