

Teacher / Child Interactions

Warm, caring interactions between teachers and children are what make quality programs. If you build good relationships with your students through these caring interactions, you'll also have a good classroom management and a safer, happier classroom.

- Getting on the children's level
- Listening and responding to children
- Speaking to children and not at children
- Showing children we care
- Entering into children's play

NAEYC Teacher - Child interactions

- Children's development of trust and emotional security is promoted with consistent, responsive and nurturing teachers
- A positive sense of self is promoted through respectful teacher-child interactions
- Cooperative and positive social behaviors are promoted through opportunities for learning reciprocity, empathy and social skills.
- Positive guidance techniques are used to promote the development of self-control and self-regulation
- Age appropriate self-help skills are encouraged to promote personal responsibility and autonomy.
- Children's overall emotional well-being is supported by the classroom environment
- Snack and mealtimes are pleasant and social learning experiences for children

Interactions should be:

- Warm
- Sensitive
- Responsive

These interactions help children:

- Help children develop a secure and positive sense of self
- Encourage them to respect and cooperate with others

Children who see themselves as highly valued are more likely to:

- Feel secure
- Thrive physically
- Get along with others
- Learn well
- Feel part of the community

How to talk to Children

Say	Do not Say
Sit down when you slide	Don't stand when you slide
Dig in the sand	Don't throw sand
Sit in the swing	Don't stand in the swing
Use both hands when you climb	You'll fall if you don't watch out
Climb down the ladder	Don't jump
Keep the puzzle in the table	Don't dump the puzzle pieces on the floor
Turn the pages carefully	Don't tear the book
Use you inside voice	Don't shout
Wipe your hands on a paper towel	Don't touch anything
Soft touches	Don't hit your friend
Walking feet	Stop running / no running
Feet on the floor	Get down now
Use nice words	You ar mean to your friends
Time to go inside	Shall we go inside?
Wash your hands	Don't you want to what your hands?

Do	Don't
Speak in a clam, kind voice	Make fun of a child
Speak directly to the child	Call the child across the room
Speak in short meaningful sentences	Give the child a choice if he cannot have one
Try to express your request in a positive way	Compare the child to another child
Get down to the child's physical level	Be dishonest with a child
Answer the child's question	Make a child feel guilty by saying: "only bad boys do that"
Keep your voice and facial expression pleasant	Make child feel inferior by saying: "you shouldn't act like a baby"
	Don't ask "would you like to clean up?" Say its

	time to clean up now.
	If you do that then I'll be upset /at you

Guiding Children's Behavior

Guiding children's behavior is mainly about how to promote positive behaviors and to prevent behavioral difficulties. The very best way to keep children active, interested, cooperative and happy is to make sure that the environment and the people in it are offering the right types and amount of support. Stimulation and positive guidance. There also will be times when real problems surface and immediate behavioral challenges must be addressed.

Positive interactions that work

All children need positive attention. The power of positive attention and reinforcement has been documented in many studies. Recognizing the positive behavior on each child every day, on many occasions, in different settings, calls for creativity, sensitivity and real social skills. Although general comments to a whole classroom may work with older children, encouragement for good behavior tends to be more effective when guided towards the individual child. Positively reinforcing appropriate behaviors is one of the most effective forms of **preventing discipline**. Look for ways to recognize appropriate behavior. *It is important to be specific when praising children, rather than just saying "Good Job" say "you are a great helper!" you helped Stacy pick up all the Blocks! Thank you!*

Examples of positive reinforcement are:

- Providing extra time doing a special project
- Giving an extra hug
- Allowing a child to choose the next book to be read

Remember: food may not be used as a reward or ever withheld as a punishment

What type of encouragement and reinforcement work best? There is no one best way. The ones that are the most natural include smiles, positive words said in pleasing ways, hugs and gentle pats on the back, joining the child in play and sometimes giving the child something special like the chance to do a favorite activity.

Be a good role model. Children readily learn to imitate what they see. Model good manners and thoughtfulness throughout the day in a comfortable, easy manner. This is best done when at the child's level, on the floor or in low chairs. Notice how children will say to one another the things they have had said to them. Avoid negative words and tones. Provide clear instructions and lots of prompts.

Interactions that don't work

What does not work well is a teacher getting frustrated with children for simply being children. Be careful not to make permanent judgements regarding the early social behavior of young children. Even a few months of maturity makes a big difference in a child skill in social situations. Social skill acquisition requires literally hundreds of natural learning experiences, most of which are fun and brief.

The problems that may require a different strategy include extreme behavior outbursts and physical aggressions towards people and toys. An important principle of classroom management is that the very best approach is that of prevention – by maintaining a dynamic and interesting curriculum and by having expectations that are developmentally appropriate for the children in your care.

Factors that can lead to challenging behavior

The factor you see below can occur when we have developmentally inappropriate expectations

Teacher-Child Relationships			
Factor	Classroom Example	Possible Challenging behavior	How to correct
Too much change	The daily schedule is different every day. The children never know what will happen next	Children are anxious and may whine or cry	As much as possible, make sure that there is a daily routine so children know what is coming next during the day. When children know what to expect they feel safer.
Too high expectations for self-control	Teachers expects that children be able to stand in a straight line before they go outside	Children pushing other children	Understand that children are just learning self-control. Be patient, model desired behaviors, but do not expect them
Inflexible routines, spaces, schedules and people	The children have a specific time when they are expected to eat and sleep	A couple of children are failing asleep at the lunch table and crying when they are woken up to finish their lunch	If children are tired, allow them to rest. Provide food for them when they wake up. Children feel safe and are able to learn when their basic needs are meet.
Environment			
Factor	Classroom Example	Possible Challenging Behavior	How to Correct
Too little space or too much open space	Children in your room love playing with blocks. They are always behavior problems as children bump into each other and knock down other's blocks	Children hit each other when their structures are knocked over	Expand areas that are more popular. Lessen room in some areas that lead to children's running or other challenging behaviors
Too few materials or too little equipment	Paper, some crayons, and markers are the only choices in the art area	Children wander aimlessly around the room	Make sure that there are adequate choices for the children in all areas. These can be homemade or recycled items as well.

Materials or equipment that is too challenging or too simple	There are three puzzles in the classroom. Two are very simple shape puzzles and one is a fifty piece jigsaw puzzle	Children throw the puzzle pieces	Fill your classroom with a variety of materials that are geared towards a variety of developmental levels (refer to the continuum earlier in this section)
Too little order or predictability	Every week the room is rearranged and the classroom areas are set up differently	Children don't put toys away and the room is a mess	Make sure that children know where everything is and where it belongs. Children feel safe and have a sense of belonging when they feel in control
Too many temptations	The children keep getting into the teacher's supplies that are on a low shelf	Children are playing with they should not be playing with	All things that are not for children should be out of their reach at all times
Expecting children to share too much	There is one truck in the block area	Children fight over the toy	Have multiples of popular toys. If that is not possible, you will either have to make sure that children get turns (maybe even one a day) or sit with them and help them play together

Activities

Lot of waiting time	After washing their hands the children sit at the tables waiting for lunch to be delivered. They sit for ten minutes	Children throw their plates or begin to run around the tables	Make sure that you have prepared for each part of the day so that children are not expected to wait with nothing to do
Too much noise	The CD player is always playing loud and very upbeat movement, even during group times	Children scream	Listen to your classroom. The most obvious noise should be the hum of children's voices
Long of frequent periods of sitting still	After sitting through a fifteen minute large group time the teacher begins to read a story to the children	Children are not paying attention: one child is wandering around, another is rolling on the floor, etc.	Remember that children's attention spans are one to two minutes more or less than their age. So, you can expect a two year

			old to sit and pay attention for zero to four minutes. Plan accordingly.
Too much locking or listening time (vs. being directly involved)	The teacher performs a long puppets show about sharing then puts a CD on for the children to sing along with the music	Child is pulling hair of the child next to her.	Make sure that the majority of your day is planned around children being actively involved in learning.

Positive Guidance

As children grow, change and assert more independence in their daily lives, appropriate guidance can sometimes be a real challenge. Knowing how to handle difficult situations in advance will help keep the situation from escalating and alleviate additional problems.

Children need consistency with both rules and consequences. It is important to follow through with the consequences that have promised. It is also important to not make threats or unrealistic consequences. For example, telling children that if the arguing over a game continues, the games will be taken away forever is not an appropriate or realistic consequence. When children are engaged in enjoyable activities, the need for discipline is lessened. However when discipline is necessary, teachers may NEVER use corporal punishment or other negative forms of discipline. Whether the children are on the playground, in the classroom, on a field trip, riding the van, or waiting to go to the restroom, discipline and logical consequences must be consistent to be effective.

When guidance is needed

- Teachers will not raise their voice to a child or group of children
- While at the child's level, teachers will talk privately and quietly
- Teachers will NEVER pull, hit, slap, or spank a child, even with parental permission or request
- Teachers will also NEVER pull, hit, slap or spank their own child or relatives at any school sponsored field trip or event
- Teachers will NEVER use methods that hurt, humiliate or frighten children

Using Positive Guidance with Children

- Teachers listen and acknowledge children feelings and frustration with respect
- Teachers encourage appropriate behavior, while patiently reminding children of the rules and the rationale for the rules
- Teachers use logical consequences in challenging situations
- Teachers eliminate potential problems by redirecting children to an acceptable behavior or activity
- Teachers set clear, fair, consistent limits for classroom behavior
- Remind the children doing good stuff and let them know you've noticed

- Show respect for a child's feelings. There is no reason for the whole class to know that you are talking to a particular child about his behavior. When talking to a child, get down at their level, talk quietly and look into his eyes.
- Give positive feedback to children who are engaged in appropriate behaviors
- Teach by example. Children learn from your actions, If you want the children to rest quietly, use your quite voice to remind them. Teach acceptable vocabulary by modeling it for the children everyday
- Work with you director if challenging behaviors occur too frequently in your classroom