



# Quality ChildCare

For Registered Home-Based Providers

LEARNING TO GROW ★ WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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## 10 Hallmarks of Quality Child Care

- ★ Build trusting relationships
- ★ Provide consistent care
- ★ Support children's health
- ★ Provide a safe environment
- ★ **Provide positive guidance**
- ★ Provide a language-rich environment
- ★ Foster curiosity and development through play
- ★ Individualize care and learning activities
- ★ Partner with parents
- ★ Pursue personal and professional growth

## This Month's Hallmarks of Quality Child Care

Provide Positive Guidance

### Developing Self-Control

**S**elf-control (also known as **self-management** or **self-regulation**) is the ability to cope with strong feelings and express one's emotions in appropriate ways. Examples of self-control include the ability to calm down when angry or excited, share, persist at difficult tasks, and wait for a turn. The process of developing self-control begins at birth and continues throughout childhood. Young children learn self-control through interactions with others and guidance from loving care providers.

According to the *Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning*, self-control is one of five core skills that have been widely recognized as critical social-emotional skills. The other skills are:

- **Self-awareness** – the ability to recognize ones' own feelings and emotions
- **Social awareness** – the ability to understand and recognize the feelings of others, take others' perspectives, and demonstrate empathy
- **Relationship skills** – the ability to build and maintain positive relationships with others; cooperation, communication
- **Responsible decision-making** – the ability to make good choices about one's behavior and interactions with others; and solve problems

In the last several years, there has been an explosion of interest and research on social and emotional skills – and the studies have shown that **these skills are crucial for school and life success.**

In fact, 'Emotional Intelligence' is becoming recognized as *more* important than 'Academic Intelligence' in predicting a child's future success. Consequently, it is important for care providers of young children to nurture and support children's social and emotional development; and to understand the important role you play in laying this critical foundation.

This newsletter will focus on the development of self-control, and will present strategies for nurturing **self-control** in infants, toddlers and preschoolers.



## Infants

Babies are born with little or no self-control. They naturally act on thoughts and feelings without the ability to stop themselves. However, they develop self-soothing skills (e.g., sucking on a pacifier or finger) – which is the beginning of self-control – in their first months of life. With sensitive guidance from care providers, baby will begin to manage his feelings and actions. Here are some strategies from Zero to Three to nurture self-control in infants:

- **Help them learn to soothe themselves.** By trying different ways to help him calm down (holding, rocking, swaddling) you help him learn to soothe himself. Teach him that he can rely on you, which makes him feel safe and secure.
- **Comfort them.** If a baby is crying, it is often because he needs you to help him calm down. Babies need your love and comfort. This helps them grow up to be secure and confident children.



upset that you had to give him a turn.” Giving toddlers the words to describe their feelings is the first step toward helping them manage their emotions and develop self-control. Here are some additional strategies from Zero to Three to nurture self-control in toddlers:

- **Give them opportunities to choose.** Giving a toddler the opportunity to make choices lets him know you trust him to make good decisions. It also helps him feel in control. Present him with two acceptable options whenever possible, and let him choose. For example, give him two types of toys to choose from, or two different jobs to choose from. For example, “Would you like to pass out the napkins or the cups today?”
- **Play games that require self-control.** Play “stop and go” games. For example, color a paper plate red on one side and green on the other side. Have the children run toward you and stop when you put up a red sign; then run again when the sign is green. Play “Freeze dance” with music. When the music is on, have the children dance; when you stop the music, ask them to freeze. Games such as this engage children physically, and promote self-control by requiring them to pay attention, remember the rules, and respond to changing circumstances.

## Toddlers

Young toddlers still need help with self-control and managing their emotions. There are times when toddlers need to do what they may not want to do, like giving another child a turn with a treasured toy. Let the toddler know you understand: “You really like that doll and didn’t want to give it to Gavin to play with. You are





- **Set appropriate limits with natural consequences.** It is important to set expectations for children. The key is to take a teaching and guiding approach with clear and natural consequences. Stay calm and explain the rule (for example, “No throwing toys. If you throw the truck, I will have to put it away”). If a child tests the limit, which is to be expected, calmly implement the consequence and let him know that he may try again later. Through everyday interactions like these, children develop the brain connections they need to master the skill of self-control.

## Preschoolers

Preschoolers are growing in their ability to regulate and control their behaviors. You may hear a child “telling” on another child who isn’t following the rules. Regulating another child’s behavior is an important first step in regulating one’s own behavior. Remember that children develop self-control and emotional regulation over many years and only after a lot of trial and error. Model self-restraint yourself, be consistent, offer natural and logical consequences, and view mistakes as learning opportunities. Here are some specific strategies to nurture self-control in preschoolers:

- **Engage in pretend play.** Imaginative play offers children a great way to learn self-regulation or self-control. During imaginative play, children develop rules



to guide their actions in playing roles (for example, a doctor, a waitress, etc.). They then shape their actions to follow these rules, and learn to inhibit any impulse for actions that don’t fit the “role.”

- **Finish what you are doing, then respond to requests for attention.** For example, if you are speaking to a child and another child asks for something (and it’s not an emergency), let him know that he needs to wait until you complete your conversation. This is a good way to help children practice waiting for a short time.
- **Give children practice in planning.** For example, have the children plan which toy they will play with first, and then have them follow through. Planning means the child needs to think first and then act, thus practicing self-control.
- **Acknowledge wins.** When a child has successfully survived a potentially frustrating situation, acknowledge his positive efforts. For instance, you could say, “Waiting for our turn is hard, but you made the best of it!” Over time, he will internalize the idea that we don’t always have control over situations, but we can control our responses.



## Reflection Sheet, Award Book, and Training Certificates

- Providers who fill out the caregiver's reflection sheet and return it by the posted deadline to the Learning to Grow Program are *guaranteed* a children's book in return. A postage-paid envelop is provided.
- Providers who thoughtfully complete the reflection sheet **question #5** can be awarded a certificate indicating one hour of training completed. Training hours will align with the topic areas required to meet DHS requirements.
- Reflection sheets do not need to be returned by the due date in order to earn the certificate. However, the supply of award books is limited and after the due date, award books will be sent only as available.
- Indicate on Question #8 if you would like to receive free technical assistance or support related to a child care issue.

### Citations:

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