

Guiding Behavior Policy

Discipline is not meant to be punishment. Instead, it is a time for teaching—the very kind of teaching Jesus did with His disciples. Teaching of this kind is two-fold: First, to immediately stop inappropriate behavior; second, to help the child find another, more appropriate way to behave. Here are some procedures for correcting behavior:

- Prevent problems before they occur. The best way to avoid trouble is to stop it before it happens!
- Set clear limits. Use the word “no” as little as possible because it does not teach the child appropriate behavior. Instead, give the child information. For example, “We don’t bite Timmy.” Save the word “no” for dangerous situations.
- Redirect behavior. Try offering the child another activity.
- Offer a choice. When you say, “You may play with the truck or the car. Which one do you want?” You are giving the child a choice.
- Acknowledge feelings. Use the words “I see...” often. Show the child that you understand.
- Talk through problems. Here is a good example: “Ryan wants the truck. Timmy wants the truck. What can we do? Here is another truck. Which one would you like Ryan?”
- If you have tried redirection and talking through the problem without success, then it is time to call in another volunteer or staff member. Please do not address issues with parents about behavior. It is the Children’s Pastor’s responsibility to talk with the parents about behavioral issues.
- **A few tips to keep in mind:**
 - ✓ Acknowledge a child’s good behavior.
 - ✓ Talk about the action and not the child’s personality.
 - ✓ Remember that seventy percent of communication is non-verbal.
 - ✓ When addressing a child’s behavior, always lower your voice.
 - ✓ Realize that a child’s behavior may simply be a cry for your attention.
 - ✓ Avoid hurrying a child. A hurried child is usually a frustrated child.
 - ✓ Pray!