



## **Positive Guidance, Discipline, and Classroom Management Policy**

*Revised March 2022*

Positive guidance, discipline, and effective classroom management are important components of a successful, well-organized curriculum.

Every child needs positive guidance from teachers, parents, and peers to achieve the goal of self-control. A consistent set of limits and realistic expectations, along with lots of encouragement, makes the child feel safe, secure, and in control.

Teachers help children develop their self-regulation skills by providing a positive, nurturing environment that fosters social and emotional development. Children learn positive behavior through positive guidance. We model and reinforce positive behaviors so that children understand the classroom community expectations.

We focus on what children can do rather than what they cannot do. Our reinforcement system includes kind words, verbal praise, and activities that promote self-worth. We also encourage positive behavior by structuring the child's day to give ample opportunity to experience individual, small, and large group experiences.

Our teachers are required to be guidance professionals. The goal of positive guidance and discipline is to teach the child self-control and self-worth.

As early childhood educators, we:

- Teach children to make choices, express themselves appropriately, solve problems, and learn from their mistakes. As guidance professionals, we do not punish children for making mistakes or having problems they cannot solve.
- Interact with children so the child feels genuinely loved, respected, and valued. We actively listen to children, so each child feels listened to and understood.
- Do not use shame, punishment, or isolation because those methods do not teach positive alternative behaviors.
- Prevent behavior problems by establishing and maintaining relationships and understanding each child's individual needs.
- Build strong teacher-parent relationships and understand the importance of partnering with parents.

Teachers must be prepared when children display tantrum behaviors that may involve them dropping to the floor, throwing classroom materials, jerking away, running, or climbing on the furniture. To keep children safe and lower the possibility of injury during these times, staff should be reminded not to:

- Guide, pick up, pull, or restrain children by the arm or hand
- Hold children down
- Hold children by their clothing

More acceptable methods to keep children safe and lower the possibility of injury may include, but are not limited to:

- Taking a deep breath to self-calm before engaging with a child that may be upset.
- Guiding children using an open hand by gently touching their shoulder or back.
- Allowing children space to self-calm while moving potential hazards out of the way.
- Picking children up with both hands underneath the arms or by their torso.

If a child's behavior consistently interrupts programming, a parent may be contacted to resolve the issue. We reserve the right to terminate services when we feel that a child's behavior becomes a safety risk for self or others.

The Sunshine House does not allow the use of corporal punishment on the premises by parents or staff. Corporal punishment/inappropriate discipline includes but is not limited to spanking, slapping, biting, pinching, jerking, isolation, verbal abuse, pulling hair or any other inappropriate handling of students. Any staff member witnessing inappropriate discipline is required to notify the supervisor on site immediately.

If a staff member has suspicions of child maltreatment by a parent or guardian, they are required to report their suspicions to the local Department of Social Services (DSS) where the child resides. Reporters of child maltreatment are kept confidential. Center administration can assist staff members with this report if requested.

## Best Practices for Positive Guidance

### What Are Some Techniques The Sunshine House Uses to Encourage Positive Behavior?

- 1. We Limit Classroom Rules to the Most Important Rules.** We utilize children as active participants in setting rules as appropriate by age. Whatever the age of the child, our classroom rules can typically be simplified as follows:
  - a. Keep yourself safe. Be kind to yourself.
  - b. Keep your friend's safe. Be kind to your friends.
  - c. Keep your things safe. Be kind to your school.

These three rules teach respect for ourselves, for others, and our school/belongings. The Safety Rules are discussed frequently as part of the curriculum, during group time, class meetings, and activities. They are also discussed when a child breaks a rule.

- 2. Modeling Positive Behavior.** Children imitate adult behavior. We model positive interactions with children and adults as an effective way to teach children appropriate behaviors and self-control.
- 3. Positive Reinforcement.** We comment or notice when children are doing things right. Many times, inappropriate behavior is designed to get your attention. If children get attention for doing something right, they will be quick to imitate positive behavior. "I like the way you are wiping your brush on the side of the can." "Jimmy remembered to put his napkin in the wastebasket." "You two are doing a good job sharing those pegs." We notice when children are enjoying themselves and comment on it: "I can tell you like to paint!" "You two are having fun on the swings." "It feels good to squeeze the play dough, doesn't it?"
- 4. Eye Contact.** Eye contact in a loving, positive way lets children know they are valued and enhances their self-worth. It enables the child to see you are watching and aware.
- 5. A Gentle Touch.** Sometimes a gentle touch is all that is needed to prevent a potential discipline problem. Rubbing a child's back if they are tense or upset can calm the situation.
- 6. Curriculum.** Room arrangement and a schedule with smooth transitions and lots of movement opportunities help promote positive behavior. Engaging activities with opportunities for small group and one-on-one interaction help children to be successful. We plan activities to teach social skills and to help children learn to self-regulate.
- 7. Acceptable Outlets for Expressing Feeling.** Children need to express strong feelings and find safe ways to do this. We provide a variety of opportunities for children to identify and learn to express their feelings.
- 8. Avoid Overstimulation.** Too many choices and options overwhelm children. We offer two choices and allow the child the opportunity to respond.

## **What Are Some Techniques the Sunshine House May Use For Appropriate Discipline / Guidance When Rules are Broken?**

- 1. Positive Redirection:** We help students choose another activity by offering suggestions. We redirect the inappropriate activity into the closest parallel acceptable action: "Blocks are for building. Here is a ball you may throw." Alternatives teach child appropriate behavior: "You may hit a punching bag," "you may spit in the toilet," or you may jump on the mini-trampoline."
- 2. Natural or Logical/Artificial Consequences:** If a child hurts our property, she is taught to take responsibility for her actions and does something to fix what is hurt. If a child hurts another child, the child who is hurt determines what will make her feel better.
- 3. Modeling:** Adults must model the type of behavior they desire in the children. This teaches children how to deal with conflicts, cooperate, etc.
- 4. Listening:** Be aware of what children are thinking and feeling. It is important to check things out before attempting to resolve problems and help children work through their difficulties.
- 5. Reinforcement:** Encourage behavior through praise or attention. When you comment on positive actions, children increase any behavior they get attention for (positive or negative).
- 6. Offering Choices:** Children like to have some control over what happens to them. Offer children good choices that are appropriate, and then accept their decisions.
- 7. Positive Guidance:** These guidance methods build children's self-esteem and confidence in themselves. Directions and rules are stated positively, such as, "Please walk," instead of "No running."

We tailor the method of positive guidance and discipline to the individual child. Children develop abilities to control themselves at different rates. We take into consideration the needs of the child or children involved. No single technique will work with every child every time.

At any time when a child has had difficulty following these rules, the caregiver then watches for the first opportunity to praise the child for getting along well with others. Engaging the child in constructive and satisfying ways will promote feelings of accomplishment and self-worth.

Our goal is to teach children self-control and to solve their problems with love and support.

## What Are Some Techniques The Sunshine House May Use to Resolve Conflict?

Conflicts happen, even in a positive, encouraging classroom. Conflicts are opportunities for teaching and learning. Because children are just beginning the process of learning democratic life skills, they naturally make mistakes. Adults use social problem-solving skills to teach children the democratic life skills they need to learn from their mistakes. The conflict resolution skills we teach are selected based on the age of the child.

1. For younger children, we can help children resolve their conflicts by assisting them in verbalizing their feelings. We need to remind them often to "use words" and prompt them with the appropriate words – "I'm angry" or "tell your friend with words that you are angry instead of hitting them." Sometimes a conversation with a one or two-year-old will seem one-sided, in that the adult is doing most of the talking. Young children understand much more language than they can produce. Our young children are just beginning to understand and learn communication techniques. Therefore, we need to give them the words they need to resolve conflict, and we may need to repeat them often.
2. The 5-finger approach can be helpful in teaching children the skills necessary to resolve conflict. Typically, these 5 steps are taught and practiced at group time as part of the curriculum, and then reminders can quickly occur when conflict occurs.
  - a. *Cooldown (thumb)*. If necessary, the teacher calms down everyone involved (including him/herself). The teacher may temporarily separate or remove children as part of this process, but only as a cooling-off period, not as a punishment. Children can be asked to breathe deeply or to count to assist in cooling down.
  - b. *Identify the problem (pointer)*. The children (with help from the teacher, as needed) put the problem into words and agree on it. This usually involves hearing both sides of the story from all individuals involved and taking turns speaking and listening.
  - c. *Brainstorm solutions (tall guy)*. The children (with the teacher's help, as needed) develop possible ways to solve the problem. If the children are not able to find a solution, the teacher may help.
  - d. *Go for it (ring finger)*. The parties decide on one solution and try it. The teacher works for an agreement on the solutions, even if she or he must suggest it.
  - e. *Follow up (pinky)*. The teacher follows up by encouraging, monitoring, and, if necessary, guiding the children as they try the solution. The teacher may review what happened, talking about alternatives for next time, and discussing ways to make amends.

## What Are Some Types of Conflict Resolution Supported by The Sunshine House?

- 1. Classic Conflict Management:** Used when two or more children experience conflict with one another, such as a child aggressively preventing another child from joining their play. The teacher involves both children finding a peaceful settlement, rather than rescuing one child and punishing the other. This helps both children see themselves as valued members of the classroom community, capable of respecting differences, solving their problems together, and learning from their mistakes.
- 2. Guidance Talk:** Used when one or two children have a conflict directly with an adult, such as when they skip out instead of cleaning up or need additional teaching after a conflict is resolved (for example, after a child is hurt during a conflict). A strategy to help the children self-regulate "next time" might be discussed. However, this should not be a punishment. An attractive "peace island," "peace table," or some form of "cozy corner" can be set up in an area of the classroom. Children can be told that whenever they need to get away, they can travel to the island. The teachers watch for "island visitors" and offer their assistance as appropriate.
- 3. Class Meeting:** Used when children experience social conflicts that may impact the whole class. For example, when children begin calling each other "butthead" or use the climber in ways that might cause others to fall. Class meetings may be held as little as once or twice a week or as often as two or three times a day. The frequency depends on whether the meetings are used to discuss routine business in addition to situations that affect the class. The five-finger approach is often reviewed. Common guidelines for classroom meetings include:
  - a. One person speaks at a time. (A talking stick can be circulated, and only the individual with the talking stick can talk while others listen).
  - b. Everyone listens carefully and respects others' views.
  - c. Everyone appreciates all members of the class.
- 4. Comprehensive Guidance:** Used when a child behaves inappropriately over time and/or these behaviors interfere with learning (such as repeated tantrums, withdrawing behavior, or hurtful behavior to the child or others). These behaviors tend to result from strong unmet emotional and/or physical needs that the child cannot cope with or understand, and guidance is both vital and challenging to use. When working with children who show severe inappropriate behavior, the following considerations are essential:
  - a. There is no such thing as a bad child. There are children with severe problems who need our help so they can solve them.

- b. Children showing severe inappropriate behavior often are the most challenging children to like. Nevertheless, they are probably most in need of a helping relationship with a caring adult.
- c. Children may act out in the classroom because it is the safest place in their lives. They are asking for help in the only way they can, even by using mistaken behavior.
- d. The more inappropriate the behavior, the more a comprehensive approach is needed, and the more people a teacher may need to involve. It is especially important to partner with the family to help the child learn to use alternative behaviors to meet their needs.
- e. Children who show repeated aggressive and extreme behaviors are in danger of being rejected by peers and adults. This rejection in childhood can cause lifelong social and emotional problems.
- f. Teachers who build positive relationships with children at risk for rejection can help them learn behaviors and life skills to help their classmates and function accept them as healthy individuals. Children facing challenging life circumstances need comprehensive guidance that includes most or all the following steps:
  - i. Encouragement to build healthy attachments with one or more staff. A child must feel entirely accepted before he can dare to change.
  - ii. Assistance in situations that may lead to loss of control before conflicts occur. For example, a teacher might help a child recognize when she feels tense and encourage her to ask for assistance and/or use self-removal to leave a situation.
  - iii. Firm, friendly, consistent intervention helps children understand what happened and how everyone involved is feeling. For example, what they can do instead next time, and how to make the others feel better (although we do not force a child to say he is sorry).
  - iv. Meeting with staff and family using the 5-finger approach to set an individual guidance plan.
  - v. Inclusion of other adults in a comprehensive plan, as needed. It is essential to begin building relationships with families at the start of the program or school year, not at the time of crisis. If additional adults are needed, teachers and families might ask other professionals to observe and become involved. As professionals, teachers, and administrative staff collaborate to accomplish together what they cannot accomplish alone.

It is important to see even children who experience repeated, serious conflicts not as problem children but as children with problems who need guidance. Such children sometimes need comprehensive guidance to resolve issues that are bigger than they are.

Teachers need support too. For teachers to use guidance effectively, they must have their support system. This may include their teaching team, partnerships with parents, and positive personal connections with family, friends, and the community. Sunshine House teachers follow the company behavior protocol listed below.





## **Behavior Management Process**

### **Supporting Students During the Escalation Cycle**

The Acting-Out or Escalation Cycle consists of 7 phases (Calm, Triggers, Agitation, Acceleration, Peak, De-escalation, and Recovery). Educators need to be able to recognize the steps and support students appropriately.

**Phase 1 - Calm:** The best behavior plan involves planning and attention. This allows students to establish and remain in the Calm Phase of the escalation process. In the Calm Phase, students are cooperative and engaged. They are more responsive to following directions and working with others. Teachers should establish and follow routines so that students know what to expect. Attention is attention, whether negative or positive. Giving students enough of the right kind of attention is essential in maintaining a calm state of mind.

**Phase 2 – Triggers:** This Phase involves misbehavior being triggered by unaddressed concerns. These concerns may be school-based or non-school based issues. Some school concerns that trigger inappropriate behavior may include negative teacher or peer interaction, change in schedule, confusion about the next task, or failure to complete the desired task. Some non-school concerns may consist of medical issues, stress at home, hunger, or lack of sleep. Non-school triggers are difficult for teachers to support based on a lack of control in the home environment. Helping children to develop problem-solving skills will support students in dealing with non-school triggers. Improved problem-solving skills should also support students with triggers that occur during the day. Support students by offering reminders about the schedule. Reminders should be verbal and visual. Students should be notified concerning schedule changes and provided explanations for the change. Avoid negative interactions with students that lead to a "tug a war" process. Teachers should monitor negative interactions with peers by stepping in to facilitate before the situation escalates. This facilitation should be a non-threatening information gathering process that allows students the opportunity to be heard.

**Phase 3 – Agitation:** During the Agitation Phase, students may demonstrate behavior such as making distracting sounds or movements, disengaging from the group, wandering around the classroom, or moving quickly from one activity to another. Unless interrupted, these behaviors will lead to increased inappropriate behavior that may involve some form of verbal or physical aggression. Teachers must intervene before this behavior reaches the next phase. Agitation can be interrupted by asking students if they need help or suggesting their next activity. Chances are other students are reaching the agitation phase, and it may be best to shift your instruction.

**Phase 4 – Acceleration:** During this Acceleration Phase, the student tries to gain the teacher's attention by arguing, refusing to follow directions, property destruction, climbing on the furniture, or interrupting others participating in activities. Unfortunately, some teachers fail to

recognize prior phases until the behavior reaches the Acceleration Phase. In this phase, the teachers should not use sarcasm or issue ultimatums. Students should be allowed time to manage their behavior. Teachers should identify feelings and offer a suggested activity. This is a great time to use "when and then" statements to avoid using the words "no" and "don't." Avoid arguing with students or repeating a prompt multiple times.

**Phase 5 – Peak:** The Peak Phase is the phase that involves out of control behavior. This phase may include, but not be limited to, physical aggression towards peers or teachers, property destruction, dumping and throwing classroom materials, throwing chairs, or turning over tables. In this phase, the goal is to maintain the child's safety in the behavior and the other students in the classroom. Response to the student during the Peak Phase will depend on the classroom circumstance. If two adults are in the classroom, one should focus on the student exhibiting the inappropriate behavior while the other should work on securing the safety of the other students. If the teacher is alone, the teacher should call a manager to offer classroom support. The Peak Phase usually does not last as long as the Acceleration Phase. However, because of the severity, it is devastating to the environment, frustrates teachers, and interferes with the operation of the classroom.

Listed below are some strategies that should lead to the De-escalation Phase:

- *Do not try to reason with the student* – During the Peak Phase, the student is usually in the fight or flight survival stage. The fight or flight response is an automated physiological reaction to an event that is perceived as stressful or frightening. The perception of threat activates the sympathetic nervous system and triggers an acute stress response that prepares the body to fight or flee. The student is limited in being able to access the part of their brain that helps them to listen and understand the reasoning. During fight or flight, the student feels threatened. At this point, the best recourse is to assure the student that they are safe, stay calm, and meet basic needs.
- *Do not make demands* – Making demands will more than likely anger the student. Using terms like calm down, stop, don't, and no result in oppositional defiance.
- *Lower your voice level* – Raising your voice or yelling over the student will not de-escalate the behavior. A raised voice level translates into a threat.
- *Validate feelings* – It is ok to say you understand that the student is angry. Do not include the word "but" in the validation statement, such as "I understand that you are angry, but you cannot hurt your classmates." Instead, use the word "because" in the statement. "I understand you are angry because James knocked over your block tower."
- *Respect personal space* – It is important for the teacher to not get in a student's face. Stand back at least 3 feet for your protection, so the student does not feel threatened. Getting on a student's level does not mean invading their personal space. Remember that personal space in the Peak Phase can be larger than normal.
- *Body language is important* – Remain calm with your expressions and your body language. Keep your face as neutral as possible. Frowning and a clenched jaw indicates anger and may be perceived as threatening. Your hands should be by your side, not on

your hips or folded. Refrain from pointing your finger or clapping your hands in the child's face.

- *Use distraction* – Distraction is more effective with younger students but can be used with all ages. Distract the student by offering activity choices.
- *Do not immediately remove the student from the classroom* – Removal from the classroom should be the last resort. Allow students to regain their composure and stay in their familiar environment. Offer an area in the classroom where the student can engage in an activity and take a break from the overall classroom dynamics. This is by no means the implementation of Time Out. Having a getaway space in the classroom should feel like sitting on a park bench in front of a lake or sitting on the beach listening to the ocean.
- *Ignore responding to targeted aggression* – Targeted aggression includes things like "I hate you," "I don't have to do what you say," "You are a stupid teacher." Responding to these statements does not support the de-escalation process. Answer questions that come from the student but keep responses short.
- *Support silence* – Silence can help students to calm down. The teacher should take slow, deep breaths during the silence. This will often remind the student of previous breathing exercises that have been practiced.
- *Offer a walk or movement break* – If you have the ability and the student is receptive, offer a walk around the room, playground, or down the hallway. This should be provided by the teacher and is seen differently from a manager removing the student from the classroom. Positive movement reduces stress.
- *Avoid judgmental statements and tones* – During a tantrum or meltdown, avoid lectures or solve problems. Remember that the student is in survival mode. Identify and validate their feelings and avoid sarcasm. Reflective conversations can come later when the student is in a more positive state of mind.
- *Avoid threatening statements* – Teachers will often say to students in this phase that they will call a manager or the parent. This is not an effective strategy.
- *Change the classroom dynamics* – We often see a student reach the Peak Phase when the classroom is experiencing organized chaos. If you can decrease the stimulation, it will help in the de-escalation process.

**Phase 6 – De-escalation:** Using the above de-escalation techniques will hopefully allow the student to move into the De-escalation Phase. In this phase, students are often embarrassed and confused. They may deny their actions and attempt to apologize. Students should NEVER be made to apologize. When the student calms down, the teacher should attempt to engage them in an individual activity. This will allow them to continue to calm down. It will also enable the classroom focus to shift. At this point, the teacher should take the opportunity to gather their thoughts, identify triggers, and make a note of any possible changes that could be implemented to de-escalate the student before they reach the Peak Phase. It is crucial to get the classroom back on task.

**Phase 7 – Recovery:** The final stage is the Recovery Phase. At this point, most of the time, the student has re-engaged in the group. Teachers should take this opportunity to discuss the situation with the student using a non-threatening approach. Show empathy, identify feelings, and ask the student what happened. Some teachers make the mistake of asking the student why they behaved the way they did. It is much more useful to ask the student what happened. Again, this is not an opportunity to lecture; however, it is a brainstorming session and social/emotional growth opportunity.



## **Behavior Intervention Protocol**

Early care professionals work daily to assist students in developing self-regulation skills to deal with their emotions. Teachers should fully understand how students develop and learn to better evaluate the severity of inappropriate behavior displayed. Staff should follow the protocol listed below when dealing with inappropriate behavior that disrupts classroom instruction.

1. Teachers should establish an open dialogue with the management staff and parents concerning inappropriate classroom behavior. This would also include discussions concerning any diagnosed condition a parent may have revealed that may affect the child's behavior.
2. Teachers should start documentation on the child in question using The Sunshine House Challenging Behavior Documentation Form. Documentation should include a description of the behavior issue, involved activity and/or group, how long it lasted, and events that occurred afterwards. The documentation will assist staff and members of the management team in identifying possible behavior triggers, patterns in behavior and classroom management issues. Below are examples of when a documentation log should be started:
  - Behavior consistently disrupts the operation of the classroom.
  - Behavior is connected to a classroom incident report causing harm to a peer or staff member.
  - Behavior that is harmful to self or others.
  - Major destruction of property.
  - Attempts to leave the classroom, center, or playground.
  - Repeated profanity.
  - Racial slurs.

Once a staff member starts the documentation process, they should inform a member of the management team. This should be done no later than the next business day. During that conversation, the team members should discuss the following:

- Inappropriate behavior that prompted documentation process (see examples in #2).
- General classroom management strategies based on the initial information.
- Previous communication, if any, with family members concerning the behavior.
- Once the documentation process has started, a team member should contact the child's parents and document the contact on the Parent Communication Log (see form below). The documentation process and the Parent Communication Log should be initiated simultaneously. The intent of the Parent Communication Log is to document early notification to the family and to begin the interactive process

between the family and the center team members. The center management team is responsible for ensuring that the communication between the center and the family has started and is being documented.

- A behavior ticket may be opened if the teacher or Center Director request an objective consultation concerning classroom strategies. Once a ticket is opened, the ADA Compliance Director will review the ticket and offer strategies based on the information provided. The ADA Compliance Director has 3 business days to respond to the ticket. Regional Directors have access to all open tickets in their region so they may review them.
3. Teachers should review the Challenging Behavior Documentation Form with management and discuss possible interventions. This review should occur at the beginning of the documentation process and follow-up should occur weekly, depending on the severity of the behavior. Documentation completed by the teacher should be submitted daily to management.

Listed below are examples of follow-up, timelines, and possible responses to behavior.

- *Behavior consistently disrupts the operation of the classroom* – During the initial discussion of the documentation process, team members should discuss the onset of the behavior, any information provided by the parent, classroom schedule changes, etc. Managers should review the documentation after the first week or sooner, if the behavior escalates to a safety issue, and suggest strategies that could be used by the teacher to support the child. At this point, the Center Director is responsible for following up with the family concerning the continued behavior issues and asking for suggestions from the family to support the child. Directors should also ask for a formal parent conference during the conversation. The conference can be conducted face-to-face, virtual, or through a conference call. Once a formal conference has been discussed, the Center Director will open an ADA Behavior Ticket in the company ticketing system. This online system allows the center managers, Regional Director, and the Director of ADA Compliance a method for sharing documentation, notes about a child, and parent conference requests. The ADA Compliance Director has 3 business days to respond to the ticket. The ticket system is set-up to send an automatic response 48 hours after the input of any information.
- *Behavior is connected to a classroom incident report causing harm to a peer or staff member* – This type of incident should be reported immediately to the Director physically in charge of the center. Center Directors should open an ADA Behavior Ticket, and verbally notify the Regional Director and/or the Director of ADA Compliance.
- *Behavior that is harmful to self or others* – This type of incident should be reported immediately to the Director physically in charge of the center. Center Directors should open an ADA Behavior Ticket, and verbally notify the Regional Director and/or the Director of ADA Compliance.

- *Major destruction of property* – This type of behavior should prompt an ADA Behavior Ticket be opened immediately.
  - *Attempts to leave the classroom, center, or playground*- This type of behavior should prompt an ADA Behavior Ticket be opened immediately.
  - *Repeated profanity* – This type of behavior should prompt an ADA Behavior Ticket be opened immediately.
  - *Racial slurs* – This type of behavior should prompt an ADA Behavior Ticket be opened immediately.
  - At any time, a Center Director has the option to call the Director of ADA Compliance or the Regional Director for support through the behavior intervention process. A ticket can be opened at the beginning of the documentation process to request classroom resources.
4. Teachers and managers should document all parent conversations concerning classroom issues in the attached Parent Communication Log. The log should be reviewed and signed off by center management. Communication logs, behavior forms, and classroom observations will be stored in the child's behavior file, separate from the child's enrollment file, and kept in the Director's office in a locked cabinet.
  5. A member of the management team should conduct at least one classroom observation before the family conference. The classroom observation focuses on the implementation of developmentally appropriate practices. It examines the environment, routine, and experiences. See attached Classroom Observation Forms. Teachers and the Center Director should review the classroom observation form results, along with the behavior documentation logs, and implement suggested changes.
  6. Teachers should attend Challenging Behavior sessions offered on Sunshine House University, Principles of Behavior Management 1 and 2. After a teacher is hired, their Center Director will assign them these courses in Sunshine House University. The teacher will have 60 days to complete the trainings and turn in their certificate of completion to their Director.
  7. The Center Director or Director of ADA Compliance can request a parent conference at any time. Once the conference is scheduled with parents, the Director of ADA Compliance will attach a Conference Form to the ADA Behavior ticket. During this conference, members of the management team and the parent should discuss the challenging behavior and classroom observations. Teachers may participate in the meeting, if requested by the parent. Parents should be encouraged to offer suggestions to support the student.
  8. During the parent conference, an Action Plan should be established with parents. The Action Plan consists of a review of current strategies and suggestions for new strategies from the managers, Director of ADA Compliance, and parents. A copy of the conference form, which

includes the Action Plan, is given to the parents at the end of the conference. A signed copy is kept for the child's file.

9. During the parent conference, teachers and Center Directors should also discuss the child's developmental assessment, focusing on the child's progress.
10. Parents should be regularly updated after the parent conference. Updates concerning the child's behavior should be documented in the Parent Communication Log. A schedule for the frequency of updates is identified during the conference, based on the established Action Plan.
11. Teachers and center management should discuss behavior modification techniques to implement in the classroom.
12. The Center Director may suggest that parents seek outside assistance to help with behavior modification and continue working with the family through the adjustment.
13. Teachers should implement behavior modification action plans for any consistently inappropriate behavior. If a child's inappropriate behavior is persistent, poses a health and safety risk, or is destructive, a child can be sent home with permission from the Regional Director or Director of ADA Compliance. Documentation of the incident must be completed by the teacher on a Behavior Documentation Form and submitted through the ADA Behavior ticket by the Center Director to the ADA Compliance Director by the following day.
14. Center Directors cannot suspend or terminate services on the center level.





## Mandated Reporter Policy

Child maltreatment is defined as – Any act or series of acts of commission or omission by a caregiver that results in harm, potential for harm, or threat of harm to a child. Acts of commission include, but are not limited to, physical, sexual, and psychological abuse. Acts of omission include, but are not limited to, failure to provide for the physical, emotional, or medical well-being of a child, and failure to properly supervise children, which results in exposure to potentially harmful environments.

- Under **North Carolina GS § 110-105.4**. Duty to report child maltreatment. (a) Any person who has cause to suspect that a child in a childcare facility has been maltreated, as defined by G.S. 110-105.3, or has died as the result of maltreatment occurring in a childcare facility, shall report the case of that child to the Department. The report may be made orally, by telephone, or in writing. The report shall include information as is known to the person making the report, including (i) the name and address of the child care facility where the child was allegedly maltreated, (ii) the name and address of the child's parent, guardian, or caretaker, (iii) the age of the child, (iv) the present whereabouts of the child if not at the home address, (v) the nature and extent of any injury or condition resulting from maltreatment, and (vi) any other information the person making the report believes might assist in the investigation of the report. If the report is made orally or by telephone, the person making the report shall give the person's name, address, and telephone number. Refusal of the person making the report to give a name shall not preclude the Department's assessment of the alleged maltreatment.
- **G.S. 7B-301** prescribes the mandatory duty of any person suspecting child abuse or neglect has taken place in childcare, or elsewhere, to report to the county Department of Social Services. When a report of child maltreatment alleges facts that indicate that a report is required under **G.S. 7B-301**, the Department shall contact the local department of social services in the county where the juvenile resides or is found and make the necessary report.
  - As a North Carolina-mandated reporter, early care staff must report suspicions of child maltreatment by childcare providers or to a child while in care to the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE). These reports of child maltreatment are kept confidential. Staff members may report their concerns regarding child maltreatment confidentially to the facility, corporate management or directly to DCDEE without fear of reprisal.
    - Call the Sunshine House Human Resources Department at 864-990-1820 and ask to speak to an HR representative.
    - Call or email the Regional Director.
    - If Human Resources or the Regional Director cannot be reached right away, the staff member should make the report directly to DCDEE.

- Call DCDEE at 800-859-0829 (in-state only) or 919-814-6300. Ask to speak to someone in the Intake Unit (calls can be made anonymously).
  - Fax information to the DCDEE Intake Unit at 919-715-1013.
  - Email DCDEE at [webmasterdcd@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:webmasterdcd@dhhs.nc.gov). A link to this email can also be found on their website at <https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/> by clicking "Home," then "Contact."
  - Mail information to DCDEE, 2201 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699.
  
- The Sunshine House will follow all childcare rules related to discipline of children in childcare rule 10A NCAC 09 .1803 PROHIBITED DISCIPLINE IN CHILD CARE CENTERS:
  - (a) No child shall be subjected to any form of corporal punishment by the owner, operator, director, or staff of any childcare center. For purposes of this Rule, "staff" shall mean any regular or substitute caregiver, any volunteer, and any auxiliary personnel, including cooks, secretaries, janitors, maids, or vehicle drivers. The following shall apply at all childcare centers:
    - (1) no child shall be handled roughly in any way, including shaking, pushing, shoving, pinching, slapping, biting, kicking, or spanking.
    - (2) no child shall be placed in a locked room, closet, or box or be left alone in a room separated from staff.
    - (3) no discipline shall be delegated to another child.
    - (4) no food shall be withheld as punishment or given as a means of reward.
    - (5) no child shall be disciplined for toileting accidents.
    - (6) no child shall be disciplined for not sleeping during rest period.
    - (7) no child shall be disciplined by assigning chores that require contact with or use of hazardous materials, such as cleaning bathrooms, floors, or emptying diaper pails.
    - (8) physical activity, such as running laps and doing push-ups, shall not be withheld as punishment, or required as punishment.
    - (9) no child shall be yelled at, shamed, humiliated, frightened, threatened, or bullied.
    - (10) no child shall be restrained as a form of discipline unless the child's safety or the safety of others is at risk. For purposes of this Rule, "restraining" shall mean that a caregiver physically holds a child in a manner that restricts the child's movement, for a minimum amount of time necessary to ensure a safe environment. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Rule, no child shall be restrained through the use of heavy objects, including a caregiver's body, or any devices such as straps, blankets, car seats, or cribs.
  - (b) Discipline practices shall be age and developmentally appropriate.
  
- The Sunshine House, Inc. employees and non-employees aware of prohibited conduct must report such prohibited conduct in accordance with these procedures. Failure to report any incident of prohibited conduct of which you are aware will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. If you become aware of prohibited

conduct, you must immediately notify your Center Director or the designated administrator in charge and NC DCDEE. If the Center Director or designated administrator is not in the building, they must designate a staff member in charge and use the center communication system to notify team members of the identity of the designated person. Staff members should use the center communication system (classroom phone, walkie talkie, two-way radio) to contact the designated staff member in charge, in case they are onsite but not in the building. The staff member in charge must contact the director/designated administrator immediately and inform them of the incident. If the Director/designated administrator cannot be reached, the Regional Director or the Vice President of Operations should be contacted immediately. As mandated reporters, staff members can initiate the mandated reporter protocol by contacting DCDEE and/or law enforcement. The Director/designated administrator and the Regional Director will ensure that the mandated reporter protocol is followed, which may involve initial contact or follow-up to DCDEE and/or law enforcement, depending on the nature of the incident.

- Sunshine House center administrators and upper management take child maltreatment very seriously. Center administrators will take prompt action as soon as possible, but no later than the next business day when they are notified of an allegation, to ensure that mandated reporter guidelines are followed. The center administrators will also notify DCDEE, EMS, or law enforcement as soon as possible, but no later than the next business day, depending on the nature of the incident. Situations that require emergency medical attention will be responded to immediately.
- The Regional Director, the Director of ADA Compliance, and the Vice President of Operations will respond as soon as possible, but no later than the next business day, when notified about an allegation of child maltreatment. They will ensure the mandated reporter guidelines are followed and that notifications are made to DCDEE, EMS, or law enforcement as soon as possible, but no later than the next business day, depending on the nature of the incident. Situations that require emergency medical attention will be responded to immediately.
- Once the Sunshine House is made aware of allegations of child maltreatment, we will take immediate and appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination, to ensure the safety and well-being of children. Non-employees who engage in prohibited conduct will be subject to suspension or termination of access to the facility. Non-employees include therapists, enrichment program support, and other vendors that may have been granted access to the center while providing services.

## Signs and Symptoms of Child Maltreatment

The following information is provided for staff members regarding the signs and symptoms of child maltreatment. This information was retrieved from NCDHHS: About Child Abuse and Child Neglect.

This information can be found online at: [www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/social-services/child-welfare-services/child-protective-services/about-child-abuse-and-child-neglect](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/social-services/child-welfare-services/child-protective-services/about-child-abuse-and-child-neglect)

Additional resources concerning the child abuse and neglect reporting procedure can be retrieved from the above-mentioned website.

### **The Child:**

- Shows sudden changes in behavior or school performance.
- Displays overtly sexualized behavior or exhibits sexual knowledge that is inconsistent with their age.
- Has not received medical attention for a physical injury that has been brought to the parents' attention.
- Has learning problems that cannot be attributed to specific physical or psychological causes.
- Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen.
- Is overly compliant, an overachiever, or too responsible.
- Comes to school early, stays late, and does not want to go home.
- Has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes.
- Has bruises or marks in non-prominent, "fleshy" areas of the body (for example, inside of biceps or behind the knees).
- Has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school.
- Seems frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home from school.
- Shrinks at the approach of adults.
- Reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver.

### **The Parent or Other Adult Caregiver:**

- Shows little concern for the child, rarely responding to the school's requests for information, conferences, or home visits.
- Denies the existence of or blames the child for problems in school or at home.
- Asks the classroom teacher to use harsh physical discipline if the child misbehaves.
- Sees the child as entirely bad, worthless, or burdensome.
- Demands perfection, or a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve.
- Offers conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation for the child's injury.
- Describes the child as "evil" or in some other extremely negative way.
- Is abusing alcohol, prescription drugs, or illegal drugs, and that abuse is having an adverse impact on the child.

- Uses harsh physical discipline with the child.
- Has a history of abuse as a child.

**Childcare Staff:**

- Shows little concern for the child.
- Blames the child for problems in school or at home.
- Makes statements about using harsh physical discipline if the child misbehaves.
- Sees the child as entirely bad, worthless, or burdensome.
- Demands perfection, or a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve.
- Offers conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation for the child's injury.
- Describes the child as "evil" or in some other extremely negative way.
- Uses harsh physical discipline with the child.
- Has a history of abuse as a child.

While not intended to be all-inclusive, the following list represents examples of actions taken by a staff member that will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination:

- Failure to report any type of inappropriate discipline or other policy violation observed to the director or person in charge immediately.
- Any inappropriate discipline of a child, including but not limited to isolation, verbal abuse, withholding food, or any other inappropriate means to punish a child.