

BEHAVIOR AND GUIDANCE

Kansas child care regulation (K.A.R. 28-4-132) requires that providers develop a written discipline policy indicating methods of guidance appropriate to the age of the children enrolled. Parents must be informed of the policy. The suggested guidance on the back of this page may be used to develop written policies. If this guidance is adopted as a written discipline policy, providers are required to read, understand, and practice.

1. The goal of discipline is to help children learn self-control. Providers help teach children about appropriate behavior and how to get along with others.
2. Be consistent. Children are confused when providers respond in different ways to similar behavior.
3. Appropriate guidance needs to follow a child's misbehavior immediately so that the child understands why he or she is being corrected. Never threaten to do something that the provider would not or could not do.
4. Be a good role model. Act with kindness and patience toward each child. Respect and talk to children about their feelings.
5. Talk with children about their behavior and what is expected. Tell children what they can do rather than what they can't. "Please walk" is more effective than "don't run".
6. Follow a consistent daily schedule so that children know what to expect and are prepared for changes in activity throughout the day.
7. Give children choices whenever possible.
8. Praise good behavior often. Children (and adults) need to hear that the good things they do are appreciated!
9. Talk to parents about both the good things their child(ren) has done while in child care and those things that require additional attention. Include parents in making decisions about effective ways to provide guidance for their child(ren). Consistency between the child's home and the child care home is most effective. Never spank or use another method of punishment that is prohibited by law or regulation, even if parents give permission.

See back side for examples of age appropriate child care practices.

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Suggested Guidance for Infants and Toddlers

1. Remove tempting items that are off limits to infants/toddlers. By nature they are curious about people and things. They are just learning.
2. Distract (this is also called redirection) the infant/toddler away from the activity that is not desired by attracting the child with a better choice.
3. Ignore the behavior, if the child is not in danger or causing someone else to be in danger.
4. Use the word "NO" sparingly. "NO" should be used only when the infant/toddler is approaching danger. Over using the word "NO" may result in the child learning to ignore you.
5. Provide duplicates of popular toys. Infants and toddlers do not understand the concept of "sharing".
6. Place a toy or item in "time-out"-not the child. Infants/toddlers have short attention spans and are naturally active. Time out for infants/toddlers is not appropriate.

Suggested Guidance for Preschool Age Children

Any of the above methods of guidance PLUS:

7. Allow preschool age children to make acceptable choices and let the natural consequence of the decision be the teacher (as long as the consequence is not dangerous). Be sure to offer choices you can live with!
8. Help children learn to solve problems. Offer suggestions when necessary and allow the child to decide.
9. Talk about the "rules" of the child care home. Remind the children. Children learn by repetition. Allow the preschool age children to help set the "rules".
10. Time-out should be used sparingly. Over use of "time out" or any other method of guidance causes the method to become "old hat" which causes it to lose its effectiveness. Time out provides the child the opportunity to think - cool off - calm down. Time out is not about your ability to control the child. Provide a "time out space" for the child that is nearby and which allows you to clearly supervise the child. Invite the child to rejoin the group when he/she is ready. Talk about the behavior, feelings and reassure the child when he/she rejoins the group. Never place a child in time out for long periods of time.

Suggested Guidance for School Age Children

Any of the above methods of guidance PLUS:

1. Involve school age children in planning activities.
2. Involve school age children in setting their own guidelines.
3. Allow school age children to suggest consequences when rules are "broken".