



GUIDANCE IN CLASSROOMS FOR CHILDREN IN CHILDHOOD

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ABSTRACT

Guidance is the art of leading somebody in the right direction. It also means to help somebody to learn something good. Children learn by what we say and the way we act. Guidance involves setting clear, consistent limits that have reasons and striving to foster self-esteem and independence. The needs of a child should be recognised and guidance should be provided accordingly. Guidance is not, however, letting a child "go free." The quest for adults is to be firm, fair, and friendly. Knowing the children with their temperaments and what developmental practices makes sense helps to guide and teach children. There are many methods that may be employed to positively guide young children. Many of the strategies described in this article are intended to help children "reclaim" their classrooms. Children are not objects that adults act on, but members of the community that deserve respect. The tiny

KEYWORDS :

The Definition of Guidance

Guidance is a generic term for all the helping services provided (ideally) by the counsellor to the individual in need of direction, instruction, guide or information to enable him or her understand himself, his world, his challenges/or opportunities as a way of leading meaningful life. Guidance is positive discipline. The word "discipline" comes from the Latin root *discipulus*, meaning pupil (American Heritage Dictionary, 1992). Simply put, guidance teaches fulfilling a child's needs. Children's needs have been classified in different ways by educational psychologists. According to Adegoke (2004) five fundamental needs of children

- (a) Need for status;
- (b) Need for security;
- (c) Need for affection
- (d) Need for independence
- (e) Need for competence

Guidance versus Punishment

Punishment is the opposite of guidance and can be problematic and abusive, both physically and verbally. For example, punishment often involves:

Physically hurting the child (such as hitting or pulling her arm); Showing the child how negative behavior feels (for example, hair pulling or biting); Humiliating the child (such as using group pressure); Never relenting (e.g., harping on old misbehaviors that cannot be undone); and Withdrawing affection from the child (Miller, 1996).

The expectations for punishment are rarely clear; they can be unrealistic, and they can often be harmful, hurtful, and arbitrary. In addition, punishment:

Stifles relationship building. The child often resents or avoids the adult who punishes her. This may lead to more punishment because the avoidance on behalf of the child angers the adult.

Does not Teach Self-Control. Without learning self-control, children may stop their "bad behavior" only while someone is punishing them, which does not typically suppress unacceptable behavior in the long run. The child will then "act up" when she does not think the punisher is watching.

Diminishes Self-Esteem and Fosters Disrespect. Different types of punishment, such as ridiculing, elicit feelings of irresponsibility and worthlessness in children (Purkey, 1978). In addition, children who are treated disrespectfully often act "in kind" and become resentful of the adults inflicting the punishment (Purkey, 1978).

Models Aggression. Through punishment, children learn that behaviors such as hitting and yelling are acceptable ways to resolve conflict.

Hinders Trust. Severe punishment may limit children's ability to trust and form positive relationships.

Strategies for Guidance

1. **Know the child.** Watching, listening, and learning about a child's temperament, interests, and learning styles often demystifies behavior and helps teachers guide the child. Teachers working with young children are extremely busy, but will nonetheless find it invaluable to take the time to learn and remember the uniqueness of each child. This enables teachers to greatly enhance the guidance they provide by respecting, responding, and building a relationship with each child.
2. **Be honest.** Sometimes teachers "tweak the truth" to expedite issues. For example, a teacher may tell a child that a toy is broken just to keep the child from playing with the toy. This kind of "quick fixes" will most likely make guidance and trust harder in the long run.
3. **Be Kind and "Save Face."** Young children get embarrassed when they think they have done something wrong. The teacher should be discreet and gentle, yet firm and consistent, when guiding young children. The goal is to make sure children know they are being guided not reprimanded.
4. **Making Verbal and Nonverbal Messages Agree.** The teachers should not give incongruent message. It is important to be aware that your tone and body language fit your words.
5. **Show Respect.** Showing the child respect will help her know she is being guided not punished. The following three tactics will help: 1) Move to the child, instead of calling over to her; 2) Squat or kneel to her level; and 3) Look kindly into her eyes.
6. **Redirect.** When an issue arises, it is sometimes beneficial to avoid a struggle with the child by directing his attention elsewhere. This strategy is very successful with children.
7. **Use Humor.** Most children respond to adults' joy. How can you tap into this joy to help guide children? It is not appropriate to laugh at a child, however, it is appropriate to laugh at a situation with a child. For example, if a toddler starts using peanut butter as a hand moisturizer, the adult may smile at the connection the child is making. In this case, it is important to remind the child that if she wants to rub something on her hands, she should use lotion, not peanut butter.
7. **Allow Natural Consequences.** A natural consequence is when an action happens and the natural outcome is what guides the child. For example, if a child breaks all her crayons she will have to make do with broken crayons. It is important to make sure the outcome is safe and does not impact the child's needs. For instance, if a child is learning to use a toilet and soils her pants, it would be punitive to make her stay in dirty clothing.
8. **Logical Consequences.** As mentioned above, sometimes it is not appropriate to let natural consequences serve as the guide. It might be beneficial to think of a logical consequence. For example, a four-year-old continuously takes out the blocks and leaves them all over the floor. A logical consequence might be

that the child is not allowed to play in the block area during the next activity time.

9. **I-Messages.** There are three parts to an I-message: 1) Define the behavior in a non-blaming manner; 2) State the tangible effect of the behavior; and 3) Clarify how the behavior makes you feel (Gordon, 1977). Gordon (1977) found that when children did not feel attacked, and realized what the adult was feeling they stopped the negative behavior.
10. **Work with the Children.** Older preschoolers and school-age children can be active participants in rule setting: 1) Children may discuss the reasons for the rules; 2) Children may describe the behaviors covered (e.g., we walk in the classroom so no one gets hurt by bumping into the furniture); and 3) Older children may help with the decision making for the rules (Evertson, Emmer, Clements, and Worsham, 1994). The benefits of brainstorming with children are multiple: It builds community, encourages ownership, increases responsibility, helps them understand the reasons behind the rules, and encourages them to solve problems.
11. **Establish "One-Way" Communication.** One-way communication occurs when someone informs another person of something (Sussna Klein & Miller, 2002). A teacher informing a child of appropriate behavior is an example of one-way communication. Two key components to clearer one-way communication are keep the message short and avoid overusing the word "no." When children hear long, lengthy commands they often "tune out." In addition the word "no" is so overused that it is rarely effective. Instead of "no running," for example, the child hears "running." Thus, the expectation is more clear when the desired behavior is accentuated. So instead of saying "no running" say "walk."
12. **Be an Active Listener.** Active listening supports the congruency of verbal and nonverbal messages and builds two-way communication. Two-way communication occurs when there are interactions between children and adults (Sussna Klein & Miller, 2002). According to Gordon (1977) active listening is exactly what it implies – listening actively – and involves really tuning into what the other person is saying in a nonjudgmental manner and giving supportive (yet neutral) feedback (such as nodding your head or repeating what they have said) to encourage the person to keep communicating. If children can express what they are feeling, adults have clues to guide their behavior.
13. **Evaluate the Environment.** Look at your room set-up. Are spaces clearly delineated? Is there too much open space, which may invite running? Or, is there not enough space for children to move around without bumping into each other? There are five factors according to Beatty (1999) for creating a physical environment that promotes guidance: 1) Arrange areas for children to access and use with ease; 2) Provide enough materials for the children; 3) Give children adequate amount of time with materials and activities; 4) Set up ways for children to self-regulate (e.g., hooks for nametags that will limit the number of children in an area); and 5) Provide a model for the children (e.g., try and treat children like you would visiting a friend and helping her clean – don't just barge into their areas).
14. **Give Choices.** Giving choices will help solve conflicts. This only works, however, when you keep in mind that too many choices are confusing. Making choices is one of the best ways for a child to develop a sense of autonomy (Crosser, 2003). The opportunities to make a choice gives these young children a chance to be independent and helps their need to have a feeling of control (Crosser, 2003).

Conclusion

The quest for adults is to be firm, fair, and friendly. Knowing the children you are working with (e.g., their temperaments) and what developmental practices make sense helps you guide and teach children. There are many methods that may be employed to positively guide young children. The guidance given builds a fundamental foundation that will help children develop a strong, healthy self-esteem and independence.

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