

Lake-Geauga United Head Start, Inc.
Behavior Management & Child Discipline Guide for
Parents

The following information is an explanation of Lake-Geauga United Head Start's behavior management strategies, our child discipline policy and your role as a parent in helping us to implement these strategies and manage your child's behavior.

Our Discipline Philosophy:

Lake-Geauga United Head Start, Inc. believes that discipline is a positive teaching opportunity. All of our staff members strive to establish a positive environment for your children that is safe, nurturing, respectful and accepting of children as individuals, and focuses on the development of the child's self-esteem. Head Start activities, materials and expectations take into consideration the individual child's developmental level. The focus of discipline is to deescalate a child's behavior and guide them to acceptable behavior. We expect our staff to use child guidance and behavior management techniques that are constructive and appropriate for the child's level of development. It will include such measures as redirection, separation from the problem situation, talking with the child about the situation, and praise for appropriate behavior.

Defining Problem Behaviors:

Unsafe and inappropriate behaviors may be an isolated incident or recurring. Behaviors that occur in the classroom can be classified in two ways: **Mild to Moderate and Severe.**

Mild to Moderate Behaviors: non-compliance, withdrawal, foul language, deliberate annoyances to staff and other children, running from the classroom or away from their class, spitting, and not being cooperative during transitions.

Severe Behaviors: physical aggression, severe verbal threats to other children or staff, bringing weapons to school, damaging property, sexual acting out towards themselves or others, and temper tantrums/ emotional meltdowns.

Preventative Measures:

It is important for parents to understand what measures our program takes to try to keep problem behaviors to a minimum. Here are some ways we do this:

Staff training: All Head Start staff receives regular training in child behavior and classroom management. Based on need, some staff members may receive more training than others. Staff members are provided with many resources and materials to support them in behavior and classroom management, including

an assigned Mental Health Consultant from Crossroads Health for their classroom that visits weekly. These consultants provide support and strategies for each classroom.

Specific classroom strategies:

Some very important strategies our staff uses to operate an orderly and safe classroom are:

- Scheduling activities that are both teacher and child directed and allowing children to do things they enjoy
- Have a variety of materials and activities that appeal to all children and their ability levels
- Arrange their classrooms in a way that is safe and attractive to the children and where they can easily supervise all areas of the room.
- Involve children in choosing topics and materials as much as possible
- Being planful about transitioning from one activity to another and entering/leaving the classroom
- Setting and defining limits. Our staff use a few simple rules stated in positive language:

- 1. Keep your hands and feet to yourself**
- 2. Follow your teacher's directions**
- 3. Use inside voices in the school**
- 4. Use kind words**
- 5. Use walking feet inside**
- 6. Be gentle-take care of yourself, others and school toys**
- 7. Stay with your class and teacher**

Direct strategies:

When staff needs to address a child's disruptive behavior directly, these are some of the strategies used:

- helping children problem-solve
- using praise when the child is behaving appropriately
- ignoring the behavior if it is not particularly disruptive to other children learning
- modeling appropriate behavior to the children
- redirecting the child to more desirable behavior. All staff are trained to use a technique called FLIP-It (ask your child's teacher for more details).
- stating the warning of consequences and following through with the consequences

-Quiet time-This isn't the same thing as time out. Each classroom has a designated area where a child can take time away from the noise and proximity to others to calm down and relax. They still have access to quiet activities (reading, writing, drawing, etc.)

-Staff members will not physically restrain your child unless they have received specific training to do so.

-Our contracted Mental Health Consultants will assess and monitor all children's behavior in the classroom and help the teaching staff develop and implement whole class and individual plans (when needed)

-LGUHS staff will do whatever is best for the child, including adapting their school schedule and time spent at school.

Your Role:

When efforts to get a child's, behavior are not successful at our level alone, your child's teacher will communicate the concerns to you and explain all of the strategies that have been tried. They will ask for your input, as you know your child the best and may have strategies that work for you at home. LGUHS staff understand that you are the expert on your child.

When a behavior hasn't been resolved despite the efforts of all Head Start staff, consultants, and any strategies suggested by you, the Site Administrator will call a meeting with you and other members of our staff and the Mental Health Consultant assigned to your child's classroom. The teaching team and consultant will bring all documentation of your child's behavior and all plans and strategies that were implemented to try to address the behavior to this point. At this meeting, a Behavior Intervention Agreement may be developed with you. The consultant may recommend additional out of school services for your child, or Head Start staff may recommend a referral to the local school system. These recommendations cannot be done unless we have your signed permission to do so. However, we will ask you to consider these options. If it's decided that an adaptation of the child's schedule is best (ie shorter school day), it is your responsibility to adhere to this change. The goal is to get the child to be back to participating for the full day as quickly as possible.

The parent is expected to sign the Behavior Intervention Agreement. This holds you responsible for taking the necessary actions required of you in the plan for **at least 2 weeks. It is very important that you follow through with what is being expected of you.** It will be crucial to your child's success. LGUHS staff will communicate with you during this time to check in and answer any questions or help with concerns. Staff may ask you for documentation of the attempts you are making to follow through with the strategies set forth in the plan. At the end of 2 weeks, LGUHS staff will make a determination of next steps. This could include leaving the plan in place as it is for a longer period of time, or revising the plan with different strategies. If a parent is not following through with what has been asked of them, the issue will be brought to the Executive Director for a decision regarding further action.