

In a child care setting, caregivers discipline children by helping them:

- *express feelings*
- *learn to listen to others*
- *share, take turns and cooperate*
- *learn appropriate behaviour*

To guide your child's behaviour in a positive and gentle way, caregivers follow the guidelines set by the Ministry of Health.

These guidelines are explained in a small booklet called **Guidance and Discipline with Young Children** and in the provincial **Child Care Regulation**.

Responsible caregivers will not strike or hit children, or use any language or punishment that will humiliate or threaten them. Instead, they will work to encourage and support children as they learn appropriate ways to behave.

There are many ways to guide children's behaviour in a child care setting. Each child and each situation is different. Caregivers use some of the approaches that follow. They may be helpful for you at home, too.

Look at the Environment

The environment of the child care setting can help to create wanted (appropriate) behaviour or unwanted (inappropriate) behaviour.

The environment is all that surrounds the child:

- *the people*
- *the toys and materials*
- *the furnishings*
- *the activities, the daily schedule*
- *the space*
- *the arrangement*
- *the emotional and social factors*

Your caregiver will first look at the things within the child care environment that can be changed to increase wanted behaviours and prevent unwanted behaviours. For example, crowded rooms with broken or unsuitable toys may upset children. When they are upset children often show unwanted behaviours like hitting or grabbing. When caregivers provide suitable materials and arrange the room so there is enough space to move about freely, children feel more comfortable. When they are more comfortable, children show more wanted behaviours like sharing and listening.

Know the Children

Caregivers form positive relationships with children and their families. They learn about each child's needs, personality and behaviours. They also learn about your family, your expectations and your culture. This information helps caregivers think about ways to support your child's development and guide his or her behaviour.

Recognize Feelings

Young children are just beginning to learn about their feelings. Caregivers help children recognize and understand their own feelings and the feelings of others. They acknowledge children's feelings and let them know what they can do and not do.

Example:

I know you're angry, but I cannot let you hurt Mei Ling.

Set Clear and Simple Limits

A few simple limits or rules help children learn about wanted or unwanted behaviour. The limits caregivers set are suitable for your child's age and stage of development. Caregivers repeat rules often in a positive way that tells children what to do rather than what not to do.

Example:

Wash your hands now, it's time for a snack.

The sand stays in the sandbox.

Offer Choices

Caregivers give children opportunities to make simple choices. This helps them cooperate with the daily routines.

Example:

We're going to change your diaper now. Would you like to walk with me or would you like me to carry you?

It's time to get ready for a nap. Do you want to bring your teddy bear with you or do you want to leave it here?

Focus on the Behaviour, Not on the Child

When children behave in an unwanted way, caregivers talk with them about their behaviour. They explain why the unwanted behaviour is a problem.

Examples:

When you grab the toy it makes Carlos angry.

I worry when you climb so high.

Give Children Time

Children, just like adults, need time to cooperate with requests. Caregivers let children know ahead of time what will happen next.

Examples:

Do you want 2 or 3 more minutes on the bike?

When you finish your painting, it will be time to clean up for lunch.

Reinforce Wanted Behaviour

When children are helping and cooperating, caregivers try to notice and comment on the behaviour. Research shows that children are more likely to repeat wanted behaviour when we pay attention to it.

Examples:

It was kind of you to share with Kathy.

Thank you for waiting your turn.

Offer Help

There are times when children need help. Caregivers let children know that they will help them when they need it.

Examples:

I am here to help you.

I'll come with you when you talk to Tarsem.

Show Respect

Caregivers know that it is important to speak to children about behaviour in a calm voice. Coming close to them, using their names, and sometimes touching them gently on their back or shoulders helps get children's attention.

Accept Small Problems

It is natural for young children to be noisy, easily exited or easily distracted at times. If their behaviour is not hurting or upsetting others, caregivers accept it as a natural part of growing up.

Help Children Calm Themselves

Children have very powerful feelings at times. These feelings can be so overwhelming that children have temper tantrums and might hurt themselves or others. Occasionally, caregivers may help children to calm themselves by **holding** them firmly but kindly until the tantrum has passed. Sometimes caregivers use **time out** or time away with children who are hurting or upsetting others.

Usually, this means removing the child from the group or activity for a short time. These approaches are used carefully and only when necessary. Please discuss these approaches with your caregiver.

Develop Partnerships with Parents

Caregivers know that you and your family are the most important influence in your child's life. They want to join with you in caring for your child in the best way possible. Parents and caregivers can work together towards understanding each other and caring for children in a respectful and loving way.

You can help caregivers by telling them how you care for your child at home and how you expect your child to behave. Caregivers can help you by talking with you about their expectations of children in their care and about their approaches for helping children grow and learn.

Produced by:

One Stop Access Project of
Vancouver Child Care Resource &
Referral
Westcoast Child Care, Resource
Centre

OSA is jointly funded through the
Canada/British Columbia Strategic
Initiative Program by:

Human Resources
Development Canada
Developpement des ressources
humaines Canada

BRITISH
COLUMBIA
Ministry for
Children and Families

Guidance and Discipline in a Child Care Setting

Parents always want to know about the quality of care their children are receiving. You want to know that your child is safe, happy and learning new and interesting things. You may also want to know about the caregiver's approach to discipline and guidance with children.