

Behavior Management for Pre-School Aged Children



Characteristics of Children

- Children are believing.
- Children can recognize adult's feelings.
- Children take things literally.
- Children are curious and eager to learn.



-Children are loving and want to be loved and accepted

-Children are beginning to prepare for the future.

-Children will follow your example.

-Little children have short attention spans and they cannot sit still very long.



1. Establish a positive relationship in which you can teach the child values.



- 1. Patiently maintain a positive relationship
- 2. Correct with kindness
- 3. Treat them as individuals
- 4. Teach values

Discipline is a management challenge

- 1. Give up the idea that you are the boss. The real task is to encourage cooperation.
- 2. When something needs to be done, describe the problem to the child.
- “There are books on the floor”
- “Blocks are not on the shelf”
- Give children the opportunity to tell themselves what to do.

3. When a child volunteers cooperation, NOTICE!

Express appreciation and your high opinion to the child. Children who can tell themselves what to do are happier.

4. If a child looks at you with a “So what?” expression, give further information.

“There are books on the floor and we need them picked up”

“They are scattered all over and need to be put back on the shelves”

- 5. Give the child a choice
 - ◆ “You can pick up the books now or stay in from outside play to pick them up”
 - ◆ You can put the blocks on the shelves now or do it while we eat snack”
 - ◆ Keep the consequences reasonable, enforceable, and immediate.
 - ◆ Choices must be real and the options must be possible
 - ◆ We need to make sure that every option is acceptable.
 - ◆ Resist the urge to talk a child out of his choice
 - ◆ Think of choice situations as legally binding contracts.

- Children learn many lessons by making choices
 - ◆ Every choice is connected to consequences
 - ◆ There is a time limit for decisions
 - ◆ They will be held accountable for each choice.
 - ◆ Some choices will produce results that are not pleasant
 - ◆ Not every situation offers the opportunity for choosing



- 6. Stay calm
 - ◆ They still have a choice and can decide to cooperate.
- 7. Step in and do what needs to be done without yelling or begging.
 - ◆ Enforce the consequences that were promised.
 - ◆ If you give in this time and allow the child to escape the consequences, don't ever expect cooperation.
- 8. When children know what is expected and simply forget, remind them in kind, considerate ways.
 - ◆ Remember, the goal is to get the child to do what needs to be done, NOT to engage in power struggles!
- 9. Use as few words as possible for reminders.

- There is no need to struggle over everyday activities. Instead of orders:
 - ◆ Expect cooperation
 - ◆ Give children a chance to tell themselves
 - ◆ Offer kind reminders when necessary



- Learning how to encourage cooperation instead of demanding obedience takes practice, but is worth it in the long run.
 - ◆ Think before speaking
 - ◆ Say to yourself, “What is the problem here?”
 - ◆ Put the problem in objective terms. Describe the problem
 - ◆ Follow the steps. Write out the steps on a card and keep it where you will read it for several months
 - ◆ Practice. This skill improves with practice.

Manage Disruptive Behaviors

- What is the Behavior?
- When is it happening?
- What do you think the child is feeling when displaying the behavior?
- What are you feeling when you are with the child?
 - What do you think the child is trying to communicate to you about his/her needs?

Be unified and consistent as teachers



- 1. Teaching is a shared responsibility
- 2. Spend time together discussing ideas and planning approaches
- 3. Support each other and discuss problems privately
- 4. Be consistent in using the approach you have agreed upon

Adult Authority

- Teachers can easily fall into the “nice nice” trap
- We can be kind to children and still be firm
- Our expectations should be clear from the beginning
- When a child has no choice, no choice should be implied
- The ridiculous “okay” added at the end of a command
- An adult who stays calm and collected retains authority

- Always assume that the child may not comply
- Know what the next step will be BEFORE you voice the request.
- There is nothing wrong with being firm as long as it is respectful and kind. In fact, it is necessary!
 - ◆ Talk like an adult who has self-control and believes in his/her own authority.
 - ◆ Help the child comply
 - ◆ Be prepared if he/she does not.
- It is all about learning and it takes time
- Be consistent and be patient!

Make correction a learning experience.

- 1. Do NOT react to the circumstance.
- 2. Discipline your own feelings



Saved by the Bell



- Take the timer out of the kitchen
- When the bell goes off, time is up
- The best reward for compliance is always an adult's attention
- Slow to adapt kids **NEED** a timer
- Try it, you'll like it
 - ◆ Objective and fair
 - ◆ Gives adults a break from being the "bad guy"

Three Stage Discipline Plan

- Encourage the right response.
 - ◆ We see what needs to be done and we want the child to tell himself what to do.
 - ★ Describe the situation and let the child decide what needs to be done.
 - ★ Clarify the information
 - ★ Kind reminders
 - ★ One word is often enough

- The adult must give an order; but first they must know what they will do if the kids do not respond.
 - ◆ Explain exactly what you want the child to do.
 - ◆ Back off and give the child a chance to comply.
 - ◆ If we stand over the child, we are inviting a contest of wills.
 - ◆ Recognize compliance.
 - ◆ A child's obedience should NEVER be taken for granted.

- Stage III: for children who choose to defy the adults
 - ◆ Give the child who fails to respond to a Stage I or Stage II request two choices: compliance or consequences.
 - ★ Specify exactly what will happen for non-compliance
 - ★ The child is given a last opportunity to act
 - ★ If the child finally decides to comply, the child is told, “you made a good choice.”

- If the child fails to do what is expected enforce the consequences.
 - ◆ Do not allow a child to manipulate the situation at this point.
 - ◆ Only give consequences you can live with
 - ◆ This is not the time to feel sorry for the child

- Children must experience the consequences of their actions, their choices
 - ◆ Consequences should be reasonable and related to the incident.
 - ◆ Consequences do not have to hurt to be effective.

Mistakes to Avoid

- Expectations that are too high
- Beginning at Stage III
- Verbal abuse

Strategies

- Nurturance - being a caring and supportive person
- Verbal Support - saying caring things to a child
- Physical Support - placing your body near a child to motivate and increase appropriate behavior
- Verbal Cues/Prompting - saying things to remind a child of appropriate behavior Routine/Structure - doing the same activities at the same time every day
- Physical Cues/Prompting - nonverbal signals to remind a child of appropriate behavior
- Verbal Praise/Reinforcement - saying specific things such as, “Good job,” “You did it,” “Wow, you’re smart.”
- Physical Praise/Reinforcement - doing specific things such as, “High fives” “Pats on the back” “Thumb buzzes”
- time

- Primary Reinforcers - treats such as cookies, candy, chips
- Interpretation - asking a child if their ideas are congruent with their experience
- Verbal Processing - talking to a child about a specific experience
- Modeling - adults showing kids what to do by doing what they need to do
- Peer Modeling/Pairing - using a child to show another child what to do
- Role Plays - learning appropriate behavior by pretending
- Contingencies - making an activity dependent on something specific
- Precision Commands - telling a child exactly what to do

- Verbal Redirection - telling a child options for appropriate behavior
- Physical Redirection - moving a child through appropriate behavior
- Planned Ignoring - not paying attention to a behavior in order to decrease its frequency
- Differential Attention - paying attention to a child who is doing what they need to do in order to motivate another child's behavior
- Natural Consequences - using a child's experience in the world to increase or decrease a behavior
- Time-out from room - missing out in the time out room
- Time-out from family - missing out (sitting) by the wall
- Reflection - remembering back to a previous












Acknowledge your child!!!

- Behavior
- Feelings

Landmarks of Normal Emotional Development of 3 & 4 Year olds

1. Cooperative play with peers
2. Sibling truce
3. Creative use of speech: “3-year prose”
4. Special skills and talents, e.g., painting manipulative skills, dance, music
5. Some leadership capacity in group

Parental Concerns that Indicate Typical Behaviors

-  Messy play
-  “Stuttering”
-  Won’t put things away
-  Aggressive and possessive play
-  Occasional soiling or wetting
-  Stubbornness
-  Won’t try new foods
-  Regressive behavior with illness or stress
-  Wants own way and fusses
-  Temper tantrums occasionally
-  Short-lived unreasonable fears

Possible concerns that may indicate problems

1. Disturbed sleep; animal dreams
2. Persistent soiling or enuresis
3. Persistent eating problems
4. Nonspeaking (beyond 18 months)
5. Inappropriate play
6. Fears of dark, ghosts, burglars; shyness
7. Excessive body rocking, finger sucking and tics

- There is no discipline in all the world like the discipline of love. It has a magic all its own.

