

Discipline and Challenging Behavior Policy

Most days Seedlings are normal everyday children displaying a wide range of normal behaviors according to their developmental level at any given time. At Seedlings we accept each child as the individual that he or she is on that day. We do our best to meet each child's needs every day no matter how they are feeling. We are here to help, not judge children or parents.

Discipline Policy

We use a guidance method of discipline. We do not use time out, shame, punishments or rewards of any kind. We respect and strive to understand each child. We model and teach the children problem solving, communication and conflict resolution tools to develop empathy, understanding and a strong personal voice.

Challenging Behavior Policy

Occasionally a child may struggle with regulating strong emotions. In trying to cope they might display challenging behavior that jeopardizes the safety and sense of belonging for other Seedlings and themselves. There may be a reason that is obvious (hungry, tired, needs to use the bathroom, misunderstandings, new baby in the house) or we may never know the reason for their behavior on that day. In these infrequent situations, the following policies will be followed with the possibility of adjustments for unforeseen individual needs.

1. Short term situations:

- On any given day when a child hurts another in a way that seriously concerns the teachers and adults, the Seedling will immediately be paired with one of the teachers to prevent any further hurting for the rest of the day. At this point the parent may be brought into the Seedlings area to be close by their child.
- The concern is shared with the child's parents, with all teachers and helpers at the closing meeting and the next day at the morning meeting.
- The next day they will start fresh. Most times this is a short term problem.

2. When a child continues hurting others in the same way:

- The parents will be informed that there is a problem and that we are making a plan with the child to change the behavior.
- We have a serious talk with the Seedling and together come up with a written plan so that no one gets hurt.
- If this doesn't work the parents are called in for a conference to try to better understand why this might be happening. Together we create an Individual Guidance Plan with specific steps for home and at Seedlings. Together we follow through on this plan of action.
- As a last resort, if none of the plans work and the child continues to hurt others they will be asked to take a break from Seedlings for a day or more. We have taken this step only a handful of times in the history of Seedlings.

3. We are a village raising these children and therefore share responsibility:

- It is the responsibility of each parent to always immediately share any safety concern they have with the staff so that it can be addressed directly and promptly.
- If your child expresses any concern or fear about another child this too needs to be shared with the staff immediately.
- Finally, if you are having negative feelings about any child (including your own) please see Susan so that she can help you see the child in the best light. She and the other teachers will help you to understand that each child is only a child, a work in progress, growing at their own pace, in their own way, facing their own challenges and that Seedlings is one of the best places on the planet to grow through those challenges and learn how to safely and magnificently be who they need to be.