

Positive Guidance for Young Children: Be Thoughtful

Young children are learning to manage their behaviors and feelings. Your responses matter to children in these moments. Sometimes adults need to stop behaviors that are unsafe or extremely disruptive and help children understand how to behave appropriately. Here are some ways adults can help children:

Redirect behavior

Substitute a “can’t do” behavior for a “can do” behavior. If your child tends to draw on the walls, stock up on drawing paper and let her know where she can find it so she can draw when she’s interested. Encourage children to help think of “can do” behaviors to replace problematic ones.

Wait until the child is calm

Young children who are upset or excited may have a hard time listening to adults. Use calming strategies such as taking deep breaths. Talk about the problem after the child is calm.

Limit your response when possible

Children may act out because they want attention or to avoid a task or situation.

Consider overlooking behaviors such as whining, bad language, and tantrums when they will not harm the child or others. Focus on teaching children how to interact appropriately. This helps them to gain positive attention.

Organize to help children succeed

Sometimes children need help understanding our expectations. For

example, if clothes and toys are often left lying about, start using baskets and low hooks for easier cleanup.



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