

Titan Tot Discipline Policy
(by Jenny Curtis)

In disciplining our students we use positive guidance. The following steps will be taken in order to assist children learn how to solve problems they encounter at preschool.

1. Modifying Instruction and Environment (as discussed in chapter 6)

When a behavior problem arises in the classroom, our first step is to modify the instruction and the environment. Often problematic behavior occurs because of something we, as teachers, have overlooked or miscalculated. For example, excessive restlessness or talking during rug time may be an indication that the instruction is inappropriate, either too boring or too advanced. Running in the classroom might be corrected by moving objects into running spaces, thereby breaking up open areas and lessening the temptation to run.

2. Modeling and Problem Solving (being an example)

If problems continue after teachers have done all they can by changing the environment or instruction, we move to modeling and problem solving. Because children are in the process of learning to interact with others, many of the situations they encounter in the preschool are foreign to them. Often times children act in inappropriate ways simply because they don't know how else to act. As teachers, we try to model correct behavior, so children can witness alternative behaviors. For example, if children are fighting over a popular toy, teachers might enter into play together and, loudly enough for the children to hear, model an appropriate problem-solving dialogue:

“May I use that block?”

“I'm using it right now, but I'll be sure to
give it to you when I am finished.”

Children often begin imitating the behavior modeled by adults as they seek to better understand social interaction.

We try to teach children that they have a right to use the toys in the preschool (assertiveness), but that it is important to consider the needs of others as well (peace making). We never tell children that they have to give a toy they are using to someone else; but we may establish guidelines for the use of popular toys:

“We'll sing the alphabet song and count
to twenty. Then it will be Anne's turn for
the cash register.”

In this way, we try to sensitize children to the needs of others, while acknowledging that their own needs are important as well.

3. Direct Instruction With Positive Statements (positive statements)

When direct instruction is necessary, we use positive statements. Instead of saying, “Stop running in the classroom,” we say, “Please, use your quiet inside

walking feet.” This accomplishes two things. First, children don’t feel a harsh rebuke in a positive statement, and second, a negative behavior is replaced with a positive one. Asking children to stop running gives them no idea of what our expectations are. The positive statement, on the other hand, tells them exactly what we expect—quiet walking.

4. Making Choices and Recognizing Consequences (choices)

In addition to positive statements, we present children with choices. For example, if a child refuses to come to the rug, we say, “You may walk to the rug, hop to the rug, or be carried to the rug.” Because all these choices are acceptable to the teacher, the child is truly free to choose as he wishes!

Ultimately, refusal to make choices or to do what the class is doing results in this choice:

“Would you like to join the class or sit outside alone with me? If you choose not to do what the rest of the class is doing, you choose not to be a part of the class and you miss out on the fun we are having.” It generally takes only a few seconds of waiting outside with teacher before a child chooses to rejoin his laughing classmates in their play.

Teachers stress to children that there are good choices and bad choices, and both have their consequences. Making good choices usually results in good things and good feelings, while making bad choices usually leads to unpleasant things and unhappiness.

We try to let natural consequences follow actions when doing so does not endanger the children. For example, if a child chooses to throw his food during snack time, he does not get to refill his plate from the serving bowl. In choosing to throw his food instead of eating it, he missed the satisfaction that might have come from a tasty treat.

5. No Physical Punishment (positive discipline)

If children are hurting themselves or others, or if they are being disruptive in the classroom, teachers may physically restrain them outside the classroom, but under no circumstances are children physically punished or verbally berated. Confidentiality is strictly observed and children’s feelings are respected.

If a child’s disruptive behavior is prolonged or becomes out of control, students may be isolated with a teacher and parents may be contacted.

In making decisions regarding discipline, we seek to foster the kinds of attitudes and habits conducive to a democratic society. Our discipline goal is not to train children to obey the adult in charge as quickly as possible, but rather to weigh options and make the choices they know will bring happiness and success to themselves and others around them. We hope to provide tools that enable our students to be effective leaders, not indifferent followers.