

## DISCIPLINE POLICY

One of the most important lessons we can help children understand is that of discipline and eventually self-control. It is our responsibility to assist the child in learning self-respect and respect for others. The best way to instill this respect is through positive discipline.

Discipline is a process, not a punishment. This process is neither easy nor short. Positive discipline involves talking to the child about the mistake in behavior, stopping the inappropriate behavior and, then, guiding the child toward the appropriate behavior.

In our classrooms, teachers use a problem-solving approach to conflict. When conflict occurs, teachers use the following steps to resolve the problem.

1. **APPROACH CALMLY:** The adult observes what is happening between the two children and prepares herself for a positive outcome.
2. **ACKNOWLEDGE FEELINGS:** The adult gives recognition to the feelings the children are expressing by using simple, descriptive words such as, "You seem angry/upset/sad."
3. **GATHER INFORMATION:** The adult tells children he/she wants to hear from each of them.
4. **RESTATE THE PROBLEM:** The adult uses details and describes needs the children have described, restates the problem, clarifying any issues by asking for more detail and reframing hurtful language.
5. **ASK FOR SOLUTIONS AND CHOOSE ONE TOGETHER:** The adult gives children plenty of time to think of solutions. The adult respects and explores all of the children's ideas, even if they seem unrealistic, considering how each might work.
6. **GIVE FOLLOW-UP SUPPORT:** When children have agreed on a solution, the adult makes a simple statement to recognize this accomplishment.

The problem-solving approach to conflict helps children learn to:

- Express needs and strong feelings
- Hear and respect others' points of views
- Express ideas and experience the give-and-take of relationships
- Develop a desire to engage in positive social behaviors
- Feel in control of the solution and the outcome
- Experience successful cooperative solutions
- Develop trust in adults and other children
- Understand how to make constructive choices
- Experience feelings of competence

At no time is staff permitted to use any of the following when disciplining a child:

- Hitting, shaking, biting, pinching or inflicting corporal punishment
- Inflicting mental or emotional punishment such as humiliation or shaming
- Depriving a child of meals, snack, rest, or toilet use
- Confining a child in an enclosed area, such as a closet. A child is never to be left alone.

