



# Play and Learn School

## DISCIPLINE POLICY

### *Philosophy of Discipline:*

Caregivers will equitably use positive guidance, redirection, planning ahead to prevent problems, encouragement of appropriate behavior, consistent clear rules, and involving children in problem solving to foster the child's own ability to become self-disciplined. Where the child understands words, discipline will be explained to the child before and at the time of any disciplinary action. Caregivers will encourage children to respect other people, to be fair, respect property, and learn to be responsible for their actions.

Caregivers will guide children to develop self control and orderly conduct in relationship to peers and adults. Aggressive physical behavior toward staff or children is unacceptable. Caregivers will intervene immediately when a child becomes physically aggressive to protect all of the children and encourage more acceptable behavior. Caregivers will use discipline that is consistent, clear, and understandable to the child.

### *Permissible Methods of Discipline:*

**For acts of aggression and fighting** (e.g., biting, hitting, etc.) staff will set appropriate expectations for children and guide them in solving problems. This positive guidance will be the usual technique for managing children with challenging behaviors rather than punishing them for having problems they have not yet learned to solve. In addition, staff may:

1. Separate the children involved.
2. Immediately comfort the individual who was injured.
3. Care for any injury suffered by the victim involved in the incident.
4. Notify parents or legal guardians of children involved in the incident.
5. Review the adequacy of caregiver supervision, appropriateness of facility activities, and administrative corrective action if there is a recurrence.

**Physical restraint** will not be used except as necessary to ensure a child's safety or that of others, and then in the form of holding by another person as gently as possible only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation.

**Medicines or drugs that will affect behavior** will not be used except as prescribed by a child's health care provider and with specific written instructions from the child's health care provider for the use of the medicine.

**Time-out** will be used if other management techniques are ineffective. "Time-out" or removal of a child from the environment may be used selectively for children over 18 months of age who are at risk of harming themselves or others. The period of "time-out" will be just long enough to enable the child to regain self-control. As a general rule this period will not exceed one minute per year of age. Caregivers will monitor the effectiveness of "time-out" and seek the help of a mental health consultant when approved behavior management strategies do not seem to be effective.

### *Prohibited Practices (Child Abuse):*

Caregivers will not use physical punishment or abusive language.

### *Suspected Child Abuse:*

All observations or suspicions of child abuse or neglect will be immediately reported to the child protective services agency no matter where the abuse might have occurred. Staff members will call to report suspected abuse or neglect. Staff members will follow the direction of the child protective services agency regarding completion of written reports. If the parent or legal guardian of the child is suspected of abuse, Play & Learn School will follow the guidance of the child protective agency regarding notification of the parent or legal guardian. Reporters of suspected child abuse will not be discharged for making the report unless it is proven that a false report was knowingly made.

Staff who are accused of child abuse may be suspended or given leave pending investigation of the accusation. Such caregivers may also be removed from the classroom and given a job that does not require interaction with children. Parents or legal guardians of suspected abused children will be notified. Parents or legal guardians of other children in the program will be contacted by if a caregiver is suspected of abuse so they may share any concerns they have had. However, no accusation or affirmation of guilt will be made until the investigation is complete. Caregivers found guilty of child abuse will be summarily dismissed or relieved of their duties.