

Developing Self Discipline In Preschoolers

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How to deal with challenging behavior and develop self discipline in preschoolers.
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A healthy, safe environment in a pre-school can facilitate children's needs by developing necessary skills to develop their social and behavioral milestones. Ordinary pre-school activities offer opportunities for this e.g. taking turns, sharing, politeness and making choices.

Developing self-discipline in preschoolers can be achieved by:

{bot_wrgoogle} * Instead of praising the child, praise the behavior

- * A child's self esteem should be nurtured and encouraged
- * Take into account a child's age and stage of development when setting limits
- * Help children to learn and understand boundaries by using play and games with rules
- * Children will imitate adult behavior so lead by example
- * Do not isolate or humiliate a child
- * When you say 'No'...mean it. Consistency is key.
- * Make sure your expectations and rules of behavior are clear
- * Always reward good behavior

Day care workers should use these positive methods of discipline which will in turn encourage self-control, self-direction, self-esteem and cooperation. On the other hand, using the following as a means of correction is never acceptable:

- Hitting, shaking, biting or any other physical restraint
- Never humiliate, threaten or isolate a child- such emotional punishment is unacceptable
- Depriving child of meals or snacks

Have a range of strategies for dealing with behavior which falls short of expectations i.e. temper tantrums and bullying. Effective tried and tested methods include:

- Distracting or removing the child from the environment
- Explaining why this behavior is not acceptable
- Giving the child the chance to calm down and regain control

The range of approaches mentioned would apply when dealing with the unpleasant behavior that is 'biting' and this being deemed pretty difficult behavior also. Children who display challenging behavior should have, with the involvement of parents and carers, a work plan developed specifically for them. When appropriate, parents should be involved, informed and supported to follow these work plans at home. Sometimes it is necessary to seek additional support in the form of outside specialists. This is not a negative thing and should be supported by parents and provider

and a positive way forward.

The childcare worker should be supported to work on a one to one basis with a child who may be biting or displaying other challenging behavior over an agreed period of time. The aim being that the carer would attempt to extend the child's interests by specifically engaging them in activities thus avoiding the difficult behaviors. Difficult and challenging behaviors, both in adults and children, respond positively to calm, constructive, consistent actions. Calm, constructive, consistent actions are essentially the most effective method of counteracting challenging behavior. Be patient, be vigilant, stick to your guns and you will out!

Fiona Lohrenz drew on her 10 years experience of running a day care to found ChildCareOnly.com and produce a 'How to Start a Day Care Business' DVD guide: www.startchildcare.com Fiona can be reached at her website: <http://www.childcareonly.com>