

Discipline for Cubbies

When we think of discipline what usually comes to mind? Is it punishment or nurture? Discipline comes from the root word disciple and is used for the benefit of the child. It is something you do for the child not to the child, though corrective measures may be needed from time to time.

Listed below are some ideas you can use in Cubbies to be proactive, and give direction and guidance from the foundation of unconditional love.

1. Develop and consistently enforce a discipline policy. Make sure all leaders know and will consistently uphold it. Review it along with the other Cubbies nurturing discipline strategies. You could write the rules on a large bear cutout laminated for durability. You may call it "Beary Good Things to Do" or use a frog cutout with the words "Hop Right To It." With each of the above suggestions consider using a written and picture form of the rules following the statement. Consider putting your discipline standard in the Parent Guide to help build cooperation between home and club.
2. Demonstrate expected behavior. For instance, tell the Cubbies "Let's walk so quietly that no one will think any Cubbies are here tonight!" You could also tell them to move as a quiet church choo-choo train, all linked together but making no noise.
3. Consider having an area where Cubbies may go if they are over-stimulated. A bean bag chair, a child-size rocking chair or other similar cozy chairs are good examples. This should be in the room along with the other Cubbies. Once a Cubbie is calmed down, you may want to review expected behaviors before you send him back into the group. You may also choose to use time out or time away.
4. It is best to practice natural consequences to a Cubbie's behavior. Consequences train appropriate behavior, preserve a child's dignity, increase internal acceptance of responsibility, increase motivation and teach the relationship of cause and effect, while maintaining a caring climate.
5. Try to ensure that your expectations are in line with Cubbies' abilities. Some discipline problems arise because leader expectations are unreasonable for preschool children.
6. Small things can help Cubbies focus. If you're losing their attention, try clapping, snapping or tapping a rhythmic pattern for Cubbies to imitate. This will regain their attention. A similar idea is to have them all stand and sing a song with lots of motions. This will help get their wiggles out.
7. You can also have a beanbag to toss. After asking a question, the Cubbie who catches the beanbag can answer. Try to let all Cubbies who want to catch the beanbag answer a question. This is a great way to review a lesson and Bear Hug verse. You also can use a small stuffed animal or soft ball. This is great to use on review nights.
8. Another great way to teach and recognize good listening skills is to hand out stickers. Keep Cubbie Bear stickers and other stickers on hand. Use Cubbie Bear stickers if a Cubbie is following the Cubbie Bear Buddy Rules for Story Time.
9. Another tip is to have Cubbies listen for or respond to something during the lesson. Maybe they need to make happy or sad faces depending on the emotion of the people in the lesson. For example, the lame man who wants to walk is very sad. He hears Jesus is coming to town, so he is very happy. He realizes he cannot get there to see Him, so he is very sad. His four friends come to help him get to Jesus, which makes him very happy. When he arrives at the home where Jesus is teaching, he cannot get in because of the crowd, so he is again very sad. His friends decide to go on the roof, remove tiles and lower him down to Jesus, so he is happy. Jesus heals him, and he is very happy.
10. When reviewing the lesson, have them point their thumb up if a statement is correct or point their thumb down if it is incorrect. You can vary this by having them stand if correct or sit if incorrect.
11. If problems do arise:
 - Ask these questions: Is the leader's attitude toward the Cubbies Christlike? Is a Cubbie receiving appropriate attention? When do the problems occur? Do you have the right ratio of leaders to Cubbies? Are you considering the limitations, tendencies and temperaments of Cubbies?
 - Always be consistent and fair. Take time to explain and instruct.
 - Keep in mind that there is always a reason for a Cubbie's behavior. Try to figure out the reason so you can minister to the Cubbie, thereby sharing God's love.