Behavior Guidance_Policy : IC3 Staff

The Ithaca Community Childcare Center uses Positive Guidance as a learning tool to provide children with the guidance and security necessary for emotional and social growth. Guidance techniques are designed and carried out in such a way as to help the individual child develop self-control and to assume responsibility for his or her actions. We believe that all domains of learning are supported during play and through positive interactions with adults. Promoting healthy social and emotional development, including self- control, is one of the fundamental responsibilities of our program and is the focus of our behavior guidance policy so that the use of suspension, expulsion or other exclusionary measures are limited and/or eliminated.

Positive Guidance is an approach to managing the behavior of children. Steps that we take towards establishing behavior management include: building secure relationships with children, offering a safe predictable environment, having appropriate expectations based on a child's developmental age, setting appropriate limits, explaining the appropriate use of materials, reinforcing positive behavior, discussing acceptable options for inappropriate behavior, offering choices and encouraging problem solving.

Positive guidance methods used in this learning process include: redirection, ignoring the behavior, positive reinforcement, alternatives and choices, problem solving techniques, modeling, limit setting and time spent away from the group or situation to gain control. Natural and logical consequences are used to help children learn to make good decisions. Behavior management must promote self-esteem in children and guide children in such a way as to help each child develop self-control and assume responsibility for his or her actions through clear and consistent rules and limits appropriate to the ages and development of the children in care. IC3 staff also use FLIP IT!, Second Step, the Pyramid Model and Conscious Discipline as additional tools to promote social and emotional competence.

Please remember that young children (under 5 years) need the experience of interacting with other children on a consistent basis. Learning how to share and cooperate with others is an ongoing process for young children, and consequently, aggressive behavior may occur (i.e. – hitting, yelling, name calling, biting, pinching, kicking, etc.). Although we do not allow this behavior to persist, it does take time for a child to learn a more acceptable way of dealing with his/her anger and frustration.

While young children are learning socially appropriate behavior, IC3 expects school age children (5 to 10 years of age) to have some mastery of socially appropriate behavior. Unsafe behavior may fall in the domains of verbal, emotional or physical (i.e. –, threatening, bullying, ostracizing, destroying property, racial slurs, fighting etc.) and are unacceptable and unsafe behaviors.

Any corrective actions used must relate to the child's behavior and be handled without prolonged delay on the part of the IC3 staff so that the child is aware of the relationship between his or her actions and the consequences of those actions.

Where a child's behavior is unsafe and harms or is likely to result in harm to the child, others or property, or seriously disrupts or is likely to seriously disrupt group interaction, the child may be separated briefly from the group, but only for as long as is necessary for the child to regain enough self-control to rejoin the group. The child must be placed in an area where he or she is in the view of, and can be supervised and supported by, a teacher. Interaction between a teacher and the child must take place immediately following the separation to guide the child toward appropriate group behavior.

Physical intervention is permitted. Physical intervention is the act of using bodily contact as a short-term immediate response to prevent children from incurring substantial or serious injury to themselves or injuring others. It may involve: picking a child up and moving him or her away from danger or conflict, holding the child's hands or gently touching the body to direct their movement, rocking a child to soothe them, blocking a child's path when they are about to injure themselves or others or destroy property. This technique allows

the child to regain self-control as quickly and safely as possible. A consultation with a child's parent is required if the child is not receptive to physical intervention.

Physical restraint is prohibited. Physical restraint is the act of using force to extremely limit a child's body movements for a lengthy period of time. It involves holding a child against his/her will and putting pressure on the child's chest and/or extremities in an effort to significantly restrict his/her movement, thereby making it extremely difficult for a child to move. It may also involve holding a child flat on the ground and restricting his/her body from movement.

Corporal punishment is prohibited. The term corporal punishment means punishment inflicted directly on the body including, but not limited to, physical restraint, spanking, biting, shaking, slapping, twisting or squeezing; demanding excessive physical exercise, prolonged lack of movement or motion, or strenuous or bizarre postures; and compelling a child to eat or have in the child's mouth soap, foods, hot spices or irritants or the like. Withholding or using food, rest or sleep as a punishment is prohibited. Methods of discipline and interaction which frighten, demean or humiliate a child are prohibited. Isolating a child in a closet, darkened area, or any area where the child cannot be seen and supervised by a teacher is prohibited.

Some children may need more intensive support when their behavior: interferes with their ability to engage in positive interactions and relationships with peers and/or adults, interferes with their ability to explore the environment and learn, persists despite developmentally appropriate guidance, and causes the child's family and/or caregivers to be concerned.

The staff at the Center will make every effort to work with children exhibiting unsafe behavior, in order that they may participate safely and the safety and well-being of all the children and staff are protected. If a child displays unsafe behavior which has a negative effect on the child, other children in the program, and/or IC3 staff, the incident will be recorded on the incident report form and the parents and IC3 administration will be notified. If the unsafe behavior continues, the staff and parent will meet privately to discuss the situation and will develop an individualized support plan determining the function of the behavior and strategies to improve the behavior, reduce safety risks and/or connect the child with resources outside of IC3 that they may need in order to be successful. A referral to Early Intervention or Committee for Preschool Special Education and/or community resources may be requested. The individual behavior plan will include parent insights, possible cause/solutions, and steps to be taken at home to support the plan.

The frequency of parent meetings and individual support plan updates will depend on the severity of the behavior and staff's ability to keep themselves and others safe while working through the individualized plan. If the behavior does not improve, a referral to Early Intervention or Committee for Preschool Special Education and/or community resources will be required.

It is IC3's expectation that a child can be safe without ongoing 1 on 1 assistance or adding extra staff to the classroom. IC3 provides group childcare. Our teacher/child ratio is a licensing requirement and one teacher cannot be dedicated to one child's needs. IC3 must make an individualized assessment on whether we can meet the particular needs of the child without fundamentally altering our program. This is in compliance with federal and state civil rights laws.

IC3 Administration will evaluate the efforts made to resolve the behavior: whether outside resources were recommended or required and if so were resources accessed by the parent; the severity of the safety risk; and if staff can successfully prevent harm or injury to the child, themselves or others. The Director reserves the right to exclude a child from the center when consultation and individualized support plans are not successful, the emotional and physical well-being of the children and the staff is in danger, and positive methods and resources have been exhausted.

This notice can come without warning if the situation warrants. Each situation will be evaluated on an individual basis and the final determination regarding a child's enrollment status will be made by the

Executive Director and/or Program Director. The Executive Director and/or Program Director will work with the parents/guardians to identify alternative programs which may be more appropriate to the child's needs.

IC3 staff will handle all discipline situations which may arise with the children while they are at the Center. IC3's confidentiality policy states that matters relating to children and their families are confidential and are not to be discussed with other families. General information on curbing disruptive behaviors will be communicated, either verbally or in writing, to all parents in the classroom. We understand that unsafe behavior brings up many emotional responses in parents. If a parent has concerns regarding another child's behavior, we strongly encourage parents to discuss these concerns with the classroom teachers.