

## Guiding Children's Behaviour

### What is Behaviour Guidance?

Guiding children's behaviour is an important part of the relationship that you build with the children in your care. Building a good relationship with a child has many aspects. It involves caring about the child, respecting the child and his rights, trusting the child and teaching the child to be responsible for himself.

The way that you deal with behaviour problems or difficult behaviours will affect how the child feels about himself, how you feel about yourself, and it will influence the atmosphere of your home.

Your role as a caregiver is to guide the child, and to help him learn to control his own behaviour. When we guide children, we need to tell them in a positive way what it is we want them to do. This takes patience and caring approach.

Caregivers must practice behaviour guidance techniques that assist the child to grow and develop as a healthy individual.

The following forms of behaviour guidance and **prohibited** by the caregiver, another adult or child in the home:

- Corporal punishment (i.e. spanking, slapping, tapping, etc.)
- Deliberate, harsh or degrading measures that would humiliate a child or undermine a child's self-respect.
- Deprivation of a child's basic needs, including food, shelter, clothing and bedding.
- Confinement by locking exit doors or permitting a child to be locked in a house without adults present.
- Use of a locked or lockable room to confine a child who has been withdrawn from others.

Participation in any of the above-mentioned forms of behaviour guidance will result in termination of the Agreement to Provide Home Child Care.

**Note:** If a parent tells you that you may spank or use any other form of physical or emotional punishment, you must tell them that these methods are not allowed and will not be used by you or anyone else in your household.



## How do I Set the Stage for Good Behaviour?

Good behaviour guidance practices start the first day that the child enters your home. It is very important to get to know the child and understand his feelings.

A new child needs to know that he is welcome but he also needs to know the rules or limits of your home. He needs to know where he can play and where he cannot. He also needs to know the routine about mealtime, playtime, and other activities. The child will need to be reminded of the rules from time to time.

Children who understand you and your home should settle in well and will be likely to cooperate with you. Good behaviour guidance is more than "getting the children to do what I want."



Our aim should be to promote the development of each child's self-control through encouraging:

- good feelings about himself
- his competence
- friendly actions toward the people around him

In all early childhood programs, children have conflicts over space, materials, and friendships. Learning how to find solutions that work for everyone is an important learning experience for young children.

Refer to the following strategies to learn how you can help young children resolve disputes.

### Strategies that Set the Stage for Problem Solving

1. Provide a consistent, predictable routine
2. Encourage children's language development
  - Be warm and positive in conversations
  - Describe and imitate children's actions
  - Read books about feelings
  - Talk with children about feelings
3. Play in partnership with children
  - Get down on children's level and engage play on their terms
  - Encourage learning about feelings during play
  - Help children resolve problems that arise during play



## Five Things to Consider when Guiding Children’s Behaviour

### 1. Environment

It is important to look at your child care space to eliminate conflict and behaviour issues. Take a look at your space to see if anything can be changed or if something is missing.

[Click here](#) to read an article on how to create a child care environment that supports children's exploration.

### 2. Schedules and Routines

Having a daily schedule and flexible routine are an important part of a professional home daycare business. It not only helps the caregiver when planning the day, but allows the children to anticipate how the day is going to go. This gives the children in care a sense of control and eliminates anxiety and behaviour issues.



When a child knows what to expect, their day becomes calmer and allows the child to participate in activities without wondering what is coming next.

### 3. Choices

Children feel good about themselves when they are allowed to make their own decisions and choices. The choices offered to children must be appropriate to their age and stage of development and the caregiver or parent offering the choice **must** be prepared to honour the choice once the child has made the decision.

Appropriate opportunities for choices may include:

- "Do you want dessert?"
- "Would you rather do finger-painting or play with the train?"
- "Would you like to pass out the napkins today?"

These are appropriate choices because it is all right if the child chooses to refuse. It is important to honour choices when choices are given, and it is equally important to give **no** choice when there is no valid opportunity to make one.

Examples of a "limited choice" or "no choice" situation may be:

- "It's cold outside today. If you want to go outside, you will need to put on your sweater."

OR

- "It's cold outside today. Do you want to wear your blue sweater or your green jacket?"

#### 4. Positive Limits

It is important to set clear and consistent limits. Remember to have open discussions frequently with the children regarding what “rules” you have in your home. “Opening the baby gate is my job –we don’t want the little ones to get hurt” or “When we go for our walk, we must remember to use out walking feet so we can be safe”.

This does not mean that you cannot change the rule time to time – perhaps there will be an opportunity that allows the children to run instead of walk!

“Now that we are at the park, there is lots of room to run and we won’t bump into each other!”

Having these kind of discussions helps children learn flexibility and critical thinking skills if you talk through your reasoning.



#### 5. Supervision

Supervision is the most important aspect in lessening negative behaviour. When you are close by or sitting with the children, it is easy to diffuse any situations that can quickly get out of hand by redirecting immediately.

**Remember!** Nothing works overnight – you must be consistent every time in order to see improvement. Always talk to your consultant for support as well.

## Problem Solving with Children of all Ages

### 1. Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions

- Place yourself between the children at their level
- Calm yourself!
- Use a calm voice and gentle touch
- Quickly and gently stop any hurting
- Remain neutral rather than take sides
- Do not force children to look at you

### 2. Acknowledge the children's feelings

- Name and describe children's feelings ( "You look really upset...")
- Place your hands on the object that the conflict is over and say "We are going to hold this together until we figure out the problem"
- IF toddlers will let you hold the object yourself then say "I am going to hold this until we figure out the problem"
- Look at each child and use their names
- Name feelings repeatedly until children are calmer

### 3. Gather Information

- With infant and younger toddlers, observe children's actions and describe the problem
- With older children ask "what" questions ("What's the problem?")
- Watch and listen closely for details of the problem
- Provide language for those children who cannot talk yet (child pointing to the baby – "So you were playing with the baby and Sarah wanted to play with the baby too?")

### 4. Restate the problem

- Repeat again the information you have observed and heard ("So the problem is...")
- Continue to acknowledge feelings if needed

### 5. Ask for children's ideas for solutions and choose one together



- With infants and younger toddlers, describe choices or the solution that you see happening (“What can we do to solve this problem?” .. “Look, Lucy is giving you the brush. What will Lucy use?”)
- With older children, ask them for ideas and agree on a solution together
- Check to make sure the solution is acceptable to both children

**6. Be prepared to give follow-up support**

- Stay nearby to support the solution
- Tell children, “You solved the problem!”

Click [here](#) for a clear discussion on implementing this process!



Below are video examples on working through conflicts with children:

1. [“I had it first..”](#)
2. [“Nobody likes hitting..”](#)
3. [“How are we going to solve the problem?”](#)

## Discussing Concerns with Parents

Communication with parents is key to having a trusting and open relationship with the families in your care. BUT! Sometimes conversations about their child and behaviour can be very difficult.

- Discuss any concerns with the parent in private – this is not a conversation for other parents or children to hear.
- Always start with something positive when sharing a concern (“Sarah was a great helper outside today, but she needed some reminders about sharing the swing with the other children....”).
- Do not share small problems every day with the parent, it makes it very difficult for a parent to remain positive when they consistently hear negative issues about their child.
- Put yourself in the parent’s shoes ... it is very hard to hear concerning information about your child.
- Stay positive and confident with the parent – let the parent know you are doing your best to work through it with the child.
- Ask the parent what works at home - consistency is very important.
- Speak to your consultant about all concerns. Your consultant will support you with all issues. We do not diagnose, but if a referral is needed, your consultant will speak to the family and begin the process.

Check out these great resources!

- [Front Door](#) – Access to Child & Youth mental Health Services
- [Carison](#)
- [KW Habilitation](#)

