



Discipline and Interventions

Before we even think about disciplining, it is very important to take the time to reflect on the values as well acceptable and non-acceptable actions as we wish to enforce in our daycare.

What is discipline?

Discipline is what we enforce in order to prevent non-acceptable behaviours. Discipline is transmitted to children by the following educative methods:

1. Language

By “language” we mean expression, communication and comprehension. If we suspect comprehensive challenges in a child in our group, it is very important to consult an audiologist to evaluate his/her hearing.

- **Rule of comprehension** ex: By asking a child to repeat a stated rule, we ensure his/her comprehension of the said rule
- **Message of comprehension** ex: When it seems a child has not understood a message or rule, we must find a way to make this child understand the message we wish to transmit (pictograms are very effective). Always use gestures when communicating with children, as these help children to establish links between words and actions and offer them an excellent visual marker.
- Develop a clear and simple vocabulary for the message we wish to communicate
- Use words they can relate to

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2. Social Skills

In order to support the learning of social skills, you may use programs specifically developed for this matter: *Vers le Pacifique*, *Brin d'ami*, *Le cirque farfelu*, taking advantage of regular daily situations as well as board games. The specific aspects that need to be developed with children in order to gain good social skills are the following:

- **Autonomy**, enables a child to make a choice of materials and/or activity in order to increase exploration and enhance self-knowledge
- **Self-Knowledge**, is to bring a child to take notice of the physical resemblances and differences which differ from other children. Bring the child to take notice of his own likes and preferences through daily experiments
- **Establish contact and interaction with peers**; bring the child to develop good manners in order to help them grow within today's society. Such as emphasizing on: greetings, thank-you's, and how to ask for forgiveness. This helps children to interact with their companions.
- **Cooperation**, bring to child to comprehend the importance of everyone's contribution in a common project
- **Sharing**
- **Reconciliation**
- **Patience**; to teach a child to wait for his turn
- **Recognition and expression of feelings** help the child to recognize and understand feelings by using associations with pictures. Ask them to explain how they are feeling and express your own feelings

3. Anger Management

- Identify anger with the help of pictograms demonstrating different emotions. This will help the child to pinpoint his feeling(s).
- Recognize the trigger-factors
- Managing behaviours
- Relaxation
- Talking

Compassion

- Discuss situations which can contain different points of view in which children can relate to, such as "*Le vilain petit Canard*". Also available, are texts by Michel Dufour, *Cirque Farfelu* collection
- Teach the child to put try and put himself in the other's position. Ex. 3-5 year-old children may tear a "paper heart" they made to express sadness when hearing a sad story. Bring the child to explain the reason for his action
- Decode other behaviours while reading stories that demonstrate sensitive moments and confrontational situations

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4. Intellectual aptitudes

- Help the child to change or restructure his point of view by asking questions, providing them with different paths and help them better understand
- Provide different helpful tools for diverse situations
- Teach the child how to handle different problems/challenges

What are our objectives with discipline and interventions?

The primary objective is to teach children to recognize and express their feelings, gain good social skills and become compassionate towards others. Discipline also allows children to live a better life in today's society, how to respect others and regulations. The earlier the child learns these skills the faster he will learn how to adapt to today's society, school as well as his peers.

Interventions (encouragement, support and accompaniment)

Before dealing with an intervention, we must **observe** the child as this is the key to all interventions. It will help us better understand a situation before intervening. Where, when, who, how and why? Observe what triggered the unacceptable behaviour. Try to find the source of the situation. Such as, was there pain involved, anger, a new situation at home or at the daycare? Then, the reason why... Need of attention, to obtain something, to avoid a situation, a change with a new level of stimulation?

Be logical and deal with facts when intervening. It is also important to encourage children to have good behaviour by emphasizing the **efforts** they make in order to reach the requested behaviour. Encourage good behaviour rather than pinpointing unacceptable ones, such as: children sitting together in a group, we may mention: "Good, we may now continue with our activity as Eric is properly sitting down..." We therefore emphasize on the positive action taken.

Once our observations have been made, we may now evaluate, plan and organize our activities, supplies, physical environment and schedule them accordingly.

Following our observation and intervention, we must follow-up, by questioning ourselves on our practices. We may need to readjust our interventions, in order to avoid the problem coming from the provider.

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Supervision of children is mandatory. When we act rapidly, abruptly, robotically and remain impartial, our intervention becomes very efficient.

Excluding, retracting or withdrawing a child is often used in today's society. However, before excluding a child, it is mandatory to reflect on why you wish to proceed with this action. Is it to punish him, to make him pay for his actions, or to remove him from a situation to give him a chance to calm down? At the spur of the moment, it is very easy to let our feelings get in the way, rather than remaining objective.

It is very important to always remain consistent. We must follow through with consequences when we mention there would be some. It is also important to encourage good actions taken by the child in order to resolve a problematic situation. Bottom line; always praise good actions in order to encourage good behaviour.

Why integrate a "quiet place" in our daycare?

If we notice a child is being very emotional, irritable, seems to need some "alone" time, or even becomes impatient, we can prevent negative behaviour by offering him a calm place to play. In this "special place", he won't be surrounded by negative stimulation and we can, at the same time, see to this child's needs. The child will more than likely find comfort in this area, where he'll find it reassuring, pleasant, welcoming and comfortable. It is very important to remind the child that the "quiet-place" is not a punishment or a "naughty-place".

Few suggestions to make the "quiet-place" welcoming and attractive

By adding cushions, quiet games, books and games for children to play by themselves, it will definitely make it inviting. Another good idea would be to add a mirror, emotion poster and hour glass/timer. This would allow the child to manage; if he wishes to do so, when and how much time he would like to spend in this environment. In general, children who are in-touch with their emotions and recognize when they need some alone time, will tend to go to the "quiet-place" by themselves. By adding photos of the children as well as their family members is also a great way to make this place calming and positive for them. You may even use a tent or canopy to make this place more intimate for them.

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Retract/withdraw or ignore?

There are two options on how to intervene. Either we decide to ignore the undesired behaviour and grant attention on the others that act accordingly, or we may decide to react and withdraw the child from the activity. It is important to always be consistent, and also, choose your battles. A child must never be punished or reprimanded for an action you haven't personally witnessed.

Retraction/withdrawal

A child must be made aware of the unacceptable behaviour and the consequences that will be enforced prior to his retraction from the activity. The daycare's "rules & regulations" and requested behaviours should be posted in the daycare so the child can learn and respect them and also know what his limits are.

It is also essential to keep in mind that the main objective for withdrawing a child, is to calm the child down. Once the child is receptive to us, we must review his behaviour. Sit the child down on a chair where you can make see him and make him understand that his behaviour is unacceptable. Withdrawal must be gradual and of a short length of time. Retraction must **only** be used in order to interrupt, destabilise and let the child have a time-out.

Once the child has calmed down, it is mandatory to ask him to think about how he can make himself understood by using positive ways. We must help him find solutions to enable him to better react the next time he is faced with a similar situation.

When opting for retraction, we must be extremely careful to use this venue only when it is necessary. We know all children learn through play, therefore, by continuously withdrawing a child from his normal play, we prevent the child from learning and prevent his normal intellectual and social development.

Ignore

Prior to ignoring an unacceptable behaviour, it is important to ensure the children are not put in harm's way and that we can manage the reaction of all the children involved. It is also important to advise all other caretakers and adults to receive their support and cooperation to enforce the intervention.

- Ignore the action, not the person
- Ignore... To better enforce
- Do not ignore lack of respect and aggression

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Intervening means

- Respecting the children's needs
- Observe to react quickly to early signs of negative behaviours
- Promote learning
- Use discipline in teaching
- Enforce bonding
- Congratulate children for their positive efforts and good actions

Children learn by example. It is important to choose your battles

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