

## What NSCECE Students are Learning

NSCECE students are learning about and looking for opportunities to practice the following guidance strategies in your classroom. Their learning is greatly enhanced when they see you role modeling and utilizing similar strategies. We appreciate you taking the time to explain your guidance choices and your thinking about how to best support children in your group. Students may not yet recognize the significant role that your choices, classroom environment and routines play in supporting positive behaviour outcomes for children. Any information you can share about your thinking in these areas would be greatly appreciated.

Our students are discouraged from using hard tones and punitive approaches to manage misbehaviour. Students are also requested not to use time out in group care settings as there is little evidence to support its use, and much evidence which points to potential down sides including missed opportunities for learning.

### Setting Limits: Children need and want limits

#### *Communicating Limits*

- Use positive language
  - ⇒ Tell the children what they can do rather than what they can't do
- Keep instructions short
- Give children time
- Give reasons for the limit
  - ⇒ If you can't think of a reason maybe the limit is not useful

### Consequences

#### *Are the result of behaviour*

- Natural Consequences happen without adult intervention
- Logical Consequences happen with adult intervention and fit the misbehaviour
  - ⇒ Must be immediate
  - ⇒ Tell the child what the consequence will be
  - ⇒ Continue to teach the correct behaviour and to use redirection
  - ⇒ Stay calm
  - ⇒ Remember that logical consequences are not a punishment

### Offer Choices

Give choices only when both choices are acceptable

- Why give choices?
  - ⇒ To help the child develop decision making skills
  - ⇒ To avoid power struggles
  - ⇒ To empower children and give them opportunities for control

- When to give choices?
  - ⇒ When it is appropriate to give a choice
  - ⇒ When the child can manage the choice
  - ⇒ When it is safe to do so
  - ⇒ Don't offer a choice when there isn't one
- Teacher's role
  - ⇒ Be clear in your own mind about your expectations
  - ⇒ Be reasonable
  - ⇒ Use words to give directions in a positive way
  - ⇒ Make sure it's a choice not a threat

### Use Redirection

*Redirection can mean*

- directing a child to another activity
- helping a child focus on another aspect of the same activity
  - Your role:
    - ⇒ Involve the child in an activity that replaces the undesirable behaviour
    - ⇒ Be sure the new activity reflects what the child currently needs or is seeking (e.g. puzzles don't replace a child's need for large body play but putting out the cots might)
    - ⇒ Consider if there is a way to make the child's chosen activity appropriate
      - "It's not safe to climb here. I wonder if we can find a safe place for you to climb?"
    - ⇒ Can you offer the child's chosen activity at another time of day?
      - "These are your choices now. You'll be able to build with the hollow blocks during free play."
    - ⇒ Be careful not to accidentally reward undesirable behaviour
  - Why use redirection?
    - ⇒ Helps the child to move positively to another task
    - ⇒ Lets the adult give a limit in a positive way
    - ⇒ Can prevent power struggles

### Language: Positive wording and clear messages

- Be aware of your own body language
- Use a natural voice tone
- Use a normal voice level
- Get close (not across the room)
- Get down to the child's level
- Use the child's name
- Make use of limiting and teaching messages
- Use gentle touches if the child is open to them
- Is the child emotionally able to engage in a conversation? Offer a space, time, reassurance if the child needs time to calm before continuing
- Use active listening and I messages

- Maintain eye contact - Do not force a child to look at you!
- Tell the child what you want him or her to do
- Use developmentally appropriate language
- Does the child understand your message?
- Give the child time to process and accept your message

### Use Encouragement

- Encouragement is specific (tells the child exactly what they did and the positive outcome that resulted)
- Shows that we appreciate the child's action
- Does not imply that they need to please us
- Does not impose our values on the child
- Focuses on the effort not the end result

### Ignore Behaviour

This strategy is not appropriate for behaviours that are hurtful, destructive, disrespectful or dangerous

- Ignore negative attention-seeking behaviours and make a plan to provide additional attention for positive behaviours
- Focus attention on behaviours you wish to change and ignore minor misbehaviour

### Teach a conflict resolution process

*High/Scope conflict resolution steps (Retrieved from: <http://www.highscope.org>)*

1. **Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions**
  - ⇒ Place yourself between the children, on their level; use a calm voice and gentle touch; remain neutral rather than take sides.
2. **Acknowledge children's feelings**
  - ⇒ Say something simple such as "You look really upset;" let children know you need to hold any object in question.
3. **Gather information**
  - ⇒ Ask "What's the problem?" Do not ask "why" questions as young children focus on that what the problem is rather than understanding the reasons behind it.
4. **Restate the problem**
  - ⇒ "So the problem is..." Use and extend the children's vocabulary, substituting neutral words for hurtful or judgmental ones (such as "stupid") if needed.
5. **Ask for solutions and choose one together.**
  - ⇒ Ask "What can we do to solve this problem?" Encourage children to think of a solution but offer options if the children are unable to.
6. **Be prepared to give follow-up support**
  - ⇒ Acknowledge children's accomplishments, e.g., "You solved the problem!" Stay nearby in case anyone is not happy with the solution and the process needs repeating.

### Use your environment and daily routines to support child competence

*Develop appropriate environments to support positive behaviours*

- Warm responsive relationships
- Curriculum approaches

- Utilize developmentally and individually appropriate routines and transitions
- Room arrangement
- Developmentally appropriate activity areas and materials
- Daily schedules
- Provide activities and learning opportunities that promote social/emotional development
- Teacher training and experience

### Time Out is not Behaviour Guidance

Typically time out is ...

- **A new name for punishment.**

One child hits her playmate. The teacher marches over and tells the child to “TAKE A TIME OUT!” Although the words “AND SUFFER” remain unspoken, they reverberate in the air. Children hear the unspoken “suffer” loud and clear.

- **Used as a threat.**

“Bobby, do you want to have to take a time out?” Again, the unspoken message is that Bobby better change what he is doing or he will suffer for it. Is a suffering child your goal? Is fear the means by which we want children to learn acceptable behavior?

- **The only way the adult knows how to respond to a child’s misbehaviour.**

Imagine if the only way a driver could control a car was with the brake pedal. There would be no steering wheel, no way to adjust the gas pedal to reduce speed, and no rear view mirror to monitor traffic. Would you want to drive such a car? If time out is your only tool, it is time to get a better equipped vehicle.

- **Rarely discussed with children except when they are being sent to it.**

It is up to the child, with her two year old or younger reasoning ability, to figure out what time out is, why she is being sent there, and how she should act now. Many a child sits on that time out chair deciding: I am a bad person; no one likes me; or she even sits there smiling because she is now the center of attention. Are those the messages we want children to receive?

- **A black hole where children disappear.**

You plop Mary in the time out chair and suddenly Sally is throwing up her lunch. By the time you have Sally cleaned up, find her mom’s emergency phone number, and call to leave a message that Sally is sick, 20 minutes have slipped past. With a jolt, you remember that Mary is still in time out....

- **A way to make children “pay” for their misbehaviour.**

When we focus on controlling a child’s behavior, we must win each battle. IF we win, what role does that leave for the child? Is time out a “You Pay—You Stay” corner of your classroom?

- **Only for children.**

First of all—who needs the time out? Sometimes it is the adult. An upset adult placing herself in time out teaches a powerful lesson. For many children, the only response they have ever seen to adult anger is violence. Adult use of time out provides valuable lessons about life.

*From: Roslyn Duffy (1996). Time Out: How it is Abused. Child Care Information Exchange*

#### Some Websites to Visit:

- <http://www.challengingbehavior.org/>
- <http://incredibleyears.com/>
- <http://braultbehavior.org/materials.html>