

Positive Guidance

Praise appropriately when children solve disputes or problems themselves. “Wow! You two really came up with a great way to share the book!”

Offer alternatives. “Would you like to look at these pictures with Adrian or play with the blocks while you wait for your turn for the puppets?”

Speak in a calm and kind voice. Your tone of voice alone can often diffuse a situation.

Involve your full attention to the classroom activities. Long conversations with other leaders are invitations for troubles as the children sense you are not paying attention to them.

Tell children often what they are doing right. “Thank you Eric, for letting Sam go first.”

Intervene before the problem escalates. Simply asking “Are you two doing okay?” usually prompts discussion of the situation before a yelling or pushing match ensues.

Verify the problem from the child’s perspective. “Do you think Tyler doesn’t like you?” or “I see that this is very frustrating for you.”

Explain rules clearly. “Hitting can hurt your friend. It will make Tina sad or angry, what else we can do to solve the problem.”

Give a child respect by going to them and explain what the problem is. Shouting to a child from across the room can be demeaning or counterproductive in solving the problem.

Understand preschooler’s abilities and characteristics. Unreasonable problem-solving expectations will result in frustration for both the child and the teacher.

Involve children in negotiating solutions to their conflicts. Ask them how they can help solve the conflict.

Dare to apologize when needed. Your example of humbleness speaks volumes to impressionable hearts.

Actively teach children to show kindness to one another. “Maybe Megan would like to draw with you? She loves to draw animals too!”

Note personality conflicts and carry out activities accordingly.

Come prepared to class prepared. You want to give children your full attention, not distracted by getting lessons ready when you should be teaching.

Eye contact is a quiet way of saying, “You have my attention. I notice you. I see what is happening. I am here to help.” Often conflicts between children can be avoided when they know that you are paying attention and are aware of what they are doing.