THE CARE COURSES SCHOOL INC.

DISCIPLINE IN CHILD CARE

A Self-Instruction Care Course®
for Early Childhood Professionals

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Discipline in Child Care

– Online Course –

a Self-Instruction Care Course
for Early Childhood Professionals

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Credit Available for This Course

Discipline in Child Care offers 20 clock hours (2.0 CEUs) of training. Credit for this course is available only through Care Courses.

This course can be read directly on your computer and/or printed on your printer. Read the section "How to Do This Course" on pages iii–iv of this PDF file.

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Introduction

Welcome to *Discipline in Child Care*. This course is designed for adults who teach or care for young children.

The most compelling feature of an early childhood facility that parents notice when they are shopping for care for their children is the *level of children's contentment.* Are the children happy or crying? Are the children enjoying their day or are they quarrelsome and irritable?

It is not difficult to figure out which atmosphere parents prefer for their children's care. One is ideal, the other horrifying.

It is entirely possible for teachers and caregivers to provide the ideal—a pleasant, positive atmosphere in which children will happily enjoy their day. To do so, teachers and caregivers must be guided by two principles:

- Most discipline problems can be *prevented* if adults understand children's needs and provide ways for these needs to be met. Adults are partners in most of children's "misbehavior."
- Mistakes are inevitable; everyone makes them. Mistakes that children make in the course of their development should be viewed as opportunities to learn, not as misbehavior to be punished.

The lessons in this course are based on these two guiding principles.

Lesson 1 discusses the meaning of "discipline." Lesson 2 examines children's needs and goals. Lesson 3 discusses a variety of strategies and procedures that work to meet children's needs and some that should be avoided. Lessons 4, 5, and 6 present articles by several child development specialists that discuss various aspects of positive guidance.

The Care Courses School Honor Code and Policy

All work must be done by the student whose name is on the account where the enrollment code was activated.

Care Courses cannot grade course work or issue a certificate unless the student has agreed to and acknowledged agreement certifying that all course work, including quizzes and activities (if any), was done solely by that student. Honor Code certification is done at the time of online quiz completion .

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How to Do This Course

This course is designed for independent study.

Advantages of a self-instruction course

- You don't have to leave your home to attend classes.
- You can work on the course whenever *you* choose, not just when a class happens to meet.
- The articles you must read are reprinted in this course. You don't have to go to a library to find them.
- You can work as fast or as slowly as *you* want to.
- You can spend as much time on every lesson as *you* need to.

This course can be read directly on your computer and/or printed on your printer.

This course has several features to help you be your own teacher.

Learning Objectives

Each lesson begins with learning objectives. Read these before you read the lesson. They will help you focus on the important points of the lesson.

Activities

Lessons 1 and 2 each include an **Activity** designed to help you apply the ideas in this course to your work as an early childhood professional. At the end of Lesson 3, you will be asked to answer questions about these **Activities.** Your answers should then entered in the Online Quiz for this course.

Self Checks

Each lesson has True/False **Self Check** questions with answers provided. Answer these questions, and check your answers. Re-read any sections of the lesson that gave you trouble.

Lesson Quizzes

Each lesson ends with a **Lesson Quiz**. Please read each lesson two times before attempting its quiz. Once you have finished reading each lesson, return to **My Courses** within your Account at www.CareCourses.com and open your course to access the Online Quiz for the lesson.

You must make a score of at least 70% on each Quiz in order to receive credit for this course. If your score is less than 70% on any quiz, you will be given a second chance to re-read the material and redo the questions. Failing the second time will result in no certificate. Please read the course content carefully before attempting the quizzes. We want you to get the best possible grade you can!

The lessons are not designed to be hard. The questions are not designed to be tricky. Read all of each lesson and think about what it says. If you have trouble, please contact us. We're always happy to help!

800-685-7610, 9 a.m–5 p.m. ET, M-F
or
info@CareCourses.com

Happy Studying!

The articles reprinted in this course are from the magazines *Young Children,* published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and *Child Care Information Exchange* (now renamed *Exchange*), published by Exchange Press.

Young Children, which is published every two months, contains a great deal of helpful information for teachers and caregivers.

If you are not already a member of NAEYC, you are encouraged to join. Membership includes a subscription to *Young Children* (6 issues per year). For membership information, telephone NAEYC offices at 1-800-424-2460, or visit the NAEYC website at *www.naeyc.org*. Issues of *Young Children* are also available in many public libraries.

Exchange, also published every two months, is another excellent source of information for early childhood professionals, especially directors and other administrators.

Contact Exchange Press at 800-221-2864 for subscription information.

Lesson 1

What Is *Discipline?*

Learning Objectives

In Lesson 1 you will learn:

- the different meanings of *discipline*
- the meaning of *discipline* that is most appropriate when dealing with children
- what is meant by *positive guidance*
- the importance of helping children develop *self-discipline*
- the relative merits of prevention and intervention
- the importance of modeling appropriate behavior for children
- the role of reinforcement in children's learning process
- what punishment accomplishes
- the importance of the caregiver and teachers in the early childhood facility environment

* * *

Lesson 1 Preview

Circle the letter of the best answer(s) for each of the following items.

1. Discipline is
   a. the process of straightening out a child who has behaved badly.
   b. helping a child learn responsibility for his or her actions.
   c. the process of changing a child's attitude.
   d. punishment.

2. Effective discipline begins with
   a. love.
   b. a clear understanding of what the child needs to learn.
   c. a clear understanding of what can be expected of children at a particular age.
   d. clear goals for the child's behavior.

3. Discipline should
   a. provide punishment that the child will remember.
   b. make the child afraid to repeat the bad behavior.
   c. provide a learning opportunity for the child.
   d. make the child afraid of the adult who is doing the disciplining.

4. The most effective method to teach a child self-discipline is to
   a. make the child do what he or she is told.
   b. set limits and at the same time respect the child.
   c. be strict with the child.
   d. threaten the child.

5. Good children
   a. do not need discipline.
   b. need to develop a sense of responsibility.
   c. are usually the ones who have been punished the most severely in the past.
   d. are the ones who let adults make most decisions for them.

6. The most important aspect of an early childhood facility's environment is
   a. the size of the rooms.
   b. the condition of the playground.
   c. the toys and educational equipment.
   d. what the caregivers do and how they interact with the children.

7. In order to ensure that children will repeat appropriate behaviors, adults should
   a. spank them when they fail to act in the appropriate way.
   b. leave them alone when they are behaving appropriately.
   c. give them attention when they behave appropriately.
   d. call their attention to inappropriate behavior.

* * *

Keep the ideas addressed in these Lesson Preview items in mind as you work through this lesson.
Notice if you change your mind about which answers are correct as you study this lesson.
These Lesson Preview items will be analyzed at the end of this lesson.

* * *

Activity 1

Purpose: *To identify discipline techniques that you experienced as a school child and evaluate their effects*

Think back to the teachers you had during your own school days. Which teacher do you remember the most fondly? What is the first thing you remember about this teacher? How did this teacher make you feel about yourself? Which teacher do you remember the most unpleasantly? How did this teacher make you feel about yourself.

Select one of your former teachers, either one that you remember fondly *or* one that you remember unpleasantly. In the space provided below, write as many things as you can remember about how this teacher treated you and how she or he made you feel about yourself.

You may remember more specific things about this teacher as you work through the lessons of this course. If so, return to this section and write down what you remember.

If you need additional space, use your own paper.

In the ***Activities*** section at the end of this course, you will be asked to review what you have written here and answer some questions about this teacher.

Activity 1:

Do I Have to Go to Work Today?

Most mornings Pam Wilson dreaded going to work at the early childhood facility where she cared for toddlers. She liked most of her coworkers and enjoyed some of the children, but the behavior problems of many of the children were driving her crazy. She hated the whining and squabbling that seemed to always be going on. She was tired of disciplining misbehaving children.

If she didn't have to do any disciplining, Pam thought she would enjoy her job. It seemed that she was always telling the same children to stop doing the same bad behavior. When she lost her temper and yelled at the children, she felt especially bad. She really didn't like having to punish the children, and besides, she hadn't found any punishment that seemed to do any long-term good. If she couldn't find more effective discipline techniques than what she had been using, Pam was thinking about quitting her job.

Pam Wilson's story is not uncommon. The concept of *discipline* when associated with children is often surrounded by negative feelings. Many teachers (and also many parents) report that discipline is the biggest challenge they face. For many, discipline is a discouraging and frustrating problem. Some teachers have even given up teaching because their problems with discipline were more unpleasant than they wanted to endure.

* * *

The New Neighbor

Everyone in Pam Wilson's apartment complex was curious about the new tenant in 11-D. She had been out of town most of the time during the six months since she moved in, and when she was at home, she stayed pretty much to herself. According to the name tag on the mailbox, the occupant of 11-D was Judith Nelson, but most of the other tenants referred to her simply as 11-D. Only two people in the entire complex had ever met Judith Nelson, and most of the other tenants almost never saw her.

One afternoon as Pam pulled into her parking space, the mysterious Judith Nelson was walking up the sidewalk carrying two large bags of groceries.

"May I help you carry those?" Pam asked with a smile. "I'm Pam from 8-E."

"You came along at just the right time. I'm Judith Nelson, but my friends call me Judy," 11-D said, returning Pam's smile.

Pam took one of the grocery bags while Judy unlocked her apartment door.

"Come on in," Judy invited. "I'm so glad to finally have a chance to meet a neighbor. Could you stay and have a cup of tea with me?"

Pam followed Judy into the kitchen to deposit the grocery bags on the table.

"It's nice to have a chance to chat," Pam told her neighbor.

"People here must think I'm a hermit!" Judy laughed. "The week after I moved in, I left for a concert tour. And since I've been home, I've had a very heavy practice schedule learning two new concertos."

"That's a beautiful piano," Pam remarked as Judy filled the kettle.

"Thanks," Judy replied. "That piano is my life. Here, have a seat," Judy offered.

Pam was fascinated by Judy's career as a concert pianist. The two talked about the many places Judy had traveled.

"You must be very talented," Pam told her new friend.

"A musician starts with talent," Judy replied, "but it takes an enormous amount of hard work and discipline to develop that talent and be successful. I studied music in college and then spent four years at a conservatory in Europe. I've worked with a lot of wonderful teachers. Some of them had careers much greater than mine. The most important lessons they taught me were to believe in myself and to set goals for myself and develop self-discipline—to make rules for myself and then follow those rules. Without self-confidence and self-discipline, I would never have had a successful career."

Discipline certainly doesn't mean the same thing to Judith Nelson as it does to Pam Wilson. For Pam, discipline is a negative and unsuccessful experience; the frustrations it causes are driving her from her job. For Judith Nelson, however, discipline is a positive concept. She described discipline as an essential factor in her success as a concert pianist. In fact, she said that self-discipline was one of the most important things her teachers had taught her.

* * *

Discipline in Child Care

Is there any relationship between discipline as it relates to young children and discipline as it relates to Judith Nelson's career? Just what does *discipline* mean, anyway?

Defining Discipline

When we look in the dictionary, we find that the word *discipline* has more than one meaning. The 10th edition of Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary provides the following definitions:

As a verb, *discipline* is defined as

(1) to punish or penalize for the sake of discipline;

(2) to train or develop by instruction and exercise, especially in self-control;

(3) (a) to bring (a group) under control, as in "to discipline troops,"

(b) to impose order upon, as in "serious writers discipline and refine their writing styles."

As a noun, *discipline* is defined as

(1) punishment;

(2) training that corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character;

(3) (a) control gained by enforcing obedience or order,

(b) orderly or prescribed conduct or pattern of behavior,

(c) self-control;

(4) a rule or system of rules governing conduct or activity.

Clearly, the concept of discipline has more than one meaning.

Discipline defined as *punishment* (definition 1) has a strong negative connotation. This is in sharp contrast to the definition of discipline as *training* (definition 2), which has a much more positive connotation than punishment. The most positive aspect of the concept of discipline as training is the emphasis on the development of *self-control,* that is, discipline that comes from *within* the individual.

Discipline defined as *bringing a person or group under control* (definition 3a) is certainly less negative than discipline defined as *punishment,* yet since this type of discipline is externally imposed, it is far less positive than discipline defined as *training in the development of self-control.* Note that definition 3b, "to impose order upon, as in 'serious writers discipline and refine their writing styles,'" is the result of discipline defined as training in self-control.

Which Definition Is Best?

What does all this mean to teachers and caregivers?

The various definitions of discipline present a major dilemma for many teachers. Most teachers desire a "well disciplined classroom" in which there is order and cooperation and in which children behave according to certain rules and show consideration for the rights of others. Achieving this ideal classroom, whether in an early childhood facility, kindergarten, elementary school, or high school, is often a teacher's nightmare. It is the point of view of this course, however, that discipline does not have to be a negative, troublesome, unhappy experience for teachers—or for children. If teachers opt for the definition of discipline as *teaching* or *training,* especially training in the development of self-control, the goal of a pleasant, well disciplined classroom is well within their reach. We call this concept of discipline ***positive guidance.***

Testifying before the Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor recently, Dr. William Wayson, professor of educational policy and leadership at Ohio State University, reported on a research study of 500 schools that were noted for their productive, well-disciplined learning environments. He stated that good schools functioned differently than bad schools:

- They taught people in the school to work together to solve problems.
- They found ways to make all students feel that they belonged in the school and that it was theirs.
- Their rules and procedures promoted self-discipline.
- They improved curriculum and instruction in order to reach, interest, and challenge more students.[1]

Dr. Wayson concluded that "Teaching self-discipline must be seen as the most important purpose of schooling, vital to the future of the individual and to the preservation of a free society."[2]

Speaking at the same Hearings, Dr. Irwin A. Hyman of the National Center for the Study of Corporal Punishment and Alternatives in the Schools, Temple University, stated:

> *A major problem in dealing with school disruption in America is that we tend to turn reflexively to punishment as a solution. In fact, most Americans consider punishment and discipline as synonymous. They fail to realize that discipline, especially in a democracy, should be dependent on students' developing internalized controls. There is a large body of theory and research which indicates that the most effective disciplinary techniques occur within a framework of concern for individual rights. ... Students need to perceive school as representing a fair and just system. ... Is there anyone here, who as a school child didn't want to feel good about himself or herself, didn't*

want to be appreciated, didn't want to be competent, and didn't want to be treated fairly? Well, I guarantee that, with very few exceptions, every student in America has the same feelings.[3]

* * *

In the following article, David Elkind compares two distinctly different approaches to discipline. Dr. Elkind is a professor of child development at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts, and author of *The Hurried Child, All Grown Up and No Place to Go,* and *Miseducation.*

Instructive Discipline Is Built on Understanding

by David Elkind

My dictionary gives two major definitions for the term discipline. One of these is "training that develops self control, character or orderliness, and efficiency." The other is "treatment that corrects and punishes." These definitions start from two quite different conceptions of the child and of childrearing. The first begins with the idea that children are born neither social nor anti-social and have to be trained to acquire the rules and routines of healthy interpersonal exchange. In contrast, the other definition starts off with the idea that children come into the world with anti-social pre-dispositions (original sin, if you will) that have to be extinguished. One idea of childrearing and discipline is, therefore, *instructive*; it is a matter of teaching children social skills and attitudes. The other conception of childrearing and discipline is *punitive*, a matter of stamping out misbehavior through punishment.

The difference in our starting conceptions of discipline is important because it determines how we look at, and treat, what we as adults label misbehavior. First of all, and most importantly, when we view discipline as a learning experience we will look at so-called misbehavior as an opportunity for instruction. Secondly, we will also appreciate that discipline presents a creative challenge for which there are no ready-made solutions, only a number of possibilities. Finally, when we view discipline as a teaching moment, we will also appreciate that children learn differently at different age levels and that we need to adjust our instruction accordingly. We cannot teach infants and young children about prejudice in the same way that we would approach this issue with adolescents. Instructive discipline is developmentally appropriate.

From an instructive discipline perspective, therefore, a child who hits another child presents a problem to be solved, not a behavior to be punished. Why did one child hit the other? Was the hitting a response to provocation, to frustration, to envy, or was it a response to something going on at home? Only when we understand the child's action more fully, can we engage in meaningful positive instruction. The major drawback with instructive discipline is that it takes time. Yet sometimes we need to invest time in order to save time. If we understand why a child engages in a particular form of behavior, we have a good chance of preventing it and therefore not having to deal with it in the future.

If, on the other hand, we think of discipline as punitive, our focus will be limited to finding the kinds of punishment most effective in getting rid of the undesirable behavior. From this standpoint, the challenge is to find the punishment which best *fits the crime*. A punitive discipline approach assumes that you can permanently stamp out misbehavior without exploring the causes of these actions. Likewise, inasmuch as causes are not included in the punishment equation, there is no need to think about age differences. Both children and adolescents can be punished by depriving them of some privilege, activity, or prized possession.

The use of punishment does indeed ensure that some form of learning takes place. Yet it is not always clear what children learn when they are punished. They may well learn that something bad will happen to them if they don't behave in a certain way. But if the causes of their misbehavior are not addressed, they may well create their own subroutines to by-pass the limits they tested or the rules they broke. A child who is deprived of her snack for hitting another child will only be made angrier at the punishment. In all likelihood she will find ways to hit the other child when no one is looking or in ways that cannot be readily detected. For many children, punishment in and of itself becomes a creative challenge, a sort of dare to find ways of indulging in the punishable behavior without being caught.

An example may help to make the difference between the two approaches concrete. Suppose a child is acting up and disturbing the other children. If we take the punishment perspective we might use the time out technique and put the child in another room or in an area away from the other children. Presumably this removal will teach the child to be less disruptive in the future. If, on the other hand, we take an instructive position, we might have a time in (1). That is, we might sit with the child and try to find out why she is upset. It might be the case that the child had a right to be angry, that he was excluded from a playgroup, was called a name, or was pushed. Once we have an idea of why the child was troubled, we have a much better chance of helping him to calm down and to rejoin the group. In the time out, a child learns that her feelings are ignored and, therefore, of no value. A child given a time in, on the other hand, learns that his feelings are important and will be attended to. Which child is more likely to act out again?

Please understand, I am not saying that punishment is never to be used. I am saying that it has to be used thoughtfully and in such a way that it doesn't backfire. The most effective punishment is that which immediately follows the deed and is intrinsic to it. A child who touches a hot stove will get burned, and that punishment will teach

him to be careful around the stove in the future.

Unfortunately, social situations are not that straightforward, and a child can hurt another child physically or psychologically without experiencing any immediate guilt or anxiety himself. And, the child may not understand the causes of his or her misbehavior. That is where instructive, non-punitive discipline comes in. Such discipline helps children appreciate both the causes and the consequences of their actions. Instructive discipline is the most effective, and positive, way to teach children healthy social interactions.

Reference

(1) Weininger, O. (1998). T.I.P.S. Time In Parenting Strategies. Binghamton, NY: S. Freud Romanian Translation & Publications.

Self Check 1.1. True/False

___ 1. According to the dictionary, *discipline* means to bring a group under control.

___ 2. According to the dictionary, *discipline* means to punish or penalize.

___ 3. According to the dictionary, *discipline* means to train or develop by instruction.

___ 4. All the definitions of discipline mean about the same thing.

___ 5. Another term for teaching or training in self-discipline is *positive guidance.*

___ 6. The point of view of this course is that discipline will always be a teacher's nightmare.

(1. T, 2. T, 3. T, 4. F, 5. T, 6. F)

Correct Statements for False Self-Check Items

Items 4 and 6 of Self Check 1.1 are false. Please read the following correct statements.

4. The various definitions of discipline are very different. Discipline as teaching or instruction seeks to understand the reasons behind the child's behaviors and help children

- understand these reasons,
- appreciate the consequences of their actions,
- find acceptable ways to solve problems, and
- meet their needs.

This type of discipline helps children develop self-control. Punishment does none of this.

6. This course emphasizes positive guidance—discipline as teaching. From this perspective, discipline is not a teacher's nightmare but a positive way to help children learn acceptable behavior and develop self-control.

Teachers who are skilled in the use of positive guidance can avoid most discipline "problems." The remainder of this course explores positive guidance—discipline as teaching—including strategies to ensure that your days with children are enjoyable—for you *and* the children.

Discipline as Teaching

Many teachers have proven in their own classrooms that positive teaching techniques produce children who are well-mannered, have self-control, and are a pleasure to be around. These teachers have shown that positive teaching techniques prevent discipline problems from developing. What secrets do these teachers know?

Secret #1: Prevention is better than intervention

Dr. Wayson's research found that good schools, that is, schools with productive, well-disciplined learning environments, "emphasized positive and preventive, rather than punitive, practices."[4]

Prevention means being prepared. Preventive preparation includes preparing the classroom, the playground, the toys and other equipment, appropriate activities, even preparing yourself.

Preventive preparation also includes teaching children the skills they need in order to act responsibly and exercise self-control. Children need to know what is expected of them in all situations.

Adults must be especially careful to teach children what is expected of them in situations that are new to the child. Role-playing and pretend play are excellent ways to teach children interpersonal skills that they need to act responsibly and exercise self-control.

> *For several weeks Yolanda, an only child, had been talking about the new baby that her family was expecting. Carol, Yolanda's teacher, sensed that Yolanda was both happy and dismayed. So Carol helped Yolanda role-play, sometimes using dolls and sometimes involving other children. Sometimes Yolanda played Mother and used dolls for herself, her father, and the new baby. Sometimes Yolanda played the new baby and other children*

played Mother, Father, and Yolanda.

At first Carol helped Yolanda and the other children get started by asking questions and helping them articulate the rules for dealing with a baby, but for the most part she let the children's ideas and imaginations guide their role-playing.

Most of the children were well aware that babies should be handled gently. Interestingly, when Yolanda played the role of her mother, she was easily able to articulate that she still cared for Yolanda. Carol was sure that Yolanda's mother had already discussed this issue with her daughter.

Role-playing helped Yolanda to internalize what she had heard and accept her new position in her family. Soon this became a game that several of the children enjoyed. Carol's role then was to pay close attention on the sideline, ready to help if needed.

Teach children very clearly the rules you expect them to follow. Teach rules *in context* at the time children need them. Children won't remember rules given to them out of context, and giving them a lot of rules at a time will only confuse them.

On a rainy day Carol brought a large ball indoors for the toddlers in her care to play with in the classroom. As she began to roll the ball on the floor, she told them, "We can play with this ball indoors today because we can't go outdoors. See how nicely it rolls on the floor? Indoors, we keep the ball on the floor. Throwing the ball is for outdoors."

Then, in order to reinforce the rule and make sure that the children understand it, she asked some of the children to tell her the rule: "Where do we keep the ball indoors, Ray? … That's right, On the floor. Jack, where do we keep the ball indoors? … Right! On the floor."

Young children need to be reminded of rules frequently. Do this in a respectful, teaching manner, not a lecturing or nagging manner. Lesson 3 focuses on positive teaching techniques that help prevent discipline problems from developing.

Secret #2: Children learn by doing

It is often said that the lessons we learn the best are those we learn the hard way. This is true. Children, like everyone else, learn from experience.

Self-discipline is a matter of making choices. Children must have practice in making choices in order to learn to make *good* choices. Think of children's misbehavior as an opportunity for them to learn.

Secret #3: Children do what they are taught to do

It is important to note that this does not necessarily mean that children do what they are *told* to do. Children, especially young children, are taught at least as much—probably more—by what teachers and caregivers **do**, how these adults **react to them**, and how these adults **interact with them** as they are by what the adults say to them. This is true for at least two reasons. First, children imitate what adults do and say. Second, children repeat behavior that is reinforced by adults' actions.

Children Are Imitators

Children are great imitators; they imitate adults' actions and also their attitudes. Children who see the adults around them smiling and laughing and being happy are likely to smile and laugh and be happy. Children who see the adults around them quarreling and yelling are likely to quarrel and yell.

Children who know that adults respect them will respect themselves—and the adults. Children who know that adults expect them to do well will believe in themselves. Children who are spoken to in a positive way will respond in a positive way.

Children who are hugged or lovingly patted by adults are likely to interact in a similar manner with other children. Children who are hit, slapped, pinched, or otherwise physically "disciplined" by adults, or who see adults hitting, slapping, pinching, or otherwise physically attacking other children, even as a means of "discipline," are likely to hit, slap, pinch, or use other physical aggression in their interactions with other children.

Knowing that children learn from the adult examples they observe, good teachers make sure that they model appropriate actions and attitudes for children. Children can learn many of the skills they need in order to act responsibly and exercise self-control by observing appropriate behavior in the adults around them.

Children Repeat Behavior That Is Reinforced

Children repeat actions that are reinforced by adults. This does not mean that children repeat only those actions approved of by adults. It also does not mean that children will necessarily discontinue those actions that adults tell them to stop.

Tangible "rewards" (such as stickers, candy, toys, or privileges) are not appropriate reinforcement. Attention from the teacher or caregiver is the most appropriate—and the most powerful —reinforcer of a child's behavior.

In their book, *Teaching Behavior to Infants and Toddlers,* Bernice Stewart and Julie Vargas stress that young children respond best to pleasurable social interactions such as "eye contact, smiles, being talked to, receiving hugs, kisses, or being cuddled."[5]

It is logical to conclude, then, that appropriate behavior—behavior that you want the child to continue—should receive your attention. Inappropriate be-

havior—behavior that you want the child to stop—should not receive your attention.

Knowing that children learn to repeat behavior that is reinforced by adult attention, good teachers make sure that they reinforce children's appropriate behavior rather than their inappropriate behavior.

Let's look at some examples.

Carol is teaching a small group of toddlers animal names. She places a box of toy animals on the floor and asks the children to sit down around the box and take turns selecting an animal and telling its name.

"Jane, you may be first," Carol says.

Jane picks up a cow then holds it up and says "cow."

"That's right, Jane. That's a cow. What sounds do cows make?" Carol asks.

"Moo," the children chorus.

"Juan, would you like to be next?" Carol asks.

Juan reaches into the box and selects a pig. As he holds it up for the group to see, Bob grabs a horse from the box and holds it up near Carol's face and yells "horse."

Carol now has a choice. Juan has behaved appropriately. He is following the rules of the group by taking his turn. Bob's behavior is disruptive to the group and irritating to Carol. Which child should Carol recognize? How should she deal with Bob's disruption? Remember that adult attention reinforces children's behavior.

In the following section we will examine four possible ways that Carol might respond:

Choice #1

Carol says, "Stop that, Bob. It's not your turn yet. Let Juan show his animal. What animal is that, Juan?"

Choice #2

Carol says, "Yes, Bob, that's a horse. Now put it down and wait your turn. Juan, what animal are you holding?"

Choice #3

Carol says, "Go sit at the table, Bob. Why can't you behave? Now, Juan, what animal are you holding?"

Choice #4

Carol ignores Bob and instead looks directly at Juan and asks, "What animal are you holding, Juan?"

The first three choices all give Bob attention and thereby reinforce his disruptive behavior. Bob wants and needs attention; this is a totally appropriate desire. However, his manner of seeking attention is not appropriate. *If Carol is to teach Bob self-discipline, she must not reinforce his inappropriate behavior. She must instead help him replace his inappropriate behavior with appropriate behavior.*

Carol selects choice #4 because she wants to help Bob stop his disruptive behavior. Now, let's see what happens next.

"A pig," Juan replies, happily.

"What sound does a pig make?" Carol asks the group.

"Oink, oink," the children chorus.

Carol has kept watch on Bob out of the corner of her eye. He seems surprised that he got no attention from her when he stuck the horse in her face. He sits down, still holding the horse, and when she asks the group what sound a pig makes, Bob joins in the group's answer.

Before Bob makes another disruptive move, Carol turns to him and says, "Bob, would you like to choose an animal from the box now?"

Bob stands up, then bends down to the box and takes a dog, dropping back into the box the horse he had been holding.

While he was still behaving appropriately, Carol asks, "What animal is that, Bob?"

"A dog," Bob says happily.

"What sounds do dogs make?" Carol asks the group as she gently touches Bob's shoulder.

The children, including Bob, make barking sounds. Carol smiles at Bob as he participates appropriately in the group activity.

It may not surprise you to learn that Bob frequently gives Carol problems. He seems to always want attention, and the ways in which he goes about getting that attention are usually disruptive.

Carol's choice not to acknowledge Bob when he grabbed the horse out of turn but rather to give her attention to Juan, who was behaving appropriately, gave Bob's inappropriate behavior no reinforcement. However, Carol stayed very much aware of what Bob was doing and gave him attention as soon as he was behaving appropriately. She reinforced his appropriate behavior first by giving him the next turn to select an animal from the box, then by an approving touch, and finally by an approving smile. By giving Bob attention for good behavior, Carol is helping him replace inappropriate behavior with appropriate behavior.

Stewart and Vargas emphasize the importance of *timing* in the reinforcement process and also recommend preplanning in order to "increase the chances

that children will behave appropriately in the first place."[6] They cite the example of a caregiver, Ruth, helping a 3-month-old baby, Lori, who was new to the day care facility, settle in. Ruth's philosophy was that if she consistently attended to appropriate behaviors, those would be the behaviors that the baby would learn.[7] Here is an account of what Ruth did and *why*:

> *Knowing that Lori would be hungry when she awoke from her nap, Ruth had the baby's bottle ready and stood by Lori's crib when she first heard Lori stir. As soon as Lori moved her fist toward her mouth, Ruth placed the nipple into the baby's mouth and picked her up. Lori's hunger was satisfied and she didn't have to cry to get fed.*
>
> *Ruth waited until Lori drank about half of her bottle and had burped before changing Lori's diaper thus avoiding the possibility of making Lori cry from hunger.*
>
> *As Ruth changed Lori, she smiled at her and talked softly to her while Lori was relaxed and happy. When Lori looked as though she were going to fuss, Ruth stopped talking and looked away from Lori's eyes. Immediately when Lori's expression relaxed, Ruth smiled at her, softly called her name, and continued to talk to her as she finished the diapering. Ruth attended only to Lori's happy, cooperative movements. These were the only movements that Ruth reinforced. Ruth was helping Lori learn to relax and enjoy dressing. Later on, she will reinforce other cooperative behaviors to help Lori become a cooperative and independent dresser.*
>
> *Ruth talked softly to Lori as she finished feeding her, then put her in a baby carrier to rest for a while so she wouldn't spit up. Ruth continued to give Lori attention after she put her down. She held up a small, colorful toy, which Lori grasped. Ruth's continuing attention kept Lori's appropriate behavior reinforced until Lori took the toy and began generating her own reinforcement.*
>
> *Ruth avoided entertaining Lori with the toy. Instead, she let Lori explore the toy on her own. This reinforced active rather than passive behavior.*
>
> *Ruth placed Lori where she could see the other babies and continued to look at her, smile at her, and talk to her often. Babies love watching other babies. This plus Ruth's intermittent attention provided reinforcement for Lori's happy behavior.*

By using properly timed reinforcement, Steward and Vargas explain, adults can shape children's behavior so that appropriate behavior replaces inappropriate behavior. If inappropriate behavior, such as whining, has already been reinforced in a child, change may come little by little. Sometimes the adult must watch the child very closely to catch the moment of appropriate behavior for reinforcement. Ignoring inappropriate behavior will not in itself stop that behavior. Appropriate behavior must be built to take its place.

> *Carol has taught the children in her care that throwing sand is not allowed. Sue and Ann are playing in the sandbox. Each child has a shovel and a sieve. They play happily for a time, then Sue takes a handful of sand and throws it into Ann's face. Ann begins to cry.*

Carol now has a choice. Ann is hurt and crying. Sue has behaved inappropriately. Carol does not want to reinforce Sue's behavior, but she wants to make sure Sue knows that this behavior is not allowed and why such a rule must be followed.

Let's look at four possible ways that Carol might respond:

Choice #1

> *Carol picks Sue up and sternly says, "Throwing sand is not allowed. When you throw sand in someone's face, it hurts. Tell Ann you are sorry." Then Carol attends to Ann.*

Choice #2

> *Carol takes Sue's toys away from her and says, "Don't throw sand, Sue. When you throw sand it may get in someone's face. That hurts." Then Carol attends to Ann.*

Choice #3

> *Carol says, "Get out of the sandbox, Sue. If you are going to throw sand, you can't play in the sandbox anymore." Then Carol attends to Ann.*

Choice #4

> *Carol goes immediately to Ann, picks her up, and wipes sand off Ann's face as she says to Ann, "I'm sorry Sue threw sand in your face. That must have really hurt. We'll go wash your face with cool water. That should make you feel much better."*
>
> *Then Carol says to Sue, "Sue, you can't play in the sandbox anymore today. But you can come help Ann get the sand off her face."*

The first three choices all give Sue immediate attention and thereby are likely to reinforce her inappropriate behavior. Carol selects choice #4. This action avoids reinforcing Sue's inappropriate behavior and also teaches Sue some other valuable lessons.

- By turning her attention immediately to the child whom Sue has hurt, Carol focuses Sue's attention on the unpleasant consequence of throwing sand. Sue is learning one of the social consequences of inappropriate

behavior: others sympathize with the victim.

- By allowing Sue to help Ann recover, Carol is helping Sue learn to empathize, that is, to identify with the feelings the hurt person is experiencing. This is a difficult concept that takes a long time for children to learn. Carol's action also gives Sue a chance to redeem her self-esteem by making up for her hurtful behavior. Rather than simply sending Sue a message that she is a bad child for hurting Ann, Carol is sending the message that Sue made a mistake but that now she has a chance to make up for it with a helpful deed. This is a lesson in taking responsibility for your own actions.

- By taking Sue away from the sandbox, Carol is teaching Sue that she loses a privilege when she breaks the rules of fair play.

Carol had already taught her class sandbox safety rules, but because they are young children, they need frequent reminders of rules. Carol decided that it would be a good idea to review a variety of safety rules with the children every day before they go outdoors.

The next day before the children go out to play, Carol gathers them together and asks, "Who can tell me an important safety rule when we play outdoors?"

Brian suggests, "Don't stand in the swings."

"Right, Brian. Sit when you swing." Carol agrees.

Several other children offer other rules.

Then Carol says, "Sue, can you tell me an important safety rule for playing in the sandbox?"

"Don't throw sand," Sue replies. "Throwing sand might hurt someone."

"That's right, Sue," Carol smiles and touches Sue on the arm. "What can we do with the sand?"

"Shovel it and sift it," Sue tells her.

When none of the other children mentioned the rule about not throwing sand, Carol involved Sue directly by asking her specifically for a rule for the sandbox. If another child had offered this, Carol could have involved Sue by asking her why the rule was important. Note that even though the children state rules as "don'ts," Carol made sure a positive statement was also made: "Sit when you swing. Shovel and sift sand."

By reinforcing the sandbox safety rule to the entire class in the context of reviewing a variety of safety rules for outdoor play, Carol kept the discipline process a learning experience rather than a punishment experience for Sue. Sue is much more likely to remember the rule when taught in this way than if she were punished for her action. This teaching experience is one step in the process of building cooperative behavior and helping Sue to learn to think of how her actions will affect others.

In the future, Carol will be careful to notice Sue when she is playing cooperatively with other children and reinforce that behavior in order to help Sue replace inappropriate behavior with appropriate behavior.

General Rules

1. Give attention to children when they are behaving well.
2. Ignore inappropriate behavior.
3. Watch children closely to notice appropriate behavior and be ready to reinforce it.
4. Build appropriate behavior to replace inappropriate behavior.

What Does Punishment Accomplish?

At the hearings before the U.S. House Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education mentioned earlier in this lesson, Henrietta Hemmesch, a school social worker with extensive experience, stated, "With regard to discipline in the school, it has been my experience that discipline [in the] form of punishment is not effective in remediating a student's problem."[8]

Punishing a child for inappropriate behavior may stop the behavior in the short run, but punishment as a form of discipline does not accomplish any positive, long-term goals. Punishment has many serious negative consequences.

The 10th edition of Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines punishment as "suffering, pain, or loss that serves as retribution."

Punishment is something that is carried out by a more powerful person against a less powerful person. Children know that they are less powerful than adults. This power differential is the source of many conflicts between adults and children. However, children will accept this differential in power status more happily, and with less rebellion, if they sense that adults in charge *respect* them. Punishment does not show respect. Punishment is condescending. You cannot expect cooperation from children whom you treat in a condescending manner.

Punishment focuses on what a child did *wrong* rather than guiding the child toward appropriate or *right* behavior. Punishment does not help the child understand what appropriate behavior is. Punishment does not foster feelings of belonging or encourage the child to develop responsible behavior. Rather, punishment encourages resentment and rebellion in children. Punishment often causes children to see adults as unfair and untrustworthy.

Positive guidance helps children develop constructive behavior. Punishment encourages destructive behaviors such as aggression, dishonesty, or withdrawal.

Positive guidance builds self-esteem and helps children develop self-control. Self-esteem includes a person's feelings of

- acceptance,
- power and control,
- virtue and moral worth, and
- competence.

Together, these four dimensions of people's self-evaluation determine their sense of their own worth and importance as individuals and how confident they are in their own abilities to successfully meet life's challenges—to persevere, take responsibility, achieve, be accountable for themselves, act responsibly toward others, and make a difference to their environment.

Punishment humiliates the child and fosters a negative self-image. Feeling humiliated is not likely to make a child want to do better.

Children who have been disciplined through positive guidance learn to make decisions on the basis of what they consider right. Children who are disciplined by punishment learn to make decisions out of fear that they might get caught.

Importance of Teachers and Caregivers

The single most important aspect of the early childhood facility environment is what the adults do and how they interact with the children. *The single most important factor in teaching children is the adult's attitude and manner.* Stewart and Vargas stress the importance of the "moment to moment interaction between caregivers and infants" in the child's behavioral development. This interaction, they point out, affects children's "general outlook on life, the way they interact with others, and what and how much they learn."[9]

All adult-child interactions should be handled positively. Adults must approach each encounter with respect for the child, considering the situation from the child's point of view, always taking care to protect and build the child's self-concept.

Self Check 1.2. True/False

___ 1. Taking steps to prevent discipline problems from occurring is better than relying on intervention skills.

___ 2. Preventive practices include preparation of the classroom, the playground, and the toys and educational equipment.

___ 3. Role-playing is a good way to teach children interpersonal skills.

___ 4. Children remember rules best when the rules are presented in context.

___ 5. Children are more likely to do what they are told to do than what they observe adults around them doing.

___ 6. Children may imitate adults' actions, but adults' attitudes and ideas are usually too complex for children to imitate.

___ 7. Attention from the teacher or caregiver is the most powerful reinforcer of a child's behavior.

___ 8. When a child is disruptive, it is important for the adult to immediately speak to that child and point out the inappropriate behavior.

___ 9. Giving a child a chance to make up for a hurtful action helps protect the child's self-esteem.

___ 10. Young children need to be reminded of rules often.

___ 11. Punishing children for misbehaving is the most effective way to teach them self-discipline.

___ 12. Punishment encourages destructive and negative behaviors, such as aggression, dishonesty, or withdrawal.

___ 13. The most important aspect of an early childhood facility's environment is what the teachers or caregivers do and how they interact with the children.

___ 14. Positive guidance only works for good children.

(1. T, 2. T, 3. T, 4. T, 5. F, 6. F, 7. T, 8. F, 9. T, 10. T, 11. F, 12. T, 13. T, 14. F)

Correct Statements for False Self-Check Items

Items 5, 6, 8, 11, and 14 of Self Check 1.2 are false. Please read the following correct statements.

5. Just the opposite is true. Children are more likely to imitate what they see you do than follow what you say.

6. Young children are very much aware of adults' attitudes and ideas. They imitate these just as they imitate adults' actions.

8. Children repeat behaviors that are reinforced. Giving a disruptive child immediate attention reinforces the disruptive behavior. Giving attention to children who *are* following the rules shows everyone what actions will get the teacher's attention.

In addition, calling attention to a child's disruptive behavior in front of the group serves to humiliate the child. This will not encourage future cooperative behavior.

11. Positive guidance, not punishment, helps children develop self-control and self-discipline.

14. Positive guidance can work for all children. Positive guidance avoids the negative and harmful practice of labeling children as "good" or "bad."

Analyzing the Preview

Go back and re-read the Lesson 1 Preview items. See if the answers you believe are best now are the same as the answers you chose before you studied this lesson. The paragraphs below explain which answers are best and discuss why the other answers are inappropriate.

Item 1 lists four possible definitions of discipline:

- the process of straightening out a child who has behaved badly,
- helping a child learn responsibility for his or her actions,
- the process of changing a child's attitude, and
- punishment.

According to the dictionary, all of these answers could be considered correct. In dealing with children, however, we must be concerned with which definition is most appropriate to achieve the goal of helping the child build a positive self-concept and develop self-discipline.

Answer *b* is the best answer and the only one that fully meets this criterion. Answer *d,* "punishment," will produce the opposite result. Both answers *a,* "straightening out a child who has behaved badly," and *c,* "the process of changing a child's attitude," approach the child from a negative point of view and imply a process of punishment.

Item 2. Answer *a* is the clear choice for Item 2. Defining goals is important, and teachers do need a clear understanding of what children need to learn and what can be expected of children at particular ages. However, children cannot be deceived about adults' attitudes toward them. Without love, positive guidance—effective discipline—cannot take place.

Item 3. The answer to Item 3 depends on the end result sought. A teacher who wants to impress upon children how bad their behavior is might choose answer *a,* "Discipline should provide punishment that the child will remember."

A teacher whose end result is a child who makes behavioral decisions out of fear could choose answer *b,* "Discipline should make the child afraid to repeat the bad behavior," or perhaps answer *a.*

A teacher whose aim is to "show the child who is boss" might choose answer *d,* "Discipline should make the child afraid of the adult who is doing the disciplining."

Only answer *c,* "Discipline should provide a learning opportunity for the child," will help a child build self-esteem and develop self-control.

Item 4. Answer *d,* "Threaten the child," may succeed in stopping undesired behavior in the short-run, but threats will not teach a child self-discipline.

Answers *a,* "Make the child do what he or she is told," and *c,* "Be strict with the child," imply force, which will also not have long-term positive results.

The most successful method to teach a child self-discipline is to set limits and at the same time respect the child (answer *b*).

Item 5. All children need discipline, defined as positive guidance. All children, even "good" children (those who don't cause adults any trouble) "need to develop a sense of responsibility" (answer *b*).

Submissive children let adults make most decisions for them (answer *d*). Submissive should not be confused with "good." When not in the presence of a controlling adult, submissive children may behave in very inappropriate ways because they have not developed self-discipline.

Submissive children are easy prey for other controlling people, whether adults or other children.

Those children "who have been punished the most severely in the past" (answer *c*) will be the ones with the most severe behavioral problems and usually also psychological problems.

Item 6. Without a doubt, the most important aspect of an early childhood facility's environment is what the teachers and caregivers do and how they interact with the children (answer *d*).

The size of the rooms is important. Too many children in cramped space can be chaotic. It is also important for playgrounds to be safe and in good condition and for the early childhood care facility to be equipped with appropriate toys and other educational equipment. But children in the most beautiful and spacious facility with the most up-to-date toys and educational equipment ***cannot*** build self-esteem and develop self-discipline unless the adults who teach and guide them use positive guidance techniques.

Item 7. Attention from an adult is the best reinforcer of a child's behavior. Therefore, answer *c* is correct. Answer *b* is the opposite of giving a child attention. Calling attention to inappropriate behavior (answer *d*) will not reinforce appropriate behavior. Because this action gives attention to children when they behave inappropriately, it reinforces the *inappropriate* behavior. Spanking (answer *a*) is a source of adult attention and thus may actually reinforce the behavior for which the child is being spanked. Neither calling attention to inappropriate behavior nor spanking offers the child a replacement for the inappropriate acts.

* * *

In the remaining lessons of this course you will learn more about children's needs and goals and ways in which you, the teacher, can help them achieve these needs and goals.

* * *

Endnotes for Lesson 1

1. Hearings before the Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education of the Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives, Ninety-Eighth Congress, Second Session, January 23, 24, 1984, p. 53.

2. Ibid., p. 127.

3. Ibid., p. 55.

4. Ibid., p. 51.

5. Bernice Stewart and Julie Vargas, *Teaching Behavior to Infants and Toddlers* (Springfield, Ill.: Charles Thomas, Publisher, 1990), p. 131.

6. Ibid., p. 131.

7. The following account is summarized from pages 131–139 in ibid.

8. Hearings before the Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education of the Committee on Education and Labor, p. 163.

9. Stewart and Vargas, *Teaching Behavior to Infants and Toddlers,* p. 5.

Lesson 1 Quiz

Please read Lesson 1 two times before attempting its quiz. When you have finished reading this lesson, return to **My Courses** within your Account at www.CareCourses.com and open your course file to access the Online Quiz for this lesson.

Lesson 2

What Children Need

Learning Objectives

In Lesson 2 you will learn:

- the relationship between misbehavior and children's attempts to meet their needs
- why young children's obnoxious and inappropriate behavior should not be considered *naughty*
- effective ways to help children feel that they belong
- the importance of fostering a sense of belonging in young children
- the importance of building self-esteem in young children
- the importance of a sense of security to young children
- the basic behavioral capabilities of children at various ages
- the importance of having fun
- ways to help children cope with reality
- the importance of appropriate adult models
- some things children *don't* need

* * *

Lesson 2 Preview

Circle the letter of the best answer(s) for each of the following items:

1. In attempting to meet their needs, young children frequently behave in ways that are
   a. naughty.
   b. irritating.
   c. inappropriate.
   d. obnoxious.

2. Which teacher/caregiver behavior is effective in helping children feel that they belong?
   a. eye contact.
   b. verbal expressions of appreciation.
   c. hugs and pats.
   d. smiles.

3. Which is the *best* way to build self-esteem in young children?
   a. Praise them for a task done well.
   b. Value them just for who they are.
   c. Point out their mistakes.
   d. Praise children for good behavior.

4. Which of the following give children a sense of security?
   a. knowing that someone is in charge and cares enough about them to keep them safe
   b. having control of their own lives
   c. being treated fairly
   d. structure and predictability in their day-to-day lives

5. Children have an internal sense of right and wrong
   a. beginning at about one year old.
   b. beginning at about eighteen-months old.
   c. not until they reach age two.
   d. beginning during the preschool years (ages three to five).

6. Having fun
   a. is a major need for children.
   b. is a waste of valuable time.
   c. will make the day more agreeable for children.
   d. is a major need for adults.

7. Children's perception of reality is
   a. the same as adults' perception of reality.
   b. what is real to them.
   c. of little importance to the adult.
   d. the basis of their behavioral decisions.

* * *

Keep the ideas addressed in these Lesson Preview items in mind as you work through this lesson.
Notice if you change your mind about which answers are correct as you study this lesson.
These Lesson Preview items will be analyzed at the end of this lesson.

* * *

Activity 2

Purpose: *To help you recognize discipline techniques that you use and evaluate their effectiveness*

Select one child in your care, preferably one who presents some discipline problems for you. Write the child's first name and age on the line provided below.

Closely observe this child's behavior over a period of several days. On each of the numbered lines below (1 through 5) briefly record an incident in which this child presented a behavior problem while in your care.

Following each behavior that you note, briefly describe how you handled the incident. *If possible,* the incidents you record should be scattered over a period of two or more weeks.

Alternate Procedure: If you are not currently teaching or caring for children, you may write about incidents you experienced in the past or incidents you have observed involving some other teacher. *If you need additional space, use your own paper.*

In the ***Activities*** section at the end of this course, you will be asked to answer some questions about what you have written about this child.

Activity 2: Child's Name Age:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Traffic seemed unusually slow as Carol drove to work Monday morning. "Must be an accident up ahead," she thought as she inched along. After she had gone a few more blocks, she discovered the trouble. Some wooden crates had fallen onto the street, forcing the two usually smooth flowing north-bound lanes of traffic to merge into one lane to pass the obstruction. Most drivers seemed to be in a rush, and Carol sensed a definite absence of friendly driving. "Not an accident yet," Carol thought, "but an accident waiting to happen."

Arriving several minutes late at the early childhood facility where she worked, Carol began her work day feeling a bit flustered. Carl, a new boy in her class, had arrived just ahead of her. She had really wanted to be there to greet him when he came. Carl had visited the class with his mother one day last week. He was a boisterous child who clamored for attention, and Carol sensed that his self-esteem was low.

Now that the weather had turned warm, the children at Carol's center spent the first half hour of the day playing outdoors. Lynn, who worked in the center's office, was supervising Carol's class when she arrived.

"Traffic!" Carol moaned to Lynn.

"I'm glad that's all it was," Lynn laughed. "I was afraid you were sick or something. Normally I like being with your class, but I think you have a tornado here today. The new boy, Carl! He's going to be a handful. I'm glad I don't have to start my week dealing with him."

"I was afraid this would happen when I met him last week," Carol whispered as Lynn turned to go back to the office. She knew that Carl would be a challenge.

"A behavior problem waiting to happen!" Carol thought to herself. "Still, this isn't as bad as sitting in a line of slow traffic. At least in this case I have an idea what to do!"

Carol, an experienced early childhood teacher, sensed from Carl's manner and behavior that his needs were not being met. Carl also sensed that his needs were not being met. He was using every strategy that he knew to correct this situation, although he had no clear understanding of what his needs were, much less how to appropriately and effectively meet them.

An understanding of what children *need* is crucial to a adult's ability to provide good care and positive guidance. Even the most well-meaning adult will not be successful without an understanding of children's needs.

This lesson will discuss some of young children's most important needs. As you read each section of this lesson, you will probably become aware of many ways in which children's various needs are *interrelated*. In meeting one need, the adult will likely be meeting other needs as well.

Children behave in ways that they believe will lead to the satisfaction of their needs. However, children have very little experience. They know when a need is not being met, although they probably do not know why this is the case, and they certainly have a very limited understanding of how to turn a need-not-met situation into a need-met situation.

Children's "misbehavior" is more correctly perceived as their inappropriate attempt to meet a very appropriate need. Teachers and caregivers who recognize this, and who know the needs that children are trying to satisfy, can avoid the unhappy circumstance of thinking of children as their adversaries.

What Children Need

Belonging

Children are social beings. They live and act and react in a social context. Their greatest need is to feel that they belong—that they connect with the people around them and that they are a significant part of their social environment.

Attention, affection, and appreciation from adults—parents, caregivers, teachers—give children the feeling of belonging. Young children who do not get the attention they need, and thus do not feel that they belong, will engage in whatever behaviors they believe will work to gain a sense of belonging. "Whatever behaviors they believe will work" includes many behaviors that adults find obnoxious and inappropriate. For example, some young children who are not getting the attention they need whine, and if whining works, that is, if whining is *reinforced* with adult attention (see Lesson 1), they will continue to whine when they want attention. Such children are not bad. Their behavior may be obnoxious and inappropriate, but it is not naughty behavior. These children do not need to be reprimanded or punished. They need to replace their inappropriate behavior with appropriate behavior. They can do this with the positive guidance of caring adults.

Attention, affection, and appreciation can be shown verbally and nonverbally, such as by eye contact, winks, smiles, pats, and hugs.

Statements such as the following are powerful verbal assurances of acceptance:

"I like being with you."

"Your smile makes me feel happy."

"You're special to me."

"I'm glad you are in my class."

"Your laugh sounds like music to me."

"I really enjoy reading stories to you."

"It's fun to clean up the room with so many good helpers."

"I'm glad you feel happy. That makes me feel happy, too."

"Thank you for cooperating."

"I'm sorry if what I said hurt your feelings. I didn't mean to do that."

"It's important to me for you to be safe."

Self-esteem

Closely related to children's need to belong is their need to feel *worthwhile*—that the people around them believe them to be important *just for who they are.* This need is not met when children are made to feel that their value rests on whether they know what to do in a certain situation or whether they behave in a certain way.

Helping children develop positive attitudes toward themselves encourages cooperation. Showing trust in and respect for children brings two rewards: children will reciprocate with trust in and respect for the adult, and they will also view themselves as trustworthy and worthy of respect.

Children have an overwhelming tendency to live up to adults' expectations. This phenomenon is called the *self-fulfilling prophecy.* Children whose teachers believe that they are capable will feel capable and be capable. Children whose teachers expect them to fail are likely to fail.

Positive statements such as the following demonstrate faith in children:

"Keep trying, Sue. You can do it."

"I have faith in you."

"You're making real progress."

"You seem to be enjoying yourself."

"It makes me happy to see you working so well."

"Would you like for me to show you? Then you can try it."

Negative statements such as the following do not show trust in or respect for children. They erode rather than build children's self-esteem. These statements are *extremely hurtful* to children:

"Can't you do anything right?"

"Here, let me do it. You'll just make a mess."

"You'll never learn."

"What a mess!"

"Why can't you get it right?"

"Do you think you will ever understand this?"

"That doesn't look much like a dog."

Adults can help children develop a positive self-concept by demonstrating that they care about the child, no matter what the child does.

Statements such as the following convey how you feel about a child's *behavior.* They preserve the child's self-esteem because they do not attack the child as a *person.* Statements such as these imply that you trust the child to take your statement and act on it:

"I can't allow you to hurt John."

"You need to stop banging the hammer on the table."

"Please don't stand on the couch."

"I don't like for you to shout so close to my ears."

"Your marking on the wall made me feel angry."

Statements such as the following attack the child as a person and erode the child's self-esteem. They do not demonstrate trust in the child's ability to change the inappropriate behavior. These statements are *extremely hurtful* to children:

"You make me sick."

"You are a bad (or naughty) boy/girl."

"Shame on you."

"Stop acting like a baby."

"Don't be stupid."

"You're so clumsy."

Negative statements such as these discourage children and foster feelings of hopelessness. Children believe the things adults say about them. Children who are told they are bad or stupid or clumsy will adopt this self-image. Children who believe themselves to be incapable are not likely to achieve.

If you want children to value themselves, treat them as valuable people. If you want children to feel capable, treat them as capable individuals. Give them many opportunities every day to be successful. If you want children to love themselves, create a loving environment for them. Giving your attention to children—letting them know that you care enough to be with them—nurtures their self-esteem.

Competence

Children need to experience success. Believing that they are competent and knowing that they can do at least some things well nurtures self-esteem.

Adults can help children feel competent by giving them opportunities to succeed. When children master a skill at one level, help them set new goals to challenge their own skill level. Children's goals should be realistic and based on their own skill level, not on some abstract notion of what a child of a certain age should be able to achieve. At any given age, children have widely differing abilities and levels of accomplishment. An achievement that represents a cause for celebration for Don at age four may have come easily to Mary at age three.

A child should only compete with herself or himself. Competition between children does not build self-esteem. Instead, it produces anxiety. Comparing children with each other can foster feelings of "I'm not good enough." Help each child identify at least one area in which he or she can excel. Some chil-

dren will be good at many things, but all children can be good at something.

Children's goals should progress in small steps. This helps ensure success. It is far better for a child to feel successful by achieving a simple goal than to feel frustrated by striving for a goal that is too difficult. Allow children plenty of time to enjoy each success before challenging them to a new level. Recognize and show appreciation for small improvements. Your joy in children's accomplishments heightens their own sense of joy and pride and confirms their feelings of competence.

> *"I see that you can tie your shoes better this week than you could last week, Ray!"*

You can almost see Ray beaming. How different he would feel if he heard instead, *"Dan learned to tie his shoes a long time ago. Do you think you'll ever get it, Ray?"*

Self Check 2.1. True/False

___ 1. Adults who mean well are usually able to provide effective positive guidance whether or not they have an understanding of children's needs.

___ 2. Most children have a very clear sense of how to fulfill their own needs.

___ 3. Children need to feel that they belong.

___ 4. Children automatically have a feeling of belonging, regardless of the way in which they are treated.

___ 5. Attention, affection, and appreciation from adults help children feel that they belong.

___ 6. The best way to build children's self-esteem is to praise their ability to do a task well.

___ 7. When adults expect children to do well, children usually live up to these expectations.

___ 8. Children need to know that they are valued no matter what they do.

___ 9. Negative statements that attack a child as a person encourage the child to do better next time.

___ 10. Children feel good about themselves when they know the adult cares enough to spend time with them.

___ 11. An adult can encourage a child to try harder by telling him that what he did was stupid.

___ 12. Competition between young children helps build their self-esteem.

___ 13. The development of almost all children who are not handicapped progresses at about the same rate.

___ 14. Children do best when adults set very high goals for them.

___ 15. An adult's joy in children's accomplishments heightens their own sense of joy and pride and confirms their feelings of competence.

(1. F, 2. F, 3. T, 4. F, 5. T, 6. F, 7. T, 8. T, 9. F, 10. T, 11. F, 12. F, 13. F, 14. F, 15. T)

Correct Statements for False Self-Check Items

Items 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, and 14 of Self Check 2.1 are false. Please read the following correct statements.

1. A well-meaning attitude is not enough to provide effective positive guidance for young children. The adult must understand children's developmental needs and the circumstances surrounding each individual child's behavior.

2. Because children have very little experience, they have very limited understanding of how to turn a need-not-met situation into a need-met situation. To learn appropriate ways to meet their needs, children need guidance from understanding adults.

4. Children's sense of belonging is directly related to how they are treated.

6. Actions and attitudes that assure children that they are valued for who they are, not for what they know or do, build children's self-esteem.

Also, positive statements of encouragement that recognize a child's efforts and demonstrate faith in the child work better than praise.

9. Children are discouraged by negative statements that attack the child as a person. Such statements cause children to feel that they are not valuable or worthwhile and that the adult does not have confidence that they can learn a skill or accomplish a task. Negative statements do not encourage children to try harder or to improve their behavior.

11. Telling a child he is stupid causes the child to believe he is stupid and to have less, not more, confidence in himself—to believe he is *in*capable, not capable.

12. Competition between children produces anxiety, not confidence or feelings of self-worth. Children should only compete with themselves.

13. All children, including normally-developing children, develop at their own individual rate. And each individual child develops in some areas more quickly than in other areas. The understanding adult views each child as a unique individual—capable in his or her own unique ways and valuable for himself or herself.

14. Children's progress occurs in small, simple steps, and children need plenty of time to practice each new skill and enjoy each accomplishment before moving on. Proovide many age-appropriate learning opportunities for children, and let chidlren set their own goals. Setting "high" goals for children will discourage them. Recognize and show appreciation for the child's efforts. And remember that what may seem like a small and insignificant step to an adult may be a very big step in the eyes of the child.

Security

Children need a sense of security. They need supportive adults who will keep them safe and offer consistent positive guidance.

Safety

Children need to know that someone is in charge and that someone cares enough about them to keep them safe. Security comes from knowing that a caring adult will not allow them to hurt themselves or others. Children also need the confidence that a caring adult will help them regain control when their emotions or behavior are out of control.

Dr. Lawrence Balter points out that behavior adults see as mischief or even defiance is often young children's way of testing their security net. "A fifteen-month-old [who] breaks away from your grip and runs wildly up the street, wanting desperately for you to run after him and then screams with glee when you do … [has an] emotional need for you to scoop him up protectively in your arms. It becomes a game in which he is reassured that he cannot get away from you."[1]

Structure

Structure and predictability in children's day-to-day lives help them feel secure. Children like routines. Bernice Stewart and Julie Vargas tell of an early childhood facility that played the same two "morning arrival" songs (*The Sidewalks of New York* and the *Winnie the Pooh* song) continually every morning between 7:00 AM and 9:00 AM. Parents told the staff that even the very youngest children learned to recognize these songs and reacted favorably whenever they heard them, even in contexts other than the early childhood facility. One baby, whose morning had been hectic and fretful, stopped crying and began babbling and clapping his hands as soon as he heard the music from the center's parking lot.[2]

Young children who have been behavior problems at home have sometimes settled down noticeably after entering nursery school with its more structured environment. Teachers and caregivers can provide structure and predictability for the children in their care by

- providing a particular place for each child's personal items
- keeping toys and other equipment in particular and clearly marked places
- establishing and maintaining a daily schedule

This does not mean that you can *never* vary from your schedule. Sometimes special circumstances call for variations. When you do feel that it is appropriate to change the schedule, however, discuss this at some length with the children ahead of time.

Teachers and caregivers can help children feel secure by setting and consistently enforcing limits and rules. Lesson 3 discusses effective rule setting and enforcement.

Treating children fairly helps them feel secure. Be sure that the limits and rules you set are fair. If a rule that you have made turns out to be unfair or unwise, change it. Explain to the children that after giving the matter some thought you have decided that the new rule is better. If you make a mistake or overreact, apologize. This provides children a model for taking responsibility for their own actions. Apologizing is not a sign of weakness. It takes a strong person to admit that she or he is wrong.

Never lie to children. Their ability to trust you is important to their sense of security. By always telling the truth, you are also modeling honesty for them.

Independence

It is natural for children to wiggle and move about, to make noise, to explore their world and indulge their curiosity. Children need space in which they can do all of these things without being told "Don't." All of the things that children do all day are important to the development of their sense of independence. Lesson 3 will discuss ways in which teachers and caregivers can prevent discipline problems from developing by providing appropriate space for children to be children and feel independent.

Power

Children need to feel powerful. They need opportunities to make simple choices and decisions. They need to feel confident that when they ask for what they need their request will be taken seriously. They need to feel that they are in control of their own lives. This doesn't mean that children need—or want—*complete* control of their lives. Too much power would, of course, overwhelm them, causing insecurity, frustration, fear, and inappropriate behavior. Children's need for power must be balanced with their need for limits.

Becoming a Separate Individual

Toddlers' major job is to become an individual separate from their parents. This natural move toward greater independence can also be seen in the day care environment. Limit-testing behavior "comes with the age"; it is a natural and necessary function of being two. Adults can help toddlers successfully achieve the independence of thought and action that they so steadfastly seek by respecting the child and providing kind yet firm positive guidance.

Self Check 2.2. True/False

___ 1. Knowing that someone is in charge and that someone cares enough about them to keep them safe helps children feel secure.

___ 2. Children feel more secure when they are confident that a caring adult will help them regain control when their emotions or behavior are out of control.

___ 3. Children find security in the structured environment of nursery school.

___ 4. If adults make a rule that is unfair they should change it.

___ 5. An early childhood facility in which children must constantly be told "Don't do that" is probably not a well-planned place.

___ 6. Children need to feel both secure and independent.

___ 7. Toddlers are too young to be entrusted with decision-making.

___ 8. Limit testing is a necessary job for toddlers.

(1. T, 2. T, 3. T, 4. T, 5. T, 6. T, 7. F, 8. T)

Correct Statement for False Self-Check Item

Item 7 of Self Check 2.2 is false. Please read the following correct statement.

7. Toddlers' major job is to become an individual separate from their parents. As toddlers begin the process of developing independence, they need many opportunities to practice making decisions.

Of course, the choices that toddlers are given must be appropriate to their age. But these choices and decisions must have meaning to the individual child. Practice making small decisions helps prepare the child for making larger decisions in the future.

Age-Appropriate Expectations

Young children are different from adults in more than just their size. Among other things, they have less understanding of how things work, less awareness of dangers, less self-control, less memory capability, less sense of right and wrong. What adults expect from them, then, should reflect their capabilities.

Babies (birth to 18-months) have no inner sense of right and wrong and no reliable self-control. They cannot resist temptation and should not be expected to obey verbal instructions. Discipline is not appropriate at this age. Behavior can be shaped by ignoring inappropriate behavior and reinforcing appropriate behavior.

Toddlers (18-months to three years) also have no inner sense of right and wrong and no reliable self-control. Although their language ability is developing rapidly, they have poor judgment, an unreliable memory for rules, and cannot reliably resist temptation. Reinforcement techniques are still effective. Distraction and substituting alternative activities are also effective at this age. Natural and logical consequences may be effective with toddlers in some cases. Power struggles should be avoided.

During the preschool years (three to five years), children develop more self-control, are able to remember and conform to rules more reliably, and are better able to connect actions to consequences. Preschoolers are less self-centered and are beginning to be able to see the world from another person's point of view. They are beginning to develop an inner sense of right and wrong. Preschoolers respond well to explanations of rules and can better understand natural and logical consequences than when they were younger.

Safe Play Areas

The areas in which children play—indoors and outdoors—should not contain objects that are harmful to the children or objects that the children are forbidden to touch.

Young children do not have either the memory or the self-control to avoid touching or grabbing objects that they find interesting. It is children's job to be curious and to learn by exploring their environment. It is the adult's job to make sure their environment is safe for their explorations. Children are not being "bad" when they get into things. They are just being children.

Fun

Children need to have fun. They need to laugh. So do adults. A young child who is squeezing mashed potatoes through her fingers or wiping peanut butter in her hair or on her high-chair tray is doing so because this is *fun.* She is also *discovering.* By exploring her world in this way, she is learning a great deal about the physical qualities of various substances. Her actions may create a mess for the adult to clean up, but it is not naughty behavior. She does not need to be reprimanded or punished.

The adult can limit the amount of mess created at mealtime by giving the child small amounts of food at a time and only as much as she is hungry for. Then provide other opportunities for the child to squeeze and smear mushy substances—finger paints, wet sand, mud pies, and such.

Having fun together helps children feel that they belong. Take time to laugh and have fun with children, laughing *with* them and not *at* them, of course. Enjoy silly and messy activities with them. Look at the funny side of things that happen.

Once when my sister and her family were visiting in our home, my young daughter told me with considerable delight, "I really like aunt Connie. She's just as silly as we are!"

Laugh at yourself when you make a silly mistake. Don't take yourself too seriously. This shows children that you accept yourself as worthwhile even when you make a mistake. Such behav-

ior on your part will help them learn not to take themselves too seriously. Cheerfulness creates a positive environment for learning and correcting behavior. Fun and laughter will make the day more agreeable for the children *and* for you.

Maria was trying to master the use of scissors, but most of her attempts produced objects with one or more missing parts. Seeing that Maria was becoming upset with herself when she cut the legs off a paper horse, Carol said to her, "Well, you won't have to climb so high to get on that horse now!"

Maria lightened up a bit. Then she smiled and said, "Yes, and he can eat up all the hay that's on the ground." Then, still smiling, Maria took another copy of the horse picture and tried again.

Self Check 2.3. True/False

___ 1. Babies cannot be expected to comply with verbal requests.

___ 2. Toddlers will usually obey if you clearly explain to them which behavior is right and which is wrong.

___ 3. Most two-year-olds have fairly well developed self-control.

___ 4. Once you have taught most two-year-olds a rule, you can usually rely on them to obey it.

___ 5. Between the ages of three and five, most children respond well to explanations of rules for behavior.

___ 6. Between the ages of three and five, most children develop a fairly good understanding of natural and logical consequences.

___ 7. Children who play with their food should be punished.

___ 8. Humor and laughter helps children to not take themselves too seriously.

___ 9. When adults have fun with children they help give children a sense of belonging.

___ 10. Cheerfulness creates a positive environment for learning.

(1. T, 2. F, 3. F, 4. F, 5. T, 6. T, 7. F, 8. T, 9. T, 10. T)

* * *

Correct Statements for False Self-Check Items

Items 2, 3, 4, and 7 of Self Check 2.3 are false. Please read the following correct statements.

2. Toddlers have no inner sense of right and wrong, no reliable self-control, and poor judgment. It is not realistic to expect toddlers to "obey" based on an explanation of right and wrong.

3. Real self-control does not develop until the preschool years—three to five years of age.

4. Toddlers have an unreliable memory for rules and cannot reliably resist temptation.

7. It is children's job to be curious and explore things in their environment. This exploration may include the child's food. Playing with food is not a punishable offense. Ensure that children have plenty of opportunities to explore objects with a wide variety of textures, colors, etc. at times other than mealtime.

Give the child a small amount of food at a time. Feed children only when they are hungry.

Reality

It is children's job to learn about their world and how it works. If they do this job well, they will try many, many things. Sometimes they will "get it right" the first time; sometimes their attempts will result in behavior that is inappropriate, that is, behavior that needs to be replaced.

Children's perception of reality is not the same as adults' perception of reality. Nevertheless, their reality is what is real for them, and this is the reality on which their behavioral decisions are based. It is the adult's job to help children learn about reality while keeping them safe. This is a gradual process that requires much loving kindness. The teacher or caregiver can help children best by *understanding their reality* and seeing problem situations from the child's point of view.

Experiencing Unpleasant Realities

One important bit of reality children experience is that *they can't always have their own way.*

Two-year-old Bob wants a truck that Jim is playing with. Bob is very fond of this truck and believes that since he wants it he should have it. His natural inclination is simply to take the truck. What will Bob do?

Bob could try grabbing the truck from Jim, in which case Jim might give up the toy willingly. Or Jim might cry, hit Bob, bite Bob, hit Bob with the truck, or some combination of these or other actions that Bob would probably find distressing. Bob needs to develop a better way of satisfying his need.

Bob has other choices, although he probably does not know what they are. At two years old, it is natural that Bob should think that if he sees a truck and wants the truck he should be able to take the truck. *This is a two-year-old's reality.* Children at this age do not understand that everyone does not share their version of reality.

The adult's most helpful response would be, *"I know you want to play with the truck, but Jim has it now. Find another toy."*

Learning that they can't always have their own way is a very difficult bit of reality for children to learn, not because they are selfish, but because it requires them to see the world from someone else's perspective. Young children first see the world only from their own perspective. They are the center of their world. Learning to see the world from someone else's perspective is a difficult process that occurs gradually over a long period of time. Children can learn this bit of reality more easily, and more happily, if their needs for belonging, for being valued, and for security are met.

What Bob does the *first* time he is faced with a situation such as this may not be an appropriate way for him to act on a permanent basis. That doesn't mean that Bob is bad or that his action is naughty. It simply means that Bob's grasp of reality and his method of satisfying his needs are still in a developing state.

But what about the second and third and subsequent times Bob is faced with a similar situation? What Bob continues to do will depend on the understanding of reality that he is taught, intentionally and unintentionally, by the words and actions of adults around him.

Adults can help children while they are learning by

- providing enough desirable toys for each child in the group;
- being watchful to ensure that each child has access to a desirable toy;
- distracting children by substituting another toy;
- *not* ridiculing or punishing children who cry from frustration. Learning to deal with disappointment is difficult. Children need understanding, not an attack on their self-esteem.
- reinforcing appropriate behavior when it is happening;
- ignoring inappropriate behavior while building appropriate behavior to take its place (see Lesson 1).

Feelings

Feelings, especially angry and hostile feelings, are another hard bit of reality that children need help coping with.

Feelings are real. Everyone has a wide range of feelings. Children need to be reassured that all their feelings, happy feelings and unhappy feelings, even unpleasant and hostile feelings, are legitimate, and that they are not the first ones to feel the way they do.

Children, just like everyone else, *are entitled to their feelings.* They need guidance in learning to recognize and understand their feelings. It is especially important that *no feelings, particularly strong negative feelings, be labeled bad or ugly.* Children simply need to learn to express feelings of anger and hostility in appropriate ways.

Adults can help children by

- being honest about their own feelings,
- modeling constructive ways to express feelings,
- recognizing and accepting children's feelings,
- allowing children to express their feelings, and
- helping children find replacements for inappropriate expressions of strong negative feelings.

Admonitions such as "Don't be afraid," or "You're too big to be afraid of that," or "Only babies get scared in the dark" are not helpful to a fearful child. Instead, ask, "Would you like to tell me what is making you feel afraid?" Then talk through the fearful circumstance with the child, assuring the child that she or he is not the only person ever to feel this way. It is particularly helpful if you relate a similar experience of your own.

If the child is unable or unwilling to tell you the source of his or her fear, try making a guess: *"Could it be that the darkness makes you afraid? Lots of children feel that way."* If your guess is wrong, the child will let you know. Perhaps after you have made a wrong guess the child will feel like telling you the right answer. If not, guess again. Be certain that your question is stated in such a way that the child does not feel accused. *"You're afraid of the dark, aren't you?"* is NOT an appropriate way to phrase your question. Such a statement implies shame and is humiliating to the child.

Anger is an especially troubling and frustrating feeling for children. Anger can make anyone feel helpless, especially children. It is natural for children to turn first to an action that restores their sense of power.

If the child's anger stems from a frustration that can be remedied, try to identify the source and take whatever steps are possible to eliminate the frustrating circumstance.

Children will naturally feel angry when they are scolded, shamed, belittled, ignored, or otherwise treated in a punitive or humiliating manner. Adults naturally feel angry under such circumstances, too. Anger is a legitimate reaction here. The remedy is to remove the source of the frustration. Children should never be treated in such negative ways. Scolding, shaming, belittling, ignoring, or otherwise humiliating children serves no positive purpose.

Often anger stems from an interpersonal conflict. In this case, respect each child's right not to like certain others. Children cannot be forced to get along with every other child, and they shouldn't be forced to play with someone they don't like. In such a circumstance, an appropriate response would be:

> *"You and Judy aren't getting along very well. Perhaps you don't like Judy. You don't have to play with her. But you may not hurt her either."*

Don't tell children not to be angry or forbid them to express their anger. Instead provide positive guidance to help them find healthy and appropriate ways to express how they feel:

> *"It seems that you're angry because Jim took your ball. But I can't let you hurt him. Use your words to tell him how you feel."*

Appropriate Adult Models

Children need adults to model appropriate behaviors. Teachers and caregivers who are themselves disciplined, who are consistent and reasonable, encourage children to develop these same traits in themselves. Remember that when *what you do* and *what you say* are not the same, children are far more likely to copy what they see you do than they are to do what you tell them to do.

Children need adults to model self-control. Teachers and caregivers must avoid losing control and verbally lashing out at children. When you are too upset to deal calmly with a situation, say something like:

> *"I'm very upset because of what you did. We need to talk about it. But let's wait until we both calm down."*

Such a statement addresses the child's *behavior,* not the child's *self.* It is teacher's and caregivers' professional responsibility to learn and follow positive ways of dealing with children.

Children Learn What They Live

If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn.

If children live with hostility, they learn to fight.

If children live with fear, they learn to be apprehensive.

If children live with pity, they learn to feel sorry for themselves.

If children live with ridicule, they learn to feel shy.

If children live with shame, they learn to feel guilty.

If children live with encouragement, they learn confidence.

If children live with tolerance, they learn patience.

If children live with praise, they learn appreciation.

If children live with acceptance, they learn to love.

If children live with approval, they learn to like themselves.

If children live with recognition, they learn it is good to have a goal.

If children live with sharing, they learn generosity.

If children live with honesty, they learn truthfulness.

If children live with fairness, they learn justice.

If children live with kindness and consideration, they learn respect.

If children live with security, they learn to have faith in themselves and in those about them.

If children live with friendship, **they learn that the world is a nice place in which to live.**

– Dorothy Law Nolte
(Reprinted with permission.)

**Children whose basic needs are met,
who feel that they belong and see themselves as
significant, worthwhile, lovable, capable, powerful people
*feel good about themselves.***
**They are pleasant for adults to be with.
These children will not need to misbehave
in order to satisfy their basic needs.**

Self Check 2.4. True/False

___ 1. When children are exploring their world to learn about it, they are bound to engage in inappropriate behavior.

___ 2. Children's perception of reality is the same as adults' perception of reality.

___ 3. It is natural for two-year-olds to think that they should have whatever they want just because they want it.

___ 4. Most two-year-olds can understand a situation from someone else's viewpoint if an adult takes the time to explain it.

___ 5. A two-year-old who grabs a toy from another child is being naughty and should be scolded.

___ 6. It is wrong for children to feel angry.

___ 7. An adult can help a child deal with fear by saying, "You're too big to be afraid of that."

___ 8. If a child has difficulty articulating a feeling, it is helpful to ask, "Could it be …?"

___ 9. Being scolded, shamed, belittled, ignored, or otherwise treated in a punitive or humiliating manner engenders anger.

___ 10. Children should be expected to play with all the other children, regardless of how they feel toward them.

___ 11. Adults can encourage children to develop self-discipline by being disciplined themselves.

___ 12. If what adults tell children to do and what those adults themselves do are not the same, children will most likely follow what they are told.

(1. T, 2. F, 3. T, 4. F, 5. F, 6. F, 7. F, 8. T, 9. T, 10. F, 11. T, 12. F)

Correct Statements for False Self-Check Items

Items 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, and 12 of Self Check 2.4 are false. Please read the following correct statements.

2. Children have very limited experiences of the world, and thus their perception of reality is not the same as that of adults. Nevertheless, children's perception of reality is real to them, and this is the "reality" on which their behavioral decisions are made.

It is the responsibility of the adult to strive to understand the individual child's perception of reality and to guide the child in positive ways to a better understanding of reality while keeping the child safe. This gradual process requires much loving kindness.

4. Learning to see the world from someone else's viewpoint is difficult for young children. This skill is well beyond the ability of two-year-olds. By stating the other child's point of view, adults can help children begin to learn this skill.

5. A two-year-old who grabs a toy from another child needs guidance to learn a more acceptable way to meet his needs. Scolding does not teach him a better method or appropriate behavior.

6. Anger is a normal human emotion, and children are entitled to their feelings just like everyone else.

7. Telling a child "You're too big to be afraid of that" does nothing to help the child deal with fear. Acknowledge the child's right to her/his emotions. Talk with the child about the child's fears. Assure children that everyone has fears. Help children learn more about things that frighten them.

10. Children should be expected to treat all the other children with respect, but no child should be forced—or even expected—to play with another child. Allow children to make their own choices of playmates.

12. When an adult's words and actions are not the same, the child will much more likely follow the adult's actions than the adult's words.

What Children *Don't* Need

Teachers who understand what children *need* are less likely to treat children in ways that harm them. Still, it is important for teachers and caregivers to understand what children *don't* need.

Criticism

Children who are criticized by adults will criticize themselves. Criticism teaches children that there is something lacking in them—that they are not good enough. Criticism makes children feel incompetent, not competent.

Guilt

Children need opportunities to feel successful, not to feel guilty that they haven't succeeded. They need to learn appropriate behavior, not to feel guilty that they haven't learned. Guilt discourages children. It is hard to be motivated to do better when one feels discouraged.

Shame

Shaming and belittling hinder a child's emotional growth. Shame humiliates. It is hard to feel competent or encouraged when one is shamed or humiliated. Shame does not teach children anything that is positive.

Embarrassment

Embarrassment devastates children's self-esteem. Avoid asking questions or making statements that will embarrass children. Be aware of children's sensitivities. Respect their privacy.

Hostility

It is not possible for a teacher or caregiver to like every child. Personality conflicts are inevitable. However, adults must remember that *they are responsible* for their own feelings toward each and every child. They are also responsible for the way they treat every

child. Under no circumstances is it ever permissible for a teacher or caregiver to treat a child with hostility.

If you have an unlikable child in your class, first realize that the child and the behavior are not the same. Once you have separated the child from the behavior, analyze the probable causes for the troublesome behavior. Examine your own interactions with the child to detect any self-fulfilling prophecies. You may be surprised to find that the insights you gain alter your feelings toward the child.

A professor with whom I studied in graduate school many years ago counseled teachers to "disarm your enemies." Difficult children expect you to reprimand them, be short tempered with them, or treat them harshly. Do the unexpected. Force yourself to treat the child whom you dislike kindly and respectfully. You will likely be surprised at the difference this makes in that child's behavior. This can be an extremely effective tactic.

Self Check 2.5. True/False

___ 1. Children who are criticized are likely to feel that they are not good enough.

___ 2. Children who are criticized by adults will be critical of themselves.

___ 3. Feeling guilty for misbehavior encourages children to improve their behavior.

___ 4. Children feel humiliated when they are shamed.

___ 5. Shame is a powerful motivator for improving behavior.

___ 6. Every teacher and caregiver should be able to like every child.

___ 7. "Disarm your enemies" means to do what children do not expect.

___ 8. Treating a child with hostility is acceptable when the child is really bad.

___ 9. A child who is ridiculed is likely to become shy.

___ 10. A child who lives with shame learns to feel guilty.

___ 11. Treating children fairly helps them develop a sense of justice.

___ 12. Giving children encouragement helps develop their sense of confidence.

___ 13. Modeling sharing in your interactions with children helps them develop generosity.

___ 14. Living with honesty helps children develop truthfulness.

___ 15. Children who are criticized often learn to criticize and condemn others.

___ 16. Treating children with kindness and consideration helps them learn to respect others.

(1. T, 2. T, 3. F, 4. T, 5. F, 6. F, 7. T, 8. F, 9. T, 10. T, 11. T, 12. T, 13. T, 14. T, 15. T, 16. T)

* * *

Correct Statements for False Self-Check Items

Items 3, 5, 6, and 8 of Self Check 2.5 are false. Please read the following correct statements.

3. Feelings of guilt discourage children. This does nothing to help them improve their behavior. Instruction from a caring adult regarding actions that are acceptable will encourage children to improve their behavior.

5. Shame humiliates. Shame makes children feel incompetent and discouraged. Shame teaches nothing that is positive.

6. It is not realistic to expect any adult to like every child. This does not mean, however, that every adult should not be expected to treat every child with respect. Try to separate your feelings about the child's behaviors from your feelings about the child. This often makes a significant difference in the way you feel about the child.

8. Treating a child with hostility is ***never*** acceptable, regardless of the child's actions. Labeling the child as "bad" is not helpful, either.

* * *

Endnotes for Lesson 2

1. Lawrence Balter, *Who's In Control?* (New York: Poseidon Press, 1988), p. 42.

2. Bernice Stewart and Julie S. Vargas, *Teaching Behavior to Infants and Toddlers* (Springfield, IL: Charles Thomas, 1990), pp. 214–215.

Analyzing the Preview

Go back and re-read the Lesson 2 Preview items. See if the answers you believe are best now are the same as the answers you chose before you studied this lesson. The paragraphs below explain which answers are best and discuss why the other answers are inappropriate.

Item 1. In attempting to meet their needs, young children frequently behave in ways that are inappropriate (answer *c*). These actions are often irritating and obnoxious to adults (answers *b* and *d*), but they are not naughty (answer *a*).

Babies and toddlers do not have an internal sense of right and wrong. During the preschool years (three to five), children *begin to develop* an internal sense of right and wrong.

Item 2. All of the answer choices foster a sense of belonging. Adult attention, affection, and appreciation, whether verbal or nonverbal, are all effective ways for adults to help children feel that they belong.

Item 3. The best way to build self-esteem in children is to value them just for who they are (answer *b*). Children need assurance that they are valued no matter what they do.

Praising children for a task done well (answer *a*) or praising children for good behavior (answer *c*) imply that their value rests on what they *do,* not on *who they are.* Either may actually lower children's self esteem by engendering the feeling that they are not good enough when their performance does not meet your standards.

Pointing out their mistakes (answer *c*) will erode, not build their self-esteem. Compliment them for their efforts and provide positive guidance to help them improve their skill level.

Item 4. Knowing that someone is in charge and cares enough about them to keep them safe (answer *a*) gives children a sense of security. So does being treated fairly (answer *c*) and having structure and predictability in their day-to-day lives (answer *d*).

Children need to have some control over their own lives. However, they can only cope with control in small amounts. Having some control over their own lives contributes to young children's need to develop independence, but having control of their own lives is not a major contributor to their sense of security.

Item 5. Children begin to develop an internal sense of right and wrong during the preschool years (ages three to five) (answer *d*). Even then, however, this sense is not reliable.

Infants (birth to eighteen-months) (answer *a*) and toddlers (eighteen-months to three years) (answers *b* and *c*) have no internal sense of right and wrong.

Item 6. Having fun is a major need for children (answer *a*) as well as for adults (answer *d*). Having fun will certainly make the day more agreeable for children and for adults (answer *c*).

Anyone who believes that having fun is a waste of valuable time (answer *b*) should definitely not be an early childhood professional.

Item 7. Children's perception of reality is *not* the same as adults' perception of reality. Therefore, answer *a* is incorrect.

But children's perception of reality is what is real to them (answer *b*), and it is the basis of their behavioral decisions (answer *d*).

It is of great importance for teachers and caregivers to understand and consider children's perception of reality as they help children learn and develop, making answer *c* incorrect.

Lesson 2 Quiz

Please read Lesson 2 two times before attempting its quiz. When you have finished reading this lesson, return to **My Courses** within your Account at www.CareCourses.com and open your course file to access the Online Quiz for this lesson.

Lesson 3

What Works, What Doesn't

Learning Objectives

In Lesson 3 you will learn:

- the importance of having many positive teaching techniques from which to draw in order to meet children's varied needs
- the benefits of showing respect for children
- the importance of having time for children
- effective ways to talk with children
- ways to prevent inappropriate behavior by talking with children
- effective ways to give children compliments and encouragement
- why DOs are better than DON'Ts
- the importance of giving children choices
- how to effectively communicate rules to children
- the value of giving children explanations
- why adults should talk to babies
- effective ways to remind children of rules
- effective ways to enforce rules
- why physical punishment is both ineffective and dangerous

* * *

Lesson 3 Preview

Circle the letter of the best answer(s) for each of the following items:

1. Having time for children means
   a. spending time getting to know and understand each child.
   b. showing that you are interested in children by noticing what they are doing.
   c. listening to children without interrupting them.
   d. carrying on spontaneous conversations with children.

2. Spontaneous conversations with children
   a. are effective ways to teach children valuable behavioral guidelines.
   b. make children feel important.
   c. can help prevent discipline problems.
   d. are a good way to introduce and reinforce a variety of concepts to children.

3. Information-seeking questions
   a. generally result in longer, more complex answers than known-answer questions.
   b. give children some control of the conversation.
   c. are not very useful for young children because they have very little information to share.
   d. are a good way to extend conversations between teacher or caregiver and children.

4. Which of the following statements provides encouragement to children?
   a. "What a good child you are!"
   b. "That's a very hard job. It takes a lot of practice."
   c. "What great progress you've made!"
   d. "You cleaned the table so nicely!"

5. Two-year-old Mary has started to crayon on the wall. Mrs. A wants Mary to crayon on paper, not on the wall. Mrs. A's most effective response would be:
   a. "Crayon on the paper, Mary."
   b. "Don't crayon on the wall, Mary."
   c. "Stop that, Mary."
   d. Slap Mary's hand and say, "No, no."

6. Which of the following is an appropriate choice to give children?
   a. "Do you want to take a nap now?"
   b. "Would you rather skip or walk to the park?"
   c. "Which book shall we read today?"
   d. "Do you want a sandwich for lunch?"

7. Mrs. A has asked the children to put away the toys before they go outdoors. As they begin putting on their coats, Mrs. A notices that they have left the block tower standing. Mrs. A's best response is:

   a. "I thought I told you to put away your toys. You'll have to obey better than that or you can't go outdoors to play."
   b. "Not so fast there. The play area isn't cleaned up yet."
   c. "Can't you children hear? I said I want the play area *clean.* Now, go finish the job."
   d. "You did a great job cleaning up the cars and airplanes. And that's a terrific tower. I don't blame you for not wanting to take it down. But we'll need that space for other things later today. Would you like to take a photo of the tower before you put the blocks away?"

8. Telling an eight-month-old baby, "Sally doesn't like for you to pull her hair. It hurts. So I don't want you to pull her hair. If she pulled your hair, it would hurt you, too."

   a. is silly since the baby isn't old enough to know what you are saying.
   b. won't help. Instead, slap the baby's hand.
   c. may encourage hair pulling.
   d. won't stop the baby's behavior, but such an explanation combined with gently removing the child's hand is a worthwhile first step in helping a child learn good judgment.

9. When adults tell children that they are bad, children

   a. expect themselves to live up to this label.
   b. try very hard to be good.
   c. develop better self-discipline.
   d. may lose hope.

10. Which of following reminders is helpful to children?

    a. "The rule is: crayons stay indoors."
    b. "Do you remember where the crayons stay?"
    c. "I thought I said to leave those indoors."
    d. "Take those crayons back in the room. They don't belong outdoors."

11. Logical consequences are often better than natural consequences because

    a. they teach children more clearly what happens when a rule is not followed.
    b. natural consequences are often too dangerous.
    c. children are not old enough to understand natural consequences.
    d. natural consequences take too much of a teacher's or caregiver's time.

12. Allowing children to help with tasks in the early childhood facility

    a. is usually more trouble than it is worth.
    b. usually results in frustration for everyone.
    c. helps children feel that they belong.
    d. encourages children to cooperate.

13. Physical punishment

    a. reinforces positive guidance.
    b. is usually effective in permanently stopping undesired behavior.
    c. teaches fear and submission.
    d. teaches children self-discipline.

14. Authoritarian control

    a. helps children develop self-discipline.
    b. reinforces positive guidance.
    c. encourages cooperation.
    d. can crush a child's will.

Help children define, understand, and develop positive character traits

At group or circle time, talk with children about the character traits they would like a friend of theirs to have—friendly, kind, sharing, plays fair, etc. Solicit ideas from the children, contributing suggestions yourself only if they need help getting started. State traits in a positive way if possible. Keep a list of these traits.

Then on a weekly or biweekly basis, tell the children "Once upon a time" stories about fictitious children who demonstrate each trait, are learning to do so, or are involved in a problem situation in which the trait is appropriate. You might vary the routine by using animal characters sometimes.

Use incidents similar to the children's own experiences to which they can easily relate, but be careful not to make any story so close to any one child's situation that he or she feels singled out. The characters in your stories should be ordinary children who face ordinary dilemmas, not superheroes. Use humor when appropriate, but don't make fun of children's problems.

As you tell a story, involve the children by asking questions such as, "What do you think Ken did next?" "How do you think Maria would feel if Ken did that?" "Can you think of another way Ken could have reacted?" "Which child is being a good friend?" "Which child would be fun to play with?" "Which child would you like to have for a friend?" "Which child would you like to be like?"

Let the children role-play and act out the stories.

This activity will help children understand the social significance of inappropriate behaviors and identify positive ways of handling various situations.

Possible situations you might include in your stories: a child picks on younger children, calls other children names, pushes, grabs toys from other children. Stories that include older children and adults who have both good

and bad traits will help children realize the continuing significance of various traits. Help children set goals for the traits they want to develop in themselves. This will help them become aware of the meaning and significance of self-discipline.

* * *

In her book *A Very Practical Guide to Discipline with Young Children,* Grace Mitchell writes, "Discipline is the slow, bit-by-bit, time consuming task of helping children see the *sense* in acting in a certain way."[1]

Teaching requires moment-by-moment decisions because teaching is a dynamic undertaking. Good teaching is not simply finding and following the "best" curriculum. A teacher must be constantly aware of what is going on in the classroom (or on the playground) and be able to respond appropriately to changing situations. A good teacher will have many positive teaching techniques from which to draw in order to meet children's varied needs and thus prevent misbehavior.

What Works

Teachers who understand children realize that children's goals are pretty much the same as teachers' goals. The first part of this lesson will focus on several positive teaching techniques that can help both teachers and children achieve their goals. Each of these techniques is based on *respecting the child.*

Respect the Child

Respecting the child means treating the child like an important, valued, worthwhile individual. Respecting the child helps to build the child's self-esteem. Respecting the child means soliciting the child's cooperation in a respectful manner, honoring the child's autonomy, and avoiding intimidation. Children who are intimidated feel robbed of their self-respect and are likely to feel resentful.

Negative discipline, that is, punishment, does not show respect for the child. The purpose of punishment is to show the child that he or she is wrong. Punishment serves to humiliate the child. Punishment erodes the child's self-esteem. Positive guidance, which respects the child, *builds* self-esteem.

Each of the following techniques discussed in this lesson is based on respecting children.

Have Time for Children

A teacher's physical presence with children does not automatically mean that she or he is prepared to *have time for* the children. A teacher who is focused primarily on following a set curriculum or is simply trying to get through the day will not have time for children in the way that they need. Teachers who do not have time for the children will likely have to contend with misbehavior on the part of at least some of the children in their care. Having time for children is a positive teaching technique and a way to prevent misbehavior.

Having time for children means

- spending time getting to know and understand each child,
- showing that you are interested in children by noticing what they are doing,
- listening to children without interrupting them,
- carrying on spontaneous conversations with children.

Talk *with* children, not *at* them. Talking with children does not mean lecturing them. Be understanding and respectful, not critical, belittling, sarcastic, or accusing. Children can sense hostility, even in your tone of voice. A calm human voice is very comforting to children, even infants.

Sit at children's eye level and make eye contact as you speak with them. Reinforce their own eye contact by smiling or saying "I like to see your eyes looking at me." But don't demand that children make eye contact with you.

Good teachers and caregivers make sure that they spend meaningful time with each child. Good teachers and caregivers also show children, by their actions and their words, that they value the time they spend with them. This does not mean that a teacher or caregiver will always be able to spend time with a child exactly when that child wants it. Dr. Elizabeth Stimson suggests that you grant the child *in fantasy* what you cannot grant in actuality and make sure to make time for the child as soon as possible.[2]

> *"Oh, Jamie, I wish I could come with you right now, but I can't. I have to stay here and finish my work with these children. It would be just wonderful if I could be with you, wouldn't it? But I can't. In a few minutes we can have some time together."*[3]

Dr. Stimson cautions that adults should not say "I wish I could" to children any more often than is absolutely necessary. Used infrequently and when unavoidable, however, this technique is far better than simply saying, "No" to children wanting your attention when you are busy.

Spontaneous Conversations

Spontaneity is a crucial ingredient to good teaching. Carrying on a simple, spontaneous conversation with children is an important adult activity. Some adults find this easy to do; others must cultivate this art. Children feel important when adults talk with them. Giving children attention in this way enhances their self-esteem.

Spontaneous, informal conversations are ideal ways in which to introduce and reinforce a variety of concepts to children, including behavioral guidelines. Children are very receptive to rules presented in the course of an informal, spontaneous conversation. Conversations are a good discipline prevention measure.

Carol took Snowball, a rabbit that she had brought to the classroom that morning, from her cage and sat down on the floor with Robert, Bob, Sue, and Ann. As Carol gently stroked the rabbit's fur, she told the children, "This is Snowball."

"Ohhh," the children said, wide eyes fixed on the rabbit.

"Is she a kitty cat?" Sue asked.

"Where did she come from?" Robert asked.

"Snowball is a rabbit. I bought her at the pet store yesterday," Carol replied.

"Is that her nose?" Ann asked, pointing to Snowball's nose, but keeping her hand well away from the animal.

"Yes, that's her nose. And see how long her ears are?" Carol said.

"Can she hear?" Ann asked.

"Yes," Carol told her, "Just like we can hear with our ears."

"Will you take her home at night?" Bob asked.

"Only for the weekend," Carol told him. "She lives in that cage on the table. She's going to live in our classroom now. She can stay here at night. But I'll take her home with me on the weekend when we don't have school. Her fur is very soft. She likes for her coat to be stroked very gently. Would anyone like to pet Snowball?"

Sue extended her hand tentatively. Carol took Sue's hand in her own and helped Sue gently touch Snowball. "That's the way. Very gently," Carol said softly, her voice reinforcing the gentleness of the strokes.

"Would you like to pet Snowball, Ann?" Carol asked. Carol proceeded to help each child touch then stroke Snowball as she answered their many questions about the class's new pet.

The natural, friendly conversation between Carol and the children taught the children many things in addition to facts about rabbits. Carol talked with the children as equals; she was not condescending. When Sue mistakenly guessed that Snowball was a cat, Carol simply stated that Snowball was a rabbit. She treated all the children's questions with the same respect that she would have treated questions from her adult friends. She encouraged their natural curiosity and allowed them to explore a new phenomenon at their own pace. In interactions such as this in which children experience being valued by adults, children learn to value themselves. This is a necessary element in the development of self-control.

Information-Seeking Questions

Informal, spontaneous conversations with children are not limited to simply asking children what are sometimes called *known-answer* questions. "What is the rabbit's name?" is a known-answer question. Such questions alone cannot sustain a conversation. More beneficial are information-seeking questions that share control of the conversation with children.

Researchers Barbara Tizard and Martin Hughes report that in typical teacher-child conversations in which the teacher asks the child known-answer questions, teachers speak more than three times as many words as do the children.[4] In contrast, researchers Dwight Rogers, Cathleen Waller, and Marilyn Perrin found that in teacher-child conversations based on *information-seeking* questions, teachers and children contributed approximately the same number of words in a typical exchange.[5]

Information-seeking questions show that you are interested in what the children are doing:

"Where are the people on your train going?" Carol asked Al, who had placed several small wooden people in a toy train car and was pushing the car along a make-believe track. Guided by Al's answer, Carol then extended the conversation by asking other questions such as, "Are the people a family?" "Is this their first time to ride a train?"

"Are the animals going somewhere?" Carol asked Cindy and Robert, who were putting clothes on several stuffed animals. "They're going on a picnic," Cindy replied. "In the park," Robert added. "What are they going to eat at the picnic?" Carol asked.

"Tell me about your picture," Carol said to Jeff, who had brought a picture he had drawn to show her.

In carrying on an informal, spontaneous conversation with children, the teacher should:

- encourage children to initiate and direct conversations,
- listen to what children say without interrupting,
- use bits of information provided by the children to help them extend their conversation,
- share personal anecdotes and ideas with the children.

Rogers, Waller, and Perrin note that informal, spontaneous conversations promote language development to a greater extent than known-answer questions because they encourage children to talk at length and "to formulate for themselves concepts and ideas without fear of being judged."[6] By providing learning experiences that enhance a child's self image, informal, spontaneous conversations between

teachers and children help to prevent misbehavior.

Talking Through Problems

Chatting with children helps them develop their language skills and learn to put their feelings into words. Adults can enhance this process by asking children questions that help them expand their sentences and their ideas. Talking situations through with children also helps them deal with problems better.

"It hurts," Ann said, starting to cry.

"What happened?" Carol asked kindly, gently touching the knee that Ann was holding. Carol listened while Ann began to describe her encounter with a chair.

"I bumped my knee," Ann said.

"Did you fall down?" Carol asked.

"I fell over that chair." As Ann talked, her crying tapered off to a slight whimper.

"Did anything else get hurt?" Carol asked.

Ann stopped crying as she examined her other leg and her arms. "I don't think so," she told Carol, "Just my knee."

"Well, little knee," Carol said, "Would you like an ice pack?" Carol asked, looking at Ann's knee. "Ice helps keep bumps from swelling," she explained to Ann.

Ann put her ear toward her knee as she told Carol, "It said, Yes."

As Carol went to get an ice pack, she said, "I don't know what we can do for the chair. How badly did it get hurt? Do you see a bruise on it?" she asked.

Ann looked up from her knee, then moved to pick up the chair over which she had tripped. "I think it's OK," she said. "I don't see any blood." Then she laughed. "I didn't know a chair could get bruised!"

Carol gave Ann her special little wrinkled-nose smile that she always used when she made a joke.

Carol's quick intervention helped Ann stop crying almost before she began. Ann found it more comforting to talk about her injury than to cry about it. Carol's interest and attention made Ann feel good about herself because she realized she was important in Carol's eyes.

Carol's manner showed Ann that she took her accident seriously. Realizing that Ann understood this, Carol decided to use humor to help Ann deal with her hurt. Children respond well to humor in such circumstances when they sense that the adult respects them and is not making fun of them.

Ann's injury was not severe. In cases where an injury produces great pain, or when the injury is coupled with great frustration, fear, or anger, the child may not be able to stop crying so easily. However, crying is often more of a plea for comfort than a reaction to intense pain or a release of troubling emotions. By crying, the child is saying, "I've just experienced a crisis. I need some extra support right now. I need comfort. I need attention. I need to know that things will be all right again."

Telling an injured child to "Stop crying" or "Act like a big girl/boy" or that "It can't hurt all that bad" is inappropriate, regardless of how insignificant the injury appears. Such statements tell the child, "Your crisis isn't important to me" and offer the child no comfort. Instead, they imply, "You really aren't hurt badly enough to cry." Only the child knows how much it hurts, how frightened or frustrated or angry he or she is, and if tears are needed.

Children *can* learn that crying is not the only method or the preferred method of asking for comfort and attention, but it is unlikely that you can successfully communicate this to them in so many words. Instead, *use words and actions to provide an alternative to tears.* Be available to each child *whenever crises occur.* Provide comforting touch in whatever way is appropriate to the child's age and the circumstances. Begin talking with the child, asking "What happened," listening to how the child feels, and helping the child talk through the crisis. Take the child's point of view seriously.

A few days after her knee-meets-chair crisis, Ann fell on the playground, scraping both knees. She picked herself up and ran immediately to Carol, who began moving in Ann's direction when she saw her fall.

"I fell down," Ann began, not even waiting for Carol to ask her what had happened. She reached up for Carol's hand and held it tightly.

"Did you trip over something?" Carol asked.

Ann pulled Carol toward the site of her accident, pointing to the spot where she fell. There were no toys or other objects there. "I think there was a bump in the sand here," Ann said.

"Maybe the sand rose up to trip you," Carol suggested. Carol knelt down to examine Ann's knees. "Everyone stumbles and falls now and then. When I was a child I fell down a lot. My knees were always skinned. My Daddy always said he thought I was trying to fly." Then she gave Ann a big hug. "Let's go wash these knees off."

"Can I have an ice pack?" Ann asked.

"Sure," Carol replied. "But we'll need two ice packs today! Let's see. Was it your right knee you bumped on the chair on Monday? Do you think maybe your left knee just wanted to see what kind of a big deal an ice pack is?"

Conversation, combined with comforting touch, provides satisfying support to a child in crisis. Once Ann had this experience, she opted for this method to deal with future crises. Some time later Carol overheard Ann telling another child who scraped his knee, "It'll be OK. Go tell Carol about it."

Talking with children is an effective strategy for dealing with most problem situations. Children begin the difficult task of understanding their frustrations, fears, anxieties, and anger as they learn to put these feelings into words. As children see that they can capture the adult's attention with their words, they discover that their words are a source of power. The interpersonal interaction of conversation is itself a source of pleasure to children, so when this behavior secures for them the attention they need, they have no reason to resort to misbehaving to get attention.

Talking with children empowers them. It helps them understand their feelings and encourages them to take responsibility for their behavior.

Conflict Situations

Spontaneous conversation is a useful and effective strategy for dealing with conflict situations.

Bob had worked for a long time building a tower with blocks. Then he had to go to the bathroom. While he was gone, Sue and Ray took some blocks from his tower to use in their own play. When Bob returned from the bathroom and found his tower torn down, he was very upset. He went to Sue and Ray's building and began knocking it down.

"Bob's ruining our building," Ray shouted.

Carol took Bob by the hand and led him to a table where they both sat down. She began by asking Bob, "Tell me about what happened." Then she listened to Bob's explanation and considered the situation from his point of view.

"I think I'd feel angry if that happened to me," Carol told Bob. "Is that how you feel? Angry?"

"Yes," Bob said, much calmer by now.

"Something similar happened to me just last week," Carol told Bob. "I brought a stack of red paper to school to use for the bulletin board, but by the time I was ready to make the bulletin board, some of the other teachers had used the red paper for art projects. I felt angry."

"Did you tell them?" Bob asked.

"No," Carol said. "I hadn't told them I planned to use the paper for something special. So they didn't know. They didn't intend to ruin my bulletin board."

"What did you do?" Bob asked.

"I used different colors of paper," Carol said with a smile. "And the bulletin turned out OK, don't you think? In fact, I think it may look better with lots of colors instead of just red."

"Why don't you talk to Ray and Sue about how you feel," Carol suggested. "Maybe they didn't know you were coming back to your tower."

Carol walked with Bob over to where Ray and Sue were sorting through the jumble of blocks. Carol's hand on Bob's shoulder helped him feel more calm. "I didn't want my tower torn down," Bob started. "It made me angry."

"But you weren't there," Sue said. "We needed more blocks for our building."

"Then you messed it all up," Ray chimed in. "That made us angry, too."

"I'm sorry," Bob said.

"I think we can find enough blocks for everyone," Carol suggested. Then she added, "Why don't we all work together and build another tower."

"OK," Bob agreed. "This one will be really tall."

The shared experience of informal conversations is a major asset when conflict situations do arise. If children know the adult will listen to them, they will more easily talk about the conflict situation. Then after the adult has listened to them, they will more easily listen to the adult's point of view.

Carol guessed how Bob was feeling then asked if this was correct. She didn't tell him how he was feeling. This is very important. Sometimes children react differently to situations than adults think. It may appear that a child is angry when the child is actually frightened. It is helpful for the adult to help children verbalize their feelings. However, you show much more respect for children if you *ask* them rather than *tell* them how they feel.

Carol's decision to tell Bob about her own similar experience confirmed to him her genuine interest in how he was feeling. It showed him that his feelings were normal and helped give him confidence that his situation was not hopeless. Carol's experience modeled an alternative way to interpret and handle a potential conflict.

Carol chose to support Bob by her presence when he went to tell Sue and Ray how he felt. Notice that she suggested he "talk with them." She left the choice of what he would say to him. She didn't tell him to say he was sorry. The best way for children to learn how to apologize is by role-playing and from observing adult behavior, *not* when the child is in a conflict situation.

As it happened, when Ray and Sue told Bob how angry they felt about him ruining their building, Bob spontaneously told them he was sorry. But an apology that does not come from within a child is meaningless. In fact, telling or forcing a child to apologize can harm the child because it teaches that one's obligation for one's misdeeds can be ful-

filled by words alone, whether or not one is truly sorry.

A friend's child, who was experiencing severe stress and feeling very powerless, once spoke to me in a particularly rude way. His mother was horrified and immediately ordered the child to tell me he was sorry. The child steadfastly refused. He felt compelled to hold onto the only power he felt he had at the time—power over how he felt. The conflict became a battle of wills: the mother refused to allow the child to move from his chair until he had apologized. The child sat for almost twenty minutes. Then he muttered, giggling, a most unconvincing, "I'm sorry." The only thing he had learned from the incident was that uttering certain words, however insincerely, would stop his punishment.

Encouraging children to *talk about what happened and how they felt about it* will help them understand their own actions as well as the consequences of their actions. This technique is also much more likely to elicit genuine feelings of regret for misdeeds than a demand for an apology.

A Simple Alternative

In *A Very Practical Guide to Discipline with Young Children,* Grace Mitchell relates the experience of a teacher, Rosalie, with a four-year-old "who could scream longer and louder than any other child I have ever known. One day I put on my most concerned, solicitous expression and offered him a glass of water. I expected that he might dash it out of my hand but instead, with a surprised look he accepted it and gulped it down. Since he couldn't swallow and scream at the same time, I had a chance to talk. 'Your throat must really hurt,' I said, soothingly. 'Now you just have a nice drink and it will feel better. As soon as you have finished we will go find a carrot for Peter Rabbit.' It worked! That time and the next, and the next. My moment of joy came when I saw José open his mouth and start to scream. Suddenly he stopped—went over to the sink and got his own drink of water."[7]

Rosalie's actions showed respect for José. She took the time to relate to him in a positive, encouraging way. By using her ingenuity, she found a way to talk with him in spite of his screaming. I believe that José must have felt very good about himself when he was able to interrupt his own urge to scream and substitute a drink of water all by himself.

Self Check 3.1. True/False

___ 1. Respecting children means treating them like important, valued, worthwhile individuals.

___ 2. Respecting children means avoiding intimidation.

___ 3. Punishment humiliates children and erodes their self-esteem.

___ 4. It is unrealistic to expect a busy teacher or caregiver to have time to devote to each child.

___ 5. Having time for children helps prevent misbehavior.

___ 6. Spontaneous conversations with children are not worth the effort unless teachers find this easy to do.

___ 7. Known-answer questions are more appropriate to use with young children than information-seeking questions.

___ 8. Trying to talk through a problem with children is not a very effective way to give them comfort.

___ 9. Children who cry every time they get hurt are usually just spoiled.

___ 10. When a child hurts someone else, the adult should demand that the child apologize.

(1. T, 2. T, 3. T, 4. F, 5. T, 6. F, 7. F, 8. F, 9. F, 10. F)

Correct Statements for False Self-Check Items

Items 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 of Self Check 3.1 are false. Please read the following correct statements.

4. No teacher should be responsible for so many children that he/she does not have time to give each child individual attention.

6. Spontaneous conversations with children are a very important adult activity. A teacher who doesn't find this easy must work to develop this skill. Talk with children about the everyday things that go on in the classroom. Your focused attention on the child and your interest in what the child is doing are what is important.

7. Open-ended, information-seeking questions that share control of the conversation between adult and child are the best way to keep a conversation going. Such questions give children opportunities to use vocabulary, formulate concepts, and express their ideas.

8. Talking through problems with children shows children that you care about their problems. It gives children a chance to express how they are feeling. Children find both of these experiences comforting. Talking through problems models an alternative to crying and other emotional outbursts.

Talking through problems with children also helps children learn problem-solving skills that they can later use on their own.

9. Children cry because of pain, fear, frustration, and/or anger. Only the child knows how he/she feels and if tears are needed. Help children learn alternatives ways to deal with troublesome times.

10. Apologies are meaningless unless they are the child's idea. A child should never be forced or even urged to apologize. Model the process of apologizing for children, but do not require or even tell them to apologize. Help children understand how others feel when they do something hurtful.

Encourage Children

Encouragement helps children feel that they belong. Children who have a strong sense of belonging feel much less need to misbehave. Encouragement is the opposite of criticism. Children who are criticized become discouraged and misbehave.

Encouragement sees the glass half full; criticism sees the glass half empty. Encouragement calls attention to how much children have done, not how much they have not done.

Children find encouragement in compliments that refer to specific actions and place value on effort or a job well done. Such statements tell children that they are *capable:*

"You cleaned the blocks up nicely."

"What great progress you've made. Come stand over here and just see how much better this room looks!"

"You've put a lot of puzzle pieces in place."

"Tying your shoes is very hard. It takes a lot of practice. You're doing better every day."

Avoid statements such as "You're a good girl/boy" that place value on the child's ability to satisfy vague, externally defined, authoritarian standards. This sort of praise is not effective encouragement. If a child can be evaluated as a "good" and acceptable person in one instance, they can be evaluated as a "bad," unacceptable person in another. Children tend to see "good" as an all-or-nothing evaluation. The child who is learning to tie his shoe will not feel that he has done a "good" job until he has completely mastered the task. This leads to discouragement, especially if the process is a slow one for him.

In her book *Parents, Please Don't Sit On Your Children,* Clare Cherry points out other forms of praise that are not encouraging to children:[8]

- Children can sense when compliments are not sincere. Insincere compliments do not encourage children.
- Children are overwhelmed by gushy, overstated praise.
- Compliments often repeated for the same accomplishment lose their value. Children may become so tired of hearing the same compliments that they prefer to stop the action being complimented.
- Compliments should not be used to trick children or coax something out of them.

Encouragement is *not* the same thing as rewards. Giving children rewards is *not* positive guidance. Giving children rewards teaches them to expect rewards. It takes the responsibility to choose appropriate behavior away from children. Children should choose appropriate behavior because this choice makes them feel good about themselves, not in order to get a reward.

Give Children Choices

Giving children choices about what they do helps satisfy their need for a sense of power and control. Giving children choices also makes them more cooperative. Give children a choice only when you intend to accept their answer.

Choices should be stated simply and clearly.

"Do you want to have your snack at the table indoors or on the porch?"

"Which book shall we read first?"

"Would you rather play with puzzles or clay?"

Self Check 3.2. True/False

___ 1. Encouragement helps children feel that they belong.

___ 2. Children who are criticized become discouraged.

___ 3. Criticism helps prevent misbehavior.

___ 4. Encouraging statements focus on the child's efforts and behavior, not the child's self.

___ 5. Telling children they are good is an effective way to encourage them.

___ 6. Rewards provide children effective encouragement.

___ 7. Giving children choices about what they do gives them a sense of control over their lives.

___ 8. When children are given choices, the adult must be prepared to accept whatever they choose.

(1. T, 2. T, 3. F, 4. T, 5. F, 6. F, 7. T, 8. T)

Correct Statements for False Self-Check Items

Items 3, 5, and 6 of Self Check 3.2 are false. Please read the following correct statements.

3. Criticism discourages children and invites misbehavior. It does not teach children better ways to meet their needs.

5. Telling children they are "good" places value on the child according to an externally defined standard. This is not encouragement. Children are encouraged by statements that refer to specific actions and communicate to children that they are capable.

6. Rewards teach children to expect rewards. This is not effective encouragement. Children are encouraged by sincere and specific statements that recognize their efforts and actions.

Communicate Rules Clearly

Setting and consistently enforcing fair limits and rules helps children feel secure. As you read in Lesson 2, children need to know that someone cares enough about them to keep them safe. Rules also make the child's world more predictable.

Be sure children understand exactly what you expect of them. Give children very clear, positive rules. Use clear, short sentences stated when possible in a positive way. Focus children's attention on what they should DO rather than on what they should avoid. "Do" statements work much better than "Don'ts." Telling children "Don't" does not help children learn to exercise good judgment and make reasoned decisions. Also, "Don't" doesn't tell children what they *can* do.

"Color on the paper" works better than "Don't color on the wall."

"Roll the ball on the floor" works better than "Don't throw the ball indoors."

Begin your directions with the action word you want done.

"Sit in the swing."

"Roll the ball on the floor."

"Ride the tricycle on the sidewalk."

Show children exactly what you expect of them.

"These toys (show the children which ones) are for the sandbox.

Keep these toys (show which ones) out of the sand."

Include an explanation of the reasons for the rule. This shows respect for children and makes it easier for them to comply. Explanations also help children learn to make choices based on reason.

"Ride the tricycles on the sidewalk. The street is for cars, and the yard is muddy."

"Keep the scissors in this box when you're not using them. These scissors don't have sharp points, but I want to be sure they don't cut or pinch anyone."

"Sit on the couch. Feet go on the floor. That way the couch will stay clean and nice."

After you have stated the rule, ask the children to tell you the rule.

"Ray, where do you ride the tricycles? ... That's right. On the sidewalk. Can you tell me why?"

"Sue, what's the rule for the couch?"

"We SIT on it!" Sue says proudly.

"Where do our feet go?"

"On the FLOOR. We don't want dirt on the couch," Sue explains.

Ask for the rule in a way that elicits a positive statement when possible. If children answer with a negative statement ("Don't ride in the street."), restate the rule in the positive: "That's right. Ride the tricycles on the sidewalk."

Let every child who wants a turn repeat the rule to you. This might seem unnecessarily repetitious to older children, but young children enjoy being able to say it themselves. And if they say it themselves, they are much more likely to remember it.

Stating Rules to Babies

Dr. Lawrence Balter recommends calmly stating rules of behavior along with explanations of why these rules are necessary to babies even before they are able to understand what you are saying. In this way you "lay the groundwork for the development of judgment and empathy later on."[9]

As you gently but firmly remove one-year-old David's hand from Sally's hair, say, "Sally doesn't like for you to pull her hair. It hurts her. So I don't want you to pull Sally's hair. If Sally pulled your hair, it would hurt you, too."

Eighteen-month-old Billy breaks away from your hand and runs toward the curb. As you bring him back, say, "Come back and walk with me on the sidewalk. The street is for cars. Cars go very fast and might not be able to stop. You might get hit. I don't want you to be hurt."

Dr. Balter explains, "These rational explanations and verbal exercises in sound judgment will be virtually incomprehensible to the small child, who is incapable of heeding good advice. But if such communication becomes part of that child's internal dialogue, the payoff may be enormous later when she is first learning to make her own good judgments."[10]

Dr. Balter cautions that telling very young children "No" can "stimulate the child to proceed further with the action."[11] Infants must be physically removed from danger. They do not yet have the self-control to resist touching interesting objects. It is also unrealistic to expect toddlers to obey verbal instructions. As Dr. Balter points out, they do not yet have "reliable amounts" of memory or self-control.[12]

Teach New Children Your Rules

On three-year-old Sam's initial orientation visit to the early childhood facility, Carol showed him where the children's coats were hung, where the bathroom was, and told him that in this class when children needed to go to the bathroom they didn't need to ask permission, but only one child should be in the bathroom at a time. On Sam's first day at the facility, Carol met him at the door, walked with him to the coat area, showed him which hook was his,

and talked with him as he hung his coat. Then she asked him if he remembered where the bathroom was and walked there with him. "Remember, you can go to the bathroom any time you need to, but if someone else is using it, wait until they are out." "I remember," Sam told her, "only one person in the bathroom at a time."

Don't assume a child who is new to your care knows general safety rules.

When Carol first showed Sam around the center's playground, she chatted with him about his favorite play equipment. "Do you like to swing?" she asked, noticing by the smile on Sam's face that this was likely to be his favorite playground activity. "Lots of the children like to swing," she told him. "That's why we have so many swings. We want everyone to have a good time here. We want everyone to be safe, too. You can't have much fun if you get hurt. That's why we sit instead of stand on the swing seats." Carol went on to explain the center's other safety rules for the swing area, making sure to state each rule in a positive way. After Sam had swung for a few minutes, Carol extended her hand and said, "Now let's go see the sandbox." She showed Sam all around the playground, explaining the safety rules as he got acquainted with each area.

Reminders

Young children forget rules easily; they need frequent reminders. Reminders should never be negative, sarcastic, angry, threatening, hostile, or accusing. Both your facial expression and your tone of voice should assure children that you trust and respect them.

Ann and Sue had been drawing pictures with crayons just before it was time to go outdoors. After the girls put the paper and crayon box away, each grabbed a handful of crayons and started for the door. Carol leaned down and stated just above a whisper and in a friendly, non-accusing manner, "The rule is: crayons stay indoors."

Reminders may also be stated in the form of a question, asked, of course, in a friendly, non-accusing voice:

"Do you remember where the crayons stay, girls?"

Name the action that the children should be performing by using the noun form of the appropriate verb. This form is called the gerund and ends in *ing. Walking, sitting, helping, listening* are gerunds. For example, if an adult saw a child starting to stand up in the swing, she would simply say "Sitting" in a pleasant voice. Clare Cherry suggests this technique in *Parents, Please Don't Sit On Your Kids.* Ms. Cherry says that her favorite gerund reminder is "playing nicely" stated casually but definitely to children whose cooperative behavior has begun to deteriorate. She notes that these two words work much better than nagging or lecturing.[13]

Nonverbal reminders are frequently more effective than spoken reminders. If you are sure the child knows the rule but may have either forgotten it momentarily or had a lapse of good judgment, a look, perhaps combined with a funny face, may be enough to restore the child's memory or self-control.

After almost three weeks in Carol's class, Sam was settling in very well. One day when the children were playing outdoors, Sam started to stand up on a swing seat. Just then he looked at Carol, who was standing nearby. Carol thought, "Sam probably forgot the rule about sitting on the swing seats until he started to stand. Or perhaps he remembered the rule, but the urge to stand was overpowering." So instead of reprimanding him, she looked him in the eye and gave him a funny smile that said, "Oops! Did you forget?" Smiling back at Carol, Sam immediately sat down.

Ms. Cherry recommends several nonverbal reminders:

- nodding your head,
- catching a child's eye from across the room,
- smiling as you gently shake your head,
- touching gently on the shoulder or arm,
- holding your index finger up while cocking your head slightly toward the finger.[14]

Self Check 3.3. True/False

___ 1. Fair limits, consistently enforced, help children feel secure.

___ 2. Limits and rules must be very clearly communicated to children.

___ 3. Telling children "Don't" is not as effective as telling them what they should do.

___ 4. Asking children to repeat rules only confuses them.

___ 5. Explaining rules of behavior to babies is a waste of time because they cannot comprehend what you are saying.

___ 6. Telling very young children "No" often stimulates them to proceed further with the action.

___ 7. Toddlers cannot be expected to remember rules and obey them.

___ 8. It is most effective to teach children a rule in the context in which it is to be applied.

___ 9. Giving children explanations for rules encourages cooperation.

___ 10. Children who forget rules easily aren't really trying.

___ 11. "Walking" or "Sitting" said in a friendly voice is an effective way to remind children of rules.

___ 12. Nonverbal reminders are frequently more effective than spoken reminders.

(1. T, 2. T, 3. T, 4. F, 5. F, 6. T, 7. T, 8. T, 9. T, 10. F, 11. T, 12. T)

Correct Statements for False Self-Check Items

Items 4, 5, and 10 of Self Check 3.3 are false. Please read the following correct statements.

4. Stating rules themselves helps children take ownership of the rules. Asking children to repeat rules allows the teacher to be sure they have understood the rules and helps children remember the rules.

5. Stating rules and reasons to babies even before they can understand what you are saying models the process of internal dialog that is the foundation of good decision making. This lays the groundwork for the development of judgment and empathy later on.

10. Young children do not have good memories for rules. They forget rules easily and need frequent reminders. This is a natural and normal occurrence in early childhood. Adults should never be negative, angry, sarcastic, hostile, or accusing when children forget rules. Never threaten a child who forgets rules. Children need a lot of repetition and reminding before they are able to remember rules. Help them learn.

* * *

Let Children Help Make the Rules

When possible, let the children help make rules. This gives them a feeling of control over their lives.

Children feel good about themselves when they can contribute to the group. This gives them a strong sense of belonging. Letting children help make rules gives them practice in decision-making. This is an important step in their process of becoming effective decision-makers. Children are also more willing to follow rules that they have helped make.

Use Natural or Logical Consequences to Enforce Rules

Enforce limits with natural or logical consequences, making sure that the consequences are not punitive. Consequences that are punitive (intended to punish) engender resentment and rebellion, not learning. Natural consequences are those that follow automatically from a particular behavior. The natural consequence of touching a hot stove is being burned. The natural consequence of running into the street is being hit by a car. The natural consequence of leaving a toy in the rain is having it ruined. Natural consequences for dangerous behaviors are, of course, not appropriate. However, for some behaviors, natural consequences teach children a great deal about their world.

> *Mary is careless and cuts the head off a picture of a teddy bear she wants to put on the bulletin board. There are no more teddy bear pictures, so she will have no teddy bear for the bulletin board.*

Mary does not need to be scolded or told to be more careful. She has experienced a natural consequence that will help her learn to be more careful when cutting.

Logical consequences relate to the particular behavior and are easy for children to understand.

> *"If you don't want to stop throwing sand, you can play somewhere else instead of the sandbox."*

This is a logical consequence because it denies the child the privilege of playing in the sandbox. Denying a child something that is unrelated to the inappropriate behavior is *not* a logical consequence.

State consequences in a calm, matter-of-fact manner. Children should perceive consequences as a choice for which they are responsible, not as a threat. Knowing they have a choice encourages compliance.

> *Carol had arranged for the children to go to swimming lessons after nap time. The children were very excited, and some didn't want to waste time napping. But she knew that children who did not have a nap would be too tired to behave well for the rest of the afternoon.*
>
> *When the children gathered in the circle area for their after-lunch story, Carol explained the rule and its reasons clearly. When she told them that anyone who did not have a nap would not be allowed to go to swimming lessons, several children groaned.*
>
> *The story Carol told that day was about going to swimming lessons—about putting on swimming suits, riding on the school bus, and meeting the swimming teacher. Carol's story also told about two children who refused to take their nap and who had to stay at the early childhood facility when everyone else went to swim.*
>
> *"Why couldn't these children go swimming?" Carol asked the group.*
>
> *"They didn't have a nap," the children told her.*
>
> *"That's right. They didn't follow the rule. What will happen if you don't have a nap today?" Carol asked.*
>
> *"We won't go swimming," the children answered.*
>
> *Then Carol asked the children to go lie down on their cots. She was understanding when they needed a little extra time to settle down to sleep and sang softly to them for several minutes until it appeared that everyone had dozed off. Suddenly Ann sat upright on her cot, said, "After nap, swimming," then lay down and went to sleep.*

Carol prevented an unhappy afternoon for herself and the children by choosing an appropriate consequence and making sure the children understood the rule, its reasons, and its consequences. The children knew from past experience that when Carol said she would enforce a rule she meant it.

Expect children to test limits. This is part of their job. It is one way in which they try out their own control of their lives and build their sense of independence. Children who feel insecure may test your limits to see if you really care. When children learn that the limits are firm, that is, when you *consistently* enforce the limits, they will be more likely to abide by them.

Involve Children in Limit Enforcement

Involving the child in the limit-enforcement process is usually effective.

- Give reminders. Reminders give children the chance to enforce the limit themselves.
- Ask the child to tell you the rule.

One day Sam was overwhelmed by his desire to stand up in the swing. Carol went to Sam, and as she took him out of the swing she asked him, "Do you know why I'm taking you out of the swing?"

"Yes," Sam said.

"Tell me why," Carol continued.

"Because I stood up in it," Sam told her.

"That's right," Carol replied. "Our rule is to sit in the swing. Now you must do something else for the rest of today's playground time. Tomorrow you may try the swing again."

The process of involving the child in the limit enforcement process has several values. First, the adult can learn if the child knows and understands the rule. By correctly answering Carol's question, Sam showed that he knew that standing in the swing was not allowed. Hearing himself repeat the rule further reinforced it, and its logical consequence, in his mind. Had he not known the rule, Carol could have retaught him. By involving Sam in the limit enforcement process, Carol showed respect for him and made it clear that she was not arbitrarily punishing him.

Give Directions One at a Time

Giving children a lot of directions at a time will only confuse them. They may remember one thing you tell them, but they certainly will not remember the entire set.

It was a warm spring day, and Denise had decided to let the children in her day care class eat their midmorning snack outdoors. She told the children to put the puzzles back on the shelf, wash their hands, pick up their snacks from the table, and go sit on the porch. Then she went to the porch to wait for the children, watching through the screen door to see who obeyed and who didn't.

As the children made their way out to the porch, Denise said, "Amy, you didn't put your puzzle away. You can't eat your snack until you obey. Put your snack down and go put the puzzle away now. Tom, did you wash your hands? No, I didn't think so. You can't have your snack until your hands are clean. Jim, where's your snack? And why didn't you dry your hands? If you children can't do better than this, we can't have our snack outdoors anymore."

Denise had set the children up for failure.

Carol had the same plan as Denise. However, she knew that it would be confusing to the children if she gave them multiple directions in a single sentence. The children wouldn't understand what was expected of them, and both she and they would feel frustrated at the resulting chaos.

So Carol gave the directions one at a time and helped the children complete that instruction before she told them the next step. Carol's class enjoyed a happy midmorning snack on the porch, and the children felt confident about their ability to understand and carry out their teacher's instructions.

Allow Children to Help

Helping creates a strong sense of belonging. The helper jobs you expect of children should be meaningful yet within the child's capability.

Showing appreciation for a child's helpful acts reinforces the child's sense of self-worth and encourages continuing cooperation. Young children are more interested in the process of doing a task than they are in the perfection of the outcome. They are encouraged when you recognize their efforts. Your appreciation should focus on what the child *did.*

"Thank you for putting the books away."

"It was very helpful to me that you cleaned the paste off the table."

Tantrums

Tantrums can present a special problem for teachers and caregivers. Children sometimes use tantrums and other irritating behavior in an attempt to manipulate adults.

Adults' response to tantrums must clearly communicate to children that *the adult is in charge and will not be manipulated.* Ignore tantrums. Do not make eye contact with the child, do not yell at the child, do not try to talk the child out of the tantrum, do not let the child feel that her or his behavior is disturbing you in the least.

Talk to children only after they calm down. Help them understand the feelings that caused the tantrum. This shows the children that you value them, but that you are still in charge.

Problems Outside School

Dr. William Wayson, whose testimony before a U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee was cited in Lesson 1, noted that schools with productive, well-disciplined learning environments, "emphasized positive and preventive, rather than punitive, practices."[15] He reported that most of the

problems which cause disruptive behavior in classrooms "arise from factors surrounding the student … [not from] conditions found in the individual student."[16]

Harmful "factors surrounding children" such as hostile school environments, authoritarian teachers, and poor teaching practices can be prevented by teachers and caregivers who understand and attend to children's needs and use positive guidance. But many children are also subject to harmful conditions outside of school.

Henrietta Hemmesch, a school social worker with extensive experience, told the House Subcommittee:

> *I would estimate that in over 90% of the cases of students who have been referred to me because of behavior problems there have been other significant underlying problems for the student. During my assessments, I've found these students to be experiencing, for example, feelings of loss or rejection, poor self-concept, difficulty coping with a recent parent divorce or separation, abuse from a parent or step-parent, or having a difficult time learning because of a learning disability or less than average academic ability. For these students to be disciplined or punished consistently or frequently in the school would only add to the emotional pain these students are already trying to deal with for themselves.*[17]

Ms. Hemmesch told of a particular boy who was experiencing anger and rejection because of numerous losses in his life, including the loss of friends left behind when he moved from another state and the loss of his step-mother, whom he loved.

> *This boy was not able to cope with his emotional pain and so was exploding with anger in the classroom when the stresses just became too much for him to handle. Disciplining him … was not effective; it only added "fuel to the fire," so to speak. … What this student needed was supportive counseling to help him deal with his feelings regarding the recent losses and not continued discipline.*

Ms. Hemmesch reported that with regular support from the school counselor and contact between school counselor and student's father, this child made meaningful progress "in controlling his anger in the classroom and appears to be more settled down." She emphasized that "we need contact with the student's home and parents to facilitate communication and remediation of behavior problems a student exhibits in the school environment."[18]

Keep in regular contact with children's parents. If you notice a change in children's behavior, talk it over with their parents as soon as possible. Work with them to help the children handle whatever problems they are experiencing.

Self Check 3.4. True/False

___ 1. Helping make rules gives children a feeling of control over their lives.

___ 2. Being allowed to help make rules encourages children's cooperation.

___ 3. Natural consequences are appropriate when the situation does not involve danger.

___ 4. Logical consequences are too complex for most children to understand.

___ 5. Children who feel insecure often test limits to see if you really care.

___ 6. Giving children reminders gives them the chance to enforce limit themselves.

___ 7. Rules and their consequences are reinforced in children's minds when they hear themselves repeat them.

___ 8. By age three, children should be able to remember and obey a string of several directions.

___ 9. Children are more interested in the outcome of a task than in the process of doing the task.

___ 10. Showing appreciation for a child's helpful acts reinforces the child's sense of self-worth.

___ 11. The adult's best response to a tantrum is to give in to what the child wants.

(1. T, 2. T, 3. T, 4. F, 5. T, 6. T, 7. T, 8. F, 9. F, 10. T, 11. F)

Correct Statements for False Self-Check Items

Items 4, 8, 9, and 11 of Self Check 3.4 are false. Please read the following correct statements.

4. Logical consequences are directly related to actions and thus easy for children to understand.

8. Three-year-olds are not able to remember and follow a string of several directions. After children are easily able to accurately follow one direction, try giving two directions at a time. Repeat both directions, and ask the children to repeat the directions back to you. If necessary state the second direction again (always in a kind, helpful voice) after the first has been accomplished.

In this way you can help children learn to keep in mind more than one direction at a time.

Remembering and following multiple directions is a complex skill that takes time and practice to master.

9. Adults tend to focus on the outcome; children are more interested in the process. This is how they learn. Notice and express appreciation for their efforts.

11. Adults should never give in to a tantrum. Ignore tantrums. Talk to the child only after he/she has calmed down. Help the child understand the feelings that caused the tantrum. Talk with the child about ways that the child's needs can be met in an acceptable manner. Your actions should show that you value the child but that you are still in charge and will not be manipulated by a tantrum.

Summary of Positive Guidance Techniques

Just about every interaction between adults and children has an effect on children's behavior and can be used as a means of positive guidance, either directly or indirectly. Positive guidance shows respect for children and helps children learn to manage their own behavior.

Direct Guidance

The ways adults speak and act with children are means of **direct guidance**. These include adults'

(1) vocal techniques,
(2) physical directions,
(3) language, and
(4) proximity control.

Following are some examples of how to use each of these as a means of positive guidance.

(1) *Vocal Techniques of Positive Guidance*

- Speak in a well modulated voice. Use inflections appropriate to the message.
- Speak distinctly.
- Be correctly articulate.
- Speak loudly enough for the farthest child to hear.
- Use correct grammar.
- Reflect words, phrases, and sentences appropriate for the children's age or developmental levels.
- Speak in a rate that is neither too fast nor too slow.
- Be pleasant to listen to.
- Speak in a natural, unaffected voice.
- Speak in a respectful, noncondescending manner.
- Avoid baby talk.

(2) *Physical Directions of Guidance*

- Get down on the child's level and close enough to his ears that he can hear you well.
- Maintain eye contact with the child throughout the conversation.
- Let your face and voice tell the child that what you are saying or doing is important or interesting and fun.

(3) *Language Techniques*

- Use short, simple sentences or directions.
- Put the child's feelings into words.
- Say the obvious.
- Everything has a name—use it.

(4) *Proximity Control*

- Sit near potential intervention situations.
- Move among the children.
- Be aware of potential child/child interaction groups forming if the combinations seem undesirable.
- Use a gentle touch to soothe and calm a child without using words.

Indirect Guidance

Children's environment also has an influence on their behavior. The environmental factors of the early childhood facility—space, activities, schedules, equipment, and staff, as well as children's home and family, can have either a positive or a negative influence on young children. Consider the following positive or negative factors.

(1) *Organization of space*

Positive influence

- Space is organized to give enough room for children to move about without interference
- Learning areas are well-defined with clear paths or traffic lanes

Negative influence

- Not enough room
- Children disturb each other
- Paths and learning areas are not well-defined

(2) *Program activities*

Positive influences

- Plan to meet individual needs
- Offer a balance of familiar and new experiences

Negative influences

- No advance planning
- Too much or too little stimulation
- Custodial care rather than enrichment program

(3) *Daily schedule*

Positive influence

- Enough time allowed for activities and transition periods
- Alternate active and quiet periods

Negative influence

- Too much or too little time scheduled for particular activities
- Active and quiet periods not alternated, causing fatigue or overstimulation

(4) *Equipment*

Positive influence

- Adequate amount and appropriate selection of equipment and materials provided
- Equipment and materials match individual and group needs

Negative influences

- Equipment and materials inadequate in quantity, quality, and variety

(5) ***Staff***

Positive influences

- Number of qualified staff is appropriate for the number of children enrolled

Negative influences

- Too few qualified staff for the number of children enrolled

(6) ***Children's home and family***

Positive influences

- Strong family ties
- Adequate parenting with values and limits well defined
- Good communication between home and early childhood facility

Negative influences

- Family crises related to health, housing, money, and/or communication
- Values and limits not well defined
- Little stimulation for child
- Poor communication between home and early childhood facility

Use Reasoning Control, not Power Control

Power control is a means of controlling children's behavior by exerting some form of power over the child either by actions or by threats. Power control includes yelling at children, telling them to do something "because I say so," denying privileges, using physical force, and using or threatening to use physical punishment.

Reasoning control means telling children *why* they should behave in a certain way.

Children respond better and also remember instructions and rules better when they are given reasons for a rule or request.

"Carry your coat over your shoulder like this so it doesn't get dirty" combines a positive statement with a reason and thus works better than "Don't drag your coat on the floor."

What Doesn't Work

Lesson 1 pointed out that while punishment may stop undesired behavior in the short-run, it has very negative long-term effects. Punishment tears down rather than builds self-esteem.

Remember: Self-esteem includes children's sense of their own worth and importance as individuals and how confident they are in their own abilities to successfully meet life's challenges—to persevere, take responsibility, achieve, be accountable for themselves, act responsibly toward others, and make a difference to their environment. Punishment destroys children's confidence in their ability to meet life's challenges.

This section will discuss several specific discipline techniques commonly used by teachers that are not only ineffective but that frequently result in worse behavioral problems and emotional problems in children.

Physical Punishment

Spanking, slapping, hitting, pinching, and other physical punishment are ineffective in building appropriate behavior.

Most states' regulations now expressly prohibit all forms of physical (corporal) punishment. Corporal punishment is generally understood to mean any punishment inflicted directly on the child's body. All early childhood professionals must know their own state's laws and regulations regarding corporal punishment and follow their state's prohibitions. The box to the right titled "What Is Corporal Punishment?" lists specific actions that are specifically prohibited in various states' regulations and that we feel should **never ever** be used as punishments for children of any age.

A few states' regulations allow teachers or caregivers to spank children within specific guidelines. For example, one state allows caregivers to spank children over 5 years of age with an open hand on the child's buttocks if the caregiver has the parents' written permission. (Of course, even if a state allows spanking and a parent gives permission, that same parent might be very upset if a teacher or caregiver actually does spank the child.)

What Is Corporal Punishment?

The following behaviors are included in the definition of corporal punishment and prohibited in many states' regulations:

spanking,
biting,
shaking,
jerking,
slapping,
spatting,
swatting,
hitting,
striking with hand or instrument,
beating,
punching,
rough handling,
thumping,
popping,
shoving,
twisting,
squeezing,
pinching,
pushing,
kicking,
hair pulling,
ear pulling,
tying or binding,
taping or obstructing a child's mouth,
demanding excessive physical exercise,
demanding prolonged lack of movement or motion,
demanding strenuous or bizarre postures,
compelling a child to eat or have in the child's mouth or on the child's lips soap, foods, hot spices, lemon juice, vinegar, or other substances

In states that prohibit physical punishment, the use of such punishments could result in a teacher or caregiver losing her registration or license. In any state, if a child is hurt by use of physical punishment, the teacher or caregiver could be sued by the child's parents or charged with child abuse.

But, whatever regulations your state has and however you or the parents feel about physical punishment, the fact is that ***it doesn't work.*** Physical punishment does not change children's behavior in a positive direction. Problem-solving techniques such as spanking, hitting, pinching, or biting only teach children to hit or pinch or bite. Physical punishment doesn't make children feel good about themselves. It doesn't build children's self-confidence. It doesn't teach children appropriate behaviors. **Physical punishment has no benefits to you or to the child.**

Even if your state does allow some form of physical punishment, we strongly advise against it. Physical punishment is always an unwise practice. Physical punishments have negative, harmful consequences for children of any age.

Many child advocates believe that physical punishment should never be used by parents or other adults under any circumstance. Physical punishment is the opposite of positive guidance. South Africa is the only major industrial nation in the world besides the United States that still permits physical punishment in schools. At least eleven states in the United States and many individual school districts in the remaining states have now outlawed physical punishment in the schools.

Dr. William Wayson, professor of educational policy and leadership at Ohio State University, whose testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education was cited in Lesson 1, stated that studies of corporal punishment show that it is "used over and over with the same students, demonstrating a lack of pedagogical effect."[19] Writing about the national PTA's resolution opposing physical punishment in schools, Joan Ball notes that while "the punching of an adult is considered assault and battery, the punching of a child is said to be discipline."[20]

Physical punishment teaches fear and submission, not self-discipline. Physical punishment fosters resentment and rebellion rather than inner control. Physical punishment models for children a violent method of getting what you want; it does not teach children any positive problem-solving skills. Writing in the professional journal *Instructor,* Melinda Tuhus states that using force "over someone who can't fight back contributes to feelings of powerlessness, when what schools should be about is empowering kids."[21] In addition, she notes, physical punishment really doesn't work. Indeed, many of the children interviewed by Ms. Tuhus reported "that children who are paddled 'don't stop being bad.'"[22]

Bob Keeshan, host of TV's "Captain Kangaroo" program for nearly 30 years, writes that physical punishment "does not achieve its stated goal of the establishment and preservation of discipline in the classroom to create an environment for learning. … [Physical punishment] has no positive permanent effects. … It has many negative effects. It teaches violence as an appropriate solution to problem solving. It teaches this lesson to the children being beaten and to peers even when the beating takes place outside their presence."[23] Keeshan recalls that the teacher in his own elementary school who had the worst reputation for cruelty because of her frequent use of a heavy wooden ruler on her students was also noted for having a particularly unruly, chaotic classroom. "I can't remember what I learned there. I must have learned something other than the cruelty of violence," he writes.[24]

In a position paper urging the banning of physical punishment in child care, schools, and other educational settings in the United States, the Association for Childhood Education International emphasizes that organization's commitment to the belief that "child care and educative settings should be models of appropriate behavior toward the young, and [that] there is considerable psychological and medical evidence that corporal punishment impairs the development of children into socially responsible adults and interferes with the process of learning."

Children have been seriously and sometimes permanently injured by even relatively mild physical punishment "when they jerk away and the blow lands off target, or when they fall against the sharp edge of some object. Eyes, ears, and brains may be permanently damaged as a result of paddling. Whiplash injuries may result from shaking. Injuries from blows to the chest and abdomen are life threatening. Bones are easily fractured and even the slightest whack may produce a jolt to the brain through the bony spinal column and spinal cord, resulting in significant swelling or bleeding."[26] Researchers Taylor and Maurer have published a thorough analysis of the serious medical effects of physical punishment.

The psychological effects of physical punishment are just as harmful as the physical effects. According to an article in *Psychiatric News,* these psychological effects include:

- loss of self-esteem,
- increased anxiety and fear,
- impairment of ego functioning,
- feelings of helplessness and humiliation,
- stifled relationship with others,
- aggression and destruction at home and at school,
- self-destructive behavior, often culminating in suicidal gestures,
- limited attention span and hyperactivity in school, leading to deficient academic performance.[27]

Research by A. Maurer and J.S. Wallerstein found a direct relationship between physical punishment in early

childhood and delinquency later in the individual's life.[28]

In light of the overwhelming evidence that physical punishment does not achieve any positive goal and in fact produces numerous and serious negative results, the good teacher will avoid any and all discipline techniques that involve physical punishment.

Other Discipline Practices to Avoid

Physical punishment is not the only form of punishment that is inappropriate and harmful to children.

Other disciplinary practices that should be **strictly avoided** include:

(1) Verbal or other psychological abuse, which includes yelling; shouting; name calling; ridicule; profanity; shaming; rejection; making belittling, derogatory, or sarcastic remarks about a child or a child's family; language or actions that humiliate, embarrass, frighten, or terrorize a child;

An adult who resorts to yelling or screaming at children usually does so out of frustration. Children can sense when adults have lost control, and they also experience anxiety. Young children often become fearful when adults yell or scream at them. With time, children learn to ignore or tune out adults who yell or scream at them.

(2) Threatening a child in any way, including actual or implied threats of physical punishment, threatening with the loss of love of any person, or threatening with punishment by a deity;

Some adults use threats to assert their control over children. Autocratic, authoritarian control lacks respect for children. By attempting to crush a child's will, it encourages children to attempt to circumvent the autocratic adult's power. Children feel there is no other way to exert their own power but by sneaking behind the authoritarian adult's back.

Authoritarian control does not encourage cooperation, build self-esteem, or help children develop self-control. Instead it engenders either resentment and rebellion or passive submission. Rebellion may create a desire for revenge and lead to irresponsible acts. Submissive, passive children never develop initiative of their own.

Children want and need to feel powerful. At the same time they want very much to please adults. But they want to do things that adults approve because they *choose* to do so, not because they are given no choice.

(3) Punishment associated with bathroom procedures including punishment for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet; forcing a child to remain in soiled or wet clothing; forcing a child to remain on the toilet; restricting the use of a toilet or other bathroom fixture; or forcing a child to clean up after toileting accidents;

(4) Withholding food, water, light, warmth, clothing, or medical care as a punishment;

(5) Forcing a child to eat or drink against the child's will;

(6) Punishment for not sleeping during nap/rest time; withholding sleep or rest; or requiring a child to go to a cot, mat, crib, bed, or other sleeping or rest facility as a punishment;

(7) Forcing a child to stand or sit facing a wall or a corner;

(8) Isolation or confinement in an enclosed area, including isolating or confining a child in a dark room, a closed room, a locked room, a closet, a box, or an unsupervised area;

(9) Physical, mechanical, or chemical restraint as punishment;

(10) Neglect of children's needs;

(11) Subjecting a child to any form of punishment by another child;

(12) Seeking or accepting parental permission to use any form of punishment prohibited by the teacher/caregiver's state or listed in this section.

The practices listed above are specifically prohibited by most states' regulations.

We recommend that all teachers and caregivers provide parents with a written statement that explains the facility's positive guidance techniques and assures parents that their children will not be subjected to any form of physical punishment or other harmful practices. Some states require that teachers/caregivers give parents such a statement.

Labeling

Labeling is another practice that should be avoided. While labeling may not be thought of as a means of discipline, many adults use this technique to control children's behavior.

Children try very hard to live up to their parents' and teachers' or caregivers' expectations. Whether labeled "good" or "bad," children expect themselves to fit their label.

The harm done to the child labeled "bad" is obvious. Statements such as "You always do such and such," "Why can't you ever be good?" "You'll never get it right," or "You never listen" destroy a child's hope.

Children labeled "good" are also harmed. They tend to feel guilty when they do something that they feel will displease adults. Guilt is an unhealthy and unhappy feeling that interferes with normal development and emotional growth.

Time Out

One common negative practice that adults should avoid is the use of Time Out. Many adults see Time Out as a valuable non-violent method of disciplining misbehaving children. ***Although many caregivers, teachers, and parents today apparently believe this statement, it is simply not true.***

Time Out is actually an extremely poor strategy. It is likely to foster hostility, resentment, and perhaps even defiance in the child. Children's behavior that adults consider "bad" is really evidence of some problem the child is experiencing. Instead of banishing the child to Time Out, adults should look for the reasons behind children's inappropriate behavior and use positive strategies to remedy problems.

Early childhood specialist Dr. Maxine Edwards Cornwell has the following to say about Time Out:

> *Many caregivers use the time-out chair today as a non-violent method of disciplining misbehaving children. It has replaced the dunce cap in the corner and the nose in the circle on the blackboard as a generally accepted way of getting children to think about their behavior.*
>
> *The fact is that the time-out chair is effective in buying some quiet time for a caregiver. That's about all it does positively. Negatively, it makes children acutely aware of who the "bad kids" are (they're always in The Chair). Children do not sit there and think about what they did or what they should have or should not have done. If they think about themselves at all, it's with an "I'm bad; they don't like me and I don't like them either so there" attitude.*
>
> *A better choice is removal from the scene of the battle to spend a few minutes with a caregiver who can lovingly discuss the problem with the child. This does not isolate children or label them "bad" but serves a better purpose—teaching children to get along with each other. We do not learn to get along with each other in the time-out chair.*

* * *

If you have used Time Out as a method of discipline, consider how effective this strategy has been. How often is the same child sent to Time Out? Has Time Out boosted children's self-esteem? Made children more cooperative? Resulted in positive changes in children's behavior? Chances are your answers to these questions do *not* support the continued use of this technique.

If you ever feel absolutely compelled to send a child to Time Out, consider this a red flag. Find positive ways to help this child so that you will never have to resort to using Time Out a second time for this child.

Self Check 3.5. True/False

___ 1. Physical punishment is an effective way to build good behavior.

___ 2. Many states do not allow teachers or caregivers to spank children under the age of 5.

___ 3. Physical punishment is the opposite of positive guidance.

___ 4. Physical punishment teaches fear and submission, not self-discipline.

___ 5. Physical punishment models for children a violent method of getting what you want.

___ 6. Physical punishment helps children learn positive problem-solving skills.

___ 7. Children who are spanked usually stop being bad.

___ 8. Yelling or screaming at children causes them to become fearful.

___ 9. Authoritarian control fosters cooperation.

___ 10. Children try very hard to live up to the labels adults apply to them.

(1. F, 2. T, 3. T, 4. T, 5. T, 6. F, 7. F, 8. T, 9. F, 10. T)

Correct Statements for False Self-Check Items

Items 1, 6, 7, and 9 of Self Check 3.5 are false. Please read the following correct statements.

1. Physical punishment does nothing to build good behavior. Instead, it increases children's anxiety and fear, impairs their ego functioning, causes feelings of helplessness and humiliation, loss of self-esteem, and aggressive and self-destructive behavior.

6. Children learn problem-solving skills from reasoning and other positive guidance techniques. Physical punishment is the opposite of positive guidance.

7. Spanking and other physical punishment does not change children's behavior in a positive direction. Such techniques teach children to hit or pinch or bite.

9. Authoritarian control fosters either resentment and rebellion or passive submission. Rebellion may create a desire for revenge and lead to irresponsible acts. Submissive, passive children never develop initiative of their own. Positive guidance shows respect for the child, teaches appropriate behaviors, and fosters cooperation.

In the following article, early childhood specialist Karen Stephens gives tips to help teachers select and use appropriate positive guidance techniques.

Breaking Our Impulses: Shifting Gears to Positive Discipline

by Karen Stephens

Having trouble finding positive ways to deal with negative behaviors? Difficult behaviors can stump even the most seasoned teachers. But take heart, here's some food for thought!

If you stumble in your early attempts to shift gears to positive discipline, don't give in to discouragement! No one technique works effectively with every child. In fact (just to complicate matters), you're not even guaranteed that one technique will work with the same child twice in a row! Children are stubbornly individual, and that's what makes them so interesting to be around! Becoming skilled in positive guidance requires experience as well as training. Give yourself plenty of both, and you will become adept at positively managing children's behavior.

When addressing behavior problems, examine what a child can learn from the situation. Focus on the behaviors you hope will occur as the result of appropriate guidance. To effectively do this, you must maintain self-control. This will help you keep a clear head which will aid in problem solving. Look at the problem from the child's point of view as well as from your own. This may shed light on the cause for the inappropriate behavior. The child's motivation may also help determine the type of guidance technique you will use.

Following are typical scenarios observed in early childhood settings. Names have been omitted to protect the innocent (and the guilty). All are examples of teacher behavior that focus more on punishing, threatening, or demeaning children than on supporting their social, emotional, or intellectual growth.

As you read each scenario, analyze why the teacher's reaction may be detrimental in terms of child development. After doing this, read the suggested alternatives for teacher behavior. Why would their use be more beneficial to children? Try to think of other ways to positively handle each situation. There is never only one right way to guide children's behavior. In fact, creativity is a great asset when using positive discipline!

Scenario 1

It's a half hour before lunch. The children have been inside all morning. Despite frequent reminders to "Stop getting out of your chairs," 14 three-year-olds have been up and down, in and out, and all around their chairs during an art project. They wander aimlessly, bumping into each other causing outbursts of tears whenever someone's paint cup is toppled. Several children play chase around the area and end up pushing each other onto the floor. (This is not a pretty sight.) The teacher finally has enough and tells the children they behaved badly during the art activity so they will not get to play outside that day. She then tells the children to sit down and put their head on the table for 20 minutes. (%$#@^&!)

Alternatives to try:

Focus on PREVENTION. Plan an art activity that will keep the children's attention. (This will require reviewing art resource books.)

Conduct art activities in smaller groups than 14. Perhaps a volunteer can be recruited so the class can be divided into two small groups. One group could be playing outside while the other participates in the art project.

Plan a more balanced daily schedule so large motor activities can be offered earlier in the morning. Young children need ample opportunity to expend energy through movement.

Express your feelings and clearly state expectations. "I'm frustrated when you don't listen to my words. I expect you to sit in your chair while doing your art project."

State options. "If you choose not to complete an art project, you may clear your space and quietly read a book until it is time to go outside."

Empathize: "Seems like you kids have a lot of energy today. You'll be glad when it's time to go outside! We are almost finished with this activity."

Scenario 2

Three five-year-olds repeatedly stand in the way as Amanda (also five) tries to drive her Big Wheel around the trike path. A teacher storms over to the children and says, "You know better than that. Do you always have to be such bullies? Go sit in your cubbies until you can behave the way you should."

Alternatives to try:

Recognize this is typical behavior for five-year-olds. Analyze the situation for the learning opportunities it holds. Encourage Amanda to stand up for herself: "Amanda, it must be frustrating to have them block your path. Can you tell them how you feel about it?" Stand nearby to support Amanda in communicating her feelings. (Your mere presence will ensure that the children listen to her.)

Reinforce Amanda's position: "Children, the trike path is for wheeled toys. The grassy area is for people to stand on."

Provide information: "You three could get hurt if you stand in front of moving Big Wheels. Your bodies will be safer in the grassy area."

Pose a reasonable consequence: "If you choose to tease Amanda, I will ask you to find another play area. Amanda does not deserve to be teased."

Scenario 3

Out of the corner of his eye, the teacher sees four-year-old Cindy hit Jerome with a block and then knock his building down. The teacher yells across the room, "Cindy, tell him you are sorry. Go on, tell him." Cindy remains silent. "All right, if you aren't going to say it, you'll just have to sit down until you do. It's going to be a long time before your mother picks you up."

Alternatives to try:

Tell Cindy she needs to listen to Jerome's feelings about his block building being knocked down. Stand nearby as Jerome tries to express himself.

Matter of factly state the function of the play materials: "Cindy, the blocks are for building. You may not hit other people with them."

Suggest ways for Cindy to make amends: "I expect you to help Jerome pick up the blocks from his building. When you aren't angry anymore, Jerome might like to hear if you are sorry."

Prompt Cindy on self-control: "If you are angry with Jerome, you may use your words to tell him. I want all children to be safe in our classroom, so you may not use blocks to hit others."

State consequences: "Cindy, if I can't trust you not to hit with blocks, you will lose the privilege of playing in the block area this morning." (And, yes, you can use a big word like privilege with some fours. They learn what it means through context.)

Scenario 4

During free-play two schoolagers begin having a tug-of-war over a red crayon. The teacher enters and takes the crayon away, saying, "If you can't play nicely, neither of you will get to use the red crayon."

Alternatives to try:

Provide information: "If you need more crayons, all you need to do is ask me for more."

Initiate problem solving: "Sounds like there is an argument here. Who can tell me what the problem is?" In this case, the problem was both children wanted to draw an apple tree and needed the red crayon. Once the problem was identified, the teacher moved onto brainstorming options. The children generated several options: split the crayon in two; trade back and forth periodically; get more red drawing utensils, i.e. red pencil or marker; etc. Once options were identified, the children reached consensus regarding the best solution. In this case, the solution was to use green, yellow, AND red for apples since the flavorful fruit comes in three different colors! Now that's creative problem solving!

Scenario 5

Anthony, a two-year-old, pulls Jessica's hair. The teacher sharply grabs Anthony's hand, smacks it in an exaggerated slapping motion, and repeats, "Bad boy, bad boy. Anthony is being a bad boy."

Alternatives to try:

Show empathy for Jessica FIRST: Kneel beside Jessica. Hold her close if possible. Rub her head gently and say, "I'm sorry you are upset. It really hurts when your hair is pulled."

To model compassion, explain Jessica's reaction to Anthony: "Anthony, look at Jessica's face. She has tears on her cheeks. It really hurts when you pull her hair. It's not okay to pull people's hair."

Redirect behavior. "Anthony, you may not pull Jessica's hair. It hurts her. Here, if you want to pull on something, you may use this play dough. It stretches long when you pull on it."

Anticipate: If Anthony is a notorious hair puller, try to identify the times of day, or the situations, which are most likely associated with hair pulling. Supervise him VERY carefully at those times. Encourage him to engage in solitary activity if he shows signs of overloading from too much peer interaction or frustration.

Scenario 6

Preschooler Miranda has been reminded to put on her coat; regardless, she still goes outside without it. The teacher responds, "You get back in there and get that coat on! Why are you being such a space cadet today? If you don't get your coat right now, I'm going to tell your daddy tonight. He'll give you what for if you don't listen to me."

Alternatives to try:

Restate expectations: "Miranda, I expect you to get your coat on now. It is not a choice whether you wear a coat or not. When it is this chilly, you must wear a coat."

State reasons for the rule: "Miranda, when you don't wear a coat in chilly weather you are more likely to get sick. I want you to be well. I expect you to go inside and put on your coat."

Express your feelings: "Miranda, I'm really tired of reminding you to get your coat. I feel like you are ignoring me, and it makes me feel unimportant. Now, it is your responsibility to go in and put on your coat before coming outside to play."

Enforce a consequence: "Miranda, if you don't wear a coat, you will not be allowed to play outside."

Attempt to problem solve: "Miranda, I'm wondering why you don't want to wear your coat. Is it hard to put on? Is the zipper broken? Is it too tight?" If

this is the case, work to remedy the situation.

Scenario 7

During music time, four-year-old Marguerite wiggles around and tries to crawl under a nearby table. The teacher pleads with her, "Pleeease behave, Marguerite. If you don't sing along, you'll just have to go home. I think I'll ask the secretary to call your mommy right now."

Alternatives to try:

Redirect and generate enthusiasm: "Marguerite, would you be the leader in our next song? It's a marching song!"

State limits: "Marguerite, during music we sit around the red circle. You may not climb under the table."

Try prevention: Go to the library and find some new songs and fingerplays so children are not bored with the same old ones.

Be specific: "Marguerite, I expect you to behave. That means your body should be sitting up straight and your eyes should be looking at me."

Scenario 8

Energetic Angelic and Vlad are running around the room, giggling as they try to tag each other. The teacher says, "Quiet down, you two. Quit acting like a couple of wild animals."

Alternatives to try:

Make a non-judgmental observation: "It seems like you two have a lot of energy to run off today. Where is a better place to do that?"

Be tolerant: "It's fun to chase each other sometimes."

Provide choices: "I know you are having fun, but I'm afraid you might bump into a table edge while running inside. Would you like to play tag outside or climb on the indoor climbing gym?"

Become involved: "Hey, I'd love to play chase, too. Let's go outside where we'll have more room!"

* * *

Resources for Teachers and Parents selected by Karen Stephens

Positive Discipline, Jane Nelson, Ballatine Books, 1981.

How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk, Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish, Avon Books, 1980.

Siblings Without Rivalry, Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish, W. W. Norton, 1987.

Please Don't Sit on the Kids, Clare Cherry, Fearon Pitman, 1983.

Raising Your Spirited Child, Mary Sheedy Kurcinka, Harper Collins, 1991.

Guidance of Young Children, Marian Marion, Merrill, 1991.

A Guide to Discipline, Jeannette Galambos Stone, NAEYC, 1978.

Know Your Child, Stella Chess and Alexander Thomas, Basic Books, 1987.

Guiding Young Children: A Child-Centered Approach, Eleanor Reynolds, Mayfield, 1990.

Kids Can Cooperate: A Practical Guide to Teaching Problem Solving, Elizabeth Crary, Parenting Press, 1984.

A Very Practical Guide to Discipline With Young Children, Grace Mitchell, Telshare, 1982.

Helping Your Child Handle Stress, Katharine Kersey, Acropolis Books, 1986.

The Hurried Child, David Elkind, Addison-Wesley, 1981.

Listen to My Feelings, Ruth Reardon, C. R. Gibson Co., 1992.

*Listening to the Littles*t, Ruth Reardon, C. R. Gibson Co., 1984.

Your Child's Self-Esteem, Dorothy Corkill Briggs, Dolphin Books, 1970.

Self-Esteem: A Family Affair, Jean Illsley Clarke, Winston Press, 1978.

Self-Esteem: 101 Ways to Help Children Like Themselves, Michele and Craig Borba, Winston Press, 1978.

Video for Early Childhood Professionals

"Appropriate Guidance," NAEYC #855.

Children's Books to Help Children Cope with Discipline Issues*

Even If I Did Something Awful, Barbara Shook Hazen, Atheneum, 1981.

Love You Forever, Robert Munsch, Firefly Books, 1986.

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day, Judith Viorst, Atheneum, 1972.

**Mama, Do You Love Me?,* Barbara M. Joose, Chronicle Books, 1991.

Leo the Late Bloomer, Robert Kraus, Windmill Books, 1971.

**Sam,* Ann Herbert Scott, McGraw-Hill Books, 1967.

The Lazy Bear, Brian Wildsmith, Franklin Watts, 1974.

Where the Wild Things Are, Maurice Sendak, Harper & Row, 1963.

(* denotes multi-cultural book)

Become aware of your own behaviors when interacting with children

Study the self-evaluation chart printed at the end of this course. Make several photocopies of the chart to use as you observe your own interactions with children.

Place copies of the self-evaluation chart on a clipboard and keep it handy. Perform this self-evaluation once a week for several weeks. Use a fresh copy of the chart each week.

Procedure: Jot down quick notes on the self-evaluation chart during your day with the children. Then once or more during the day, go back to the day's chart and add details as appropriate.

Review each self-evaluation at the end of the day. Note things you would like to change about your interactions with the children. Then at the beginning of the following day, review your notes re these changes. Work on these areas for several days.

Do a new self-evaluation the following week. Use a fresh copy of the chart and follow the same procedure. Repeat this process for several weeks. Then compare your first self-evaluation chart with the current chart. Notice changes that you observe in your interactions with children. Also think about any changes you have noticed in the children's behaviors.

* * *

Analyzing the Preview

Go back and re-read the Lesson 3 Preview items. See if the answers you believe are best now are the same as the answers you chose before you studied this lesson. The paragraphs below explain which answers are best and discuss why the other answers are inappropriate.

Item 1. All of the answers are correct.

Item 2. All of the answers are correct.

Item 3. Research has found that information-seeking questions generally result in longer, more complex answers than known-answer questions (answer *a*). Information-seeking questions *do* give children some control of the conversation (answer *b*). And information-seeking questions are a good way to extend conversations between adults and children (answer *d*). Therefore, all three of these answers are correct.

Answer *c* is not correct. The *amount* of information that young children have to share is not the issue. The goal is to encourage them to engage in conversation.

Item 4. Answers *b,* "That's a very hard job. It takes a lot of practice," *c,* "What great progress you've made!" and *d,* "You cleaned the table so nicely!" all provide encouragement to children because they show appreciation for what children have *done* or *attempted to do.*

Answer *a* is not an encouraging statement; it evaluates the child's self from an external, arbitrary point of view. It implies that if a child can be judged "good," the child can also be judged "bad." This engenders anxiety, not hope, in children.

Item 5. Only answer *a,* "Crayon on the paper, Mary," is an effective response. This statement tells Mary what she should DO. Answers *b, c,* and *d* are not appropriate. All indicate only what Mary should not do. Answer *d* also includes physical violence (a slap).

Item 6. Choices *b,* "Would you rather skip or walk to the park?" and *c,* "Which book shall we read today?" both give children legitimate choices. The adult could accept the children's choice in either case.

Choice *a* is not an appropriate choice to give children unless you are willing to accept their choice to "*not* take a nap now."

Choice *d* really doesn't give children much of a *choice* since no alternative is presented. Is their choice between a sandwich and *nothing*?

Item 7. Answer *d* is the only response that shows respect for the children. This response recognizes what the children have accomplished and looks at the situation from the children's point of view.

Answers *a, b,* and *c* are negative and insulting and offer no encouragement. Such responses do not foster cooperation, help children develop self-discipline, or build children's self-esteem.

Item 8. Answer *d* is correct. The baby won't comprehend what is being said, but this response is *not* useless (answer *a*). As such communication becomes part of a child's internal dialogue, it helps lay the groundwork for the development of judgment and empathy later on. State the explanation with a calm, firm, matter-of-fact tone, not with hostility.

It is never wise to slap a baby's hand (answer *b*). The slap will anger the baby, but the baby will not remember the association between the slap and the inappropriate action. *Removing* the baby's hand is the proper way to stop hair pulling.

Hair pulling is not an action that can be ignored because another child is being hurt. The child's hand must be removed. Therefore, the principle of avoiding attention in order not to reinforce inappropriate behavior does not apply here (answer *c*).

Item 9. Answers *a* and *d* are true. Children expect themselves to live up to whatever labels adults apply to them. If told often enough that they are bad, children will lose hope. Telling children they are bad *dis*courages them. It

is hard for children to try to improve their behavior (answer *b*) when they feel discouraged. Children develop self-discipline (answer *c*) when they feel encouraged, not discouraged.

Item 10. Answers *a,* "The rule is: crayons stay indoors," and *b,* "Do you remember where the crayons stay?" show respect for children by helping them follow rules. They invite cooperation. Answers *c* and *d* are disrespectful and hostile. They attack the child's self-esteem, foster resentment, and invite uncooperative behavior.

Item 11. Natural consequences are often dangerous (answer *b*). When this is the case, only logical consequences are appropriate. However, natural consequences *do* teach children clearly what happens when a rule is not followed (answer *a*) and children *can* understand natural consequences (answer *c*). When natural consequences are appropriate, it *is* worth the teacher's or caregiver's time (answer *d*) to use them.

Item 12. Allowing children to help with tasks in the early childhood facility helps children feel that they belong (answer *c*). It also encourages children to cooperate (answer *d*). The adult who feels that allowing children to help is usually more trouble than it is worth (answer *a*) or who finds that this creates frustration (answer *b*) may be either not providing children a clear understanding of what is expected of them, expecting children to do things that are beyond their capabilities, or making the requests in a manner that is insulting to the children. Children *love* to help, and they love to please adults. Allowing them to help can make everyone's day more pleasant.

Item 13. Answer *c* is the only correct answer. Physical punishment *does* teach fear and submission. Physical punishment is the *opposite of* positive guidance (answer *a*). Physical punishment is *not* effective in permanently stopping undesired behavior (answer *b*). Physical punishment does *not* teach children self-discipline (answer *d*). It fosters resentment and rebellion rather than inner control.

Item 14. Authoritarian control can crush a child's will (answer *d*). Authoritarian control encourages sneaky behavior, not cooperation (answer *c*). Positive guidance, *not* authoritarian control, helps children develop self-discipline (answer *a*). Authoritarian control is the *opposite* of positive guidance (answer *b*).

* * *

Endnotes for Lesson 3

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5. Dwight Rogers, Cathleen Waller, and Marilyn Perrin, "Learning More about What Makes a Good Teacher Good Through Collaborative Research in the Classroom," *Young Children,* 42:4 (May 1987), p. 37.
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8. Clare Cherry, *Parents, Please Don't Sit On Your Kids* (Carthage, Illinois: Fearon Teacher Aids, 1985), p. 110.
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15. Hearings before the Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education of the Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives, Ninety-Eighth Congress, Second Session, January 23, 24, 1984, p. 51.
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23. Bob Keeshan, "Banning Corporal Punishment in the Classroom," *Education Digest,* LIV:8 (April 1989), p. 20.
24. Ibid., pp. 19–20.
25. John R. Cryan, "The Banning of Corporal Punishment in Child Care, School, and Other Educative Settings in the United States," Position paper of the Association for Childhood Education International.
26. Ibid.; L. Taylor and A. Maurer, *Think Twice: The Medical Effects of Physical Punishment* (Berkeley, CA: Generation Books, 1985).
27. "Many States Still Condone Corporal Punishment in Schools: More Creative Discipline Urged," *Psychiatric News,* 17 (August 1982), p. 21.
28. A. Maurer and J.S. Wallerstein, *The Influence of School Corporal Punishment on Learning,* A Publication by the Committee to End Violence Against the Next Generation, Berkeley, CA., 1983); A. Maurer and J.S. Wallerstein, *The Influence of School Corporal Punishment on Crime,* A Publication by the Committee to End Violence Against the Next Generation, Berkeley, CA., no date.

Lesson 3 Quiz

Please read Lesson 3 two times before attempting its quiz. When you have finished reading this lesson, return to **My Courses** within your Account at www.CareCourses.com and open your course file to access the Online Quiz for this lesson.

Lesson 4

Adults' Attitudes and Language

Learning Objectives

In Lesson 4 you will learn:

- the meaning and significance of patience in child care
- the relationship between patience and understanding
- the difference between the child's needs and goals and an adult-centered agenda
- the relationship between patience and teacher-child power struggles
- the role of understanding children in effective teaching
- the difference between responsive language and restrictive language
- the importance of using responsive language with children

* * *

Lesson 4 Preview

Circle the letter of the best answer(s):

1. Having *patience* means that a teacher
   a. understands children.
   b. truly loves children.
   c. is well suited to teaching young children.
   d. is capable of bearing affliction with calmness.

2. A teacher who relies on patience
   a. will be able to avoid power struggles with the children.
   b. will have children who almost never act out.
   c. is likely to engage in inappropriate teacher behaviors when that patience runs out.
   d. will be able to successfully guide children.

3. By being patient with children, a teacher engenders feelings of _____ in children.
   a. inferiority
   b. competence
   c. risk-taking
   d. spontaneity

4. Teachers who understand children
   a. know how to control them.
   b. take time to trust their natural growth process.
   c. have the most patience with them.
   d. tend to see them as the "opposition."

5. The way in which adults talk to children can
   a. provide nurturing.
   b. encourage independence.
   c. discourage independence.
   d. assert power over the child.

6. Responsive language
   a. is critical of the child.
   b. encourages two-way conversation.
   c. is often rude.
   d. consists of lecturing.

7. Restrictive language
   a. encourages independence.
   b. is respectful of the child.
   c. is impersonal and unresponsive to children's feelings and ideas.
   d. implies alternatives and choices.

* * *

Keep the ideas addressed in these Lesson Preview items in mind as you work through this lesson.
Notice if you change your mind about which answers are correct as you study this lesson.
These Lesson Preview items will be analyzed at the end of this lesson.

* * *

Lesson 1 pointed out that the single most important aspect of the early childhood facility environment is what the teachers and caregivers do and how they interact with the children.

> *The single most important factor in teaching children is the adult's attitude and manner.*

As Bernice Stewart and Julie Vargas stated in their book *Teaching Behavior to Infants and Toddlers,* the "moment to moment interaction between caregivers and infants" affects children's "general outlook on life, the way they interact with others, and what and how much they learn."* This means that the attitudes and actions of early childhood teachers help determine whether the children in their care develop into happy, independent, self-assured, *self-disciplined* individuals or whether they develop a low self-concept, are discouraged, rebellious or withdrawn, and become "discipline problems."

The articles presented in this lesson focus on the attitudes and language of caregivers and teachers: "Patience or Understanding?" by Nancy Moorman, "'I'm bery bery cwoss!' Understanding Children's Anger" by Marie D. Hammer, "Bad Language: From Potty Talk to Swearing to Name-Calling—Humor or Hurtful?" by Roslyn Duffy, and "Caregiver and Teacher Language—Responsive or Restrictive?" by Janet Stone.

*Bernice Stewart and Julie Vargas, *Teaching Behavior to Infants and Toddlers* (Springfield, Ill.: Charles Thomas, Publisher, 1990), p. 131.

Adults' Attitudes

The first article reprinted in this lesson examines two possible attitudes or points of view: patience and understanding.

It is not uncommon for people to assume that teachers of young children need *both* of these traits. In "Patience or Understanding?" Nancy Moorman discusses the effects of both patience and understanding in a teacher's approach to children. She demonstrates that patience and understanding are not compatible with each other. In fact, they are actually opposites.

What exactly does *patience* mean? How often have you heard (or said) such phrases as:

> *You're trying my patience, young lady.*
>
> *I've been patient with you about as long as I can be.*
>
> *That child would try the patience of a saint.*
>
> *My patience is running very thin.*
>
> *I'm trying to be patient with you, but it isn't easy.*

What attitude toward children do such statements imply? Whose needs—the children's or the teacher's—do such statements address? Are such statements positive or negative? What do such statements teach children? Do they guide children or attempt to control children? How do such statements make children feel about themselves? about the "patient" adult? What do such statements reveal about the adult's level of *understanding* of children, their needs, and their level of development?

Patience or Understanding?

by Nancy Moorman

Ryan had just solved the problem of who will play with the kindergarten's only boy doll by punching 5-year-old Nicky in the stomach.

Does Ryan's aggressive behavior try your patience? Is patience a desirable attitude for success in teaching young children? Will it help Ryan's teacher successfully deal with this situation? Just what does it mean to be patient?

Colleagues and the parents of my kindergarten students have often commented on the tremendous amounts of patience required to teach young children. "I'd never have the patience to work with little children." "Where do you get all that patience?" I found myself feeling increasingly uncomfortable with these compliments because I've never considered myself a very patient person.

Gradually, as I heard patience extolled by other teachers and in graduate courses, and saw it on attribute lists in teacher preparation textbooks, I began to question the concept of patience as a virtue. My discomfort with the concept of patience as an attribute of good teaching was explained when I looked up the term in Webster's Dictionary.

Patient is defined as "bearing pains or trials calmly or without complaint; manifesting forbearance under provocation or strain; steadfast despite opposition, difficulty, or adversity."

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pa tient (pa shent) *adj.* Capable of bearing affliction with calmness.

The American Heritage Dictionary (1972) Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Patience is associated only with unpleasant situations and is not even considered in a pleasant context! Because I find teaching the young very pleasant, I now believe that patience is an *un*desirable teacher attribute; its presence (in

large amounts, at least) indicates a teacher who finds teaching unpleasant. I see myself as a successful teacher with very little patience. *Visitors to my classroom had mistakenly believed that I exhibited patience with young children, when in reality they were witnessing the behavior that results from understanding.*

The teacher who understands the developmental level of the child does not need to "bear pains calmly." This teacher will accept behavior as developmentally appropriate and will not see the child as an adversary, because the child will be viewed as innately *good,* though inexperienced. Teachers who understand young children will see themselves as children's partners in learning and will not view the child as opposition. The adult will approach the learning situation and the child as a pleasure rather than a trial. The child's intuitive reaction to this approach will be positive and will create a positive learning experience.

A teacher's perceptions determine whether or not a particular circumstance requires patience. In my view, Ryan is not a naughty child, but a child with limited social skills. The aggressive behavior is understandable. To deal effectively with the situation, I must accept the physical aggression as appropriate to Ryan's level of development and social experience, but work to teach him other socially appropriate and effective behaviors. I might place my arms around both children while explaining (rather than reprimanding) that people must feel safe in school. "We may not hit people or hurt them. Next time use words to tell Nicky that you feel angry and want the doll back. Then Nicky will know what you want." *My perception is not that Ryan is interrupting my teaching, but that he is offering me an opportunity to model problem-solving skills, to create classroom discipline, and to encourage self-discipline.* The classroom scuffle offers me an opportunity to act as a learning enabler by helping Ryan and the other children learn how to meet basic safety and esteem needs. I do not want to depend on patience in order to act effectively, because each new circumstance will draw on my reserves. If I rely on patience, there is a danger of it running out, resulting in inappropriate teacher behaviors. If I rely on understanding, and this understanding is based on sound developmental theory, it will never run out.

Teachers who expect the kindergarten child to sit quietly while working, to form letters correctly, or to "keep your hands to yourself" will require patience because of a lack of understanding. Inappropriate demands create tension within teachers, within their young students, and between teacher and child. The teacher may demonstrate patience while calmly but tersely reminding, "Ryan, for the last time, take that pencil out of your mouth." Ryan may feel humiliated for unconsciously performing an act totally appropriate for a teething 5- or 6-year-old. If I understand, I will ignore the behavior or substitute a more suitable chewing material to satisfy the child's need. Nothing in my tone of voice, body language, or overall demeanor will indicate any tension of impatience, because I will not feel it. I understand.

Patience implies disrespect to the child because it is a condescending view that the patient person is somehow superior to the "opposition." It assumes that young children's behaviors provoke, oppose, and strain. This attitude contrasts with the developmental point of view of respect for the child's orderly, predictable development. Patient teachers perceive the aggressive child as the opponent, and are liable to set up an adversarial relationship in which they feel justifiably provoked into action against the child. In these power struggles, the teacher is the winner and the child always loses. The result may be the antithesis of the developmental point of view in the midst of a so-called "developmental" classroom: A child may be controlled instead of guided. She or he may be bullied into conformity rather than encouraged to develop uniqueness within social parameters. This teacher does not understand the child's needs and therefore cannot consider them. Impatience results when teachers are dominated by their own needs and cannot adequately take into account the needs of the child.

Teachers who understand young children know that they are not time-efficient. These teachers take time to trust in the natural growth process, to listen attentively, to respond descriptively and appreciatively. They take time to listen to what children are *unable* to say, as well as to expand upon what they *do* say. Such teachers make time to allow children to discover their world and build their reality through interactions with objects and people. When I understand, I accept that each child is worth all the time she or he needs. Because I accept what *is,* I put my energy into effective teaching, not into struggling against the reality that children are children.

A teacher who understand children's needs encourages growth. When basic physical and security needs are met in an accepting environment, children are able to risk growth and experience success. When love and belonging needs are met, the children are able to develop competence and self-acceptance. The satisfaction of esteem needs precludes acting out to gain the acceptance of peers and attention from the teacher. When I understand these needs, I search for ways to help children meet them. I encourage freedom, sharing, conversation, movement, risk-taking, and spontaneity—the natural characteristics of childhood. Children will struggle to use these capacities regardless of my attitude. They act to satisfy *their* needs, not the needs or goals of the teacher. Therefore, the teacher who works to satisfy the children's needs will be comfortable and successful in the teaching role. Children will feel comfortable with their natural, necessary activities and will not be subjected to feelings of inferiority imposed by an endlessly patient teacher.

Teachers rely on patience when their own basic needs are in conflict with the needs of their students. For example, children may need activity to meet basic physiological needs, but this may conflict with the teacher's physiologi-

cal need (to avoid excessive noise), safety need (for a positive evaluation from an administrator), or esteem need (for peer approval). Meeting the children's needs is more likely to become the teacher's goal when she or he understands the developmental characteristics of early childhood. It is to be hoped that the teacher will then stop looking to the children for the satisfaction of too many of her own needs too much of the time and will concern herself with the attainment of appropriate goals for each of the *children.* As an understanding professional, her own natural egocentrism will less likely interfere with educating the children, and she will be accepting of *their* egocentrism, an essential reality of very young children.

It is important for teachers to have mature, healthy personalities because young children are very vulnerable and their development requires focused and sensitive nurturing. Teachers who have gone into early childhood education with their own basic needs unmet, or who feel oppressed and burdened, may inadvertently draw excessively from the children to meet their own basic needs. This preoccupation with concerns of their own precludes an understanding of children, and therefore makes *acting* upon this understanding impossible. Healthy teachers will look to their students for fulfillment of self-actualization needs to enhance their lives *above and beyond* basics. This ensures an enriching interdependent growth experience for both.

An understanding professional values such attributes as organizational skills, problem-solving abilities, a broad knowledge base, and a thorough understanding of child development, and participates in activities to further these qualities. Graduate courses, membership in professional organizations, and consistent reading of professional journals will increase a teacher's understanding and implementation of current early childhood educational research and theory. Adult expectations will be appropriate to the developmental capabilities of the children and will encourage learning. Teachers will not define their own teaching abilities with unproductive terms like *patient,* but will articulate their role as professional educators in a legitimate field of study. While the patient teacher is likely to see herself as a martyr, struggling through days of adversity imposed by the children, the professional will celebrate *with* them the process of growth. Enthusiasm and joy can result as understanding teachers welcome student behaviors that patient teachers find irritating.

As early childhood educators work to validate their role as viable professionals—viable in the eyes of sometimes skeptical communities: administrators, upper-grade teachers, and parents—they must dispel the myth that patience is predominant in their success.

Parents and colleagues marvel at the early childhood teacher's patience *and* understanding. They misunderstand. Teachers possess patience *or* understanding: Patience is rarely necessary when one is understanding.

For further reading:

Ames, L. G. & F. L. (1979) *Your five-year-old.* New York: Dell.

Bloom, B. (1981) *All our children learning.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Elkind, D. (1976). *Child development and education.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Maslow, A. H. (1954). *Motivation and personality.* New York: Harper & Row.

Moorman, C. (1985) *Talk sense to yourself.* Michigan: Personal Power Press.

The article "Patience or Understanding?" leaves no doubt that ***the most effective teacher of young children is one who understands children well.***

Patience and understanding are opposites. *Patience* is the ability to "bear affliction with calmness." While it is certainly appropriate to remain calm no matter what children do, remaining calm does not mean that the teacher *understands* children. Patience defines children's inappropriate behavior as naughty. This casts natural childhood behaviors in a negative, condescending way and shows a lack of respect for children as individuals with limited levels of development and social skills. Having patience does *not* mean that a person is well suited to teach young children.

The teacher who *understands* children, on the other hand, realizes that they have limited social skills. They are in the process of learning appropriate ways to meet their needs. It is the teacher's responsibility to guide children through this learning process in a positive, supportive manner that will build, not tear down, their self-esteem. Only in this way can children develop *self-discipline.*

Self Check 4.1. True/False

___ 1. Patience is the most important characteristic that a teacher of young children needs.

___ 2. Having patience means that a teacher understands children.

___ 3. Children who have a very patient teacher will almost never misbehave.

___ 4. Much of young children's "misbehavior" is actually developmentally appropriate behavior for the child.

___ 5. Teachers who understand children realize that children must

be reprimanded for inappropriate behavior.

___ 6. Teachers who understand children are equipped to treat a child's inappropriate behavior as a teaching opportunity.

___ 7. Teachers who feel that they need to have patience with children generally view children as the "opposition."

___ 8. Patience means considering the child's needs.

___ 9. A patient teacher is more likely to get into power struggles with children than is a teacher who understands their needs.

___ 10. Understanding children means accepting that each child is worth all the time she or he needs to experience success.

___ 11. Children whose need for self-esteem has been met will not need to act out in order to gain the acceptance of other children or attention from the teacher.

___ 12. Movement, spontaneity, and risk-taking are natural characteristics of childhood.

___ 13. Teachers rely on patience when their own basic needs are in conflict with the needs of their students.

___ 14. Patience is rarely necessary when a teacher is understanding.

___ 15. Effective teachers are those with mature, healthy personalities, whose own basic needs for love and belonging have been met.

(1. F, 2. F, 3. F, 4. T, 5. F, 6. T, 7. T, 8. F, 9. T, 10. T, 11. T, 12. T, 13. T, 14. T, 15. T)

Correct Statements for False Self-Check Items

Items 1, 2, 3, 5, and 8 of Self Check 4.1 are false. Please read the following correct statements.

1. Understanding is the most important characteristic that a teacher of young children needs.

2. Patience is a condescending attitude that shows an absence of understanding of children's abilities and needs.

3. Because young children have limited experiences and are just learning socially acceptable behaviors, they will do things that are inappropriate. The understanding teacher sees these behaviors as learning opportunities, not misbehaving. Children who have an understanding, respectful teacher who takes the time to help them learn acceptable behaviors are less likely to continue to behave in unacceptable ways.

5. Teachers who understand children realize that children need guidance from an understanding, respectful adult in order to learn appropriate behaviors. Reprimands and other forms of punishment are inappropriate and ineffective in achieving positive results.

8. Patience is a self-centered attitude. It considers the adult's needs, not the needs of the child. As Ms. Moorman writes, "*Patience implies disrespect to the child because it is a condescending view that the patient person is somehow superior to the 'opposition.'"*

Teachers' attitudes about children's emotions and the way children express their emotions influence whether their interactions with children will be positive and helpful or negative and harmful.

In "I'm bery bery cwoss!" Marie Hammer explains the importance of respecting children's right to their own emotions, their need to express these emotions, and the role of positive guidance in helping children learn to deal with strong emotions and express these emotions in a healthy, acceptable manner.

"I'm bery bery cwoss!" —Understanding Children's Anger

by Marie D. Hammer

Crash!! Tinkle tinkle! Gasp—everyone stopped still. The plate glass door to the kindergarten was in a million pieces all over the floor. In the middle of this was a small wooden ladder that the children used with their outdoor block buildings. Brendan stood nearby, glaring at me. "I'm bery, bery cwoss!" he shouted, then dissolved into tears.

All too often, the adult reaction is to the actual display of anger such as this, and a perceived need for discipline in response to this act of vandalism, without considering the underlying cause of the anger or the need to help the child to cope with these feelings in more socially acceptable ways. Brendan had reached the end of his patience. His single mother had gone out bowling the previous evening, and he had stayed at a neighbor's home where he "had to sleep on the couch with only one warm blanket." To add further insult, his mum had used the money in his piggy bank to finance her outing. Brendan was not pleased.

As adults we may smile wryly at this story, and we may even identify with the feelings expressed. (I would be angry, too, if someone took money from

me without my consent to go out bowling.) Yet adults are often dismissive of these negative feelings in children; we try to cajole children back into a good mood, dismissing their sense of anger, frustration, or sadness as unimportant, not sufficiently serious to warrant the intensity of emotion. In other words, we apply adult standards to the validation of children's feelings. We need to be clear that this is a child we are talking about; and, right at the moment the child's feelings are just as real and serious to them as any adult catastrophe might feel to us.

Alternatively we seek to punish children, sending them away from the situation, "Go to your room until you can play nicely." This gives children the message that they are not allowed to feel angry or upset, that these feelings are unacceptable. Indeed, I believe that adults view children through rose colored glasses. We see childhood as the happiest time of life, without cares and worries and with the freedom to play; therefore, we expect children to be happy and smiling playfully at all times—or maybe our hopes cloud our perceptions.

So, what is the alternative to punishment? Can we let go of the need to be all powerful and address the situation with alternative outlets for the emotions? Sand trays offer excellent opportunities for children to build their own world and control the interactions between characters. Much of this play is solitary in nature but it is vital to ensure that a supportive adult is present to 'reflectively listen' to the play as it progresses and to provide the words and emotional terminology the child needs. Adopting the principles of "scaffolding" the play experiences and ensuring that there is adequate time to play without the intrusion of extraneous routines is also a vital component of these play experiences.

Objectives should be set to guide the children through play experiences that confront the troubling issues and allow the children to explore a range of problem solving strategies. These issues can range from simple confrontations with other family members to the complexities of abuse and dealing with the experience of trauma which also require specialist intervention.

The Importance of Social Competence

Early childhood educators have long maintained the importance of enhancing children's development to facilitate the child's passing through the education systems and participating "as a member of society." In particular, the development of social competence is identified as a necessary component for school success. This notion of social competence "enables the child to recognise and become a part of the 'culture of literacy'"(Saunders & Green, 1993). Nevertheless, the appropriate expression of emotions in a way that is not harmful to others is a key component of the socializing process.

Despite such grandiose claims there appears to be no universally agreed definition of social competence. However, social competence of children is significantly influenced by such dimensions of home environment as parenting practices, parental values, and cultural background. Influences outside the home such as preschool and child care settings can either enhance or inhibit this area of child development (Saunders & Green, 1993).

The Role of Play

> *"Play is the child's natural medium of self-expression."*
> — Axline, 1969

The role of play, in particular pretense play, is noted by researchers as a contributor to the provision of a basic understanding of social rituals, drama, and other "collective symbolic activities." Researchers' observations of such play have become more detailed and are generating a number of theories that speculate the significance of play behaviors for providing better understanding of child development in the early childhood years (Fein 1981).

Opportunities for children to play out life's experiences allow them to replay their feelings and to analyze these so that they can come to understand and make sense of what is happening to them. Early childhood professionals have traditionally provided dramatic play through home corners, etc., as a means of enabling children to practice and understand adult roles and relationships. However, the usual dress-ups, dolls, and tea sets can be intimidating for children with frightening or negative emotional experiences to deal with. A far safer option is to provide a small tray with doll house furniture and small figures that are representative of the child's immediate family. These could include grandparents, siblings, significant family friends, etc., depending on the child's circumstances. The play space should be in a quiet area that affords some privacy from the hustle and bustle of the main playroom area. The child is then able to engage in re-enactment of troubling situations at arm's length, without needing to be the main player—a situation that can be too threatening or scary. The child's need for some privacy must also be protected as well as protecting other children in the group from observing situations that they may find strange or disturbing.

A study of social participation in children's play behavior, conducted by Roper and Hinde (1978), determined that social participation in play behavior should not be described along one dimension. Rather, the study found that the "parallel to group dimension" which reflects how children play on their own can be seen as a significant component of play, and self play does not necessarily mean that a child is lacking in social ability. They conclude that the use of a dimension of "social participation" is in fact misleading in the analysis of play and involves too great a distortion of children's individual differences (Roper & Hinde, 1978). The notion of social climate and the child's social context is highlighted as important preparation for the developmental transition to peer competence (Waters & Sroufe, 1983).

It is within these contexts that play, as children's natural medium of self-expression, becomes all-important. Early childhood professionals have become a little glib about the importance of play and perhaps less conscious of the utilization of play as a means of assisting children to express their emotions both on the positive and negative end of the emotional spectrum.

Play materials that encourage solitary play and self-expression, such as drawing, painting, finger painting, and clay modeling or pounding, are valuable means for children to describe their feelings in pictures rather than words as well as affording them quiet times for reflection. Such activities have a calming and therapeutic effect that is very beneficial for the child who is feeling angry or frustrated.

Understanding Emotions

Research from as early as Darwin has looked at the development of emotions, suggesting a view that certain emotional capacities are innate (Bowlby, 1969, 1973). Not only do infants appear to be able to experience emotion but they are capable of the muscle movements necessary for encoding and expressing different emotional states (Oster, in O'Hagen, 1993). As children develop, their early emotional capabilities will be influenced by parents as well as social and cultural factors. A primary function of emotions and the accompanying expressive behavior is communication. That is, emotional development in early childhood is greatly dependent upon the quality and frequency of responses from the child's caregivers (O'Hagen, 1993).

Miller (1996) reminds us that anger is one of the most difficult emotions in children for adults to deal with. She suggests that adults find anger as frightening as it is for the angry child and for their peers. The role of early childhood professionals is to find ways for children to recognize and express what is a natural feeling from time to time. This expression must be appropriate to the setting and should help children to move through their anger to a more productive emotion.

The use of puppets can provide children with a non-threatening and safe target for their anger. The adult, as the puppeteer, can reflectively listen to the child and perhaps make suggestions for resolution of the anger by prompting with questions such as "What could be different?" "What do you need to change to help you feel better?" In these situations we must also be mindful of the child's own developmental level and acknowledge that young children cannot easily put themselves in others shoes. "I don't care how Jimmy feels. I need the red bucket and I wanted it first!" Therefore, the adult's guidance should not be an attempt to think about how Jimmy feels but rather an exercise of guiding children to reach a peaceful solution for themselves.

Play as an avenue of emotional expression can be seen as a window that brings children's emotional acting-out behavior out of the solitude and into a place where it can be unpacked, looked at, and understood. The provision of play opportunities can and should be incorporated into early childhood programs by virtue of the true implementation of individualized programming for children.

The adaptability of young children makes the early childhood years the ideal time to use their natural play activity as a forum to understand all human emotions and to develop the social mechanisms to express and deal with their emotion. Early childhood educators are obliged to provide these opportunities and to model the understanding and expression of these very real feelings in a safe and supportive environment.

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In the next article, "Bad Language: From Potty Talk to Swearing to Name-Calling—Humor or Hurtful?" Roslyn Duffy talks about some of the reasons children use language that adults find unacceptable. Ms. Duffy emphasizes the need for adults to understand the function of such language for young children and suggests ways that adults can deal with this issue that will avoid reinforcing the behavior, set boundaries for appropriate behaviors, yet still show respect for the child's emotions.

Bad Language: From Potty Talk to Swearing to Name-Calling— Humor or Hurtful?

by Roslyn Duffy

– Situation –

From a child's point of view:

"At first all I had to do was coo, gurgle, or cry and I got fed, changed, or held. Then my coos changed into 'Mama' or "Dada' or 'Gamma' and something great happened. My sounds had magical powers. When my 'Mama's' and 'Dada's' turned into 'NO's,' I wondered if words could get any better? Well, as a matter of fact—YES!

"It wasn't long after my 'NO' period had begun that people started paying attention to what came out of my other end. When I left a little something in the potty one morning, magic seemed to be pouring out of me — from both ends!

"But now I've discovered even better magic! Watch what happens when I say 'POOPY'!"

Note: At this point our narration must end for our protagonist is convulsing on the floor in a fit of giggles.

– Solution –

Potty Humor

Sounds and the words they form usher in a true source of magic for children. Words hold power and the world reacts—sometimes in spectacular fashion. One mom said, "If you want to make my Abdu happy, just say 'butt.'" Children love potty words. To them these words are high (or, maybe, low) humor. They shriek with laughter at the word 'poop' and giggle with delight over 'pee.'

Fascinated with her own body functions, a child's emerging vocabulary soon combines toilet training with the delightful shock value of potty words to produce the hilarious plop of a gleefully uttered 'poopy.' When we give this language minimal attention (no matter how hard it is not to titter at their cuteness), it will keep early potty talk from becoming a bigger problem.

Farts are funny

Children find joy everywhere. As they become aware of other people's body functions as well as their own, it isn't long before they discover the joy of 'farts.' Now here is a word with a triple whammy. The actual action creates a wonderful sound, it is a source of embarrassment to everyone, and it is a 'naughty' word. For a child enthralled by the magic and power of words—winning the lottery couldn't compare to this thrill.

One approach is to make unacceptable words less potent through deliberate overuse. In the book, *Walter the Farting Dog,* this awful and delightful word is mentioned on almost every page. After a while, the shock value wears off and turns the word into a more ho-hum experience (but please note that 'after a while' caveat).

The echo effect

A child's early language practice can also produce some mortifying moments for adults. A rueful mom tells the story of sitting in a doctor's waiting room. The room was quiet so that when her toddler dropped his toy and muttered, "Oh Sh_ t," it rang out loud and clear. This mom knew at once that she had just heard her own voice echoed from her son's mouth and that it was time to clean up her language.

Children are great mimics and the 'mirror neurons' firing in their brains prime them to reproduce what they experience. They don't invent words like the F-word. They must first hear them. This second source of inappropriate language comes from playmates, the media, and friends—but it also comes, perhaps more often than we want to admit, from us.

The way these words get used: as angry epithets; to wound or belittle; and to bully are also testaments to the way children hear them used. If we want to eliminate such language (and behavior), the best place to start is with ourselves. There may still be times we'll regress, needing to acknowledge and apologize for our language.

Even if such language does not offend you, you will be doing your child a disservice by not letting him know that some words are offensive to others. He will eventually be around people outside of his family, and his ability to communicate in ways that are acceptable is going to matter. Children need to know the expectations of the society in which they live—and yes, words CAN hurt.

When you and your child hear others use foul language, talk about it. Ask her what she thinks about those words. If she says, "It isn't nice to call names" or "Mean words hurt people's feelings," she will better internalize these rules.

Another response to offensive language is to send a child (or ourselves) into the bathroom to use them. It's boring to talk to yourself, and without an audience the shock value disappears.

Word 'ka-pow'er

Language has power, and certain words have definite 'KA-POW'er. Name-calling moves language to a deliberate and hurtful level. The meaning of a word matters less than the result it produces. Calling a playmate a 'Dumbie' gives the name-caller a sense of power, especially when the other child slinks away, gives in during a dispute, or quits competing for a coveted swing seat.

At one preschool the teachers were surprised to discover that the children didn't know what 'Dumbie' meant, even though one child had used it to intimi-

date a classmate, and the classmate had fully understood its hurtful intent. The bottom line is that hurting others cannot be allowed.

Positive power

Name-calling turns language into something hurtful and is often a sign of inadequate skills or a symptom of feelings of powerlessness. We know that we need to teach social skills: to share, to ask for what they need or how to wait for turns. But children also need to experience appropriate power. This can take place through contributing behavior: handing out art supplies at preschool, helping plan a menu at home, or being put in charge of selecting the soup or crackers while grocery shopping. These diminish the need to seek power in hurtful ways.

The child being hurt by name-calling also needs skills—in particular, self-assertiveness. Adults can prompt this child to say, "Don't call me that name." Or, "It hurts when you call me that. Please stop now!"

The point is that we need to address many aspects of the problems symptomized by hurtful language rather than focus on words alone.

Feelings need words

Children also need to be able to name and express their emotions. A good rule of thumb is that children who use hurtful language (and this includes potty or swear words used in anger as well as name-calling) are often upset or feeling hurt.

Marianna doesn't like it when Daddy won't let her watch television or play longer at the park. She can't name her feelings, so she uses what she does know. She knows that potty words are naughty and that saying things in a loud voice gets attention (remember all that practice shouting 'NO'?). So she combines these techniques and hollers: "You're a 'POOPY-BUTT'." Now that gets Dad's attention!

Much early name-calling is a variation of potty talk, but its purpose changes to expressing strong emotions such as anger, disappointment, or frustration rather than humor. Thus, it requires a different response. First we make the boundary of acceptable behavior clear.

"It is not okay to call others names."

"Name-calling hurts others."

"You need to use my name when you speak to me."

We state the expectations, and if a behavior continues we ask the child to leave the room (or the adult can step into another room) until the child is ready to use kind words. Doing this with a minimum of fuss and attention, but with calm consistency, will drain name-calling of its magic potential.

Next we add the skill. Spend time exploring what was going on and identify and name emotions.

"You felt disappointed that we had to leave the park. You wanted to play longer."

"You were angry when Daddy turned the television off and said it was bedtime. We can say how we feel without name-calling." Suggest that next time she try saying, "Daddy, I really want to play longer," or "I'm MAD!" (here a loud voice may be acceptable, though the name-calling was not).

Children need to know that it is fine to say how they feel, even when those feelings are unpleasant. But it is not okay to call names or use words to hurt others. We can acknowledge and commiserate with feelings, even if the need to leave the playground or go to bed remains the same.

"You really would like to play longer."

"You don't want to go to bed yet."

"You're upset because you want to watch your program."

We then follow these with a hopeful or encouraging statement.

"Maybe we can come back to the park this weekend."

"Let's record the rest of the program so you can watch it tomorrow."

or

"Let's plan on watching a program together on Saturday. Which show should we choose?"

This last possibility helps to distract a child from the present upset and gives her something to look forward to; in addition, she is experiencing a positive contribution through the planning process.

The magic continues

Words offer powerful magic. Children need to learn to use them in ways that are appropriate. Many of the issues with potty language, name-calling, and other 'bad' language will appear and disappear within short developmental time frames. We can extend those time frames by overreacting and giving them too much attention. We can minimize them by setting firm boundaries, being consistent, and teaching skills that guide children towards acceptable behavior as well as learning how to name and express their emotions. And it probably won't do any harm to laugh over the occasional fart—after all, farts can be funny. Just ask any preschooler.

Self Check 4.2. True/False

___ 1. An understanding adult will consider the cause of children's strong emotions rather than reacting simply to the way in which the emotions are expressed.

___ 2. Punishing children for expressing their strong emotions gives them the message that their feelings are unacceptable.

___ 3. Pretend play helps children understand social rituals, roles, and relationships.

___ 4. Quiet pretend play areas that have some privacy from the main play area are often helpful for children who have experienced troubling events in their lives.

___ 5. Play materials that encourage solitary play and self-expression help children describe and reflect on their feelings.

___ 6. Children's emotional development is influenced by the quality and frequency of responses from their caregivers.

___ 7. Researchers report that adults find it difficult and frightening to deal with children's anger.

___ 8. Giving attention to children's potty talk is likely to increase its use.

___ 9. Opportunities to experience appropriate power lessen children's need to seek power in hurtful ways.

___ 10. Focusing on the intent and effects of hurtful words teaches children more useful lessons than focusing on the words themselves.

___ 11. When children know appropriate words to express their feelings, they will have less need to use inappropriate words.

___ 12. Setting firm boundaries, being consistent, and giving children positive guidance toward acceptable behavior will help minimize the use of inappropriate language.

(1. T, 2. T, 3. T, 4. T, 5. T, 6. T, 7. T, 8. T, 9. T, 10.T, 11. T, 12. T)

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Adults' Language

The next article, "Caregiver and Teacher Language—Responsive or Restrictive?" by Janet Stone, focuses on two different styles of caregiver/teacher language. This article reports the findings of research that Dr. Stone conducted for her doctoral dissertation. The references listed at the end of the article are good sources for further reading on the subject of the teacher's role in early childhood development.

In this article, Dr. Stone shows the value of responsive language, which uses reason, encourages independence, and uses nurturant control. Responsive language is caring and respectful of the child and encourages two-way conversation. Responsive language is the opposite of restrictive language, which is rude, critical, and controlling. Restrictive language asserts power, discourages independence, and consists of lectures instead of discussions.

The effective teacher or caregiver, then, is one who uses responsive language, providing verbal nurturing, encouragement, and explanations rather than commands, insults, and discouragement. Dr. Stone's research indicates that the way teachers and caregivers talk to children reveals their attitudes toward, and relationships with, the children, that is, just how responsive they are to the needs of the children in their care.

* * *

Caregiver and Teacher Language—Responsive or Restrictive?

by Janet Stone

Today more than 55 percent of mothers of young children are in the workforce, and the fastest growing arrangement for the care of their children is enrollment in child care centers (38). As greater numbers of children are enrolled in center-based and family child care programs at younger ages and for longer hours, the quality of the care provided takes on even greater importance. Today's children and, hence, tomorrow's world are becoming increasingly affected by the kind of care offered in today's child care centers and family child care homes.

In my role as a corporate work and family counselor, I help employees find good child care. In the course of this work, I have visited more than 75 child care centers and have seen first-hand the range in quality of the care available. Because all of the centers I visit are licensed by the state, they are fairly consistent in offering safe and clean facilities; they are, custodially speaking, acceptable. Far too few licensing agencies look beyond the custodial level of care, however. They fail to assess one of the most important elements of the child care center—the caregivers or teachers. As NAEYC [National Association for the Education of Young Children] has long insisted, this element is largely what separates the fine programs from the minimally acceptable programs. The caregivers, after all, create the social, emotional, intellectual, and physical environments that children experience, and the caregivers direct the daily interactions between themselves and the children in their care (10). What element of child care could more powerfully affect the developing child than the caregiver who, in essence, acts as surrogate parent and as teacher, combining two highly influential roles into one? Galinsky, for one—

past-president of the National Association for the Education of Young Children—stated that the relationship between the teacher and the child is the most important ingredient of child care (8).

If we are to look beyond the basics of safety and hygiene to elements that make the difference between marginal and preferable care, we must pay greater attention to assessing caregiver performance. This is the focus of NAEYC's accreditation process and the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential program.

One critical and practical way to assess and improve the performance of caregivers is to focus on caregiver language, the way in which caregivers speak to and with children in their care. Caregiver language provides significant insight into caregiving behavior in general. The more closely we investigate a caregiver's language, the more clearly we know that person's caregiving behavior and style. (Katherine Read Baker made this very clear in her book *The Nursery School: A Human Relations Laboratory,* originally published in 1950 and now in its ninth edition [see *Young Children,* March 1992, pp. 4–5]). According to Amidon and Flanders (1), verbal behavior is an adequate sample of total behavior and can be observed more reliably than can nonverbal behavior.

Although efforts to study caregiver/teacher language have been complicated by the lack of consistent language classification terminology, two main categories of caregiver language types have emerged. These language types can be labeled *responsive language* and *restrictive language.* In other studies and discussions, responsive language has been called *elaborated language* (16), *indirect language* (1), *positive verbal environment* (20), and *informative language* (14). Likewise, restrictive language has been called, among other things, *direct language* (1), *restricted language* (16), *negative verbal environment* (20), and *controlling language* (14).

What are responsive and restrictive language?

Responsive language is language that conveys a positive regard for children and a respect for and acceptance of their individual ideas and feelings. Responsive language encourages verbal give-and-take and independent thought, implies alternatives and choices, and includes other-oriented induction, in which reasons and explanations are provided. Responsive language also includes teacher requests and necessary commands expressed in nurturant ways. When using responsive language, caregivers elaborate on their statements, providing extra information so that children more fully understand.

Restrictive language is language that involves teacher control through such power-assertion methods as issuing unnecessary or disrespectful commands, threats, punishments, and criticisms. Restrictive language discourages independence and verbal give-and-take, encourages submission to authority and rules, is unresponsive to children's feelings and ideas, is condensed and impersonal and involves lecturing.

The Caregiver Language Record (CLR; 31) more specifically differentiates between responsive and restrictive language by separating each of these categories into four subcategories.

The subcategories of responsive language include the following:

- using reason and logic,
- encouraging independence and autonomy,
- using nurturant control, and
- elaborating.

1. Using reason and logic

Example: "We'll go outdoors later when the grass has had a chance to dry. It's too wet now."

Instead of "No, we are not going outdoors." (Child: "Why not?" or: "Because I said so."

Example: "Hitting hurts, I can't allow you to hurt anyone."

Instead of "Don't hit him. Be a good boy."

Example: "I don't like it when you call me that. It hurts my feelings."

Instead of "Don't you ever call me that."

Example: "You'll feel better if you rest a minute."

Instead of "Put your head down."

2. Encouraging independence and autonomy

Example: "Does it hurt when Sarah pulls your hair? You can tell her it makes you unhappy."

Instead of "Sarah, stop pulling Carrie's hair."

Example: "Each person may choose a job from the job chart."

Instead of "Rebecca will be our line leader today."

Example: "Tony would like to continue painting. He'll join us later."

Instead of "Tony, put that down and come here now."

Example: "That's okay. Tammy may make whatever she likes with the dough."

Instead of "Tammy, that doesn't look like a flower to me. Remember, we are making flowers for our mothers."

Example: "What things did you do over the weekend?"

Instead of "What is today's date?"

3. Using nurturant control

Example: "I feel so happy, seeing all of this cooperating."

Instead of "Let's see who does the best job."

Example: "I need each of you to place your toy back on the shelf so we can go outside."

Instead of "No one is going anywhere until this room is clean."

Example: "It's time to be quiet."

Instead of "MOUTHS CLOSED!"

Example: "Let's sit down now."

Instead of "SIT!"

Example: "Please close the door, Andy."

Instead of "Close the door, Andy."

Example: "We walk in the hall."

Instead of "No running!"

4. Elaborating

Example: "I won't be here tomorrow; I need to take my little girl to the doctor, but I'll be back the next day. Miss Jeffries will take care of you while I'm gone."

Instead of "I won't be here tomorrow."

Example: "You need to turn the water off so we won't waste water."

Instead of "Turn the water off."

Example: (In response to a child's statement) "Really? How interesting."

Instead of "Concentrate on your work."

* * *

The subcategories of restrictive language include the following:

- asserting power,
- discouraging independence and autonomy,
- controlling, and
- lecturing.

1. Asserting power

Restrictive Example: "I will have to tell your mother if you spit again."

Responsive alternative "Spitting spreads germs, and others don't like it. If you are angry, you can talk about it."

Restrictive Example: "Throwing sand isn't nice. What's the matter with you? You stand against the fence by yourself now."

Responsive alternative "When sand is thrown, it gets in our eyes. You may play in the sandbox without throwing sand, or you may play on the side. Which do you choose?"

Restrictive Example: "That's not doing your best; that's just scribble."

Responsive alternative "Looks like you enjoyed using all those colors.""

Restrictive Example: "What are you supposed to be doing? I said to clean up."

Responsive alternative "Jamie, everyone needs to help. Your job is to throw the scraps in the trash can."

2. Discouraging independence and autonomy

Restrictive Example: "Your tree needs to look like this."

Responsive alternative "Think about all of the different types of trees you could make. Each tree will look a little different from the others. That will make them interesting."

Restrictive Example: "Why are you crying? I don't see anyone else crying. Be a big boy."

Responsive alternative "You're really feeling sad. Would you like to tell me why you're unhappy? Maybe I can help."

Restrictive Example: "That's not the way we do it."

Responsive alternative "Look at Craig's new idea."

3. Controlling

Restrictive Example: "No yelling."

Responsive alternative "Let's speak softly."

Restrictive Example: "Don't you throw that ball in here. Give it to me. You should know better."

Responsive alternative "Your ball needs to go on the shelf until playground time. I'd love to see how far you can throw when we're outdoors where nothing can break."

Restrictive Example: "Your time is up."

Responsive alternative "You need to finish up because John has been waiting a long time for his turn."

4. Lecturing

Restrictive Example: "Mark, you should know better. I've told you a hundred time that running is not allowed. We have been walking in the hallway all year."

Responsive alternative "Mark, you need to walk."

Restrictive Example: "This is a potato peeler. It is sharp, so we must be careful. It is used to take the skin off potatoes."

Responsive alternative "Who would like to guess what this is? You're right, Mandy—a potato peeler. Why do you think we would need a potato

peeler?" Jason says, "to take off potato skin." "Who would like a turn helping me take off the potato's skin? Great, you may all have a turn. Who has an idea about why we'll need to be careful? Yes, so we don't waste potato. Why else? Yes, because the peeler can cut us; because it is sharp."

* * *

Undoubtedly, responsive caregiver language is preferable to restrictive language. Responsive language, under various labels, has been described as

- an element of democratic teaching as opposed to undemocratic teaching (1),
- an element of nondirectiveness as opposed to directiveness (19),
- an element of authoritative teaching as opposed to authoritarian teaching (3),
- an element of multi-dimensional teaching as opposed to unidimensional teaching (23),
- an element of teacher respectfulness as opposed to teacher disrespectfulness (9),
- an element of humanistic control as opposed to custodial control (22),
- an element of teacher affective availability as opposed to teacher affective unavailability (36),
- an element of sensitivity as opposed to harshness (35), and
- an element of encouraging self-esteem and self-discipline (11).

Restrictive language has demonstrated that caregiver use of primarily responsive language (as opposed to primarily restrictive language) is associated with

children demonstrating higher self-esteem (20);

fewer discipline problems (22);

less physical aggression (4);

heightened moral development (17);

higher motivation, less anxiety, and more independence (6); and

- greater creativity (34).

We did a study to determine whether caregivers used predominantly responsive or restrictive language

No teacher/caregiver could be expected to use solely responsive language; there are times when a quick command must be given without attention to courtesy or when teaching takes the form of lecturing for a very brief time, but certainly we would expect the majority of an early childhood teacher's language to be responsive instead of restrictive. Surely we would expect the caregiver of young children to use more nurturance, praise, encouragement, explanation, and respect than criticism, discouragement, threats, punishments, commands, and lectures.

A 1991 study conducted for the University of Miami as the author's doctoral dissertation helped to determine the validity of this expectation (31). The study was designed to determine the extent to which caregivers in child care centers use responsive versus restrictive language. For purposes of the study, the caregiving language of 30 caregivers, working in 17 child care centers in Dade County, Florida, was investigated. Because the centers were randomly chosen from all of the licensed centers operating in Miami, caregivers varied in educational background, experience, age, and race, and were a representative sample of the total population of Miami caregivers. The caregivers were observed for three hours each, with their language scored using the CLR (31).

The findings of the study supported exactly what people who are knowledgeable about actual child care settings already know: that we cannot assume that the caregivers of young children use primarily responsive language. Our findings also indicated that the way people talk to children must be considered when hiring and training teachers. Of the 30 caregivers in the study, 16 used primarily responsive language, while 14 (almost one half) used primarily restrictive language.

This may be a particularly bleak finding in light of the fact that restrictive language is a characteristic of authoritarian caregiving, and a number of studies have indicated that restrictive, authoritarian environments produce negative effects in children, including aggression and social incompetence (13; 15; 5; 32; 37). The possible implied relationship between caregiver restrictiveness and the results of studies that have found child care graduates to be more aggressive and socially incompetent than peers who were never enrolled in child care centers is difficult to ignore (27; 29; 28; 24; 2).

Another finding of the Miami study has important implications as well. A second purpose of the study was to investigate the possible relationship between responsive language and other caregiving practices. Because verbal behavior is an adequate sample of an individual's total behavior (1), researchers reasoned that a caregiver who uses predominantly responsive language will also be generally responsive. A teacher displays not only individual characteristics but a general caregiving style as well (18; 33).

The National Association for the Education of Young Children's position statement on Guidelines for Appropriate Curriculum Content and Assessment states that "All educators have a belief system, whether explicit or implicit, about how children learn and what they should be learning that guides and influences their practice" (26, p. 24). Baumrind (3); Sears, Maccoby, and Levin (30); and others have described behaviors that cluster to create one's caregiving (or parenting or teaching) style, and Mills and Clyde

(25) imply a connectedness running through a teacher's many teaching practices.

Responsive language may thus represent a general responsivity that permeates the many teaching behaviors of a particular caregiver. If caregivers who use responsive language use other preferred caregiving practices as well, then the importance of finding caregivers who use responsive language is underscored; hiring a caregiver who uses responsive language could also mean hiring a teacher who will demonstrate other preferred caregiving practices.

To investigate the possible relationship between responsive language and other preferred caregiving practices, trained research assistants, blinded to the purposes of the study, scored the same 30 caregivers on their execution of 10 caregiver practices selected and excerpted from the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Score (ECERS; 12). Items were used that

- were not dependent on caregiver language style (to avoid overlap with the language measurements made);
- could be accurately observed during one three-hour visit.

Caregivers were given from one to seven points for each item, as determined by criteria in the ECERS. They were scored on

1. child-related displays in their rooms;
2. carrying out of snack and mealtimes;
3. art experiences;
4. music/movement experiences;
5. free-play opportunities;
6. activities in which children use expressive language;
7. supervision of fine-motor activities;
8. supervision of gross-motor activities;
9. group times; and
10. general tone of the classroom.

Naptime and provision for relaxation and comfort were scored as alternate items when for any reason one of the previously named items could not be observed and scored. For each caregiver, scores for each of the 10 measured items were added to provide a total caregiver-practices score. Higher total scores indicated that practices were being executed in a manner preferable to that indicated by lower scores.

The subjects' scores on the Caregiver Language Record were correlated with their caregiver practices scores, using the Pearson product-moment correlation formula (a statistical measure of the magnitude and direction of a relationship). The results indicated a significant, positive relationship between caregiver use of responsive language and the use of other preferred caregiving practices ($r = .785$). We may therefore conclude that caregivers who display responsive language are likely to employ other preferred caregiving practices as well.

The ramifications of this study's results are clear

First, caregiver training—be it part of university study, vocational training, or state licensing programs—must transmit an understanding of the need for caregiver responsivity to children in general, and the use of responsive caregiver language in particular.

As have most child development authors who write about child management and child guidance, Galinsky has suggested that such responsive language elements as using reasoning and providing explanations to children help children to develop self-control and to be more compliant, cooperative, and considerate (7). Galinsky said that well-trained teachers can positively interact with children and reduce possibilities for aggressive behavior. Galinsky cautioned against poorly trained caregivers, saying, "The cost we as a society could pay for children who grow up more aggressive seems high indeed" (7, p. 234).

Logue, Eheart, and Leavitt (21) pointed out several studies indicating that training must directly address responsivity because more teacher education, by itself, does not guarantee greater verbal responsiveness; highly educated teachers often focus more on structured, cognitive activity and less on responsivity, non-directiveness, and openness. Logue, Eheart, and Leavitt stated that "training programs need to help teachers define their role, not as a teacher who directs and instructs, but as a teacher whose primary responsibility is to support and be responsive to children throughout the day" (21, p. 9).

Secondly, I strongly recommend that directors of early childhood settings make use of this study's findings during the caregiver hiring process. While interviewing prospective staff members, directors can ask questions that elicit responsive or restrictive verbal responses from the applicant. Examples of such questions include, What words would you use in response to a child who has interrupted your reading of a story with the remark, "I have a dog like that!" and What words would you use when a child fails to clean his place after snack? Because directors often have opportunities to observe caregiver applicants when the applicants substitute for a morning, I further recommend that during that time the director take careful note of the caregiver's use of responsive versus restrictive language. Results of our study imply that the caregiver's language is indicative of a general caregiving style, or, at least, that it is predictive of the use or nonuse of a number of preferred caregiving practices that cannot be easily observed until the applicant is hired and his or her teaching is well under way. This study also calls into question the theory that a harsh or strict teacher of young children can be a truly "good" teacher.

Low wages make hiring the best caregivers a difficult challenge, but I hope that this doesn't make us "settle" for less than the children deserve. If we teach about responsive language in our

vocational, college, and state licensing preparatory programs; if those who hire know how to identify responsive language when they hear it; if directors provide in-service training in responsive language where they see it lacking, locating and hiring qualified caregivers who use primarily responsive language will not be out of reach. One purpose of this article is to let people know that responsive language is a vital characteristic of good teachers and should weigh as heavily as the more traditional criteria we weigh in hiring.

Today's very young children, more than ever before, are leaving home each morning and spending their days in early childhood settings. The environments they find there, friendly or unfriendly, will affect the rest of their lives, shaping their earliest views of teachers, school, the world outside the home, and themselves. Let us hope that they will find responsive caregivers who provide a warm and nurturant environment and who, through responsive language, let children know that they are valued and respected, that they matter in this world.

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* * *

Notice that when using responsive language, adults are often speaking *with* children. In many cases, responsive language encourages the child to join in a conversation. When using restrictive language, however, adults are generally speaking *at* children.

Notice also how the ideas developed in the articles you have read in this lesson reinforce each other. A teacher who sees children as the opposition, who has difficulty understanding and accepting children's emotions, and who feels she or he must have patience with them while dealing with their misbehavior is very likely to use restrictive language. On the other hand, a teacher who understands children and accepts their emotions is likely to use responsive language—and to be far more successful in guiding children to replace immature and inappropriate behavior with appropriate behavior.

Activity 5

Purpose: *To become aware of your own use of restrictive and responsive language in your interactions with children.*

Analyze the language that you use with the children in your care. Listen to yourself as you speak to and with children. If you have a tape recorder, make a tape of yourself during the time you are with the children, then listen to the tape when you are alone. Make a note of how many restrictive statements and how many responsive statements you make.

As you become conscious of the nature of your statements, requests, and directions to the children, work on removing restrictive language from your interactions with children and replacing it with responsive language.

Repeat this analysis exercise every few days. Notice if the proportion of responsive statements that you make is increasing. Your goal should be to eliminate restrictive statements altogether.

Self Check 4.3. True/False

___ 1. Janet Stone states that a strict teacher is the best choice for young children.

___ 2. Restrictive language encourages independence.

___ 3. Responsive language shows respect for children's ideas and feelings.

___ 4. Restrictive language encourages verbal give-and-take.

___ 5. Responsive language is nurturing.

___ 6. Lecturing is an example of restrictive language.

___ 7. Elaborating on children's statements is an example of responsive language.

___ 8. Responsive language provides explanations and extra information so that children can more fully understand.

(1. F, 2. F, 3. T, 4. F, 5. T, 6. T, 7. T, 8. T)

Correct Statements for False Self-Check Items

Items 1, 2, and 4 of Self Check 4.3 are false. Please read the following correct statements.

1. Janet Stone states that the ideal teacher for young children is nurturant and responsive; respects children's individual ideas and feelings; provides opportunities for children to make their own choices; and encourages give-and-take and independent thought.

2. Restrictive language *dis*courages independence. It involves teacher control through power-assertion, including unnecessary and/or disrespectful commands, threats, punishments, and criticisms. *Responsive* language, on the other hand, encourages independence.

4. Restrictive language encourages submission to authority and rules and is not responsive to children's feelings and ideas. *Responsive* language encourages verbal give-and-take.

Analyzing the Preview

Go back and re-read the Lesson 4 Preview items. See if the answers you believe are best now are the same as the answers you chose before you studied this lesson. The paragraphs below explain which answers are best and discuss why the other answers are inappropriate.

Item 1. The dictionary defines patience as "bearing pains or trials calmly or without complaint." This is reflected in answer *d.*

Teachers who understand children—that is, understand each child's developmental level, abilities, and needs—do not need to "bear pains calmly." Therefore, having patience and understanding children (answer *a*) are opposites. Having patience is not the same thing as loving children (answer *b*). Teachers with patience may or may not truly love children. Feeling the need to have patience with children is a condescending view that the patient person is superior to the "opposition."

Since a patient person exhibits little understanding for children's developmental levels, natural growth processes, and needs, she or he is NOT well suited to teaching young children (answer *c*).

Item 2. Because a teacher who relies on patience sees children's behaviors as provoking, opposing, and straining, she or he is likely to engage in inappropriate teacher behaviors when that patience runs out (answer *c*).

The patient teacher's view of the child as the opponent often *leads to,* rather than avoids, an adversarial teacher-child relationship and thus power struggles with children (answer *a*). It is natural for children to engage in behaviors commonly called "acting out" (answer *b*), regardless whether the adult "bears the provocation" calmly or not. In order to learn to replace inappropriate behaviors with appropriate behaviors, children need the guidance of a teacher who understands the child's developmental needs and thus is able to teach the child socially appropriate and effective behaviors. The ability to successfully guide children (answer *d*) depends on a teacher's ability to *understand* children, not to be patient with them.

Item 3. Patience is a condescending attitude that assigns a negative moral judgment to the child's behavior. The child is made to feel naughty or bad. Thus, patience engenders feelings of inferiority in children (answer *a*).

Because patience defines the child in a negative way, it engenders feelings of *in*competence, not competence (answer *b*) in children.

Patience does *not* encourage risk-taking (answer *c*) or spontaneity (answer *d*). An understanding teacher will recognize risk-taking and spontaneity as natural characteristics of childhood, even when these characteristics lead the child to engage in behaviors that are not themselves appropriate.

Item 4. Teachers who understand children take time to trust their natural growth process (answer *b*).

Teachers who understand children have no need to control them (answer *a*) or to have patience with them (answer *c*). They also do not see children as the "opposition" (answer *d*). Understanding children accepts them as innately *good* while recognizing their limited level of development and social skills. Understanding brings with it respect for the child's orderly, predictable development. Teachers who understand children put their energies into effective teaching rather than into struggling against the reality that children are children.

Item 5. *All* of the answer choices for this item are possible. The way in which adults talk to children can provide nurturing or it can assert power over the child. It can either encourage or discourage independence. This is why the *manner in which* adults talk to children is of such vital importance.

Item 6. Responsive language encourages two-way conversation (answer *b*). Its opposite, restrictive language, is rude (answer *c*), critical of the child (answer *a*), and consists of lecturing (answer *d*).

Item 7. Restrictive language is impersonal and unresponsive to children's feelings and ideas (answer *c*). Restrictive language is NOT respectful of the child (answer *b*). It *dis*courages rather than encourages independence (answer *a*) and encourages submission to authority and rules rather than offering alternatives and choices (answer *d*).

Lesson 4 Quiz

Please read Lesson 4 two times before attempting its quiz. When you have finished reading this lesson, return to **My Courses** within your Account at www.CareCourses.com and open your course file to access the Online Quiz for this lesson.

Lesson 5

Creating a Positive Climate in the Early Childhood Facility

Lesson 5 Learning Objectives

In Lesson 5 you will learn:

- to identify positive discipline methods and negative discipline methods
- the harmful effects of negative approaches to discipline
- the benefits of positive approaches to discipline
- when and how self-images are formed
- ways to help infants and toddlers develop self-esteem and self-discipline

* * *

Lesson 5 Preview

Circle the letter of the best answer(s):

1. The term "terrible twos" is frequently applied to two-year-olds because
   a. children misbehave more at this age than at any other age.
   b. adults are frustrated by children's growing need for independence.
   c. adults often have unrealistic expectations of children this age.
   d. adults often don't understand the difference between discipline methods that harm a child's self-esteem and discipline methods that increase a child's self-esteem.
2. Experienced teachers and caregivers who have studied child development
   a. can almost always distinguish between "good" and "bad" children.
   b. see all young children as potentially good people.
   c. realize that children's limited experience will cause them to behave inappropriately sometimes.
   d. know that young children are highly motivated to please and be accepted and approved of.
3. Good discipline teaches children
   a. self-control.
   b. how to get along with others.
   c. standards for behavior.
   d. to fear punishment.
4. A young child who stops a particular behavior because she is spanked probably does so because
   a. she realizes it is wrong.
   b. she fears loss of love from the adult.
   c. she is developing self-control.
   d. she is beginning to feel more independent.
5. An individual's self-image begins to develop
   a. in infancy.
   b. around two years old.
   c. when the child is about five.
   d. during adolescence.
6. Adults can exercise preventive discipline by
   a. keeping children from getting overtired or overhungry.
   b. keeping themselves rested and in good health.
   c. properly managing children's schedule.
   d. arranging children's play space appropriately.
7. Adults can begin to gradually transfer some responsibility for a child's own behavior to the child when the child is
   a. one year old.
   b. almost two years old.
   c. three years old.
   d. six years old.

Keep the ideas addressed in these Lesson Preview items in mind as you work through this lesson.
Notice if you change your mind about which answers are correct as you study this lesson.
These Lesson Preview items will be analyzed at the end of this lesson.

* * *

The first article reprinted in this lesson is from the magazine *Young Children's regular series of "Ideas That Work With Young Children." The editors of Young Children* invite caregivers and teachers to submit questions or problems for analysis in this section.

This article, titled "Avoiding 'Me Against You' Discipline," is written in answer to the following question:

> **I see why they are termed the terrible 2s. I have constant discipline problems with most of the children in my group. There are several children who give me trouble one incident on top of another. Last year I had 4-year-olds. They were not so bad, but what do you do when children *are* bad? Some of my**

coworkers do not seem to believe in discipline.

The article explains:

> *"Our profession believes in discipline, but rather than thinking of good versus bad children think of good versus bad approaches to discipline. Bad approaches to discipline diminish a child's self-esteem.*
>
> *A person's intuitive feeling of self-worth (or worthlessness) is formed at a very young age from a collection of perceptions about her body, race, intelligence, similarity to others in the peer group, socioeconomic status and other `self-images.' Probably the most major among them is the child's sense of parents' and significant others' continuing evaluation of her.*
>
> *"Every day, discipline diminishes or enhances a child's feeling of worthlessness or self-worth."*

The article discusses the effects of both bad and good discipline techniques and presents ten methods of discipline that promote self-worth. The article concludes by noting that while many things in an individual's life are totally beyond their control, it should be the adult's goal through positive discipline techniques to "give each child ever-increasing control of his life."

Ideas That Work With Young Children. Avoiding "Me Against You" Discipline

Some adults see each individual child as being at this moment "good" and at that moment "bad." It all adds up to a view of a child as, overall, either a "good child" or a "bad child": She's a good girl; he's a hateful child, a really naughty boy.

Other adults, and certainly those of us well educated in child development, think differently about children. We consider all infants, toddlers, and young children *potentially* good people, naive little people with a very small amount of experience on Earth, who have much to learn, and *a great deal of motivation to please, to be accepted, to be approved, to be loved, to be cared for.* We see young children as generally receptive to guidance and usually eager to "do it right." (There are exceptional instances, and they sure keep us from falling asleep on the job!)

It's hard to imagine a sensible adult who does not "believe in discipline." You don't find mainstream adults trained in child development, child psychology, early childhood education, or parenting who don't believe in discipline. How would a young child learn self-control, daily self-help and family/school life, how to get along with other children, values, parents' and teachers' standards, and "right from wrong" without explanations and expectations (discipline)? How would a child develop "good character"? *Our profession believes in discipline, but rather than thinking of good versus bad children thinks of good versus bad approaches to discipline.*

* ***Bad approaches to discipline*** diminish a child's self-esteem, make her feel worthless, make her feel victimized, make it impossible for her to begin to feel in control of—and to take responsibility for—some aspects of her own "destiny," make her blame "them," make her apathetic and disengaged, make her leave it all up to "fate," and make her not even try to "be good."

* ***Good approaches to discipline*** increase a child's self-esteem, allow her to feel valued, encourage her to feel cooperative, enable her to learn gradually the many skills involved in taking responsibility for some aspects of what happens to her, motivate her to change her strategy rather than to blame others, help her take initiative, help her relate successfully, and help her problem solve.

Getting into a pattern of "me against you" confrontations with a crawler, toddler, or young child of any age can only lead to failure for the adult and bad news for the child's healthy emotional development.

If the adult is doling out harsh orders, humiliating insults, or sharp smacks intended to make the child *stop* doing something (touch it, climb up it), she may superficially succeed: The giant adult is three or four times as big and strong as a young child, and the adult can terrorize the vulnerable little child, through the child's fear of loss of love and care, into compliance. But the adult will have *only* superficial success because each such incident in which the child's shaky, emerging sense of individuality and independence is crushed leaves him angry (he will get revenge) and leaves him with lowered self-confidence.

If the adult is attempting to make the child *start* doing something (eat, sleep, be friendly, learn), she will undoubtedly fail and feel frustrated. (You can lead a horse to water but ….)

So one reason not to sink to the level of fighting with a 2-year-old is that it is not likely to work even in the short term. A second reason not to resort to frequent "no-no's," arguments, put-downs, and punishments when relating to young children is that a pattern of this treatment is permanently damaging to the child's long-term self-esteem.

Self Check 5.1. True/False

___ 1. Two-year-olds are called "terrible twos" primarily because they have developed into bad or hateful children.

___ 2. Young children naturally have a deep desire to please the adults who care for them.

___ 3. Young children may stop a particular behavior when they are spanked because they fear loss of love from adult who spanked them.

___ 4. Bad approaches to discipline can make it impossible for children to begin to feel in control of their lives.

___ 5. Good approaches to discipline encourage children to begin to take responsibility for their behavior.

___ 6. Low self-esteem is consistently linked with emotional and behavioral problems.

___ 7. The way in which young children perceive that adults feel about them influences how they feel about themselves.

___ 8. Young children whose teacher or caregiver is in a bad mood will feel that she/he disapproves of them.

(1. F, 2. T, 3. T, 4. T, 5. T, 6. T, 7. T, 8. T)

Correct Statement for False Self-Check Item

Item 1 of Self Check 5.1 is false. Please read the following correct statement.

1. Two-year-olds are often called "terrible twos" because adults do not understand or appreciate children's need to begin developing independence at this age.

* * *

Methods of discipline must seldom interfere with the lifelong need for self-esteem

The search for a sense of personal worth steers much of what well-adjusted adults do (adults who have made an *unfortunate* adjustment may have *given up* the search and settled for *low* self-esteem). The search for a sense of personal worth is of pivotal importance to teenagers in their tumultuous identity struggles and is critical in the lives of small children.

Beyond providing physical care, perhaps the main child caring job of parents and other primary caregivers is providing a feeling of self-esteem to children, from earliest infancy onward. Not only adults and adolescents, but in young children and even infants, the search for a sense of personal worth motivates much of each individual's ceaseless striving to develop and maintain meaningful attachments and meaningful work. The beginnings of a sense of being a valued individual come from loving interactions between mother and infant, and from loving interactions with other primary caregivers; *and* from encouragement of initiative and independence: Mother wants me to become myself, to make choices, to do it my way, to learn to do it acceptably without having my spirit broken. Nothing is more consistently and intimately linked to a wide variety of emotional and behavioral disturbances than is a low opinion of oneself. Low self-esteem is always found in children/teens/adults who regularly do poorly in family life, friendships, school, jobs, and their lives in general.

Positive or negative self-image starts in infancy

Very early in an infant/toddler's development, before he or she has effective language, an embryonic ability to self-evaluate has begun to evolve. This is the capacity (to some people the curse) to assess the aggregate of one's feelings, behaviors, competencies, and relationships—to judge oneself. Even toddlers, in an intuitional way if not in a way they could explain, pervasively feel they are perceived as precious, a pest, clever, stupid, wonderful, naughty, capable, helpless, or whatever. Astonishingly early, babies develop a *sense* of self as good or as unable and unworthy. We know people who seem to have a weak sense of self; they seem not to know who they are, where they're going, what they want, or even what they have already accomplished. They do not appear to understand the coherence of their core *self.* Worse yet, we know people who have a strong sense of a *negative* self: They feel that at the center of themselves they are less than equal to others, a loser, deficient, dumb, unkind, unconscientious, incapable of successes—the ultimate success being that of feeling like a lovable person.

One's self-image, at all ages, but all the more so in infancy and early childhood, is dependent upon and interconnected with the judgments of higher authorities.

Adults, in many cases, will work hard without promotions or salary increases if they get encouragement, a degree of praise, and recognition from their supervisors.

Adolescents, confused as to whether they are going to be popular and make it in life, if fortunate enough to have loving and effective parents, get a significant amount of calming, stabilizing, and focus from parental conviction that *of course* they are going to find friends and mates, *of course* they are going to make it in life. In short, teenagers' positive self-image is reinforced by their parents' positive image of them.

Children will work hard in school for their teacher's approval; under normal, nonremedial circumstances, grades and stickers are not required. At the same time that parents and teachers strive to help each child develop independence, autonomy, individuality, and satisfaction in a job well done (intrinsic reward), we know that our opinion of the child, and how we convey it to her, is a critical variable in her feeling of self-worth.

The human self is not solitary, self-contained, and completely autonomous. Human beings are social animals. We live in groups, we need each other to survive, and so we care what people think of us. Largely based on what the most significant people in our early lives think of us, we develop high, adequate, or low self-esteem.

Helping infants and toddlers develop self-esteem *and* self-discipline

We can structure our spaces at home and in the center, the schedule, diet, outings, frequency of visitors, and so

on, to bring out the best in easily overwrought, easily exhausted babies and young children whose emotional and social systems quickly "short circuit" under stress. We can also structure our *own* lives to provide enough sleep, healthy food, time off, rewarding projects beyond the child, and other friends so that we can act with maximum maturity—can muster maximum patience and understanding. (Because they are egocentric, young children experience grown-ups' grumpiness as disapproval of *them*; feeling constantly disapproved of leads to low self-esteem.) All this is *preventive discipline.* Nonetheless, situations calling for limits to be set, standards to be established, and desired behaviors to be encouraged will arise with mobile infants, into-everything toddlers, and increasingly independent preschoolers. Therefore, we are continuously faced with the questions: Am I disciplining in a way that hurts or helps this child's self-esteem? Am I disciplining in a way that attempts to control (to disempower) the child or in a way that attempts to develop *self*-control in the child (personal empowerment)?

> ***Do you*** help children problem solve, predict, plan, share, cooperate, empathize, and learn to understand how to get along in the world?

Methods of discipline that promote self-worth

1. Show that you recognize and accept the reason the child is doing what, in your judgment, is the wrong thing:

"You want to play with the truck but ..."

"You like to climb but ..."

"You want me to stay with you but ..."

This validates the legitimacy of the child's desires and illustrates to the child that you are an understanding person. It also is honest from the outset: The adult is wiser, in charge, and not afraid to be the leader, and occasionally has priorities other than the child's wishes.

2. State the "but"

"You want to play with the truck but Jerisa is using it right now."

"You like to climb but this will fall and hurt you; it's my job to keep you safe."

"You want me to stay with you but now I need to (go out, help Jill, serve lunch, etc.)."

This lets the child know that others have needs too. It teaches "perspective taking" and will lead later to the child's ability to put himself in other people's shoes. It will also gain you the child's respect; you are fair. And it will make the child feel safe; you are able to keep *him* safe.

3. Offer a solution:

"Soon you can play with the truck."

One-year-olds can begin to understand "just a minute" and will wait patiently if we always follow through 60 seconds later. Two- and 3-year-olds can learn to understand "I'll tell you when it's your turn" if we always follow through within two or three minutes.

This assists children in learning how to delay gratification but is not thwarting in view of their short-term understanding of time, and teaches them to trust because you are fair.

4. Often, it's helpful to say something indicating your confidence in the child's ability and willingness to learn.

"When you get older I know you will (whatever it is you expect)."

"Next time you can (restate what is expected in a positive manner)"

This affirms your faith in the child, lets her know that you assume she has the capacity to grow and mature, transmits your belief in her good intentions, and establishes your expectation that "next time" she will do better.

5. In some situations, after firmly stating what is not to be done, you can demonstrate "how we do it," or "a better way":

"We don't hit. Pat my face gently (gently stroke)."

"Puzzle pieces are not for throwing. Let's put them in their places together" (offer help).

This sets firm limits yet helps the child feel that you two are a team, not enemies.

6. Toddlers are not easy to distract, but frequently they can be redirected to something similar but OK. Carry or lead the child by the hand, saying,

"That's the gerbil's paper. Here's Lindsay's paper."

"We don't jump in the scrub bucket. Lindsay can jump on the rug."

"Peter needs that toy. Here's a toy for Lindsay."

This endorses the child's right to choose what she will do, yet begins to teach that other people have rights too.

7. Avoid accusing. Even with babies, communicate in respectful tones and words.

This prevents lowering the child's self-image and promotes his tendency to cooperate.

8. For every "no," offer two *acceptable* choices:

"Rosie cannot bite Esther. Rosie can bite the rubber duck or the cracker."

"That book is for teachers. Jackie can have this book or this book."

This encourages the child's independence and emerging decision-making skills, but sets boundaries. Children should *never* be allowed to hurt each other. It's bad for the hurter's self-image as well as for the self-esteem of the hurt.

9. If children have enough language, assist them in expressing their feelings, including anger, and their wishes. Assist them in thinking about alternatives and in thinking of a solution to the problem. Adults should never fear children's anger.

"You hate me because you're so tired. It's hard to feel loving when you need to sleep. When you wake up, I think you'll feel more friendly."

"You feel terribly angry because I won't let you have candy. I will let you choose a banana or an apple. Which do you want?"

This encourages characteristics we want to see emerge in children, such as awareness of feelings and reasonable assertiveness, and gives children tools for solving problems without unpleasant scenes. It shows them that we are strong, so they are safe: We will not fall apart or cave in or harm them even if their rage scars *them.*

Are you a model and a gentle guide? This is the best kind of discipline because it fosters self-esteem and self-discipline.

10. Until a child is a year and a half or almost 2 years old, adults are completely responsible for his safety and comfort, and for creating the conditions that encourage "good behavior." After this age, while we are still responsible for his safety, adults increasingly, though extremely gradually, begin to transfer responsibility for behaving acceptably to the child. Adults establish firm limits and standards as needed. They start expecting the child to become aware of other people's feelings. They begin to expect the child to think simple cause/effect (consequences) thoughts, if guided quietly through the thinking process. This is teaching the rudiments of "self-discipline."

11. When talking to children 1 year old and older, give clear, simple directions in a firm, friendly voice.

This avoids confusion, miscommunication, overwhelming a person new to the art of comprehension with a blizzard of words, and resulting refusal to comply.

12. Be aware that the job of a toddler, and to an extent the job of *all* young children, is to taste, touch, smell, squeeze, tote, poke, pour, sort, explore, and *test.* At times, toddlers are greedy, at times grandiose. They do not share well; they need time to experience ownership before they are expected to share. They need to assert themselves ("No," "I can't," "I won't," and "Do it myself"). They need to separate to a degree from their parents (individuate). One way to do this is to say *no* and not to do what is asked, or to *do* what is not wanted.

If adults understand children in this age range, they will create circumstances and develop attitudes that permit and promote development. *Development includes learning self-discipline.* It's better learned through guidance than through punishment. It's better learned through a "We are a team, I am the leader, it's my job to help you grow up" approach than it is through a "me against you," self-esteem reducing, hostility-generating approach.

* * *

None of us control our own destiny. Our moment in history and our geographic place, the socioeconomic circumstances of the family we happen to be born into, disabilities or extra blessings we may find ours, our genetic inheritance and birth order, whether we have dreadful, sensational, or adequate parents, educational and other opportunities available or unavailable to us, and much, much more are matters, from an individual's point of view, of good and bad luck. But the goal of a good approach to discipline is to give each child ever-increasing control of his life.

Creating a Positive Climate Promotes Self-Discipline

The stronger a child's motivation "to be good," the more effort he will exert in this direction. Therefore, there will be fewer "me against you" situations. If the child believes *you* believe he *is* good and is *capable* of learning new aspects of being good, and if he feels that you like him, he will be easier to live with.

Creating a positive climate for the very young includes

- spending lots of leisurely time with an infant or young child;
- sharing important activities and meaningful play;
- listening and answering as an equal (not as an instructor; for example, using labeling words when a toddler points inquiringly toward something, or discussing whatever topic the 2-year-old is trying to tell you about),
- complimenting the child's efforts: "William is feeding himself!" "Juana is putting on her shoe!" (even if what you are seeing is only clumsy stabs in the right direction); and
- smiling, touching, caressing, kissing, cuddling, holding, rocking, hugging.

The young child should not have to "be good" to "earn" these indicators of caregivers' enjoyment. Children should freely be given affection and approval solely because they *exist.*

Even to babies and toddlers, it's important that we say every day

"Good morning!"

"Hi" (from time to time)

"Will you play with me?" or "Let's play _____ together."

"Come with me. We will …."

"I love you," or "You're my friend."

"Let's (sit, ride, rest, etc.) together."

"I'm glad you're in my (class, group, family)."

"I like to hug you."

Harmful, Negative Disciplinary Methods

1. Frequently saying, "Stop that!" "Don't do it *that* way!" "That's not so bad considering that *you* did it." "If it weren't for you, …."
2. Criticizing
3. Discouraging
4. Creating constant obstacles and barriers
5. Blaming, shaming
6. Saying "You always …," "You never …."
7. Using sarcastic, caustic, and cruel "humor"
8. Physical punishment
9. Using removal from the group or isolation (the time-out chair, the corner, the child's room)

Any adult might *occasionally* do any of these things. Doing any or all of them more than once in a while means that a bad approach to discipline has become a habit and urgently needs to be addressed, analyzed, and altered before the child experiences low self-esteem as a permanent part of her personality.

From "Ideas That Work With Young Children. Avoiding 'Me Against You' Discipline," 1988, *Young Children, 44*(1), pp. 24–29. Copyright © 1988 by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Reprinted by permission.

Self Check 5.2. True/False

___ 1. Telling a two-year-old who wants a toy that she can't have it because someone else is playing with it is unwise because it will only make her more angry.

___ 2. Children should freely be given approval just because they exist.

___ 3. Sarcastic remarks damage a child's self-esteem.

___ 4. One-year-olds are too young to understand "just a minute."

___ 5. Explaining that you cannot let a child use sharp-pointed scissors because they could hurt her will give her confidence that you are able to keep her safe.

___ 6. Offering help to a child can encourage him to feel that he and the adult are a team.

___ 7. Telling Ann, "Next time you can ask John for the truck" shows her that you have faith in her good intentions and capacity to learn more mature behavior.

(1. F, 2. T, 3. T, 4. F, 5. T, 6. T, 7. T)

Correct Statements for False Self-Check Items

Items 1 and 4 of Self Check 5.2 are false. Please read the following correct statements.

1. Explaining reasons to children is appropriate regardless of how young the child is. This lets the child know that others have needs too. It teaches "perspective taking" and will lead later to the child's ability to put himself in other people's shoes. It will also gain you the child's respect; you are fair. And it will make the child feel safe; you are able to keep *him* safe.

4. One-year-olds can begin to understand "just a minute" and will wait patiently if we always follow through 60 seconds later.

How Young Children Build Images of Themselves

by Francis Wardle

Self-image, the view each of us has of ourselves, is complex, multidimensional, and ever changing. It affects everything we do, and is affected by everything we do. The creation of self-image begins at birth and continues throughout a person's life. It is neither all positive nor all negative.

What is of deep interest to early childhood educators is our wish to assist in the development of a strong, independent, secure self-image in each of our children. This need of ours has resulted in some very negative ideas and practices—to name a few, showering praise and rewards on children at every turn; believing a single program, book, poster, phrase, pamphlet, or activity can inoculate a child with a positive self-image; engaging in activities with our children that form an excessive preoccupation with oneself; and believing that a minority child's self-image is totally tied to his sense of belonging to a minority group.

Self-image is based on a simple, interactive, conceptual model: the individual, the individual's interaction with the environment, the response of that environment to the individual, and the individual's interpretation of that response. But the application of this model poses some complex questions:

- Why do children interpret the response to the same environment differently?
- How does self-image build on itself?
- Which adults in the environment have the most impact on self-image (for example, bonding)?
- What does developmental age have to do with creation of self-image?

- What is the impact on self-image of minority status in this society?

Critical to a child's self-image is how the child interprets the response of the environment to her actions and involvement. When she looks in the mirror, does she say "I like myself" or is she critical? When she fails a task, does she say to herself "Here we go again" or does she say "That was an interesting experiment with unexpected results"? Meta communication—talking to ourselves—has a lot to do with the development of our self-image.

Each child has a profound impact on the creation of his own self-image: the way he behaves and responds to the environment (Is he appropriate? fun to be around? obnoxious?) and the way he evaluates information from the environment. He is an active agent in the development of his own self-image.

Clearly much of a child's self-image is based on the way society views the child. A child who feels she belongs to a family, community, and culture will develop a healthy self-image. This is why it is so critical that schools and early childhood programs support a child's home environment—culture, race, language, lifestyle, and values.

But we cannot do this at the expense of the most important ingredient of self-image: the quality of human interactions. The way important people in a child's life respond to the child's personality and behaviors is a mirror for the child's image. William Cross (1) has carefully looked at these two factors: the important human interactions in a child's life and the various groups the child belongs to. He has developed what he calls a two factor theory of self-image—a combination of personal identity and reference group orientation.

Personal identity is a concept everyone has, regardless of culture, language, nationality, or race. It includes self-esteem, self-worth, self-evaluation, interpersonal competence, personality traits, and physical characteristics. Reference group orientation includes the various groups a person belongs to: church, school, race, community, family, gender, and racial identity and gender image. It also includes the symbols and values of those groups.

While Cross believes self-image is based on an interaction between personal identity and reference group orientation, he does not believe one is predictive of the other: a person who has a strong sense of group belonging does not necessarily have a strong personal identity.

But it is also clear much of a child's personal identity is determined by the way the environment responds to the characteristics the child has, based on his group belonging (gender, race, family lifestyle, religion). For example, if a program does not support a child's home language, that will impact self-image. If a child does not see pictures, books, and people in his program that look like him, that too will affect his self-image. And if a child is prevented from participating in a celebration because of his family's religious choice, this will have a negative impact.

What is important about the two factor model is to realize these impacts are important because they affect the individual child. A child's positive self-image is based on how the child sees herself; it is not based on how the child sees herself in reference to racial, ethnic, gender, economic, or other groups. This is particularly true of young children, who have not yet formed a clear concept of racial consistency and group membership. What is critical are positive, meaningful responses to the individual child, not to the group the child belongs to. A girl who builds a fantastic structure in the block area is competent as an individual, not as a girl; a biracial child who is complimented for his rich brown skin, blond hair, and green eyes is receiving positive feedback about his unique physical features.

Self-image is based on the continual resolution of two often conflicting parts: the way the world views the child (physical features, behavior, likability, temperament) and the way the child views himself. Because young children go through various cognitive and social stages in which they view the world and themselves through particular prisms, this resolution is a continuous growth process. One of our biggest roles as parents and teachers is to continually help our children resolve this apparent conflict.

While our total interactions with our children impact this resolution, it is helpful to break what we do into four general themes: love and acceptance, power and control, moral virtue, and competence (2). Early childhood educators are particularly interested in positively impacting self-image while children are with them; yet we do a disservice to our children if we divorce that experience from the child's total life. These concepts are applicable at home, at the program, and in the community.

Love and Acceptance

Is the child accepted as a unique, worthy individual? Does the child feel she belongs? Does she feel people care about her and her experiences?

We can build feelings of love and acceptance by:

- Providing high levels of support and nurturing at all times.
- Providing appropriate and consistent limits.
- Providing praise and acknowledgment for completing specific tasks.
- Letting children know you love them based on their unique personality. "It's fun being with you." "I'm glad you came shopping with me." "I like having someone to talk to."
- Engaging in projects with your child that show her you enjoy her company.
- Giving each child your undivided, personal attention as much as you can.

Power and Control

Does a child feel he has some control of his life, and of his destiny? Does he feel his destiny is under his control or someone else's?

We can develop feelings of power and control by:

- Providing lots of opportunities for choice.
- Providing meaningful projects and activities a child can participate in: building a fort, growing a garden, doing a cooking project, completing a painting.
- Providing many opportunities for children to explore, investigate, hypothesize, wonder, and develop alternative solutions to practical and intellectual problems.
- Helping children develop their own ability to decide if they are satisfied with their effort and its result. Help them self-evaluate.
- Teaching problem-solving techniques.
- Providing high expectations and challenges.
- Letting children know you believe they can succeed.
- Encouraging children to develop their own rules, based on their abilities, to control certain activities.

Moral Value

Does the child basically feel good? Does she believe she is being treated fairly? Does she believe that, fundamentally, she is a good person? Does she believe she belongs?

We can develop feelings of moral value by:

- Making sure that all interactions with adults (teachers, parents, coaches) are characterized by mutual respect, cooperation, empathy, and fairness.
- Limiting extrinsic rewards, like money, stickers.
- Helping children constructively handle failure and disappointment.
- Providing opportunities for children to persist and expend effort in projects meaningful to the child.
- Providing many opportunities for children to work together cooperatively and in groups.
- Providing opportunities for children to do things for other people, the school, or the community (visiting seniors, cleaning up the playground for the whole school).
- Criticizing the child's behavior, not the child, when you need to limit or criticize a child.
- Never comparing the child with other participants (family, team, class) in any group of which she is a part. Helping her feel like an important part of the group.

Competence

Does the child feel he can do a variety of things other children his age can accomplish? Does he believe it is worth attempting a task, even if it cannot be fully completed?

We can support feelings of competence by:

- Basing expectations on the individual child's age and abilities.
- Doing as many instructive things with your child as possible.
- Understanding that overcoming problems and developing solutions are important competencies that build self-image.
- Supporting interpersonal competence—solving problems with other children.
- Providing acknowledgment and appropriate praise for completing specific tasks.
- Rewarding effort and risk-taking.
- Helping children learn new skills and concepts and building on existing skills, but not expecting them to be able to do tasks as well as adults.

Conclusion

Developing a healthy, secure self-image is a life-long, complex, elusive phenomena. It is not a linear process. It is fluid and dynamic. It is constantly changing and shifting. And it ultimately involves how a person feels about herself, both as an individual and as a responsible member of overlapping social groups: family, church, profession, race, culture, and nation. Child care professionals have a vital role to play in the early development of our children's strong and positive self-images.

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Responding Professionally and Compassionately to Challenging Behavior

by Karen Stephens

It's around 3 PM. It's been a long day. I'm tired; the kids are rambunctious. Why not? They're energized from nap! (When will we adults ever learn to join in?)

It's a typical "making the transition to snack time" afternoon. Even the telephone rings on cue to complete the cacophony. It's the editor of this fine magazine, "Karen, tell me about difficult kids." Instant reaction: "I'll fax you first and last names in five minutes."

No, I'd never break confidentiality rules by divulging names! But my point is, I could name names. And when I conferred with our teaching staff about difficult children, we came up with the very same names!

There are children who are so challenging of our every decision, so demanding of emotional reserves and physical stamina, so intent on testing our commitment to consistency, that they leave a very vivid impression … for life … or at least a career.

If you've been to even one self-esteem or positive discipline workshop, you know the dangers of labeling kids. They live up to the labels we bestow! Research (and common sense) warns us of the pitfalls of name-calling. Most teachers avoid pigeon-holing children with unflattering and stereotypical adjectives. We've struck most "isms" from our language. But there's a descriptor still politically correct among early childhood professionals: "The difficult child."

We haven't eradicated that phrase from staff meetings, late night discussions with family members, co-worker parties, or even parent conferences. With one scathing word, "difficult," we sum up a child's past, current, and future personality and behavior as if it has little hope of refinement or redefinition.

The frustrating thing about this is the word is just so useful! Entering the break room, a teacher puts hand to forehead and laments (her voice reeking exasperation): "Tony is such a difficult child …." Instant commiseration pours out to her. Every teacher in the room knows exactly what she's talking about.

I'm ashamed I still find the descriptor on the tip of my tongue. You know, when a child's behavior really begins to wear on you, the label creeps into your consciousness like a chant: Difficult, difficult, difficult. Before you know it, the whole staff is hoping the parents discontinue enrollment before the child moves up to their room. But how are we to cope with children who are so hard to live with if we can't describe them honestly? And difficult is often the most honest descriptor!

Research Sheds Light on Temperament

Since the 1960s, research has shown that, from birth, each of us has a basic temperament. That means each of us is born with a predisposed way of responding to physical environment, events, and interactions with others. The style of responding tends to remain stable throughout life.

Researchers (most notably Stella Chase and Alexander Thomas) identified three basic temperaments: easy, slow to warm up, and difficult (with variations in each of the three broad categories).

Temperaments are determined by analyzing children's typical behavior related to: activity level, predictable biological schedules (rhythmicity), responses to novelty and change (approach/withdrawal), adaptability, intensity of reaction, sensitivity to stimuli (responsiveness threshold), mood, attention span, and distractibility.

Within each category, there is a continuum or gradation of behaviors. For instance, in terms of activity level, children may be very active, mildly active, or extremely passive. As you might guess, children of "easy" temperament fall at one end of the continuum. "Difficult" children fall at the extreme other end.

It's important to remember that children do not "choose" temperament, and parents don't bestow temperament by way of child-rearing. A better way to think of it is that we all react to children's innate temperament. We influence how they cope with their own temperament, but children are not taught or "given" temperament.

Temperament is a function of biological development. It is affected by random organization of genes, chemicals, and hormones. It is also affected by prenatal exposure to drugs, such as cocaine and alcohol (since drugs ingested by the mother affect the development of the nervous system of the fetus).

Characteristics of Temperamentally Difficult Children

So, parents have been proven correct. Siblings born to the same parents, reared in very similar ways, can still be—in terms of behavior and personality—as different as night and day. Temperament at least partially explains this phenomenon.

Temperament doesn't make a child good or bad. It just influences a child's particular style of approaching the world. The challenge for teachers is to recognize children's unique temperament characteristics and then find ways to cope and respond to them constructively. The degree to which the teacher achieves this will affect the quality of teacher-child relationships and interactions. It will also influence children's self-esteem and mastery of positive social skills.

Following are characteristics associated with temperamentally difficult children. They are important to be aware of so you can better analyze classroom incidents and why they occur. But of equal value, being aware of these characteristics will help you re-

spond to children's behavior with compassion rather than disdain and resentment.

- **High activity levels.** These children MOVE … a lot! They are often loud. It's hard for them to control impulses in group time. Active play can escalate out of a child's control.

- **Easily overstimulated.** They have intense reactions to sensations. They're hesitant about tasting new foods. Loud, unexpected sounds and color overwhelm them. Intense or prolonged eye contact causes them to withdraw, resist, or move away. They may enjoy cuddling, but not for long or intense periods. Some children have strong preferences (and dislikes!) for varying fabrics of clothing. (A five-year-old girl once cried all day because her corduroy dress "just didn't feeeeeel right." Oh, and she hated it because it was plaid. I had to coax her into the classroom amidst her repeated wail: "My mom made me wear this ugly dress!!!")

- **Overwhelmed by change and novelty.** They're easily caught off guard by changes in schedules and routines. Field trips and special visitors can throw them into a tizzy! Parents visiting the classroom confuse and bewilder them. Fire drills ruin their day. You get the idea.

- **Decisive, adamant, and intense reactions.** These children don't just have opinions, ideas, or "druthers." They know what they want, and they want it NOW! They can be incredibly persistent and single-minded. It's very hard for them to take anyone else's perspective.

- **Easily distracted OR incredibly focused.** These children may need a lot of reminders to stay on task. They bore easily. Their focus can be diverted from activities by something as simple as a fly or a stain spied on another child's shoe. However, when something grabs their attention, they can tune everything (and everyone!) out and become oblivious to regular routines. Thus, they require many reminders of what is going on around them.

- **Adapt slowly to change.** Transitions that are not smooth and predictable throw them off schedule for the whole day. They don't ease back into routines after playing outside. It's very hard for them to shift gears from active play to quiet play. They are very wary of new caregivers, volunteers, and children. They have a hard time calming themselves after active play, parent separations, temper tantrums, or tears.

- **Irregular biological rhythms and schedules.** Hunger fluctuates day to day, so they often don't want to eat during regular meal times. Digestion can be a problem. Potty training can be difficult due to irregular bowel patterns. Nap time can be a challenge because sleep is hard to achieve as well as maintain.

- **Rapid, sometimes intense, mood swings.** Triggers for mood swings are often hard to identify. A child may be laughing one minute and in a violent temper tantrum the next. Anger flares up and quickly becomes uncontrollable. Frustration often leaves these children literally curled up in a ball on the floor with tears flowing.

Implications for Teachers

Facing the facts of life in child care. Yes, it's true. Temperamentally difficult children pose unique challenges, especially in a group setting. Let's face it, child care is stimulating in terms of peers and materials. Current staff turnover rates don't bode well for consistency. Children who are extremely sensitive to noise, color, and social interactions may do better in a very small center, a day care home, or with an in-home nanny.

Confronting childhood stresses. By being aware of and sensitive to the stresses endured by your students, you'll find it easier to be compassionate with them. A child care center with predictable, well-balanced activities and routines can be a haven for all children, but especially children who struggle with life's harder issues.

And as you show compassion for the children, I hope you save some for yourself as well. There are many times when you'll feel like a failure when dealing with challenging children. But remember, even when you are successful in creating a stable, secure, and comforting classroom environment, this may not be the case in children's homes.

Even the best of teachers or the best of child care centers cannot make up for a home environment that is chaotic, experiencing pangs of poverty, struggling with the anxiety of separation and divorce, ridden with domestic or neighborhood violence, or tainted by substance abuse. Homes such as these are especially difficult for challenging children to thrive in. In a very real sense, teachers experience the fall-out of such conditions when children enter their classroom each day.

Facing ourselves. Difficult children test the true character of teachers. When a teacher is tired or overwhelmed by group size, it's easy to take difficult children's behavior personally. It takes patience, discipline, and professionalism to rise above holding grudges against children who aren't "easy" through no fault of their own.

Remember that each of us is born with a temperament which lasts throughout life. Teachers must take time for self-reflection to determine how their own temperament is affecting their relationship with their "difficult" student.

In an ideal world, difficult children would only be assigned to "easy" teachers who are temperamentally blessed by nature with endless understanding and adaptability. But, in reality, teachers who have trouble coping with change are caring for children with the very same challenge. This highlights the need for teachers to be self-aware, objective, and analytical. Is the child the source of classroom conflict, or is it the teacher?

For a teacher, facing oneself with brutal honesty is often the biggest challenge of all! But it's often the secret to solving classroom behavior problems.

Being ethical. Professionals must resist the urge to "gossip" about challenging children. Whether in staff meetings or at the local pub, concerns about children's behavior should focus on problem solving. It should be geared to establishing goals for a child's continued development (as well as our own). Discussion should focus on positive expectations rather than exacerbating a problem by letting staff's frustration fester beyond reasonable bounds.

The urge to "warn" substitutes, aides, or volunteers about children's inappropriate behavior conveys a defeatist attitude. A more ethical approach is to share tips for helping each child cope most easily within the classroom setting. After all, each is an individual. Each, regardless of temperament, has "challenging" moments. You can help substitutes have successful days in your classroom by telling them *what works* with children rather than focusing on how the children, especially the challenging ones, "don't work."

Focus on partnerships with parents. "Sometimes I just want to rush in here and tell you what a wonderful person Juanita can be." Thus pleaded a parent we were conferring with on a daily basis about her child's behavior.

It was obvious she was tired of hearing about problems. It was our cue to reassure her that we, too, thought her child was a wonderful person—a person we could celebrate as part of our classroom.

In future parent discussions, we focused more on Juanita's positive behavior. But, at the same time, we continued talking about new ways to help her learn more constructive social skills. We shared books and articles with the parent. We referred her to local parent workshops.

Most importantly, we listened to her perceptions of her child's behavior and its possible causes. After all, parents are the most important people in children's lives. Often, but not always, they can be very objective and insightful when dealing with a topic as important as their child's development.

Dealing Constructively with Difficult Behavior

Raising Your Spirited Child by Mary Sheedy Kurcinka helped me rethink children with challenging behaviors. Being an early childhood teacher and a mother of a "difficult" child herself, she has a lot of credibility.

To focus on the strengths and positive aspects of "difficult" temperament, she coined the term "spirited child." She urges us not to negatively categorize children simply because their nature is more intense. She reminds us that children who are vocal and adamant may someday be great defense lawyers. The ability to tune out all but one thought may ultimately serve a child well who aspires to be a scientist or competitive athlete.

Yes, I think she thought up a wonderful phrase to replace "difficult child" in our vocabulary. A spunky, spirited child doesn't fit into a classroom as seamlessly as a laid-back, go-with-the-flow, "easy temperament" child. But you have to admit, they bring a lot of spice to life. By helping them make the most of their unique characteristics, we also nurture professional growth in ourselves. The compassion we extend to these children today will influence the quality of their lives into the future.

Responding to Spirited Children

With the hope of bringing out the best in ALL children, here are some tips for responding to the spirited children who grace your classroom with their energy.

- Maintain a predictable daily schedule. Privately warn children of changes in routine.
- Give children simple, step-by-step directions when guiding them through activities or routines.
- Because these children get overwhelmed when given too many choices, limit the number of activities offered at one time in one area. Limit the number of choices during a particular activity. (Needless to say, this is very hard to do while still allowing other children to have choices they are able to handle!)
- Work in small groups as much as possible. Make a concerted effort to make your classroom less overwhelming and stimulating. Rotate toys and materials. Leave more white space on walls. Keep noise and voice levels steady.
- Make sure all activities are developmentally appropriate. Successful experiences with hands-on materials are especially important for these children.
- If children begin losing control or being overwhelmed, provide more structure. This can be achieved by offering fewer choices and providing more specific directions to follow. While some children flourish with creativity when offered open-ended activities, these children may flounder. It takes a wise teacher to make the distinction.
- Document problematic behaviors in a daily log. Analyze log entries. Can you identify what

triggers antisocial behavior such as hitting, kicking, or tantrums? Can the classroom be modified to eliminate or reduce the triggers?

- Create cozy, secluded corners (inside and outside) so children can remove themselves when necessary from the overstimulation of group living.

- Become skilled in managing smooth transitions between activities.

- Rehearse any changes that can be anticipated. For instance, before a field trip, role play procedures that will be followed.

- Include movement in activities whenever possible. Make sure movement opportunities are scheduled throughout the day.

- Be respectful of children's preferences in terms of tastes, textures, etc. Don't force a child to put his hands in water, play dough, or sand if he vehemently dislikes the texture. With time and gradual exposure, the child will learn to adjust to and enjoy sensory variations. This requires teachers to be understanding.

- Coach children toward self-control. Every child can be impulsive, but especially spirited children. Teaching them self-discipline is imperative. Helping them master language for expression of feelings and desires will help them gain positive social skills. Positive discipline techniques must be consistently applied.

- Choose your battles wisely. Avoid power struggles. When disciplining, use clear direction and enforce limits with reasonable, related, and respectful consequences. Avoid overreacting, raising your voice, and issuing ultimatums. Deal with behavior problems calmly and matter-of-factly. This will help the child gain control and trust in your support and guidance.

- Hold frequent parent conferences to coordinate classroom practices with home practice. Parents can often give teachers helpful hints for dealing with children's behavior and vice versa.

- Focus on the child's strengths. Look for the positive. Comment on adaptive, admirable behaviors and traits so you are an uplifting influence. Name-calling and labeling children as "troublemakers" make you an accomplice to creating a child's negative self-image. I'm sure that's not the legacy you want to leave children.

- When YOU become overwhelmed and drained, seek the counsel of a supportive friend or co-worker. Finding someone you trust who will just listen can give you the release you need to face the next day with an optimistic attitude.

* * *

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Self Check 5.3. True/False

___ 1. A child's temperament is determined by the parents' interactions with the child.

___ 2. The teacher's own temperament influences how she or he responds to children.

___ 3. Children who are extremely sensitive to noise and other external stimuli tend to do well in the typical active early childhood program environment.

___ 4. A predictable daily schedule is extremely important for children who have particular difficulty adjusting to change.

___ 5. Giving simple, step-by-step directions is especially helpful when guiding spirited children through new activities or routines.

___ 6. Spirited children cope more easily in a fairly unstructured environment.

___ 7. Positive guidance techniques are essential for helping spirited children learn to cope.

___ 8. Helping children master language to express their feelings and desires will help them gain positive social skills.

(1. F, 2. T, 3. F, 4. T, 5. T, 6. F, 7. T, 8. T)

Correct Statements for False Self-Check Items

Items 1, 3, and 6 of Self Check 5.3 are false. Please read the following correct statements.

1. From birth, each person has a basic temperament. People do not choose their temperament, temperament is not determined by parents' interactions with the child, and people cannot change their temperament. Temperament remains stable throughout the person's life.

Parents and teachers can influence how children cope with difficult features of their temperament by

- understanding each individual child's temperament traits,
- providing an environment that suits the individual child's needs,
- focusing on the positive features of the child's temperament,
- responding constructively (rather than negatively) to the child,
- avoiding unrealistic expectations of the child, and
- helping the child learn to adapt certain behaviors and master social skills in order to conform to social demands the child will inevitably face.

3. Children who are extremely sensitive to noise and other external stimuli often find a busy classroom environment overwhelming. These children are often more comfortable in a small center, a day care home, or with in-home care.

6. Spirited children who tend to lose control or easily become overwhelmed cope better in a more structured environment. Limiting the number of choices presented at one time is recommended for children who are overwhelmed by novelty and change.

Analyzing the Preview

Go back and re-read the Lesson 5 Preview items. See if the answers you believe are best now are the same as the answers you chose before you studied this lesson. The paragraphs below explain which answers are best and discuss why the other answers are inappropriate.

Item 1. Answers *b, c,* and *d,* are true. Adults who have unrealistic expectations of two-year-olds who don't understand the difference between discipline methods that harm a child's self-esteem and discipline methods that increase a child's self-esteem will almost surely become frustrated children's growing need for independence at this age. Two-year-olds' behavior that is often labeled "bad" is far more often their mistaken effort, based on inexperience and lack of skills, to meet their very real needs. They need *guidance,* not punishment.

Item 2. The more adults know about child development, the more likely they will be to realize that answers *b, c,* and *d,* are true and the less likely they will be to label children "good" or "bad" (answer *a*). All young children are potentially good people who are highly motivated to please and to be accepted and approved of. Because of their limited experience, they will behave inappropriately sometimes.

Item 3. Answers *a, b,* and *c* are correct. Good discipline teaches children self-control and standards for behavior, including how to get along with other children. Bad discipline methods teach children to fear punishment.

Item 4. Answer *b* is correct. Any compliance that an adult gets from a child as a result of harsh discipline results from the child's fear—fear of loss of love or care or fear of punishment.

Young children do not have an internal sense of right and wrong (answer *a*). Harsh punishment crushes their sense of independence (answer *d*) and hinders their development of self-control (answer *c*).

Item 5. An individual's self-image begins to develop in infancy (answer *a*).

Item 6. All four answers are ways in which adults can exercise preventive discipline.

Item 7. Adults can begin to gradually transfer some responsibility for his own behavior to a child when the child is almost two years old (answer *b*).

Before this age (answer *a*), adults are completely responsible for creating the conditions that encourage "good behavior." This "gradual transfer" will begin with establishing firm limits and behavioral standards, helping the child become aware of other people's feelings, and guiding the child to understand simple cause and effect situations (consequences).

However, the adults are still primarily responsible for the conditions that encourage "good behavior" and will continue to have this responsibility until the child is much, much older.

Lesson 5 Quiz

Please read Lesson 5 two times before attempting its quiz. When you have finished reading this lesson, return to **My Courses** within your Account at www.CareCourses.com and open your course file to access the Online Quiz for this lesson.

Lesson 6

Adult-Child Interactions

Learning Objectives

In Lesson 6 you will learn:

- three levels of adult involvement with children
- how an adult's presence can have a stabilizing effect on children's feelings and behaviors
- what is meant by an adult's *facilitative intervention* in children's activities
- under what circumstances facilitative intervention by an adult is helpful to children
- when an adult's shared participation in children's activities is appropriate
- the importance of physical contact for young children
- some ways in which spontaneous conversations are beneficial to young children
- nurturing ways in which to give children compliments
- nurturing ways to offer children assistance
- ways to help children learn to take turns
- ways to help children understand and follow rules

* * *

Lesson 6 Preview

Circle the letter of the best answer(s) for each of the following items:

1. Focusing on and recording adult-child interactions is a teaching skill that is appropriate for
   a. students of child development.
   b. child development psychologists.
   c. early childhood facility directors.
   d. all early childhood professionals..

2. If a teacher or caregiver needs to attend to a task that would keep her from being *directly involved* with a group of children, she or he should
   a. save the task until the children go home.
   b. be aware of what the children are doing.
   c. be available to help if needed.
   d. get another teacher while she does the task.

3. When a young child who is involved in a task experiences some difficulty, the adult's best response is to
   a. leave the child alone to figure it out herself.
   b. complete the task for the child.
   c. offer a suggestion or clarification that will guide the child to success.

4. When a teacher or caregiver is participating in an activity with children, she or he
   a. should not be too directive.
   b. can provide a language model.
   c. can model turn taking.
   d. can guide the children's learning.

5. Spontaneous conversation is appropriate
   a. when children are doing routine activities.
   b. when children are playing.
   c. even before children can use words.
   d. when children are at all levels of language development.

6. Most young children
   a. should have adult assistance in almost everything they do.
   b. resist assistance from the adult.
   c. need opportunities to do things all by themselves.
   d. enjoy giving assistance to the teacher or caregiver and to other children.

* * *

Keep the ideas addressed in these Lesson Preview items in mind as you work through this lesson.
Notice if you change your mind about which answers are correct as you study this lesson.
These Lesson Preview items will be analyzed at the end of this lesson.

* * *

In this lesson you will read the article "Childrearing Interactions Within Developmental Home- or Center-Based Early Education" by Carol D. Klass. The central theme of Dr. Klass's article is: ***teachers and caregivers are childrearers; positive interaction patterns matter.*** The everyday interactions between children and their teachers and/or caregivers are the foundations of young children's development.

The data in this article are based on observations made by Dr. Klass in both center-based and home-based child care facilities. She explains that observing and recording the social transactions between adults and children can help teachers and caregivers improve how they relate to the children in their care. In the first section of her article, Dr. Klass discusses three distinct forms of adult-child interaction found in her observations: *Shared participation,* engaging in an activity with children; *stabilizing presence,* just being nearby but not directly interacting; and *facilitative intervention,* stepping in to help, then bowing out again. She notes that good teachers use all three types of interaction and know when each type is most appropriate.

* * *

Childrearing Interactions Within Developmental Home- or Center-Based Early Education*

by Carol S. Klass

Caregivers are childrearers. Positive interaction patterns matter!

Traditionally, love and authority patterns within families have been the vehicle for the young child's development of self and the incorporation of society's values and practices. (2, 3, 5, 13, 15) An ever increasing number of very young children spend 8 to 10 hours, 5 days a week, for more than a few years, in home- or center-based child care. Therefore, adults other than family members are developmentally significant. This is true even for children who attend half-day preschool programs, though possibly less so. Just as in a family, the love and authority patterns demonstrated through daily childrearing interactions in preschool and child care are especially important in the development of the young child's feelings, behaviors, and values.

These subtle, ever-changing interactions of childrearing often are taken for granted and thus are extremely hard to depict, therefore to teach or to practice. Yet defining and discussing these subtleties is essential to grasping the meaning of *quality* developmental care and education, whether the interactions take place in home-based child care or in group programs. In fact, more and more child development specialists believe that *the nature of child-adult interactions is one of the most important variables in determining whether early childhood education programs are high or low quality.*

This article examines positive childrearing interactions in an out-of-family child care setting. (There are certainly negative interactions, too, but we do not seek to promote them!) A conceptual model of the levels of adult involvement with children, and specific patterns of adult-child interactions will be presented. There are other instruments for looking at adult-child interactions (see list at end of article ["Some additional adult-child interaction analysis guides"]). This model has been derived by the author through 6 months of *participation observation* research in center-based child care (10) and 1 year of twice weekly current action research in home-based child care (11). This article examines distinctly different patterns and urges *more* early childhood teachers and supervisors to notice—even to *record*—this variety of helpful interactions. Noticing and recording *constructive* interactions is one way to notice and eliminate *undesirable* transactions between adults and children.

Levels of adult involvement with children

Parents occasionally leave their toddlers and preschoolers in order to complete household tasks in a different room. However, early childhood educators always must be in the vicinity of the children when they are awake—*first,* to ensure safety, and *second,* to observe the children and be available to them.

Three levels of involvement are common in competent child care. These three levels differ in the *amount* of adult involvement (see Table 1 at the end of this article).

- The adult can be near the children but not directly relating to them—this role is called *stabilizing presence.*
- An adult can enter the children's activity, interact with them, and then leave—moving in and out of children's experience we will call *facilitative intervention.*
- An adult can be a total participant in children's activity—that is termed *shared participation.*

In all three levels of adult involvement, a competent caregiver observes the children—is focused on their actions and words—much of the time. These three levels of involvement with children will be discussed briefly with illustrations from the observation records of the Therapeutic Family Day Care Project.

The Therapeutic Family Day Care Project is an early prevention/treatment program for young children at risk of maltreatment. A series of collaborative action research projects is central to it. The ongoing observational records of caregivers and project staff are one major aspect of this research effort. Staff regularly visit providers' homes and record the actions, words, and activities of children and providers. Weekly, providers maintain observational notes on each child under their care. Providers and project staff give written feedback

*Numbers in parentheses refer to numbered notes at the end of this article.

to each other on these observations and meet twice monthly to discuss ongoing project events.

Whereas students of child development and developmental psychology are expected to develop skills in child observation and anecdotal record keeping, many home- and center-based caregivers have not had this training. Because the adult-child relationship is a crucial component of quality child care, focusing on and tracking adult-child interactions is a teaching skill worth developing for all caregivers, including primary grade teachers.

Stabilizing presence

When young children are involved in an activity, the caregivers' presence has an affirming and stabilizing effect on the children's feelings and behaviors. (4, 8, 16) When the caregiver is nearby, the children know that she or he is interested in them, is available to help if needed, and can share in their delight.

Family child care providers sometimes prepare food while children complete table activities such as crayoning, gluing, dough clay sculpture, or cutting magazine pictures. Similarly, a provider may fold laundry, dust, or complete some other household task close to the playing children. When engaged in these household tasks, the adult is available and can be responsive to children's needs. Often this kind of adult involvement shifts to more involved levels, because invariably a child eagerly wants to assist. For example, many children love to help vacuum or fold towels. Like home-based child care people, preschool and center-based child care teachers often are in the vicinity of playing children, yet are not directly interacting with them; a teacher may be reading a story to three children but be *aware* of five other children at the nearby art table.

Facilitative intervention

Beyond being a presence, an early childhood educator has many opportunities to enter *into* the children's experience, interact with them, and then depart from the activity. Sometimes adults step into a child's world to give orders. That is not what is meant here. This kind of moving in and out of children's play, called *facilitative intervention,* offers children more support than a mere presence, but it is not intrusive. In her involvement, the adult can affirm, extend, redirect, expand, and/or clarify the young children's experience.

> *Jeff (30 months) is seated at the kitchen table. Sally, the caretaker, gives Jeff a dish tub containing cornmeal and rice, several small coffee spoons, and plastic funnels of various sizes. Sally places her son Josh (3 months) on the table in his infant seat. She begins to cook spaghetti.*
>
> *Jeff pours the cornmeal mixture into a funnel, holds it high, and watches the mixture fall into the tub. Sally says to Jeff, "You are putting it into the top of the funnel and where does it go?" Jeff replies as he points to the tub, "Down here." The fourth time he does this the mixture does not all out of the funnel. As Sally watches Jeff from the stove area, she suggests, "Let's try a bigger funnel." Jeff uses the larger funnel, and as the mixture falls into the tub, he gleefully says, "It works!" He then begins covering the spoons with the mixture.*

Jeff is absorbed in the task of filling funnels and watching the mixture slip through. In her conversation with Jeff, Sally calls attention to spatial relations included in the task. When Jeff encounters a problem with the funnel, Sally suggests a strategy to solve his problem. As Jeff explores this new sensory experience, Sally is noticing so she can extend and clarify the learning he is doing through play.

Shared Participation

Often an early educator and children will participate actively together in a project. This involvement is called *shared participation.* Shared participation usually occurs in adult-initiated activities such as story reading, singing, cooking together, or playing games. The danger is being too directive. When children are *very* young, an adult often joins in an activity as a full participant to assist the child in completing the task (puzzles, pegs, and pegboards). The observation notes of our providers identify many types of shared participation in adult-directed projects.

- "Cooking: [making] muffins, butter, pie dough, yogurt popsicles, instant pudding, [and] peeling carrots"
- "Playing peek-a-boo behind the trees"
- "Singing together in the car [while going home]"
- "Role playing *Three Billy Goats Gruff* together"

Such activities offer young children social experiences of shared enjoyment and enable them to develop a sense of *self-in-relation-to-others.* In her shared participation, the caregiver is a significant guide for learning. She can affirm the young child's involvement, provide a language model, model turn taking, and add props or give a suggestion to extend a make-believe sequence.

> *Margaret, a caregiver, and Chris (4 ½ years) and his sister Jill (2 ½ years) have just made dough clay. They are seated at the kitchen table. Margaret's son Stan (15 months) sits on her lap. Chris takes a large amount of dough. Margaret then gives Jill some dough and takes some for herself. Seated on his mother's lap, Stan is stirring small pieces of dough that are left in the bottom of the large bowl.*
>
> *As he rolls the dough, Chris says, "I think I can make a snake." Margaret exclaims, "A snake. That's a good idea! That's a big one!" Chris says, "Look how long it is!" As he speaks, he continues to roll the dough. Margaret adds, "And thin too." Jill begins to roll*

a small piece of dough and says, "Lookeeeeee! A snake." Margaret repeats, "Snake. Jill does it look like anything else?" Jill does not respond and Margaret suggests, "Maybe a rope." Jill smiles and nods yes.

Chris takes small pieces of Jill's dough as he says to her, "Can I have that?" He already has most of the dough in front of him. Margaret suggests, "Chris, why don't you let Jill have that." She points to a small amount of dough. Chris replies, "I'm making a big castle!" He gives his sister the small amount of dough as he continues to form the large clump in front of him. Margaret responds, "Thank you, Chris." As Chris forms the dough, Margaret says appreciatively, "It looks like a moat around the castle." Chris comments, "This is a water castle." Margaret says, "A water castle." Chris explains, "It's floating in the water."

The children form shapes with their dough, and Margaret makes a jack-o-lantern with her own dough. Chris and Jill make a variety of forms as they talk for more than 20 minutes with each other and with Margaret.

As the children mold their dough, Margaret expresses delight in their projects. "That's a good idea! That's a big one!" As Margaret listens to Chris identify his forms—"water castle"—Chris is stimulated to continue describing his creation—"It's floating in the water." Typical of a 2-year-old, Jill makes clumps and rolls with her dough. Occasionally she imitates her brother in naming her forms—a snake—and Margaret extends this toddler's thinking—"maybe a rope." All this may sound trivial, but these everyday interactions are the foundations of young children's development. As she participates with the children, Margaret also avoids potential disputes by suggesting that Chris give his sister a small amount of dough rather than take all of it. This can be considered *preventive discipline.*

Self Check 6.1. True/False

___ 1. Interactions between teachers and caregivers and children are one of the most important factors in determining the quality of early childhood education programs.

___ 2. Noticing constructive adult-child interactions can help a teacher or caregiver to discontinue undesirable interactions.

___ 3. It is permissible for teachers or caregivers in child care facilities to leave young children alone in a room while they are awake for short periods of time.

___ 4. When a teacher or caregiver is involved with a task and not directly involved with a group of children, those children should not bother the teacher or caregiver.

___ 5. The adult's presence has a stabilizing effect on children's feelings and behaviors.

___ 6. Facilitative intervention means that the adult does the task for the child.

___ 7. Shared participation means that the adult is actively involved in a task with the children.

___ 8. Knowing the degree of adult involvement in children's activities that is most beneficial at any particular time is an important teacher/caregiver skill.

(1. T, 2. T, 3. F, 4. F, 5. T, 6. F, 7. T, 8. T)

Correct Statements for False Self-Check Items

Items 3, 4, and 6 of Self Check 6.1 are false. Please read the following correct statements.

3. The teacher or caregiver must **never** leave a child alone in a room while the child is awake, both to ensure the child's safety and also to be available to the child.

4. The teacher or caregiver should always be available to help children when needed, regardless of what task the adult is involved in.

6. Facilitative intervention means that the adult enters into children's activity to provide support—to affirm, extend, redirect, expand and/or clarify the children's experience. The adult interacts with the children as needed and then withdraw from the activity. Facilitative intervention does *not* mean that the adult takes over children's activity or performs the task for the children.

* * *

In the second section of her article, Dr. Klass identifies and discusses six teaching skills that teachers and caregivers need to develop in order to help young children: providing physical contact, carrying on a simple, spontaneous conversation with children, praising children's accomplishments, providing assistance to children, structuring turn taking, and helping children understand and follow rules.

* * *

Adult-child interaction patterns

Within these levels of positive adult involvement with children are six distinct patterns of adult-child interaction: *physical intimacy, spontaneous conversation, praise, assistance, structured turn taking,* and *understanding/following rules* (see Table 2 at the end of this article). These patterns of adult-child interaction occur in various situations with a variety of caregivers and are *central* to quality developmental child care.

Physical intimacy

While receiving physical comfort when upset, in spontaneous giving and receiving of physical affection, and during informal snuggling in an adult's lap, young children experience intimacy with a caring adult. Frequently a toddler climbs onto a nearby grownup's lap, cuddles for a few moments, and returns to play with other children. These brief cuddling episodes

seem to offer toddlers needed support, as if the child were "refueling" for further play. (4)

In any excellent program for very young children, children and providers frequently initiate spontaneous hugging. Providers' observation records give evidence of many episodes of adult/child physical intimacy.

- "Loves climbing on my lap with a book."
- "I was the horsie on all fours. They were the cowboys."
- "Loves when David [provider's husband] roughhouses with them."
- "Lately she seems out of sorts and prefers to sit on my lap and swing with me." [on the outdoor porch swing]

The need for intimate contact is basic for young children. Such contact contributes to their sense of trust in others and in themselves. (3)

Spontaneous conversation

Early childhood educators have almost unlimited opportunities to engage in spontaneous conversations with children, both when the children are playing and when they are engaged in routine activities. With very young children who either have not begun to use words or who are at an early stage in language development, adults can talk about the activities they engage in with the children. ("It's time to get ready for lunch. First let's go to the sink and wash,") Similarly, adults can verbalize the child's activity as they observe it.

> *Sally sits on the floor and Jeff (20 months) is putting a small plastic lid on his head. Sally asks, "Do you think it will stay?" Jeff chuckles gleefully as the lid falls from his head. Sally then stacks two lids together and, as she places them on Jeff's head, says, "I'll put two on you this time." Jeff immediately shakes his head so that they fall to the floor. As she hands Jeff two lids, Sally asks, "Can you stack two together?"*

After a young child begins speaking, there are innumerable situations in which a caregiver can affirm and expand these early speech patterns through informal, impromptu conversation.

> *Eating breakfast at the kitchen table are family day care provider Jean, her son Ricky (21 months), and day care children Nancy (23 months) and Jason (25 months). Ricky is seated in a high chair next to his mother.*
>
> *Ricky leans against Jean's arm. She says, "What's the matter, Ricky?" Ricky then bends over to look under the table. Jean asks, "What is down there?" She cannot understand Ricky's response. Jean then says, "Crispix" (the name of one of the two boxes of cereal on the table). Ricky repeats, "Crispix."*
>
> *Jason then asks Jean, "What's that?" Jean replies, "He's looking at the cereal on the floor. Did you spill any?" (On the floor were about two pieces of cereal and some milk.) Jason says, "Yet!" Jean says, "Another mess. Who will clean it up?" Ricky replies, "How about me?" and Jean says, "How about you. Okay, finish your cereal first." Ricky says, "Finish my cereal."*
>
> *Now Jean notices that Nancy's spoon has fallen into her cereal and milk. She says, "You spoon is not long enough, is it. It fell into your milk." Nancy repeats, "Fell into milk."*
>
> *When Nancy's cereal is gone she says to Jean, "More." Jean asks her, "Do you want more?" Nancy nods yes. Jean asks, "What kind, Cheerios or Crispix?" Nancy looks at her bowl and says, "This." Jean asks, "The kind I put away?" Nancy nods yes. As she gets the box of Rice Krispies from the cupboard, Jean says, "Krispies?" Nancy smiles as she says, "Krispies."*

For half an hour, these three toddlers and Jean have been breakfasting together. As this brief excerpt illustrates, the provider and children chat together throughout. The toddlers often repeat a portion of Jean's comments, and Jean frequently expands the children's one-word sentences. In this shared experience of a routine task, spontaneous conversation fosters the children's language skills. It sounds so simple to converse with children! But for many caregivers it is not, to which many staff development specialists and supervisors can attest. The art of chatting naturally with children must be nurtured. We can foster it in ourselves.

Adult verbalizations also can help young children learn inner control, one of the major developmental tasks of the toddler and preschool years. (14) Before children can learn to control their feelings, they first must be able to recognize them. Adults can assist young children in recognizing their feelings by identifying them as they occur. ("Thunder is noisy and scary, isn't it?" "It's hard to wait for lunch when you are very hungry." "Lil doesn't like it when you grab her block.") This ability to identify and then help clarify a young child's feelings is a high level skill that most early childhood educators develop only through experience and reflection.

Praise

Early childhood educators have many opportunities to respond positively to children's actions and thereby influence their understanding of self. When individual accomplishments are praised, young children are helped to recognize their successes and gain feelings of self-worth.

> *Sarah is in her backyard with her daughter Karen (6 years) and child care children Jennie (4 ½ years) and Jennie's sisters, Rachel (3 years) and Kimmy (23 months).*
>
> *Sarah watches Kimmy get on the swing glider and begin to swing. She says to Kimmy, "You're get-*

ting bigger! You get on there and swing by yourself, don't you!" Kimmy smiles cheerfully.

Later, Sarah lifts Kimmy onto the swing as she tells her, "Remember how Karen and Jennie put their feet to go high? Let me get you started and then you go." Sarah gives Kimmy a push and then steps back and watches her. As she watches, Sarah enthusiastically says, "You're getting higher. You are getting there!" As Sarah describes Kimmy's swinging, she helps Kimmy recognize her successes, and in so doing, gain feelings of self-worth.

In contrast, some adults frequently praise young children labeling desired behaviors with global evaluative comments such as "good girl" or "nice boy." Over time, this labeling communicates to children that they are "good" or "nice," meaning that they are pleasing the adult. The children learn that to please adults is good and nice. What we *want* them to learn is that *their own* goals and actions are valuable.

Assistance

A significant portion of childrearing involves assisting children. Toddlers and preschoolers often need adult assistance, first in routine care tasks (eating, toileting, or changing clothes); second, in learning how to successfully complete tasks on their own (work with puzzles or scissors), or self-care (brushing teeth); and third, in learning the basic rules and routines of the home, home-based child care, or school (putting away toys, taking naps). Adult responsiveness to young children's needs promotes confidence to explore and try new tasks. (1, 12)

Margaret sits on the family room couch while her son Stan (15 months) plays next to her. Child care children Chris (4 ½ years) and his sister Jill (2 ½ years) each work on an interlocking puzzle on the coffee table in front of Margaret.

With ease, Chris begins placing puzzle pieces into the formboard. When he hesitates, as if he does not know what piece needs to be put in next, Margaret suggests, "Where is the other hat?" With this suggestion, Chris puts in two more puzzle pieces and proudly comments, "Only two more!"

Jill places one corner piece into her puzzle. She seems to find the remaining pieces difficult. Margaret suggests, "Jill, look for the yellow—it goes here." She points to the correct placement. "Do you think it will fit?" Jill smiles and nods yes as she puts the yellow piece into the formboard. Margaret then suggests to Jill, "See if you can find the eyes." As Jill holds the puzzle piece with eyes, Margaret suggests, "Try it here." She points.

When Chris completes his puzzle, Margaret suggests, "Maybe you can help Jill." Jill watches while her brother completes the puzzle for her.

Margaret was able to help both children successfully put puzzle pieces into the formboards. Rather than take complete responsibility for assisting Jill, Margaret encouraged Chris to help his sister. Clearly, the short-term expedient method would be for an adult to complete tasks for young children. But in addition to task completion, Margaret offered an opportunity for these children to gain increased skill in puzzle completion, feel pride in accomplishment, and for Chris, experience assisting another. Of course, it is important that on many occasions each day, younger children (Jill) need opportunities to do things they can do with assistance from *nobody.*

Structured turn taking

Turn taking is by nature an individual act within a social context. In a group setting, children must occasionally wait to have individual turns to use a specific toy such as a tricycle, swing, or favorite truck. To wait for a turn is difficult for very young children, because accepting another's right to a turn requires the ability to take the perspective of another person—a skill that is not often well-developed in the young.

In some activities adults can structure turn taking so that each individual participation adds to the flow of the group process such as in cooking projects or story dramatization. In story dramatization the children who are not having a turn dramatizing usually are active participants as observers. Even toddlers can enter into turn taking when it is clearly structured by an adult, as illustrated in the following vignette.

Jean stands at the kitchen table where three children are sitting: her son Ricky (19 months) and day care children Mark (3 years) and Nancy (21 months). Jean and the children are making biscuits for lunch.

Jean sets a mixing bowl on the table and pours flour into a measuring cup as she says to the children, "Okay, it's Nancy's turn to put some flour into the bowl." She gives the measuring cup to Nancy and scoots the bowl in front of her. Nancy dumps the flour into the bowl.

Jean says, "Now it's Ricky's turn." And the process is repeated, first with Ricky, then with Mark. Jean brings baking powder. She says, "Now it's Nancy's turn to put something in." Jean helps each child put one teaspoon of baking powder into the bowl. As they wait for their turns, Ricky and Nancy make circular motions with their hands in the flour on the table.

Again Jean gives each child a turn to add salt. She gives Mark a measuring cup of milk and he pours it into the bowl. Ricky and Nancy have turns pouring milk. Jean says to Mark, "Can you stir this slowly while I put the milk away?" Mark begins to stir, and says to Jean, "You want to stir?" Jean replies, "I think I'll let you.

You're doing such a fine job." She gets round cookie cutters from the kitchen cabinet and gives one to each child.

These children seem young to be able to succeed in a project involving so many turntaking sequences. But because Jean organizes joint cooking experiences several times each week, the toddlers have learned that she will make certain everyone has a turn in preparing the food. Maturation is important, but so are appropriate learning experiences.

Understanding and following rules

To develop self-control, young children need to understand and follow simple rules. When behavioral limits and realistic expectations are consistent and clearly defined, children gain the security needed to develop self-control. (4, 6, 7, 9)

Since the last time Jeff (23 months) was at her home, Sally has placed a decorated Christmas tree on a low table in the living room. As Sally and Jeff approach the tree, Sally begins talking to him about the different ornaments and as she talks, takes his hand to touch them. She says, "Touch with one finger. Be gentle." Sally points out each ornament and says its name as Jeff touches it. She waits for him to try to repeat the ornament name after her, and keeps reminding him to "be gentle—remember, one finger." Jeff touches each ornament as directed. A couple of times he excitedly grabs an ornament; Sally takes his hand, and once again reminds him to be gentle. Jeff is babbling all the time he is at the tree. Occasionally it sounds as if what he is saying is a repeat of what Sally has said. Sally responds to Jeff's babbling, "Yes, that is the clown; see his big red nose."

Sally gives Jeff directions in a positive yet firm manner. Knowing that Jeff is very young and extremely excited, she remains with him to share in his excitement and at the same time to make certain that he follows her instructions. With repeated, consistent expectations and adult support, in time Jeff will enjoy the tree without an adult at his side.

Frequently young children disobey or forget the rules. The adult needs to redirect the children's action in a firm yet friendly manner. When an adult is watching children's play and a young child misbehaves, the adult can implement rules within the play context. The adult enters the child's experience and in the redirection gives the child explanations. (14)

Jean sits on the living room couch as day care child Nancy (23 months) and Jean's son Ricky (21 months) play on the rug in front of her. Ricky picks up a small wooden play person, opens the back door of a large school bus, and says to his mother, "There's one people." Jean replies, "Okay. Let's take him up the steps." Ricky pretends to take three play people up the back steps of the school bus.

Ricky comes to his mother with two play people and says "pocket." Jean replies, "Well, let's check and see if you have any pockets." At this time Nancy gets on the school bus and begins to ride it around the living room. Ricky goes to Nancy and begins to gesture as if to push her off the bus. Jean says to him, "Nancy is going to take her people on a ride, Ricky. Let's wait until they get back. Then you can take your people up the steps." Ricky leaves Nancy and goes to the toy box, gets out a car, and lies on his stomach as he begins to move the car back and forth.

As the children play, Jean is available physically and *emotionally* to observe, assist, extend, or redirect their actions. Jean understands the project Ricky is working on with his play people and school bus. When Ricky attempts to push Nancy off the school bus, Jean redirects him within the context of his earlier play. Because her redirection includes identifying Nancy's intentions—"is going to take her people on a ride"—Ricky has an opportunity to learn to take the perspective of another. Often young children act impulsively with little or no awareness of their own intentions or feelings. When Ricky hears his own intentions—"then you can take your people up and down the steps"—he is more able to hear his mother's report of Nancy's intentions.

If Jean had not been near the playing children, or had not been paying close attention to them, Ricky probably would have pushed Nancy off the bus. This may have resulted in an emotional outburst from Nancy. Jean then very likely would have responded to the emotional outburst and would have stated her rule that forbids pushing, a rule these children knew. Jean's response would have ended the children's dispute. However, because she only would have understood the emotional outburst of the conflict, her strategy to resolve the conflict would have been *external* to the situation that led to it. Ricky and Nancy would have learned obedience to rules (no pushing). However, they would not have had the opportunity to recognize their own or the other child's feelings and intentions.

Conclusion

A most significant aspect of early childhood education is the *quality* of the childrearing interactions between adult caregivers and young children. Many early childhood specialists believe that positive childrearing approaches are even more important than the question of *which* curriculum to use (as long as it is appropriate for each individual child's developmental level, style, and interests), and *where* child care occurs (as long as it is safe and there is sufficient space). This article presents a conceptual model to help home- and center-based child caregivers *and all other early childhood educators* examine *their own* interactions in terms of how *they* are influencing the growth and development of the children they care for.

Table 1. **Possible Adult-Child Involvement Levels and Interaction Patterns**

Levels of Adult-Child Involvement

Patterns of Adult-Child Interaction	**Stabilizing presence**	**Facilitative intervention**	**Shared participation**
Physical intimacy	Null	Karen trips and falls on the rug. Mary goes to Karen as she says, "Uh oh, let's fix it." Mary picks Karen up, kisses her finger, and rocks Karen as she pats her back. Then Karen gets down and climbs on the rocking horse.	Adam is curled in Denise's lap as she reads a book to him.
Spontaneous conversation	Null	Hal and Holly make crayon pictures as they sit at Jean's kitchen table. After singing, "Old MacDonald," Jean, Hal, and Holly chat about Jean's chickens on her brother's farm.	Jeff and Sally pretend that plastic lids are hats. As they put the lids on each other's head, Sally describes the process ("Do you think it will stay on your head this time?")
Praise	The "patient" Rachel lies down and Jennie and Kimmy (dressed in "doctor" clothes) take care of her. Sarah sits at the kitchen table and observes the children's role playing. (Sarah's presence affirms the play of the children who occasionally come to her to fix their face mask or slippers.)	Tracy is sitting with Emily and Dick who each put puzzle pieces into a formboard. As Emily places the last piece in her Garfield puzzle, Tracy says enthusiastically, "You did it! Now there's Garfield."	When Rachel and Kimmy nap after lunch, Sarah and Jennie clean the dishes. As Jennie washes the table, Sarah says, "You are really helping me."
Assistance	Null	Sam climbs on a concrete block to be next to the bunny hutch. When Gloria sees him talking to the bunnies, she gets lettuce and then holds Sam so he can feed the bunnies.	Sally and Jeff each form shapes with dough clay at the kitchen table. As Sally puts her hand on top of Jeff's hand she says, "Let's make a big snake."
Structured turntaking	Null	Karen and Jennie swing on the horizontal tire swing. Kimmy stands by the swing but is ignored by Karen and Jennie. Kimmy begins to cry. As she puts Kimmy on the swing, Sarah says, "Kimmy wants to swing too, so let's help her have a turn."	As Sarah digs out the hill of potatoes, Jennie, Rachel, and Kimmy take turns picking up the potatoes.
Understanding and following rules	Sarah is seated on the adult glider swing near Rachel, Jennie, and Karen who are swinging on the horizontal tire swing and singing "Itsy, Bitsy Spider." (Sarah's presence seems to have a stabilizing effect on these three small children's extended shared enjoyment.)	Dick begins looking at the pictures in a book. When he begins to tear a page, Tracy says to him, "You can look at books, but let's not tear the pages because then we wouldn't have any books, would we?"	Margaret, Chris, and Jill each form dough clay shapes. Chris, then Jill, loudly bang their fists against the dough. Margaret: "Let's try to be a little gentle."

Table 2. **Adult-Child Interaction Patterns**

Physical intimacy	Adult expresses affection to child through physical contact (lap sitting, hugging) initiated by child or adult.
Spontaneous conversation	Adult and child engage in many informal conversations, initiated by child or adult.
Praise	Adult gives positive response to appropriate child behavior and attempts to describe behavior *rather than* relying on words like "good" or "nice."
Assistance	Adult provides assistance to child so that child can successfully complete task (particularly when *asked* for help. Adult encourages another child, competent in the task, to assist.
Structured turn taking	Adult guides children in taking turns so that each child has an opportunity to use materials.
Understanding and following rules	Rule implementation: Adult establishes rules that are clearly and positively defined. Adult redirects child's misbehavior (misusing materials, unsafe activity) in a positive manner with explanation. Conflict resolution: Adult enters into children's disputes and attempts to assist children (1) in understanding each other's desires and (2) in *themselves* reaching a joint solution to the problem.

Some additional adult-child interaction analysis guides

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Greenberg, P. (1986). *Staff growth program for child care centers* (rev. ed.). Acropolis Press, 2400 17th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20009.

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Preschool caregivers in center-based programs: Child Development Association assessment system and competency standards (1987). CDA National Credentialing Program, 1817 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20009.

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Children Helping Children

Margaret fostered cooperation between 4 1/2-year-old Chris and his 2 1/2-year-old sister, Jill, and gave Chris an opportunity to help a younger child when she asked Chris to help Jill finish her puzzle. This was a good opportunity for Chris.

Helping someone else is an important activity for *all* children. In mixed-age classes, which are particularly common in day homes, caregivers should also structure opportunities for younger children to help older ones, making sure, of course, that the younger child can be successful. For instance, after the children finish playing with the puzzles, Margaret might suggest, "Jill, that was kind of Chris to help you finish your puzzle. Would you like to help Chris by putting his puzzle on the shelf?"

Opportunities to help each other should also be presented to children in day care centers that divide classes into more narrow age categories. Here, too, it is important for *all* children to have opportunities to be the helper.

It is easy to find ways in which the particularly capable child can help others. Be careful that no child is made to feel incapable because he or she always must *receive* help. The slower, less capable, or more clumsy child also needs opportunities to feel helpful. Caregivers should be aware of each child's strengths and special skills when suggesting helper tasks.

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7. Honig, A.S (1985b). Compliance, control, and discipline (continued). *Young Children, 40*(3), 477–52.

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Self Check 6.2. True/False

___ 1. Frequent hugging is extremely important for young children.

___ 2. Adults should only talk to children about their activities *after* the children have learned to talk well enough to participate.

___ 3. Verbalizing a child's activity expands a child's speech patterns.

___ 4. Verbalizing a child's feelings helps the child recognize feelings and develop inner control.

___ 5. Children must be able to recognize their feelings before they can learn to control the ways they express their feelings.

___ 6. It is extremely worthwhile for teachers and caregivers to develop the art of chatting naturally with children.

___ 7. The way adults praise children influences children's understanding of themselves.

___ 8. The best way to praise children is to let them know that they have pleased the adult.

___ 9. Adult responsiveness to children's needs makes children dependent and discourages them from trying new things.

___ 10. Teachers and caregivers can help toddlers learn turn taking through structured learning experiences.

(1. T, 2. F, 3. T, 4. T, 5. T, 6. T, 7. T, 8. F, 9. F, 10. T)

Correct Statements for False Self-Check Items

Items 2, 8, and 9 of Self Check 6.2 are false. Please read the following correct statements.

2. Adults should talk to children from birth. Talking to children demonstrates the adult's interest in the child. Even babies respond eagerly to the human voice. In addition, children learn language by hearing it spoken.

8. Encouragement is more appropriate—and more effective—than praise. Notice and show appreciation for children's efforts to achieve their own goals as well as their accomplishments.

Children's goal should not be to please adults but to successfully accomplish their own age-appropriate tasks and goals. We want them to understand that their goals and actions are valuable and to feel a sense of accomplishment and joy in their own success.

9. Adult responsiveness is very encouraging to children. Adult responsiveness to children's needs promotes children's confidence to explore and try new tasks. Responsiveness does not mean evaluating the child's actions but recognizing the child's intentions, efforts, and specific actions in a positive, supportive manner.

* * *

Analyzing the Preview

Go back and re-read the Lesson 6 Preview items. See if the answers you believe are best now are the same as the answers you chose before you studied this lesson. The paragraphs below explain which answers are best and discuss why the other answers are inappropriate.

Item 1. Noticing and recording interactions between children and adults is an extremely helpful skill for all of the categories listed in this item. Therefore, all answers are correct.

Item 2. Answers *b* and *c* are correct. During portions of the day, children can carry on activities without the teacher's or caregiver's direct participation. However, the teacher or caregiver must always be aware of what the children are doing and available to help them if needed.

Of course, if a task would not allow the teacher or caregiver to fulfil these obligations, then the teacher or caregiver

should save the task until the children go home or get a substitute teacher.

Item 3. When a child is having difficulty with a task, the adult's best action depends on the exact circumstances. In most cases, answer *c* is the preferred response: offer a suggestion or clarification to guide the child to success.

The child should be left to do the task alone (answer *a*) *only if* the adult is sure the child will not become frustrated. The adult should complete the task for the child (answer *b*) *only if* the task must be completed and it is clear that the child cannot do it alone (buttoning a coat before going outdoors).

Item 4. All answers are correct.

Item 5. Spontaneous conversation is appropriate in all four situations.

Item 6. Even young children need opportunities to do things all by themselves (answer *c*), partly *because* they need assistance in so many areas. Being able to do things independently gives them self-confidence.

Young children also enjoy giving assistance to the teacher or caregiver and to other children (answer *d*)—another source of self-confidence.

Answer *c* is sometimes true and sometimes false. Children need and enjoy adult assistance in many situations, but they may (appropriately) resist such assistance in other situations. Adults should be careful to offer assistance in such a way that the child feels as independent as possible.

Answer *a* is not true. Young children should be given the opportunity to do as many things by themselves as possible.

Lesson 6 Quiz

Please read Lesson 6 two times before attempting its quiz. When you have finished reading this lesson, return to **My Courses** within your Account at www.CareCourses.com and open your course file to access the Online Quiz for this lesson and instructions for submitting your answers for grading.

Activities

The Activity questions are based on the Activities you did in Lessons 1 and 2. These Activities **must be completed to pass this course**. We recommend that you print and use the following two pages to write your answers to these Activity questions for your own record.

Activity 1: Techniques Your Teacher Used

Re-read what you wrote about the teacher you selected in Activity 1 (Lesson 1). If you wish, add to the notes you have already made. Then think about the discipline techniques that you have read about in this course and answer the following questions. Please keep a copy of your answers for your own record.

1. List the *positive* or *negative* discipline techniques that you have studied in this course that this teacher used.

2. How did these discipline techniques that you have listed make you feel at the time?

3. What effect did they have on you in the following years?

4. How did the techniques this teacher used affect the way you discipline children in your care?

Activity 2: Your Discipline Techniques

Re-read your notes about a child who presented a discipline problem (Lesson 2). For each of the five discipline problems,

a) briefly state the child's behavior problem

b) name a positive guidance technique that would be the appropriate for this behavior problem.

Please keep a copy of your answers for your own record.

When you have completed the Activities, return to **My Courses** within your Account at www.CareCourses.com and open your course file to access the Online Quiz for the Activities and instructions for submitting your answers for grading.

* * *

Self-Evaluation Chart

A Self-Evaluation Chart **for your own use** is printed at the end of this course file.

Activity 1: Techniques Your Teacher Used

1. List the *positive* or *negative* discipline techniques that you have studied in this course that this teacher used.

2. How did these discipline techniques that you have listed make you feel at the time?

3. What effect did they have on you in the following years?

4. How did the techniques this teacher used affect the way you discipline children in your care?

Activity 2: Your Discipline Techniques

1. Child's behavior:

Positive guidance technique for behavior #1:

2. Child's behavior:

Positive guidance technique for behavior #2:

3. Child's behavior:

Positive guidance technique for behavior #3:

4. Child's behavior:

Positive guidance technique for behavior #4:

5. Child's behavior:

Positive guidance technique for behavior #5:

Self-Evaluation Chart

Your name _____ Ages of children in your group _____ Date of observations _____

Note examples that illustrate how you did or did not do each of the following (use additional paper as needed):

Encourage children _____

_____

Give children a sense of belonging _____

_____

Help children develop a sense of competence _____

_____

Have age-appropriate expectations of each child _____

_____

Give children opportunities to have fun _____

_____

Help children deal honestly with their feelings _____

_____

Give children choices _____

_____

Communicate rules clearly _____

_____

Use natural/logical consequences to enforce rules _____

_____

Involve children in limit enforcement _____

_____

Allow children to help _____

_____

Show respect for children _____

_____

Have time for individual children _____

_____

Engage in spontaneous conversation with children _____

_____

Handle a conflict situation _____

_____