

Guiding Children's Behavior

The CARES model is an adopted model to be used throughout the Thompson Integrated Early Childhood program. We provide discipline and guidance of children's behavior that is respectful, nurturing, and positive and promotes the ultimate development of self-control in young children.

Non-negotiable Policies Based on State, District and Program Regulations and Law.

1. A child cannot be excluded from class, field trips, or activities because of disabilities.
2. At no time will children be left alone.
3. Only the Director can send a child home for behavior issues.

Guiding children's behavior:

1. Use the Safety Rule.

- Children and teachers use the Safety Rule to decide on appropriate behavior for themselves and others.

2. Positive Verbal Guidance

- Tell children what to do instead of what not to do.
- Requests and directions are given in respectful ways.
- Validate children's feelings.
- Clarify classroom rules and give reasons for the limits.

3. Model the behavior that you want children to follow.

- All young children benefit from a visual model of what to do, but this is especially important for children with language delays.

4. Reinforce appropriate behavior.

- Behaviors that are followed by positive reinforcement are likely to be strengthened and repeated.
- Use social reinforcers (smiles, praise, pat on the back, wink, OK sign) and activity reinforcers (engaging in a special activity as reward for desired behavior) before tangible reinforcers (stickers, stars, prizes).
- Be specific and describe the behavior you are praising.

5. Ignore nondisruptive inappropriate behavior.

- Limit attention to children who are used to negative responses from adults.
- "Catch the child being good" and then use praise.

6. Offer Choices.

- This practice shows respect and encourages independence. When children are given options to choose from, they are much more likely to cooperate with expectations.

7. Redirect and offer acceptable substitutes.

- Privately (quietly so just that child can hear) remind the child of the classroom rule and then redirect by offering an alternative or giving a choice.

8. Facilitate problem solving with children.

- What is the problem?
- What can you do?
- What might happen if...?
- Choose a solution and use it.
- Is it working?

9. Use logical consequences.

- Logical consequences are reasonable, respectful, and related to the behavior.
- They ask a child either to rehearse the desired behavior or to restore a problem situation to a more desirable state.

The following strategies should only be used when the previous nine strategies have been repeatedly tried and are not working to help the child learn acceptable behavior patterns. An adult should use the calming down steps to help the child achieve control.

The purpose of any of the following strategies is to help the child learn acceptable behavior patterns. Adults should use these opportunities to help a child learn these strategies.

10. Time out from reinforcement.

- Designate a nonfrightening time-out area away from activity but within view of the teacher.
- Calmly insist that the child take a time-out.
- Keep the time-out short. A good rule of thumb is one minute of time-out per year of age of the child.
- Praise the child who participates in a time-out as planned.
- Assist the child to become engaged in another activity and reward positive behavior.

11. Use the Individual Child CARES Strategies Plan.

- Assemble the team to review each section of the plan and how it is being used and how it is working with an individual child.
- Keep notes during the discussion so all members of the team have the same understanding of the CARES strategies and how they are being used with the child.

12. Holding an out-of-control child.

- Occasionally a child may lose control so completely that he has to be physically restrained and removed from the scene to prevent him from hurting himself or others.
- Adults provide the control in a calm, non-punitive manner, using a soothing voice.
- Be sure to discuss the incident with the child's parent and your supervisor.
- Any incident involving physical restraint needs to be documented with a copy sent to the director.

13. Create an individual behavior plan.

- Assemble the team.
- Follow the process for writing an individual behavior plan.
- Follow the process for referring the child for additional help outside the resources available for the team.