



Learning to Grow

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII ♥ WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Positive Guidance Strategy: Redirection

Positive guidance is an effective strategy when teaching children appropriate behaviors. This strategy moves us beyond reaction and punishment (e.g., yelling, ridiculing, hitting) to using effective responses. These responses focus on teaching children how to appropriately deal with frustrations, and build the social skills and self-control they need for future challenges.

The adult caring for a child sets the tone. The way you respond to an inappropriate behavior matters. Keeping your own emotions in check and maintaining composure is key to fostering a climate that teaches the child how to modify and control her own behavior. Instead of taking the child's misbehavior personally, remove yourself

from the equation and see it as a learning opportunity. Respond with calmness, using the following steps:

1. See the inappropriate behavior or an impending one that's about to happen.
2. Step back (if this is not an unsafe situation); check your own emotions and calmly shift your thinking to take on the role of teaching instead of reacting.
3. Approach the child/situation and use a **positive guidance strategy**, such as redirecting the child to a positive alternative, offering choices, or responding with a natural or logical consequence.

In this newsletter, we will focus on the positive guidance strategy of redirection and offer tips and examples for using this strategy with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.



This newsletter includes:

- ♥ **Age-specific information and suggestions** about activities to do with your infant, toddler, or preschooler,
- ♥ **Featured activities** for each age group,
- ♥ **How This Helps:** a summary of your child's development by doing these activities together,
- ♥ **Resources:** for more information about this topic, and
- ♥ **Suggested Books:** a list of books to read with your child.

Infants

Infants are curious about their environment and will roll, crawl and toddle to explore their surroundings. By removing items you don't want your child to touch, you reduce the number of times you say "No." When your baby does get into something she shouldn't, redirection is a guidance strategy to use. By using redirection, you are showing her what to do. You replace an unwanted behavior with one that is acceptable.



Here are examples of redirection strategies to try with an infant.

- ♥ **Change the scene:** Position the child so she can see different things, or move her to a new spot.
- ♥ **Use supported distraction:** When you see your baby heading towards a dangerous activity or one that is not appropriate, say "this is not safe," and move your child to another area. State your limit first ("this is not safe") and then distract with another interesting activity.
- ♥ **Offer similar substitutes:** Redirect your child to a safer alternative and give her another option. For example, if your baby is interested in pushing the buttons on the TV, say, "You may not play with the buttons on the TV but you may play with these buttons" and give her an alternative age appropriate toy that has buttons that she can push.

Activity for Infants: *Dump and Fill*

What You Need:

- A plastic empty container or box
- Safe items that she can grasp such as soft blocks, clothespins, or thread spools

What to Do:

1. Show your child how to fill a container or box with the safe items.
2. Show her how to turn the container or box over and dump the items out.
3. Invite her to copy you.
4. Then show her how to put the items back into the container or box. You can say, "I like how you are grasping the block and putting it into the box."
5. As she is filling the container, count the items.
6. Talk about what she is doing and what happens when she turns the container or box over.

Note: You can use this activity for a child who likes to drop her food from her high chair. You can say, "Food is not for dropping, but you may drop these clothespins into this container."

(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)



Toddlers

Redirection can be a very successful guidance strategy to use with toddlers. When an issue arises, you can avoid a struggle with the child by directing her attention elsewhere. It is tempting for the parent or care provider to say “No!” to stop a certain behavior. Toddlers can sometimes see “No!” as a challenge; use redirection as an alternative to “no.”

Here are examples of redirection strategies to try with a toddler.

- ♥ **Share your expectations with your child in a way that she can understand.** For example, you can say, “Walls are not for writing on. You can use your marker on this paper.”
- ♥ **Make alternative activities fun for your child.** Your child may respond to an alternative activity if it is interesting to her. For example, if the child is throwing a block, redirect her attention to a beanbag activity and say, “It isn’t safe to throw a block; someone could get hurt. You can throw these beanbags into this basket.”
- ♥ **Give reminders.** Toddlers may need reminders about what is appropriate behavior. For



example, if the child is pulling a toy out of another child’s hand, remind her that the other child is playing with it and that she can either wait to play with it later or to find another one. You can say, “Kaila has that doll, here’s one for you.” If there isn’t another toy like that, take her by her hand and say, “Kaila has the doll right now, let’s find something else for you to play with.”

Activity for Toddlers: *Poetry in Motion*

What You Need:
None

What to Do:

1. Recite this poem slowly and show your child how to act out the movements with you:

*Hop a little, jump a little, one, two, three.
Run a little, clap a little, tap one knee.
Bend a little, stretch a little, wiggle your head.
Hop a little, jump a little, one, two, three.*

2. Make up your own poem with movements to act out. If you speak more than one language, recite the poem in a different language.



(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)

Preschoolers

As your preschooler gains more independence, she'll exhibit different kinds of behaviors. This is a normal part of growing up. While redirection strategies continue to work, you may now find yourself having to explain more to the child about why she can or cannot do certain things. Redirection, with an explanation, gives the child the opportunity to learn that the way she is acting is not acceptable, while also providing an alternative. As a result, redirection provides an opportunity to both correct and teach.

♥ **Provide an explanation.** If the child is having trouble sharing a toy and starts to use physical force, redirect and explain. For example, say, "Annie, you're having trouble sharing the blocks. You are hurting other people by pushing. Let's find somewhere else for you to play with the blocks."

♥ **Offer to play a game.** A long wait can cause a child to become impatient. Offer to play a game such as "I Spy," or a guessing game. You can say, "Look out the window. How many buses do you think will pass by before the doctor sees you? I guess 10. What's your guess? Let's count."



♥ **Teach how to resolve conflicts and solve problems.** Help your child recognize and name feelings, identify problems, and come up with her own ideas of acceptable alternative activities. You can say, "It is not safe to throw the ball in the living room, but can you think of a safe place to throw the ball?" Talk about the reasons why only some places are safe for ball throwing.

Activity for Preschoolers: *Guessing Games*

What You Need:
None

What to Do:

1. Tell your child that you are thinking of something in the room and that she has to guess what you are thinking of.
2. Give her simple clues. For example, "I am thinking of something we turn on when it gets dark."
3. If she guesses correctly, say, "Yes, I was thinking of the lamp!" If she does not guess correctly, give her simpler clues: "You can find it in the living room. It is on the little table."
4. Next, give your child a chance to think of things for you to guess. Ask her for clues.
5. As she masters simple clues, challenge her with harder clues.



(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)

How This Helps

The activities suggested in this newsletter help promote many different aspects of development:

Physical Development

- ♥ Use and strengthen small muscles such as facial muscles, fingers, hands, and toes, and large muscles such as neck, arms and legs.
- ♥ Learn to use her body with intention

Social and Emotional Development

- ♥ Learn to interact with others
- ♥ Feel important and good about herself

Language and Literacy Development

- ♥ Build verbal skills and vocabulary
- ♥ Increase her observation, listening and understanding skills, and her attention span

Cognitive Development

- ♥ Develop her creativity and imagination
- ♥ Begin to recognize math concepts like numbers, sized, shapes and sequences

Kids in the Kitchen

Cooking teaches valuable lessons such as math and science concepts, fine motor skills, and language development. As you make this recipe with your child, ask questions throughout the process to encourage her thinking skills. Talk about kitchen safety. Show her how to handle items safely and allow her to do as much as she is capable of. Most of all, have fun!

Lasagna Cups

Adapted from: <http://allrecipes.com/recipe/241564/lasagna-cupcakes/>

Ingredients:

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|---|---|
| Cooking spray | 24 Won ton wrappers |
| 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese | 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese |
| $\frac{3}{4}$ cup ricotta cheese | 1 cup pasta sauce |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ pound cooked ground beef (optional) | Muffin pan (12 muffin cups), sprayed with cooking spray |

For topping:

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|--|---|
| $\frac{1}{4}$ cup grated Parmesan cheese | $\frac{1}{4}$ cup shredded mozzarella cheeses |
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Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.
2. Have your child place a won ton wrapper in each muffin cup.
3. Divide the cheeses, ground beef, and pasta sauce in half, placing one half on the side to use later.
4. Layer the Parmesan cheese, mozzarella cheese, ricotta cheese, ground beef, and pasta sauce on top of each won ton wrapper.
5. Have your child place another won ton wrapper into each muffin cup, on top of the lasagna mixture, counting each one aloud.
6. With the other half of the ingredients, repeat the steps of layering onto each won ton wrapper: cheeses, ground beef, and pasta sauce.
7. Add the remaining Parmesan cheese and mozzarella cheese to create a topping for each cup.
8. Bake for about 18–20 minutes.
9. Let cool for 5 minutes and pop out with a knife.

Resources

Parenting Counts

Research-based resource site developed to support parents and caregivers in raising socially and emotionally healthy children. The following articles discuss some of children's challenging behaviors and tips on responding with positive guidance:

Testing 1,2,3 *Parenting Counts*

<http://www.parentingcounts.org/information/timeline/testing-1-2-3/>

Tantrums Happen! *Parenting Counts*

<http://www.parentingcounts.org/information/documents/tantrums-happen-100-718-200907.pdf>

Bright Horizons Positive Guidance: A Guide for Parents

Early childhood website that includes a *Positive Guidance Toolbox for Parents* offering simple solutions to common parenting challenges.
<https://www.brighthorizons.com/family-resources/positive-guidance-guide-for-parents>



Suggested Books

Discover these books and more at the **Hawai'i State Public Library** www.librarieshawaii.org.

Infants and Toddlers

Naptime by the Sea by Ellie Crowe

Take a journey with Hawai'i's sea creatures as they settle down for their nap. It uses lyrical rhyming and repetition to help your child fall asleep.

The Runaway Bunny by Margaret Wise Brown

A little bunny keeps running away, but his lovingly steadfast mother finds him every time. It is a comforting story of a mother's love.

Preschoolers

The Way I Act by Steve Metzger

Explore the different ways of behaving with positive ideas of how to act in a variety of situations.

In My Heart A Book of Feelings by Jo Witek

Learn about the different ways a person's heart can feel from sad to happy, brave, and shy. The story includes rich vocabulary words that will help children learn about the different emotions that come with their feelings.



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