

## Municipality of the District of St. Mary's

# Behaviour Guidance Procedures

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### Philosophy

At the **Municipality of the District of St. Mary's** we provide a nurturing and loving environment for each child in our care. We believe that children are capable, confident and curious, born with a natural desire to learn and engage with their world. We know that children learn best through play and therefore we provide an inclusive daily program with a carefully planned environment, rich with opportunities for children to explore and discover the world at their own pace.

### Behaviour Guidance at St. Mary's Programs

At the **Municipality of the District of St. Mary's** our trained staff put priority on building a strong and trusting relationship with all children and families knowing that children thrive in an environment in which they feel welcomed, safe and secure. Children are encouraged to express themselves in a developmentally appropriate program which is designed to offer positive experiences and to respectfully honor the needs, interests and desires of all children.

At the **Municipality of the District of St. Mary's**, we focus on ways to prevent inappropriate behaviour as we seek to understand reasons why they may occur. Our nurturing educators respond in ways that teach and gently guide children, protects them from harm, respects dignity and privacy and promotes children's well-being.

### Prevention

Preventative practices you will see at our programs:

- Playrooms set up as developmentally appropriate
- We teach social skills and use positive behavior strategies to support the development of appropriate social behaviour
- Model and teach appropriate use of materials and equipment (e.g. respectful environment)
- Reinforce positive social interactions with encouragement and modelling
- Offer choices and encourage decision making
- Set realistic expectations (e.g. sharing is not a realistic expectation for a toddler!)
- Set consistent limits (e.g. children feel more secure when they know their boundaries)
- **Understanding that every behaviour is the communication of a message**

## Strategies

Our staff provide positive guidance throughout the day. We acknowledge that behaviours are communicating a message. We are responsible to use our observation skills to find out what the behaviour is trying to tell us. When challenging behaviours occur, the following strategies for solving conflicts will be applied:

- **Approach quickly and calmly** to stop hurtful or unsafe behavior
- **Acknowledge each child's feelings** with a simple description (e.g. "You seem angry")
- **Gather information** from each child involved (e.g. "Let's talk about what happened")
- **Identify and state the problem** (e.g. "You both want to sit in the same spot at circle")
- **Brainstorm solutions** with the children (e.g. "What else can you do?")
- **Allow children to develop a solution** and use it (e.g. "What idea do you choose?")
- **Follow up!** See how the solution is working.

We believe that it can sometimes be appropriate to ignore an undesirable behaviour. However, through consistent engagement with children, our staff have opportunities to model and encourage appropriate behaviours, explain why a behaviour may be inappropriate and can support children with appropriate options. We encourage co-operative behaviour and only remove a child from a potentially dangerous situation and explain why, helping to settle them into another activity. There may be times when Behaviour Guidance Plans are created and implemented in our program. In these cases, plans are developed with the child's family, professionals and staff as a team and are re-evaluated over time. The plan is intended to support the child through difficult situations. Children are NOT isolated for any reason (other than illness). Overall, children are supported in a wide variety of fun learning experiences every day!

**Regulation 19(1)** states that each licensee, Director, staff member and volunteer of a licensee must behave in a manner that does not harm any child who is attending the day care program, and must not do or permit any of the following:

- (a) Use corporal punishment, including
  - (i) Striking a child directly or with any physical object, and
  - (ii) Shaking, shoving, spanking and other forms of aggressive physical conduct
- (b) Require or force a child to repeat physical movements;
- (c) Use harsh, humiliating, belittling or degrading responses of any form, whether verbal, emotional or physical;
- (d) Confine or isolate a child
- (e) Deprive a child of basic needs, including food, shelter, clothing and bedding.

During mealtimes, we create a relaxing and enjoyable meal environment. We respect children's ability to determine when they are hungry, and when they are full which will in turn promote healthy eating behaviours. Please note we abide by the following statements from the **Food and Nutrition Standards; Section 11.1**

- (i) Staff and volunteers do not offer food to reinforce positive behaviours
- (ii) Staff and volunteers do not withhold food as a consequence for inappropriate behaviours
- (iii) Food is not used as a reward for completing a task or finishing a meal (e.g. dessert will not be withheld if the child does not finish the main meal).