

WVCDC PHILOSOPHY

Today's society seems to demand a two-worker household and as a result, childcare outside of the home has become a most important factor. Now, more than ever before, the dream of extraordinary, quality childcare is at the heart of every concerned, caring and responsible working parent.

Our philosophy is to focus on the child first and then build outward from there. Our methods of positive child development appear rather simplistic, but on closer examination one can see that they are well thought out.

We continue to value the statement "children's play is children's work." Adequate children's play ultimately leads to a productive and satisfying adult life and working career. An undue focus on achievement-oriented activities tends to thwart this natural outgrowth of play. One of the primary requirements of our staff is to have a comprehensive understanding of play and its relationship to learning.

The basis for our program may be summed up in a list of well-chosen words:

Acceptance	Nurturing	Facilitation	Respect
Encouragement	Conflict Resolution	Discovery	Empowerment
Choices	Discipline Reality		

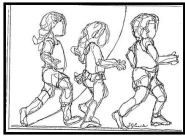
Let's discuss these concepts in more detail...

Acceptance:

This is one of the prime lessons one can learn about the developing child. He/she must be accepted for who he/she is. We must value their uniqueness as we value our own. Many times we do not consider ourselves as unique, but we are and we must strive to recognize each and every child's specialness. When this is accomplished, the child is well on his/her way toward self-actualization.

Nurturing:

Physical contact makes up a sizable part of nurturing. When we talk to children, it is at eye level conveying a warm and safe environment in which the child can express what is actually on his/her mind. We give lots of hugs, which reinforce the comfort of meeting eye to eye. Positive verbal reinforcements are also part of our nurturing procedure -- children, as well as adults, need this reinforcement to develop and sort out our lives. The response to negative verbal reinforcement is ineffective in the long run. We accomplish little when we are negative to our children and possibly doom them to a repetition of an unproductive behavior style. We also express forgiveness for actions, which upset us because of our pre-condition to certain situations or circumstances; we accept the situation for what it is and the context in which it takes place. We do not pre-judge – we are open to all possible avenues of cognitive thought.



WEST VANCOUVER CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

Facilitation:

Learning to be non-judgmental is absolutely necessary for facilitation – without it, we cannot hope to provide feedback on the children’s behavior which at all times must be accurate. We attempt to facilitate children’s understanding of themselves in order for them to continue any semblance of rational development needed to launch the child into a social structure where he/she can hope to be as productive as possible.

Respect:

It may be true that we as adults (a good deal of the time) could be more respectful of each other’s space and person. At least, we would all certainly admit that we would like to have the respect due us. This in turn must carry down to our children. We are definitely models (in every aspect) for our children. If we can respect them and their thinking, they can begin to learn respect for their peers, and in time this respect is certain to carry over into adult life.

Encouragement:

Children need encouragement all of the time in order for them to develop self-sufficient in regard to taking responsibility for themselves, their actions and their environment. We encourage them to use clear verbal communication to express their needs, feelings and frustrations (in their daily contact with their peers) and encourage them to be sensitive to other’s needs as well as their own.

Conflict Resolution:

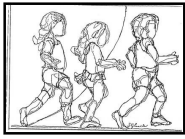
Children need to be schooled in the art of resolving their own conflicts. As caregivers, we try to remain as neutral as possible, allowing the children maximum opportunity to resolve their own differences. The caregivers will monitor the children to ensure and even exchange of ideas is occurring. When the caregiver observes a rising frustration level on either child or an uneven verbal exchange is occurring, they will then step in to offer alternative solutions. Children need to practice the fine art of conflict resolution so when they reach adulthood, they have already mastered this much needed skill.

Discovery:

We feel it is important to allow children to discover things for themselves. This increases the child’s sense of self-worth. One would be surprised at a child’s innate ability to discover and explore his/her world around him. Through discovery, a child will explore many avenues leading to self-learning.

Empowerment:

Children must feel that they have some quantity of power over their lives. It is our job as caregivers to help the child realize this is possible within means. When the child says “no”, we must find out the reason for the “no”. The child then learns that “no” is not just a word one uses casually, but that there is a concrete reason for using “no” and it is not to be used indiscriminately. Children must also listen to the “no’s” of their peers. When a child says “no” to his/her peer, that peer must learn to respect the “no”. In this way, the child realizes that he/she has power over: 1) their own bodies; 2) their own lives; and 3) their own environment. A child’s full growth and development follow more easily.



Choices:

Children should have as many choices as are feasible in their lives. Situations abound with alternatives – children must learn that they have them and how to use them. Once the child learns that he/she has choices, we, the caregivers, will stand ready to assist the him/her in appropriate selections.

Discipline Reality:

Discipline has always been a work that strikes fear in the hearts of many who really do not understand its use and attributes. Underlying our philosophy of discipline are two governing concepts: that the purpose of discipline is to teach – not to punish – and that the only kind of discipline worth striving for is self-discipline. The goal is for children to develop habits of self control, become cooperative (rather than competitive), and be considerate of the feelings of others and to respect the physical environment. An effort is made to accomplish this in a positive way rather than through criticism.

The maintaining of consistent, fair and appropriate limits are vital to all discipline and provide a sense of security for children. Children are fearful when they have too much power and no discipline. When problems arise, teachers act as facilitators – not dictators – identifying feelings and enabling children to come up with their own innovative solutions. The focus is on problem solving and not fixing blame. Reasoning is used when appropriate, i.e. “The toys have to be put away so we can find them tomorrow”; instead of, “because I said so.”

Explaining how a child’s behavior affects others is important, i.e. “John is upset because you pulled his hair.” Children are encouraged to express their feelings. All feelings are guided towards doing this in an acceptable way. Empathy for others also begins with understanding oneself.

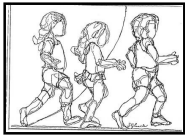
Children are empowered as they learn to resolve conflicts, take responsibility for their own actions and reduce their dependence on adult-imposed control. At no time will a child be struck, roughly handled or verbally abused as a discipline response.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Our discipline policy is based on the guidelines outlined in “A Step Ahead – Behaviour Management that Really Works”, provided and presented by L. Sheppard, M.A. Behaviour Consultant.

We acknowledge that:

1. Discipline is a learned process by which children develop socially acceptable and appropriate behaviour as they grow to maturity.
2. Each child is a unique individual.
3. Children’s behaviour reflects their development.
4. Children’s experience in their family and culture influences their behaviour patterns.

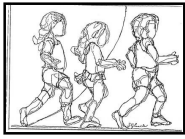


Our discipline strategies include:

1. Establish clear, consistent and simple limits.
2. Offer straight-forward explanations for limits.
3. State limits in a positive rather than a negative way.
4. Focus on the behaviour rather than the child.
5. Make statements of expectations rather than pose questions.
6. Allow time for children to respond to expectations.
7. Reinforce appropriate behaviour, both with words and gestures.
8. Ignore minor accidents provided that it does not become contagious or chronic.
9. Encourage children to see you as a resource.
10. Encourage children to solve problems as they arise.
11. Scan and observe children in their activities.
12. Gain a child's attention in a respectful way.
13. Use proximity and touch.
14. Remind children, clarify and reinforce limits.
15. Model problem-solving skills.
16. Re-direct the child to a more calming activity.
17. Use natural consequences (see following pages for more detail).
18. Use time out (see following pages for more detail).
19. Use logical consequences (see following pages for more detail).
20. Removal of privileges and activities (see following pages for more detail).
21. Use holding technique – used only when a child has lost all control or the ability to reason or is about to flee.

Natural Consequences

Natural consequences result “naturally” from inappropriate behaviour choices. Rather than intervening, the adult doesn't intervene. If a child chooses not to wear mittens outside on a cold day, the natural consequence of that decision is cold hands. Obviously, safety must be taken into account and children must be protected from decisions that would have dangerous or overly serious consequences.



Logical Consequences

Logical consequences are related to, or are fitting for, particular behaviours. Unlike natural consequences, logical consequences are imposed by the adult (i.e. a child who is pushing other children off a climbing toy is not allowed to play on that toy for the next 15 minutes).

Removing Privileges and Activities

Another consequence for more serious misbehaviours is the removal or withholding of privileges/activities. This can involve stopping the child from doing something right at the time, or withholding something yet to come.

The privilege/activity to be removed must be enforceable (i.e. not allowing a child to go on an outing is a poor consequence if there is no one available to supervise the child while the rest of the children go). Ideally, the consequence should not have a negative impact on others (i.e. not allowing a child to participate in a game may not be the best consequence if it means there will be too few players for the others to play).

Once again, it is important to ensure the consequence is appropriate for the age and abilities of the child, and that it is fair with respect to the seriousness of the behavior. We are explicit about what behaviour is being responded to, what privilege/activity is being lost, and for how long.

One does not lecture, sympathize, or focus on the incident. When the consequence is over, the child is allowed to continue with the privilege/activity.

Biting (Infant & Toddler Program)

Biting is a normal part of growth and development, through which oral exploration takes place.

When the staff observes a child starting to bite, then the staff will substitute a teething ring as an alternative source. In the event that a child bites another individual the staff will remove the child from the situation and tend to the injured party. The incident will be recorded in both of the children's daily log.