

Child Discipline Policies and Procedures

1. What *not* to do:
 - a. Do not physically manipulate children (e.g. shoving, pushing, pulling, etc...)
 - b. Do not use corporal or cruel punishment including but not limited to:
 - i. Slapping, spanking, pinching, pulling or squeezing
 - ii. Yelling or screaming at children
 - iii. Forced or physical restraint
 - iv. Any punishment which is intended to embarrass the child
 - c. Do not use “time out” too often so that it does not lose its effectiveness. If “time out” is used, do not make the child face a wall or a corner. Allow them to face the group.
 - d. Do not forget that each child is in a unique stage of development and has unique needs.
2. What *to* do:
 - a. Notify parents about their child’s problem behaviors when they pick up their child
 - b. Keep the ministry supervisor in the loop about problems or potential problems
 - c. Be clear about classroom expectations before problem behavior happens. When corrective action is needed, do your best to make sure the child understands why it is happening.
 - d. Focus on catching children being good rather than being bad. Do not reinforce negative behavior by only giving attention to those causing a disturbance
 - e. Be fair and consistent with discipline
 - f. Keep your vocal tone firm yet loving
 - g. Attempt to use consequences that teach good behavior and are not simply punitive
 - h. Encourage children to say, “I’m sorry,” when it is appropriate (e.g. hurting another child, taking another child’s toy, etc...)
 - i. Especially with younger children, remember that distraction from the problem activity or redirecting to an appropriate activity is effective
 - j. Use a verbal warning system and be clear about your intentions:
 - i. E.g. “This is your first warning. If you get three warnings you will be put on time-out.”
 - k. Move closer to children who are being disruptive or if there is a situation that is more likely to lead to problem behavior (e.g. several children wanting to play with one toy)
3. Preliminary Action – *The Child’s Environment*
 - a. Look at room arrangement and the enrichments in the room first:
 - i. Are they boring? Are they incomplete? Etc...
 - b. Look at the daily schedule:
 - i. Is there a blend of busy and quiet times?
 - ii. Do you use “circle time” as a transitional time?
 - iii. Are we asking the children to sit or be in any one activity for too long?
 - c. Consider whether or not there is adequate adult supervision
4. Preliminary Action – *The Child*
 - a. Ask yourself, “Why is the discipline problem happening?”
 - b. Make sure the child feels loved and welcomed by the teacher
5. Corrective Action for First Warning
 - a. Give first verbal warning and explain problem
 - b. Redirect the child by suggesting a positive activity or reminding them of the current task (e.g. “Let’s all listen to the teacher right now,” or “Why don’t we (*suggest an activity*)?”)
6. Corrective Action for Second Warning

- a. Give second verbal warning and explain what will happen next
- b. Separate groups of children who are being disruptive and monitor them more closely
- 7. Corrective Action for Third Warning
 - a. Give third verbal warning and follow through with the warned consequence
 - i. E.g. time-out, removal from activity, having to sit with parents, etc...
- 8. Corrective Action for Severe Offense or Consistent Problem
 - a. Send child to their parent.
 - i. Use an usher for assistance if sending a children's worker would result in too small of an adult-to-child ratio.
 - ii. Fully explain situation to parent
 - iii. Notify the ministry leader and Associate Pastor of Student Ministries
 - b. If there is a consistent problem, have the child stay with the parent for an extended period of time (1-2 weeks), or allow the parent to sit in on the class to supervise their child until the problem is corrected.
 - i. Have a meeting with the parent and ministry leader to address how to proceed.

