



Quality ChildCare

For Registered Home-Based Providers

CENTER ON THE FAMILY ★ UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

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10 Hallmarks of Quality Child Care

1. Build trusting relationships
2. Provide consistent care
3. Support children's health
4. Provide a safe environment
5. **Provide positive guidance**
6. Provide a language-rich environment
7. Foster curiosity and development through play
8. Individualize care and learning activities
9. Partner with parents
10. Pursue personal and professional growth

This Month's Hallmark of Quality Child Care

Provide Positive Guidance

Using Positive Guidance to Prepare Children for School

Family child care providers play an important role in preparing children for school entry. Readiness for Kindergarten is not just about knowing letters, colors, and numbers; it is also about children developing social skills that allow them to feel confident and good enough about themselves to be successful in school. Social skills, such as being able to regulate their own emotions and control their behaviors, establish and sustain positive relationships, and participate cooperatively and constructively in group situations, help children navigate the new experiences awaiting them. Your positive guidance through the early years will support children in attaining these skills.

Like all skills, development of these social skills doesn't happen all at once. They develop over time, and with practice, when young children are supported by nurturing and compassionate child care providers using positive guidance. Knowing what is reasonable to expect of young children at each stage of development helps establish realistic expectations for each individual child's behaviors. In this newsletter, we will explore strategies from the *Creative Curriculum for Family Child Care* that focus on taking a positive guidance approach to supporting children's self-regulation and their ability to participate cooperatively.



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What positive guidance looks like at different ages

Infants (birth – 8 months)

Infants use crying as their way of communicating their feelings of being hungry, tired, uncomfortable, or bored. When you comfort infants by responding consistently, this is an early form of positive guidance. Infants who learn that they can rely on you to respond to their cries are better able to calm themselves and regulate their emotions. An early example of self-calming is sucking a fist or a thumb while waiting to be breast fed or until the bottle is ready.

Explorers (8 – 18 months)

Mobile infants are developmentally driven to touch and taste everything in their environment. Explorers who have positive relationships with their caregivers will frequently look back to check their caregiver's face and body language for approval or disapproval of what they are about to do. Your smile or frown is often enough to let them know what is or is not Okay.



Toddlers (18 – 36 months)

Children this age are starting to seek and communicate their desire to do things independently even when they are not yet capable. “No” is a favorite word and sharing is difficult. Toddlers need their caregivers to establish a few clear and simple rules about what is expected. Your patient and loving reminders will be needed frequently. Since children this age often play next to each other but not “with” each other, you can support their initial efforts to work cooperatively by acknowledging whenever one child is offering help or joining in play with another.

Preschool Aged (3 – 5 years)

Children this age are just beginning to understand the difference between right and wrong. They also have a better command of language for expressing their feelings and resolving problems. However, the ability to keep their emotions in check and control their behavior is still inconsistent. Positive guidance includes listening to the child and teaching him how to use his words to express his feelings instead of his hands or feet. It's also helpful to provide a space or an activity where he can let off steam. Help him grow in cooperation and group participation by giving him “jobs” to do and choices to make.

Supporting the Development of Self-Regulation

Children need a lot of practice to develop the level of self-regulation which will be expected of them when they enter Kindergarten. There are many things caregivers and parents can do to support them.

- Give children opportunities to plan and follow guidelines such as in stringing beads following a pattern of colors or following a simple recipe.
- Encourage children's sense of independence. Allow them to pour their own milk or juice from a small pitcher when they are able.
- Offer acceptable choices to give them some control over events. "Do you want to play with the blocks or the trucks?"
- Give children plenty of chances to master skills of everyday living such as setting the table or putting their belongings in their own cubby.
- Read aloud books that are related to self-regulation such as *Please Baby, Please* or *When Sophie Gets Angry, Really, Really, Angry*.
- Play games that involve stopping or controlling actions such as Simon Says and Mother May I?



Using Routines and Environment to Promote Self-Regulation, Cooperation, and Group Participation

Just as you may respond differently depending upon how much stress you are experiencing, so do children respond to their environment, schedules, and routines. Here are some suggestions from *The Creative Curriculum* for setting up the environment to minimize stress and unwanted behavior:

- Set up an interesting, safe space that children may explore freely without your constantly having to say "No."
- Establish a predictable daily schedule to give children a sense of order.
- Build clean-up time into the daily schedule. Being able to clean up without being prompted is a sign of self-regulation and cooperation.
- Allow enough time for children to run and play outdoors.
- Provide unstructured time for pretend play every day. Using imaginary props for dramatic play helps children to process society's expectations for behavior and experience being an important part of a group.
- Anticipate children's physical needs. Serve lunch before they are so hungry that they are irritable. Help them take naps before they become overly tired.

For suggestions on responding to challenging behaviors, see the link on page 4 to the Zero to Three website: Challenging Behaviors—Tips and Tools.

Citations:

Dodge, D.T., Rudick, S., & Colker, L. J. (2009). *The creative curriculum for family child care*, Second edition, Teaching Strategies, Washington, D.C.

Zero to Three. Challenging Behaviors Tips and Tools. <http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/challenging-behavior/tips-tools-challenging-behaviors.html> [available on-line December 16, 2014]

Reflection Sheet and Award Book

- To receive the award book for this month, fill out your caregiver's reflection sheet and return it to the Center on the Family in the postage paid envelope by the deadline posted.
- Indicate if you would like to receive free technical assistance related to a child care issue.
- Update your address or contact information if any changes have taken place.



REMINDER: Registered QCC Participants can use their participation in the program to fulfill the relicensing requirement of “increased knowledge.” Ask your DHS Licensing Social Worker about the requirements today.