



Play Centers, Inc. / Play and Learn
"Your First Choice for Quality Child Care and Education"
in Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, and Baltimore County



Positive Guidance for School-Age Children

Play Centers follows the philosophy that the ultimate goal of discipline is to teach children to be responsible for their own actions. Hence, discipline policies and procedures are based upon the child's developmental understanding of what is right and wrong.

Our play-centered philosophy provides children with many choices all throughout the morning/afternoon session. Children can choose which Zones to spend time in, which activities to do in each Zone, when to move on to another Zone, whether to join a large group or small group activity, or whether to pursue an individual pursuit, and so on. The availability of choices decreases many behavioral issues; however any inappropriate, negative, and/or unacceptable behavior is dealt with immediately and on an individual basis. Play Centers believes in focusing on the positive rather than the negative. Our staff teaches children what is acceptable and appropriate behavior through modeling, ignoring minor attention seeking behaviors, and redirection to other available choices (such as, building in the Construction Zone or playing a game in the Games Zone if too many people are in the Creative Zone, or having an impromptu dance party or yoga group when children need a physical outlet on a rainy day). Other positive methods of guiding children's behavior that are utilized include behavior modification (rewards and reinforcements), anticipation and elimination of potential problems, and encouragement and praise.

Parents will be invited to be actively aware of and involved in all components of the Positive Guidance Process. These include receiving information on expectations and progress; documentation and follow-up; informal discussions/ formal conferences, etc. to be used as parent/provider decisions are made to support the child's success in the program. The staff will do everything possible to deal with difficult situations on-site; however, parents will be notified immediately if a child is in danger of hurting himself/herself, others, or the environment. It is an accepted fact that children need guidance. They need directions, limits, and rules to follow. Play Centers meets the need by incorporating discipline techniques which are geared to the development of self-respect, skills in problem solving, and, healthy interpersonal relationships. Staff set firm, fair, and consistent limits which affirm the child's self-control, thus self-esteem, and establish cooperation. With all age groups, individual differences are recognized and creative discipline techniques are utilized, thus resulting in a positive learning experience for the child.

For older children, conflict resolution is approached in the following ways:

1. Staff act as mediators and negotiators, letting children know that the staff is there to protect each child as they work out solutions to their conflicts.
2. Staff help the children to brainstorm various solutions to their conflicts.
3. Staff act as role models as they help settle differences with the children.
4. Conflicts are resolved through supportive, non-punitive, non-violent means.

Occasionally, when a child fails to respond to verbal techniques, a one-on-one discussion of the problem and alternative solutions are explored. Alternative solutions may include redirection to another activity, spending time alone to reflect and regroup and /or talking with the parents. Age appropriateness, as well as developmental stages, are major factors to consider when developing a quality program. Play Centers makes every effort to ensure that these two key issues are addressed prior to the implementation of any discipline techniques for a given age group. Play Centers Inc. will provide support, guidance, and training, both in the initial and on-going staff development process, but also as specific circumstances warrant.