

Child Guidance and Behavior

POLICY:

Positive behavior strategies will be used when teaching children how to manage their own behavior to help in becoming school ready. Child guidance and classroom management decisions will promote positive social skills, foster mutual respect, strengthen self-esteem and support a safe environment.

This policy relates to Head Start Performance Standards 45 CFR Part 1302.30, 1302.31, 1302.32, 1302.34, 1302.47, 1302.90

PROCEDURE:

1. Teachers will plan a safe and developmentally appropriate environment that supports pro-social behavior:
 - a. Routines will be established and followed to promote predictability and security for children.
 - b. All adults in the classroom are expected to interact with the children in a positive, friendly, and socially supportive way, modeling pro-social behaviors with each other and the children.
 - c. There will be enough structure in the classroom environment to communicate to children what to do and how to use the equipment and materials.
 - d. The classroom furnishings and equipment will be checked regularly for safety and will be arranged to promote ease of movement, separation of loud (Musical Instruments, Dramatic Play, Blocks) and quiet areas (Library, Writing, and Listening), large play spaces and small play spaces.
 - e. The cultures of the children will be reflected throughout the environment in a positive and inclusive way.

2. Positive behavioral strategies for guiding and managing behavior of children will typically include the following;
 - a. Using praise, encouragement, redirection and other positive means of recognizing appropriate behavior.
 - b. Clearly stating expectations for appropriate behavior.
 - c. Teaching children positive social skills through direct teaching, modeling and practice with peers including mental health and social skills activities in lesson plans.
 - d. Providing children alternative choices and redirection away from inappropriate behavior. Avoid power struggles with children whenever possible.
3. Develop classroom rules that are clear, reasonable and consistent. Establish the rules at the beginning of the year, including children in the process:
 - a. Classroom rules will be posted in classroom.
 - b. Posted rules will include pictures as much as possible.
 - c. Establishing, modifying, and discussing rules will be part of the regular class day.
 - d. Rules will be consistent with Head Start policies and procedures.
 - e. Rules will be as few in number as possible, being clear and reasonable.
 - f. The rules will state what the child should do, instead of what they shouldn't do.
4. Intervention for behavior problems should be progressive and based on the situation:
 - a. Children who forget the rules are redirected and reminded of the expectations. Refer to posted rules when necessary.
 - b. Repeated occurrences of inappropriate behavior require intervention through problem solving.

5. When a child presents dangerous behavior with the potential for hurting themselves or others, staff will intervene immediately. Additional strategies could include: Removing the child from the immediate situation, providing time to calm down, problem solve and plan how to re-enter the play environment.
6. For the safety of the child and staff, crisis intervention for the child displaying dangerous behavior will not exceed gentle but firm physical guidance and direction, holding the child only long enough to get them to a safe place to calm down. Physical restraint is not to be used as a routine procedure without an approved, signed behavior plan specifying its use.
7. The use of corporal punishment is strictly forbidden. Use of such methods will result in **immediate termination**.
8. Withholding food, or access to the bathroom, name calling or any other form of demeaning treatment is strictly forbidden. Use of such methods will result in disciplinary action **up to and including termination**.
9. Behavior that is chronically unacceptable may be an indicator that further support and assessment is needed. This support may include an in-house referral to the mental health professional (*see Referral policy*). Special support may be required during the time of referral and assessment. The mental health consultant and management staff should be included in planning the necessary support.
10. Continual communication with parents must be maintained concerning the child's behavior through staff observation (anecdotal) note taking. Staff will be sensitive to different cultural beliefs and values.