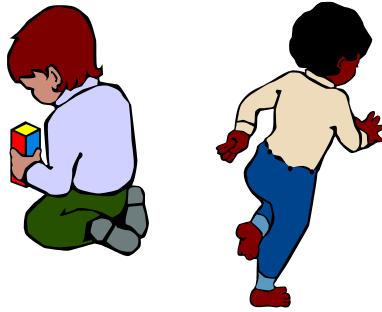


Child Guidance Policy



Every child wants to do the right thing, but they need guidance and understanding. Every action or behavior is produced by a certain feeling or emotion. We, as early childhood professionals, need to help children understand their emotions and help them find a way to verbalize the feelings behind their actions and behaviors. Teaching children positive social skills, emotional literacy and respect for others are necessary life skills. We encourage and guide children to talk through altercations with their peers. Teachers are available to mediate and help children work through issues in a safe and calm manner

Bringing the children together face-to-face with a teacher holding a hand of each child, helps to create a warm environment for the children to begin discussing the issue. During heated debates, the teacher is always there to accept and understand each child's emotion and verbalize this to the other children involved. This helps children understand and begin to identify the emotions their bodies are exhibiting and together discuss future ways of dealing with those kinds of feelings. Of course, there are times when some children will need time to calm down or receive first aid before discussing an issue. As soon as those needs are met, children are encouraged to promptly return to the problem before it is forgotten so that a solution is found, that all children involved can agree to, and can be referred to for future reference. Each child's temperament must be considered before engaging in discussions about an issue or conflict. Knowing a child's temperament helps us to understand how best to support children in times of conflict.

Our goal as teachers is to offer children the skills necessary to do "the right thing" because it feels good, not because they are afraid of doing something wrong. We try to avoid having children apologize for misbehavior, because it means nothing to the child if they are forced to say it. By offering children choices we encourage them to try to make the situation right in a way that feels comfortable to the child. An example of this would be the following:

If a child hit another child out of frustration or anger, we would acknowledge that their friend is hurt. Then the rule is stated to the child "people are not for hurting, hitting hurts". The teacher would then proceed in explaining that we do not allow children to be hurt at school. The needs of the victim will be addressed with asking how can we make them feel better? Ice, a cold cloth, or hugs are the usual remedies that children request. Once we have seen to the needs of the victim, we are able to verbally discuss the situation and find possible solutions to the problem. Often the child who did the hitting apologizes to the victim on their own because they are genuinely sorry for what they have done and want their friends to know it. Before a child apologizes, we want to explain to them what it means to apologize. Such as "When you apologize for hitting your friend that means you are going to try your very hardest to never let it happen again."

Discipline needs positive guidance. A successful classroom teaches and models self-discipline. The following is a list of possible techniques used to guide children in appropriate behavior:

- Encourage and facilitate verbal discussions of problems by acting as a mediator.
- Understand and accept children's emotions and offer positive attention whenever appropriate.

- Show comfort and sorrow to the victim and ask for help in aiding the hurt child.
- Time for the child to calm down and become in control of their body while allowing the child to choose the appropriate amount of time.
- Redirection of children to a new activity or other activity that may help release feelings of aggression. Some areas of play that seem to alleviate this behavior are pounding toys, playdough, ripping paper or painting an angry picture.
- “Tailing” or “shadowing” a child may be necessary to encourage appropriate behavior and limit opportunities to act out.
- Certain aspects of our day require some regulation by teachers. However, offering opportunities for children to be in command of various aspects of their day offers them opportunities to have control and be in charge of their own choices. These opportunities may include things such as how they get to the changing table for a diaper change (jump, piggy back ride, etc.), where and how they want their cot set up for rest, where they sit for lunch, what materials we take out for choice time or what job they want for the day.
- Parent involvement includes conferences to discuss persistent and inappropriate behavior, forming a behavioral plan to find solutions and offer consistency in dealing with the issue and journals that document occurrences and solutions. Forming a partnership with parents is the most effective way to encourage and be consistent with appropriate behavior.
- Keeping children safe is especially important to us. Sometimes guiding children through stages of aggression (biting, hitting, pushing, etc.) takes time and understanding. Teachers are to be supportive of victims and aggressors during these stages of development. All children need direction and guidance at different stages of development. We strive to offer support to all families during behavioral challenges and normal development. It is important for parents and families to support our teachers by being consistent with guidance techniques. See the Director or your child’s teacher if you would like further information on ways you can use some of these skills at home.
- We look to these situations as opportunities for children to gain the skill of communication, collaboration, compromise, emotional literacy, negotiation, and problem solving. We see these same values available to the adults involved in the situation We strongly seek a resolution that honors all parties in the best way.
- Please remember that we highly value confidentiality as a protection for families, staff, and children. We will maintain this to the greatest degree possible in any situation. All notes, forms and other documentation in a child’s or other school file are to be held in the same confidential manner.

Our goal is to honor the emotions, values and beliefs of each child, family, staff, and any other member of our community. We aim to do this in an open and safe environment, where every person will be heard. Staff will model non-violent communication and active listening skills, that include listening to understand the other person or people involved, including children. We often view altercations of children from the outside, it is our job to take the time to truly understand the situation to best help and honor the children involved, regardless of how cut and dry it seems from the outside. There is always a deeper meaning on the inside.