

Discipline with Grace, Truth and Love

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Hebrews 2:11

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

Proverbs 1:7

He will die for lack of discipline, led astray by his own great folly.

Proverbs 5:23

Who: Our two year olds through our Kindergarteners.

What: A new plan that involves positive reinforcement, higher expectations and consequences for certain inappropriate behaviors.

When: "Soft Opening" throughout the month of July with full involvement and compliance by August.

Why: We are doing our children and our families a disservice by not having reasonable expectations of behavior in our classrooms. We can better partner with parents in helping them raise world changers when we encourage their child to grow in self-control.

Our plan is flexible and will need to be evaluated often at first to determine what works and what isn't as helpful. To this end we will be asking you, the classroom teacher, how things are going as you implement this strategy. Please don't hesitate to let us know when you are successful and when you feel challenged. The three main behaviors we will be targeting are aggression, defiance and disruptive actions.

When a child is exhibiting any of these behaviors you will take a four step approach:

1. Observe the environment to see if you can spot a logical reason for the misbehavior.
2. Take the child aside ask them why they did (the behavior) and then lovingly explain our expectation and tell them why it's not okay. (truth) Listen to them if they have anything to say and they are saying it respectfully.
3. At this time they will receive a warning (grace) including a statement of the consequence attached to the behavior.
4. If they repeat the behavior you will move forward with the consequence.

Consequences: For aggressive or disruptive behavior and defiance.

(For extreme examples of any of these the child will need to be removed from the room right away.)

Step 1: Child will not get to have name on the Beach Scene and will not get a stamp on their hand.

Step 2: Child will have a time-out in class. The child should be separated from other children and activities and placed in a time out chair. They may need a volunteer or additional staff to stay by them during this time to ensure that they stay in the chair. Some children have never had a time out and will not immediately understand that they need to stay seated. Do not physically restrain them. Keep returning them to the chair gently but firmly and say "You need to stay in this chair for 3 more minutes". This is not a time for fun conversation (ie. What they ate for dinner/breakfast, where they went on vacation, what their favorite t.v. show is, etc.). The timeout should be 3-5 minutes long and ending with the child agreeing to comply with the rules. Document event in SPECIAL FRIENDS binder after your shift is over. (Keep a note in your pocket if you need to so that you don't forget this important step.)

Step 3: Child will have a time-out with a Coordinator and parent will be notified. Depending on the severity, or if aggression is involved, parent may be called out of service. Otherwise, child shall remain with coordinator the duration of service. During checkout, coordinator will go into the room with child and wait for parent to arrive. Coordinator will call parent into room and explain the issue. We always want to partner with the parent. We want their buy-in and support. Document event in SPECIAL FRIENDS binder. (Parents will be receiving a written communication from us stating our expectations when their child turns four.)

Step 4: Child will be removed from class and their parent will be called out of service and required to shadow child the remainder of service. The parent(s) will be contacted by a Director/Assistant Director during the week to establish a positive action plan for the future. We will document the plan in SPECIAL FRIENDS binder. Director/Assistant Director will communicate this plan to the appropriate coordinator and the coordinator will communicate with the teacher.

Talking Points:

*It is very important that we greet each child and family as they arrive. It is also essential that we let them know how much time remains for each activity. For example: "Hi Johnny, I'm so glad you're here today. (He arrived at 5:45 for the 6:00 service) Come on in and let's get started with some fun playing. We have lots of cars. Do you enjoy playing with cars? Cars help us get places. We're going to learn about a couple of friends who were going somewhere today in our Bible Story. We'll have a special Bible Story in about 30 minutes. So, you've got lots of time to play now!" (Susie arrives at 6:12 for the 6:00 service) "Hi Susie, Great to see you today! You got here just in time for Bible Story! We're cleaning up toys right now and we're going to head over to the Fireside Room to hear a great story. Can you help Johnny put the cars away and line up here by the door when you're done so we can get over to the Fireside Room? Thanks!"
~Make sure you flash lights 2 minutes prior to a clean up time and give them a 2 minute playtime warning and then flash the lights again for cleanup. It doesn't have to be 2 or 5 minutes, just give them a warning.

*Line kids up for story time and tell them what to expect. "We're going to the Fireside Room now. When we walk in the hallway, we need to be quiet as mice. When we're in the Fireside Room, I need you to have a seat on a blue line, eyes forward, lips zipped, ready to hear our exciting story. Miss Ann is so excited to share the story from the Bible with you today. Did you know it's a true story? That's right, everything in the Bible is true because it's God's word! Let's be kind, respectful, good listeners for her. I know you can all do that! That's what God wants us to do! Those who follow our rules get to put their name on a dolphin and put in on our Beach scene and will get a stamp at the end of class for following our rules. Thanks friends, we're going to have a great time listening and singing praises! Let's go!"

*When you get into the room, you will have a few who follow instructions to a "T" and a few who don't. Draw attention to the ones who are following instructions. If you don't know what to do right now, you can look at Abby. Abby's being a good example and is ready to hear our Bible Story. You can also look at Susie. Thank you Susie for sitting just right."

*When a child is being defiant, not following the rules, gently walk over and get at their level. "Johnny, I need you to sit down and look at Miss Ann right now. She's telling us an awesome story from the Bible that God really wants you to hear."

~They run away from you. "Johnny, I need you to sit down because if you run, you'll bump your head, or bump into a friend and we don't want anyone to get hurt."

~He runs some more. "Johnny, I don't want to have to remove your dolphin from our Beach scene, but that's what happens when we don't follow the rules. Do you want to follow the rules now?"

~He sits, but only for a moment. Then, he gets back up and runs around. Calmly and gently walk over and get at his level. "Johnny, we're going to remove your name from the Beach Scene now because you didn't follow the rules. You can earn your name back by following our rules and being a good example, can you do that for me?"

~Now Johnny will either turn the corner, or he'll head down the same road.

*If Johnny truly turns the corner and is a good listener and helpful. Make a big production and put his name back in. “Johnny, you are so helpful! I like the way you think of others! That’s being a good example. Let’s put your name back in the Beach Scene now.”

*If Johnny doesn’t change, at the end you’ll be stamping everyone else’s hand. Gently and lovingly sit next to Johnny and let him know you gave him warnings and you want him to make good choices. God wants him to make good choices. So, next time, when he comes back he can be a really good big helper and he’ll get a stamp for following the rules.

*If a child is put in a time-out in the class because of defiance...”Johnny, I understand you don’t want to do craft right now, but the kids are doing craft now and we don’t want to disturb them, so you can sit here or you can join them, but it wouldn’t be fair for you to play toys right now. Take as much time as you need. I’ll wait here with you.” DO NOT MAKE THIS A PLEASANT, FUN, Easy conversational time.

*If a child is removed from class, Coordinator should talk with parents and let them know we want this to be a positive experience. How can we be helpful in making Johnny’s time here enjoyable for everyone?

*If a child is removed again and parent has to shadow child, make sure parent understands we are working to be helpful and make church meaningful and enjoyable for them.