



PUMPKIN PATCH CHILDCARE AND LEARNING CENTER

Behavior Guidance Manual

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Introduction

We believe that the ultimate goal of a behavior guidance program should be to teach children and help them learn and grow. With that in mind, we use a combination of preventative techniques, redirection, and logical consequences to help guide children's behavior along with staff modeling positive behavior. We also realize that in order for children to better manage their behavior, they need to learn how to resolve conflicts with their peers. We have developed a peer problem solving skills program that teaches children to recognize and express their feelings appropriately and to recognize and understand what others are feeling.

The Goals of Our Behavior Guidance Program:

1. To Foster a Strong Self-Esteem in Children
2. To Proactively Tackle Behavior Problems
3. To Provide a Calm and Nurturing Environment
4. To Teach Children Self-Control

We Accomplish These Goals By:

1. Providing an Environment Where Failure is not Fatal
2. Energizing and Recognizing Successes
3. Not Giving Energy to Negative Behavior
4. Setting and Enforcing Rules and Consequences

Behavior Guidance Plan Overview:

1. Have simple, clear rules posted in the classroom for children to follow, make sure expectations are clear.
2. Provide immediate and directly related consequences for unacceptable behavior.
3. If a child is having a tantrum or is upset, provide them with a quiet safe space to calm down. Children aren't forced to use this space, but it offered as an option.
4. If you see a child is about to break a rule or use negative behavior, or have conflict with another child, redirect them before it happens.
5. If a child's tantrum or behavior can't be controlled or children or staff are in danger, call an administrator for assistance.
6. Staff will use developmentally appropriate approaches to behavior that include: conversation, coaching, redirection, and problem solving to teach children how to work through problems with adults and their peers.
7. Staff will teach children problem solving and coping skills to help children learn appropriate ways to handle problems and their feelings.
8. Every behavior has a reason. It is our job to figure out the reason and work with the child to find an acceptable way to express how they are feeling.

Discipline Definition: The word discipline comes for the Latin word meaning "to teach". At Pumpkin Patch we need to remember that our goal in behavior guidance is to teach; our goal is

never to punish. Consequences teach children that when they make certain choices in life, there are consequences.

General Behavior Guidance Notes

This is a brief overview of some of the expectations Pumpkin Patch has of staff members regarding behavior guidance. More details about these topics are described in this manual.

1. All staff members, volunteers, license holders, and subcontractors are required and expected to provide each child with a positive model of acceptable behavior.
2. All staff members, volunteers, license holders, and subcontractors are required and expected to tailor behavior guidance to the development level of the children they are working with.
3. All staff members, volunteers, license holders, and subcontractors are required and expected to redirect children and groups away from problems toward constructive activities in order to reduce conflicts.
4. All staff members, volunteers, license holders, and subcontractors are required and expected to teach children how to use acceptable alternatives to problem behaviors in order to reduce conflict.
5. All staff members, volunteers, license holders, and subcontractors are required and expected to provide immediate and directly related consequences for a child's unacceptable behavior.

Preventative Guidance

There are lots of things we can do in our classrooms to prevent behavior problems from happening.

1. **Conscious Discipline**
 - a. Use rituals and positive interactions to create a place where children feel safe, loved, and valued.
 - b. Teach all children calm down breathing techniques daily.
 - c. Set up a Safe Space in your classroom where children can choose to go when they want to calm down or want space. Have calming tools in this space for children to use.
 - d. Teach problem solving skills.
 - e. Pause before responding to situations if it is safe to do so (Stop – Take a breath – and – Relax = STAR).
 - f. Provide children with job opportunities to help children feel part of a family and feel valued (toddler-school age).
2. **Keep your room organized**

Clutter can cause children to feel overwhelmed and overstimulated which will lead to behavior problems.
3. **Classroom Rules**

- a. Post them where children can see them
 - b. Review them daily
 - c. Keep them clear and simple
 - d. Keep them positive (tell them what to do instead of what not to do)
4. Consistency
- a. Children are at their best when they know what to expect. Frequent changes and uncertainty makes them uncomfortable, stressed, and more likely to act out.
 - b. Post a class schedule at their level so they can see what to expect during the day.
 - c. Transitions
 - Transitions are how we get from one thing to the next
 - Carefully plan and structure transitions
 - Give warnings before transitions (verbal, hand signals, songs)
5. Positive Environment
- a. Use positive language. Research has shown that children who are in environments where they hear lots of negatives (no, don't, stop, I'm done with you, etc.) tend to have more behavior problems. These words are only used when you are protecting the safety of children and must be followed with a one-on-one explanation of why you need them to stop doing something.
 - b. You will feel better when you start using more positive language (it changes your mood too).
6. Modeling Behavior
- Teachers are expected to model the behaviors they want to see from the children. If a child is doing something you don't want them to do, make sure they aren't learning it from you or other staff.
7. If, "No," is not an acceptable answer, do not ask the question. Instead give a direction. Example: Instead of, "Would you please stop throwing that – you're going to hurt someone?" try, "**I need you to** stop throwing that. It isn't safe."
8. Specific Praise and Recognition
- a. When children feel good about themselves they have better behavior.
 - b. Just telling a child, "Good job!" isn't enough. You need to give specific praise for specific actions or work (I love how you cleaned up without being asked; Great job keeping your hands to yourself in line; I really like how focused you are on your work today; You did a great job using your words to solve your problem).
9. Teacher - Child Bonds
- a. The more you connect the less you correct. This means when you have a good relationship with a child you will have fewer behavior problems.
 - b. When children feel close to a teacher they are more likely to want them to be proud. If they don't feel close to a teacher, they don't find the need to make them proud.
 - c. Self-fulfilling Prophecy: This is the theory that children will be what we expect them to be. If you expect a child to be bad and a trouble maker, that is how they will be

because you send out signals (and sometimes words) that let them know this is how you feel.

10. Lower the Rope

Each child is an individual and has their own strengths, abilities, and challenges. If you set the rope too high they will never be successful. If they are never successful, they will quit trying to succeed and you will have behavior problems.

11. Start the Day Right

Start every day by greeting children individually.

12. Modify Your Approach or the Environment

Just because the way you interact, teach, or set up your environment worked in the past, doesn't mean it will always work for all children. There are lots of modifications you can make that can help correct problems (major room arrangements need to be preapproved).

Reactive Guidance

Reactive Guidance is what we do when a child makes a choice or displays a behavior that is not safe or breaks classroom rules.

1. Problem Solving/Coaching

- a. When a child does not follow rules or is struggling with their behavior, talking to the child individually can be a great teaching tool.
- b. If the child is upset, allow them time to calm down before using this tool.
- c. During problem solving/coaching, ask the child what happened to make them upset, how they handled those feelings, and what they could do in similar situations in the future. Give suggestions and support to the student during this time.
- d. Problem solving/coaching is not a punishment or consequence. It is a learning tool for children who want to participate. Never force a child to participate in this.

2. Redirection

- a. Staff are expected to redirect children away from problems toward constructive activity in order to reduce conflict.
- b. Redirection is when a behavior may be headed in a negative direction and you offer different choices to direct child towards better outcome.
- c. Redirection allows the child to choose acceptable behavior on their own.
- d. Redirection needs to relieve the tension and draw the child's interest.
- e. The purpose of redirection is to teach appropriate ways to do what they want to do.

Example: A student is about to write on another student's paper. You bring the student their own paper and pencil and ask if they would like to write too.

3. Logical Consequences
 - a. Consequences must be delivered immediately. You can't give consequences that are in the future (Example 1: a child can't be left out of a future field trip because of behavior on a past field trip. Example 2: You can't tell a child they can't play on the climber in the afternoon because they weren't following rules on it in the morning).
 - b. Logical Consequences teach children that their actions have a related result.
 - c. Give the child a reminder and a warning before delivering the consequence unless the student or other student(s) are in danger of being hurt.
 - d. You deliver one consequence per situation. If the child says, "I don't care," stick with the consequence. Don't change the consequence to make the child respond differently.

Example: A student is tipping back in their chair. You remind them that the chair legs need to stay on the ground for safety. They continue to tip back in their chair. You remind them again and let them know that if it happens again they will need to choose another activity. They continue to tip in their chair. You tell them they need to choose another activity and why.
4. If a child becomes violent, move the children away from the child who is being violent and call an administrator for assistance.

Persistent Unacceptable Behavior

1. Persistent, unacceptable behavior is defined by the state of MN as "any recurring behavior which is dangerous to the child, other children, or staff members and this behavior occurs on different days throughout the week."
2. Staff are expected to communicate with children's families regarding any behavior issues or concerns on an on-going basis.
3. The Director or Assistant Director is responsible for coordinating a "Team" approach to working with cases of persistent, unacceptable behavior including staff, family, child, Early Childhood Special Education Professionals, and/or other professionals.

Behavior Plan Procedure

1. If a child is displaying persistent, unacceptable behavior, the Lead Teacher is to start a behavior log (using center Behavior Log Form) for that child. The Lead Teacher is responsible for notifying all classroom staff members about the log, how to use the log, and where to find the log. All staff who work with the child are responsible for using this log.
2. Behavior logs will include at least the following: child's name, date of behavior, time behavior started and ended, staff intervention methods.
3. The Lead Teacher is responsible for notifying the Director or Assistant Director of the behavior concern in writing and scheduling a conference with the child's parent(s) or legal guardian. During the conference, the Lead Teacher will discuss the behaviors they are experiencing and methods they have tried to assist the child. The Lead Teacher will collect information from the parents regarding any concerns they have, what they use for behavior guidance at home, and any other background information on the child that may be useful. During this meeting, the Teacher will explain our process for developing a plan for the child.
4. The Director or Assistant Director will have staff complete a "Staff Survey of Child Behavior" form (which includes staff observing and making notes of the observed

- behaviors) and submit the form along with notes from the parent conference and a copy of the behavior log within 5 days of the parent conference.
5. The Director or Assistant will develop a Behavior Plan for the child based on the information gathered. They may choose to conduct additional observations to gather additional information.
 6. After the Behavior Plan is completed, the Assistant Director or Director will meet with the Lead Teacher to review the plan. The Lead Teacher is responsible for reviewing the plan with all classroom staff and scheduling a meeting with the child's parents or legal guardian.
 7. In the parent meeting staff will work in partnership with the parent(s) to make any adjustments to the plan based on parent feedback and recommendations not received during the first conference. Any modifications made will be documented on the form.
 8. During the parent behavior plan review meeting the Lead Teacher will have the parent sign one copy of the form and give the other copy of the form to the parents/legal guardian. The signed copy of the form will be turned in to the Assistant Director or Director to be filed in the child's file. An additional copy will be kept in the child's classroom file.
 9. If at any time the staff or parent(s) feel it is necessary, we will request assistance from outside services. If outside services are needed, parents will sign a consent to share information form.
 10. All staff will follow the child's Behavior Plan. If the behaviors continue after the behavior plan is in place, the Lead Teacher is required to communicate in writing to the director so the behavior plan can be adjusted.
 11. Behavior plans will include the following information: child's strengths, child's struggles, behaviors being displayed, any background information about the child, goals for the child, plan for achieving the goals, any other relevant or helpful information.

Parent Communication

It is vital to a child's development that their teachers communicate clearly with parents about the child's successes and struggles. When a child has an unusual or serious behavior struggle(s) during the day, the staff members are expected to communicate this information to the parent(s) verbally (also leave a note for or email an administrator). If it is not possible to talk to the parent, you may leave them a note. It is important to remember that successful communication requires respect. Staff members are expected to be positive, helpful, and respectful when discussing a child's behavior struggles. This does not mean you aren't honest about the behavior; it means that you discuss it in a way that lets the parent know that you are there to help the child and the parents. If you feel a parent isn't being respectful to you, you need to continue to be respectful to the parent during the conversation and then let an administrator know about the situation so we can address it with the parent. Remember that most often the parent shares your frustration with the situation and may even be embarrassed about it, causing them to become defensive, angry, and/or dismissive.

Separation from the Group

No child may be separated from the group unless the following has occurred:

1. Less intrusive methods of guiding the child's behavior have been tried and were ineffective.

2. The child's behavior threatens the well-being of the child or other children in the program.
3. A child who requires separation from the group must:
 - a. Remain within an unenclosed part of the classroom where the child can be continuously seen and heard by a program staff person.
 - b. The child's return to the group must be contingent on the child's stopping or bringing under control the behavior that precipitated the separation.
 - c. The child must be returned to the group as soon as the behavior that precipitated the separation abated or stops.
 - d. Children 6 weeks to 16 months are not allowed to be separated from the group.
4. Separation Report
Occasionally a child may need to be separated from the group due to more serious behavior. All separations from the group must be noted on the Separation from Group Form from Licensing and must include the following:
 - a. Child's Name
 - b. Staff Person's Name
 - c. Time & Date
 - d. Information indicating what less intrusive methods were used to guide the behavior
 - e. How the child's behavior continued to threaten the well-being of the child or other children in care.
5. If a child separated from the group three or more times in one day, the child's parents shall be notified and the notification shall be indicated on the daily log.
6. If a child is separated 5 or more times in one week, eight or more times in two weeks, the procedures for Persistent Unacceptable Behavior must be followed.
7. Children under 16 months old are never separated from the group. This includes putting them in a highchair, bouncy seat, or crib as a way of controlling a child's behavior or preventing a child from injuring others.

Prohibited Actions

The following methods and actions do not allow for a supportive learning environment, are not in line with Pumpkin Patch's philosophy, and violate state licensing and center policies.

1. Subjection of a child to corporal punishment which includes but is not limited to: Rough Handling, Shoving, Hair Pulling, Ear Pulling, Shaking, Slapping, Kicking, Biting, Pinching, Hitting, Spanking
2. Subjection of a child to emotional stress, which includes but is not limited to: Name Calling, Ostracism, Shaming, Psychological abuse or coercion, Making Derogatory Remarks About a Child or the Child's Family, Using Language that threatens, humiliates, or frightens the child

3. Separation of a child from the group except within exceptions listed under Separation From the Group
4. Punishments for lapses in toilet training.
5. Withholding food, light, warmth, clothing, or medical care as a punishment for unacceptable behavior.
6. The use of physical restraint other than to physically hold a child where containment is necessary to protect a child or others from harm.
7. The use of mechanical restraints, such as tying.

Children with Mental Retardation or Related Conditions

For children with mental retardation or related conditions or children under the age of five as specified in Minnesota Rules parts 9525.0036, the standards governing the use of aversive and deprivation procedures in Minnesota Rules, parts 9525.2700 to 9525.2810 apply.

Biting Policy

In addition to this policy, staff will read through the NAEYC article, "Understanding and Responding to Children Who Bite."

Biting is a natural developmental stage that many children go through. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between thirteen and twenty-four months of age. The safety of the children at the center is our primary concern. The center's biting policy addresses the actions the staff will take if a biting incident occurs.

Toddlers bite other toddlers for many different reasons. A child might be teething or overly tired and frustrated. He or she might be experimenting or trying to get the attention of the teacher or his peers. Toddlers have poor verbal skills and are impulsive without a lot of self-control. Sometimes biting occurs for no apparent reason. The center will encourage the children to "use their words" if they become angry or frustrated. The staff members will maintain a close and constant supervision of the children at all times.

The following steps will be taken if a biting incident occurs at our center:

- The biting will be interrupted with a firm but calm "No...we don't bite people."
- Staff will stay calm and will not overreact.
- The bitten child will be comforted.
- Staff will remove the biter from the situation. The biter will be given something to do that is satisfying.
- The wound of the bitten child shall be assessed and cleansed with soap and water. If the bite has broken the skin, the child's parents will be contacted immediately after the child has been cared for. Staff will recommend the parent notify their child's doctor
- The parents of both children will be notified of the biting incident. Appropriate forms will be filled out (Accident/Incident Reports)

- **Confidentiality of all children involved will be maintained.**

If a child's biting is happening on a frequent basis (more than one incident in a day or more than 2 incidents in a week), staff will follow the procedures for Persistent, Unacceptable Behavior (found in this handbook).

Peer Problem-Solving Program

Infants and Toddlers

Problem Solving Steps for Disagreements & Conflicts

- Teach children about their own feelings and what others are feeling on a daily basis by talking about them, reading books, and looking at pictures.
- When children are playing be prepared to step in and help them solve problems ("he has it-I want it" "she took it – it's mine" etc.).
- Teach the children to say & sign, "Stop"
- Teach children appropriate ways to share through games and activities.
- Give children words and signs for their emotions and for "stop" and "help".
- When a conflict arises, help child say or sign "Stop."
- Take time to explain, "Max feels sad (or mad) when you take his toys. We need to give it back"
- The goal of teaching "stop" is not for staff members to use it towards children, but to teach children to tell others what they need.

When a child hurts someone

- If a child hurts another child calmly say, "Do you see [Jane] is crying? She is sad because you hurt her."

Preschoolers

As children start developing more complex social skills, it is common for them to have more conflicts with their peers. It is important to the children's development that we teach them good conflict resolution skills. Below are detailed steps for helping children learn to solve conflict with their peers.

Problem Solving Steps for Disagreements & Conflicts

1. Teach children about what they are feeling and what others are feeling on a daily basis through conversations, stories, and pictures.

2. When children are playing be prepared to step in and help them solve problems (“he has it I want it” “she took it – it’s mine” etc.), but give them time to try to work it out without your help if you feel the children involved are safe doing so.
3. Teach children appropriate ways to share and ask for a turn.
4. When a conflict arises, help child say “When you _____ I feel _____.” Please stop.”
5. Congratulate the child on getting the other child to stop the behavior (the child will generally stop since you are there to oversee). If the child does not stop, congratulate the child on using his/her words and work with the other child on stopping the behavior.
6. Congratulate the child who stopped for listening to his/her friend (this will teach and encourage the child to stop in the future).
7. Encourage the child who asked the person to stop to say, “Thank you.”
8. Encourage the other child to say, “Your welcome.” This teaches children to praise each other for their successes.
9. Post a Problem Solving Steps Poster in your classroom. If you can draw, add simple pictures for your non-readers.
10. With time the children will need less coaching and will be able to work through these steps independently.

When a child hurts someone

1. If a child hurts another child say, “you see Matt is crying? You hurt him. Matt, I need you to tell Jane how you feel.” You will need to coach the children on this next part for a while, but with time they may be able to do it on their own. “I feel _____ when you _____.”
2. Then ask the child who did the hurting what happened. Coach that child to say, “I feel _____ when you _____.”
3. Explain that it is never okay to hurt someone when you are at school. And review the problem solving steps.
4. At this age you can often get children to tell you what happened by sitting down and asking questions (even the child who did the hurting).

School Ageds

As children start developing more complex social skills, it is common for them to have more conflicts with their peers. It is important to the children’s development that we teach them good conflict resolution skills. Below are detailed steps for helping children learn to solve conflict with their peers.

Problem Solving Steps for Disagreements & Conflicts

1. When students are playing be prepared to step in and help them solve problems (“he has it I want it” “she took it – it’s mine” etc.), but give them time to try to work it out without your help if you feel the children involved are safe doing so.
2. Teach children appropriate ways to work through problems with their peers.
3. When a conflict arises, encourage children to say “When you _____ I feel _____. Please stop.”
4. Congratulate the child on getting the other child to stop the behavior (the child will generally stop since you are there to oversee). If the child does not stop, congratulate the child on using his/her words and work with the other child on stopping the behavior.
5. Congratulate the child who stopped for listening to his/her friend (this will teach and encourage the child to stop in the future).
6. Encourage students to use good manners when working through problems and sharing their feelings.
7. With time the children will need less coaching and will be able to work through these steps independently.