

Techniques for Creating a Positive Learning Environment

Positive Discipline and Behavior Guidance techniques increase self-esteem, develop social competence, and teach: decision-making and problem solving skills; friendship skills; respect for self, others and the environment; empathy; coping skills; and independence.

- State expectations in the positive, rather than saying “no” or “don’t.”
- Be specific: “Sit on your bottom and cross your legs like this,” rather than “Sit the right way.”
- Squat down or sit in order to speak with children at their eye-level whenever possible.
- Redirect inappropriate behavior before it escalates.
- Suggest appropriate alternative behavior. “You can make a tunnel with the sand like this,” or provide a substitution: “You are really wanting to throw – let’s throw beanbags instead.”
- Model appropriate behavior; follow the rules you have set for the children and provide modeling along with instruction.
- Give specific reason for limits whenever possible: “Hitting hurts,” rather than “It’s not nice to hit.”
- Point out natural consequences: “When you throw sand, it can get in your eyes.” Give out logical consequences. If a child throws sand on the floor, the child should be involved in cleaning it up.
- Provide choices whenever possible: “You may clean up the blocks or the vehicles.”
- Avoid terms that pass judgment such as “good” and “bad.”
- Label the behavior, not the child: “Hitting hurts,” rather than “Only naughty girls hit.”
- Provide warnings and follow through: “If you throw the sand again, I’ll have to ask you to find another place to play.”
- Provide appropriate praise and reinforcement to reinforce positive behavior: “I like the way you’re sharing the play dough.”

