

Behavior Guidance Plan

(MN Rules, part 9503.0055, subparts 1-6)

The Discovery Center promotes a positive approach to managing the behavior of all children. All behavior guidance methods used are tailored to the developmental level of the children that the program is licensed to serve. These policies and procedures are in place to protect the safety of all children and staff and the goal is to limit or eliminate the use of suspension, expulsion, and other exclusionary measures.

The following techniques are implemented by Discovery Center staff as a positive model of acceptable behavior.

- **Prevention:** A well-designed environment prevents frustration, interruptions, and hazards. We strive to maintain stimulating classrooms so that the children can be engaged in productive and positive activities.
- **Positive Redirection:** This technique involves redirecting unacceptable behavior to an acceptable alternative. We will recognize children for their appropriate behavior and successful interactions.
- **Modeling:** Teacher and peer-modeled appropriate behavior is provided to help the children pattern positive responses. When needed, staff will demonstrate such things as “gentle touches” to make an impression on children.
- **Boundaries:** The Discovery Center has clear and simple rules in each classroom. Such guidelines as “walking feet, inside voices, listening ears and gentle touches” help the children to achieve acceptable standards.
- **Problem-solving:** We appeal to the child’s growing intellectual and moral reasoning by using natural and logical consequences. Asking questions often helps a child to develop correct responses. We regularly remind the children to “use their words” to resolve issues.

Children are in the process of learning appropriate behavior. They are constantly experimenting with different types of actions and are looking for direction and limits. Our methods include recognition and encouragement of appropriate behavior as often as possible.

When inappropriate behavior becomes apparent, the following FIVE-STEP BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE PLAN is carried out by staff to ensure the safety of all the children and staff.

1. **STEP ONE—TEACHER PRESENCE** The teacher may need to stand near, look at, put a hand on the shoulder, etc. to show a child their behavior is not acceptable.
2. **STEP TWO—REDIRECTION** The teacher leads the child to a new activity to avoid conflict; may separate from the toy, etc.
3. **STEP THREE—PROBLEM-SOLVING WITH CHILD** The teacher helps the child to solve problems, think of alternative solutions, models words to use instead of physical reaction, lets the child voice their feelings, and acknowledges other feelings, etc.
4. **STEP FOUR—NATURAL AND LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES** The teacher calls upon the child to assist in remedying the situation. (i.e., after a child knocks over another’s toy blocks purposely, that child would be asked to help pick them up, etc.) All consequences for unacceptable behavior are immediate and relate to the observed inappropriate behavior.
5. **STEP FIVE—SEPARATION FROM THE GROUP** No child will be separated from the group unless the following has occurred: Less intrusive methods, as listed in Steps 1 through 4, of guiding the child’s behavior have been tried and were ineffective. The child’s behavior threatens the well-being of the child or other children in the group.

(Exclusionary measures are not considered until all possible interventions have been exhausted, and there is agreement that seclusion is in the best interest of the child.)

A child who requires separation must:

- Be within an unenclosed part of the classroom where the child can be continuously seen and heard by a staff member.
- Return to the group contingent upon stopping or bringing under control the behavior that precipitated the separation and be returned to the group as soon as the behavior that precipitated the separation abates or stops.

SEPARATION REPORT: All separation from the group is documented on the Daily Log and include the following:

- The child's name; staff person's name; time; date,
- Information indicating that less intrusive methods were used to guide the child's behavior, and
- How the child's behavior continued to threaten the well-being of the child or other children in care
- If a child is separated from the group three or more times in one day, the child's parent will be notified, and the parent notification will be indicated in the Daily Separation Log.

If a child is separated five or more times in one week, eight times or more in two weeks, the procedures under "Persistent Inappropriate Behavior" will be followed.

PROHIBITED ACTIONS:

The Discovery Center prohibits the following actions by or at the direction of staff:

No child will be subjected to emotional stress,

which includes but is not limited to...

- Name Calling
- Ostracism
- Shaming
- Spanking
- Using language that threatens, humiliates, or frightens the child.
- Making derogatory remarks about a child or child's family
- Punished for lapses in toilet habits.
- Food, light, warmth, clothing, or medical care withheld as punishment for unacceptable behavior.
- No physical restraints will be used, other than to hold a child to protect them from hurting themselves or others (see positive manual hold).

- No mechanical restraints will be used on a child, such as tying.
- Separating from the group, except as outlined in Step Five, "Separation from the Group."

No child will be subjected to corporal punishment, which includes but is not limited to....

- Rough Handling
- Slapping
- Shoving
- Kicking
- Hitting
- Biting
- Ear Pulling
- Pinching
- Shaking

PERSISTENT INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

If a child is consistently showing unacceptable behavior the following steps will be taken:

- The persistent unacceptable behavior will be observed/recorded by the teaching team along with written documentation on how the teachers responded to the behavior. This documentation is kept in the child's file.
- Staff will inform the Site Director of the inappropriate behavior, their observations, documentation, and Response to the behavior. The Site Director will give feedback and offer suggestions to staff on other ways to handle the behavior.

If the teachers and Site Director feel the behavior is not diminishing after implementing the Behavior Guidance Plan or if a child has been separated from the group more than 3 times in one day or 5 or more times in one week, the child's parents will be notified, and the parent notification will be indicated in the Separation Log.

- A meeting will be set up with the child's parents, the teaching team, and the Site Director. If needed, other professionals will be consulted i.e.: District Early Childhood Special Education; Private Psychologist, Health Care Professional, or the Wilder Foundation.
- If all avenues have been exhausted here and the staff feels a child would be better served in another program, staff will assist parents in finding a new program that best meets the needs of the child.

Manual Restraint / Physical Hold: We promote the rights of children served and strive to protect their health and safety during the "Emergency use of physical hold"; using a manual restraint/physical hold when a child poses an imminent risk of physical harm to self or others, and it is the least restrictive intervention that would achieve safety. *(Property damage, verbal aggression, or a child's refusal to receive or participate in programming on their own do not constitute an emergency.)*

Positive strategies and techniques are required before using a manual restraint/physical hold.

The following must first be used to attempt to de-escalate a child's behavior before it poses an imminent risk of physical harm to self/others:

- **Follow the first 5 Steps of the Program Behavior Guidance Plan** (Teacher Presence/Redirection/Problem-Solving/Natural and Logical Consequences)
- **Other strategies that could be used include:**
 - Reinforce appropriate behavior.
 - Offer choices to the person, including activities that are relaxing and enjoyable.
 - Use positive verbal guidance and feedback.
 - Actively listen to a child and validate their feelings.
 - Speak calmly with reassuring words, consider volume, tone, and non-verbal communication.
 - Simplify a task or routine or discontinue until the child is calm.

Physical contact or instructional techniques must use the least restrictive alternative possible to meet the needs of the child. The following is allowed on an emergency basis when a child's conduct poses an imminent risk of physical harm to self or others and less restrictive strategies have not stopped the behavior.

- **Physical escort:** physical intervention or contact used as a behavior management technique to guide or carry a child to safety or away from an unsafe or potentially harmful and escalating situation.
- **One staff person provides arm restraint** in a standing or seated position.

Manual restraint/physical hold is discontinued as soon as the behavior ceases.

A Behavior Update Report Form is completed after the use of a manual restraint/physical hold and includes:

- The names of staff and children involved in the incident.
- The positive/alternative measures from the Behavior Guidance Plan that were attempted to de-escalate the incident and maintain safety and identify when/how/how long the alternative measures were attempted before the physical hold was implemented. *(If possible, an observing staff member will fill out the form and description.)*
- The Behavior Update Report Form will be shared with and signed by the student's parents and filed in the student's file.
- The Site Director will be notified.