

Parent Aware Tip Sheets

Using Positive Forms of Discipline

Children need to have individualized guidance throughout the day. This is because children do not yet have the skills or self-discipline to control their own behavior. Caregivers with knowledge of children's development will have an easier time understanding challenging behaviors and how to appropriately guide children to more acceptable behaviors.

What is discipline?

Discipline is guidance to promote appropriate actions. It also means the way in which adults help children to develop self-discipline, so they behave in ways that are acceptable without needing adult guidance.

How can you use positive discipline to guide children's behavior?

- **Providing plenty of space to play** or having duplicate toys available to reduce conflicts among children before they even happen.
- **Maintaining a dependable routine** will help keep children from feeling irritable or stressed.
- **Having enough adults to appropriately meet children's needs** can also help to ensure that children are well-supervised and safe.
- **Redirecting children from an inappropriate activity** or behavior to a more appropriate one. Praising children for appropriate behavior will increase the likelihood that they will repeat the action. Intervening when a problem is noticed and effectively solving the problem in a way that is satisfying will still be necessary in some situations, but stepping in quickly and in a comforting way will make this easier.
- **Responding sympathetically to children**, even when they display emotions that are not usually considered appropriate, such as anger, whining or crying will help children to feel accepted and understood.

There are also strategic ways in which adults can anticipate challenging behaviors and plan to prevent them. For example, knowing that children are usually tired and hungry just before lunch, and are more likely to have difficulty during this time, will help staff to supervise more closely and give support to children when necessary. Another example includes giving a child with a favorite toy a protected place to play so that others will not bother the child.