



## **Guidance and Discipline Policy**

Oakton College Early Childhood Education Center

The goal of discipline at the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Center is to support children as they learn to function in a social setting, while developing a positive self-concept, self-control, and also learning to take responsibility for their own behavior. Discipline is not punishment, but rather guidance strategies that are responsive to a child's behavior and encourages their active participation in the process of resolving the situation. Our guidance strategies support children as they learn to appropriately express their feelings, to consider the feelings/needs of others, and to negotiate their own conflicts, differences, and ultimately come to resolutions.

This approach depends upon cooperation, negotiation, and requires that adults maintain a non-punitive attitude. As a DCFS licensed program that adheres to NAEYC standards, the following actions are **strictly prohibited** at the ECE Center:

- Corporal punishment, including hitting, spanking, swatting, beating, shaking, pinching, and other measures intended to induce physical pain or fear
  - Any form of emotional abuse including shaming, name calling, rejecting, terrorizing, humiliation, or isolating/seclusion of a child
  - Threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest or use of the bathroom
  - Abusive and profane language
  - Any form of public or private humiliation including threats of physical punishment
- Section 407.270 IL. Dept. of Children and Family Services Licensing Standards for Day Care Centers*

The director will directly address any adult engaging in the prohibited practices while at the Center and such action is subject to possible DCFS involvement. Should any paid staff member engage in any of the above-mentioned prohibited practices the director will work directly with Oakton College's HR Dept and Campus Police to determine appropriate actions that protect both the rights of the child in the program and the accused staff person.

### **Teacher's Role**

Staff members are responsible for handling discipline for the children under their care. The ECE Center environment, schedules, routines, and activities are all designed to foster positive behavior management. Additionally, staff create appropriate expectations based on age, developmental stage, and cultural preferences of the individual children in their care.

Examples of positive guidance strategies used by ECE Center staff include:

- Calmly setting clear, simple, consistent rules, limits, and consequences
- Adapting the environment to meet individual needs and needs of the group
- Providing the children with words to identify both positive & negative emotions and encouraging children to express their emotions appropriately.
- Guiding children as they learn to problem-solve including describing problems, considering the perspectives of others, and verbalizing alternative solutions.
- Supporting children as they learn to accept the natural consequences of their actions.
- Modeling appropriate behaviors and language

The ECE Center does not use “time-out” as a guidance strategy. A child who has lost control of their behavior will be given the opportunity to regain control in a quiet place in the room, with a teacher nearby. At times the teacher and the child may leave the room together to take a walk in the hallway or get a drink of water. The goal is to help the child calm down and self-regulate. Children will not be away from their group longer than one minute per year of age of the child.

### **Parents’/Guardians’ Role**

The ECE Center encourages open communication between families and staff. It is our intention that families and teachers have face to face conversations each day. In addition to formal conferences, teachers will inform parents if problem behaviors arise, and patterns emerge. Collaboration amongst Center staff and families is essential to developing a more comprehensive view of a child and their behavior. We welcome parental input as to what works best for their child, so that the most consistent approach can be established to help a child develop the skills needed to be successful in the classroom.

If a child’s behavior results in an injury to another child or staff member, the child’s parent/guardian will be notified as soon as possible and written documentation in the form of an incident report will be provided to the parents and a copy will be placed in the child’s file.

### **Steps for Addressing Challenging Behaviors**

Challenging behaviors can be defined as any behavior that interferes with children’s learning, development, and success in the classroom, is harmful to the child, or others, or puts a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure. (Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2007)

When a child’s behavior is negatively impacting their health/safety or the health/safety of the classroom community the following strategies will be used to ensure successful inclusion: observation/documentation, collaboration, creation of an Individual Support Plan (ISP), and seeking support services if needed.

**Observation/documentation**-Observation is an essential tool when seeking to understand what a child’s behavior is trying to communicate, as well as to identify any other factors which might trigger a specific behavior. Teaching staff will document their observations, strategies tried, and child’s response to those strategies.

**Collaboration & Creation of ISP**-When a child exhibits a challenging behavior on a continual basis that is not resolved through appropriate behavior management strategies, the teachers will share their concerns with the director, discuss the observed behavior, and create a plan to further include the child’s parents/guardians.

The teaching team will request a meeting with the child’s parents/guardian. The goal of this meeting is to share classroom observations & collaboratively develop an Individual Support Plan. The ISP will document individualized classroom strategies to address the challenging behaviors as well as establish an agreed upon follow-up plan (email, phone conversations, or in-person meetings) including a timeframe to keep parents informed of their child’s progress. The ISP will be shared with the parent and the Center’s administrative team. A copy will be kept in the child’s file.

**Additional Support Services**- In some cases, with parental permission, an outside community resource may be consulted. The ECE Center partners with Illinois Action for Children Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants to provide support to classroom teaching teams. In some situations, parents may be asked to seek a professional evaluation and/or seek additional services from their school district. All interventions will be recorded as part of the ISP.

If the results of an outside evaluation suggest the need for accommodations, the ECE Center will provide these, or other appropriate accommodations as long as they do not place an undue hardship on the ECE Center as outlined in the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The ECE Center is committed to exhausting all means within its disposal to keep a child in our program. If a child responds to the interventions established and the ECE Center feels that the child can continue in the program in a manner that is safe for the entire classroom community, the child will continue their enrollment. If the child does not respond to interventions, the Director will work with the family to transition the child to a more appropriate setting for the child.

### **Discharge and Transition Policy**

If a child is having an unusual amount of difficulty assimilating into the group setting, the ECE Center will work collaboratively with the child's family as outlined above. If interventions are unsuccessful, the Director will work with the family to find a more appropriate placement for their child, based on the following Department of Children and Family Services regulations:

*"Infants, toddlers, and preschool age children who, after documented attempts have been made to meet the children's individual needs, demonstrate an inability to benefit from the type of care offered by the facility, or whose presence is detrimental to the group, shall be transitioned to an alternative program.*

*For infants, toddlers, and preschool aged children, in all instances when a facility decides that it is in the best interest of the child to transition to a different program, the child's and parents' needs shall be considered by planning with the parents to identify the new program and working with the parents and pending program on a transition plan designed to ensure continuity of services to meet the child's needs."*

DCFS Licensing Standards for Day Care Centers 407.250

The final determination regarding a child's enrollment status will be made by the director. As a center the concern is the welfare of all children enrolled in our program. There is a range of behavior for children of all ages that although not acceptable (biting, hitting, use of profanity, ect.) may be developmental and manageable within our setting. Other children's parents will not be a part of any decision-making process on the issue of another child's enrollment, nor will other parent's requests for termination of enrollment for other children impact any child's enrollment status.

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I have read and agree to follow the Guidance and Discipline Policy as stated above.

Printed name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_