

McCreary County Preschool Discipline Policy Statement

At our preschool, we believe that every child should feel safe, respected, and welcomed. It is built on a foundation of respect, understanding, and proactive support for every child's social and emotional development. We are committed to treating all children fairly and kindly, no matter their background, race, culture, ability, or family situation. We honor each child's unique strengths, backgrounds, cultures, identities, and experiences.

What Discipline is Not

We **do not allow corporal punishment** of any kind. This means:

- No hitting, spanking, shaking, or any form of physical punishment.
- No yelling, threatening, or embarrassing a child.
- Making a child feel that they are “bad.”
- Taking away or threatening to take away essential items or activities such as snacks, play time, recess, or rotation classes.

These actions are harmful and do not help children learn.

What We Do Instead

We use **positive guidance** to help children learn how to behave and solve problems. This includes:

- Teaching children how to talk about their feelings.
- Helping children learn to get along with others.
- Guiding children in the process of learning to work together to solve their problems.
- Giving children clear rules and reminding them often.
- Praising good choices and helping with tough ones.

When a child has a hard time, we stay calm, offer support, and teach them better ways to act.

Working Together

We believe that families are our partners. If your child is having behavior challenges, we will:

- Talk with you in a respectful way.
- Work together to come up with a plan that helps your child.
- Bring in extra help if needed, like a behavior coach or counselor.

We want you to feel welcome and included in all decisions about your child.

Being Fair to Everyone

We look closely at our discipline practices to make sure all children are treated fairly. We:

- We ensure discipline supports each child's growth, not punishes it.
- Watch for patterns that may affect some children more than others.
- We engage in positive behavior strategies.
- Use data to check if we are being fair across different groups of students.
- Work with families, professionals, and educators to make changes if we see a problem.

Our teachers and leaders are trained to use fair and respectful behavior strategies that support all children.

Our Promise

- **We will never use physical punishment.**
- **We will help children learn with kindness and support.**
- **We will work with families to help every child succeed.**
- **We will treat all children with fairness and respect.**

Our Approach to Challenging Behavior

We understand that challenging behaviors are a normal part of early childhood development. Our professionals are trained to view these behaviors not as defiance, but as opportunities for learning and growth.

We define **challenging behavior** as any behavior that:

- Interferes with a child's learning, development, and success at play.
- Is harmful to the child, other children, or adults.
- Puts a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure.

The Pyramid Model Framework

We utilize the **Pyramid Model** as our framework for Response to Intervention (RTI), promoting young children's healthy social and emotional development. This model emphasizes a tiered approach to support, ensuring that all children receive the guidance they need.

Tier 1: Universal Promotion of Social Development

We **set the stage for success** for all children by employing an effective staff, preparing high-quality supportive environments, and building and maintaining nurturing and responsive relationships. This **universal promotion of social development** includes:

- **Thoughtful Environmental Design:** Staff design the physical environment to minimize conflict.
- **Age-Appropriate Expectations:** Staff maintain age-appropriate expectations for children's behavior.
- **Attentive Observation and Supervision:** Adults closely observe and supervise children's activities and interactions.

Tier 2: Secondary Prevention Practices

Secondary prevention practices target social-emotional strategies to **prevent problems** from escalating. Adults provide explicit instruction and support by **modeling**

self-regulation and **coaching children to express and understand emotions**. Staff demonstrate that we can accept, manage, and communicate feelings in direct and non-aggressive ways. We want children to know, through our words and actions, that we are not fearful of their intense emotions and will not punish, threaten, or withdraw from them.

- **Positive Problem-Solving:** Staff help children describe problems, generate possible solutions, and think through the logical consequences of their actions.

Tier 3: Tertiary Interventions

Tertiary interventions provide **individualized support** for children with persistent challenges. Such interventions emphasize skill-building and include graduated behavior supports. General guidelines include:

- **Positive and Productive Guidance:** Guidance will always be positive, productive, and immediate when behavior is not in alignment with classroom expectations.
- **Safe and Supportive Temporary Relocation:** Children whose behavior endangers others will be temporarily supervised in a safe location within the indoor or outdoor classroom. Staff do not use seclusion or "time out" (the traditional chair in the corner). The intention of this intervention is for adults to support **co-regulation**. Staff will model and coach self-calming strategies. As the child appears ready, they will then process the problem with the staff member and any other concerned parties. Staff stay close to support emotional needs, ensure all children's safety, and prompt prosocial skills to support the child's successful reentry into play and learning.
- **Individualized Action Plans:** For children with persistent, serious, challenging behavior, teachers, families, and other professionals work as a team to observe, document, and **develop and implement an individualized action plan of graduated behavior supports** that will address the behavior and facilitate the child's inclusion and success.

