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Child Guidance Philosophy

Social emotional development of toddlers is a child’s sense of self and of others. Toddler’s environment directly effects their development. Throughout emotional development toddlers are experiencing self-concept (child’s sense of self), identity (children’s idea about their place in the world), social competence (children’s ability to navigate social situations) and emotional expression (children’s ability to express feelings and understand behaviors).

 We know that toddlers are developing when they develop attachments to primary caregivers. When they demonstrate awareness of self and of their own abilities. Toddlers will also be able to acquire a sense of belonging. They will increasingly explore people, places and things. Toddlers will be able to recognize similarities and differences between people. Toddlers will show empathy by responding to social and emotional cues. Toddlers will be able to communicate a vast array of needs. Toddlers will be exploring emotions and their impact on self and others.

 There is a significant difference between traditional punishment and guidance. “Traditional punishment diminishes self esteem, loss of enjoyment to learning, and negative feelings towards self and others (7).” Traditional punishment is made public and guidance is a learning experience. Mistaken behavior is behavior that occurs but is completely natural. The mistaken behavior is part of the developmental process. As an educator it is our job to help guide children through their development. There are three levels of mistaken behavior, strong needs, socially influenced and experimentation mistaken behavior.

 When children are experiencing level three which is the strong needs area they may feel that the environment they are in is “dangerous and or painful.” The behavior patterns in this level tend to be “rigid and exaggerated (12).” The children continue the same behaviors in new situations because they want to protect themselves. In order for this child to progress the teacher must develop a relationship with the child built on trust. The teacher can support the child by intervening non-punitively, working to build a strong relationship, observation, seek more information through conversation with the child, and other adults as well as parents/guardians, create a coordinated individualized guidance plan and implement the plan (13). Mistaken behavior level three is typically a reflection of what is going on in the child’s life. A teacher may not be able to change those circumstances but she/he can provide a comfortable place at school where the child knows that they are safe and welcome.

Level two socially influenced mistaken behaviors are when children are seeking the teachers/adults approval. These children may say “I can’t do it right” they entice other children and adults to do it for them. These children lack self esteem and strength to respond to these situations on their own. Level two behaviors are learned, reinforced unintentionally or intentionally by other people in the child’s life. The teacher needs to observe the situations before she handles the situation. She/he must differentiate between a single child or a group of children. If it is a group of children a class meeting where the teacher discusses the problem with the class may be effective. The class works together to come to a solution. If the situation only involves one child the teacher handles the situation in a private manner with the child. She/he speaks firmly but friendly explains the behavior is unacceptable and states what would be a better option. The teacher follows up with the child making sure to give compliment sandwiches when needed. By the teacher helping guide the children she/he is encouraging the development of life skills.

Level one experimental mistaken behavior is when children are learning through their experiences. At times mistaken behaviors start off at level one but then progress to level two or three. All behaviors have a motivation behind them. It is in the teacher and the child’s best interest to understand what these motivations are. If the teacher understands the motivation she/he can accurately establish how react or not to react simply observe.

When I get frustrated with a child’s behavior this book has taught me to step back and remember that this is part of the child’s development. The Power of Guidance has taught me that there are motivations behind behaviors and if you dig down deep enough such as building a trusting relationship with the child you may encourage positive behavior. However, keeping in mind that mistaken behavior is going to happen but you can guide the child(ren). I agree with everything that Gartrell had to say. I would love to learn more and or witness him in a classroom setting. So that I could see how this technique is carried out.

 Group management is handled in a positive way in Blue Horses. My cooperating teacher will talk to the children on their level. When another child hurts another she may say Bob you hurt Sarah. She is unhappy look at her face. If a child is having a hard time keeping their bodies to themselves she may ask them if they would like time to go sit in the chair. The chair is located in a nook of the room where the children can go and collect their thoughts. Transitions are managed according to the personalities of the children in the class. Often times my cooperating teacher will invite the children to help her clean up the room before they transition to gross motor time. For snack time the children clean up and wash their hands a song is sung to hand washing. The children enjoy hearing the song and often come running over to wash when they hear the song. My cooperating teacher prevents behavior by providing many materials; developmentally appropriate activities and being present throughout. When we go to the gym she makes sure that there are a lot of balls located in the gym so that there will be no fighting over balls. My teacher tries to prevent challenging behavior before it happens. However, sometimes it does happen and she handles in a positive reinforcement way. She will try to redirect child attention and or make it known what that the behavior is not okay.

 The gym challenges me when the toddlers are with the older toddlers. However, when the younger toddlers are in the gym with the 9-18 month olds it does not challenge me as much. The children take on different roles depending on the age group they are with. When they are with the older toddlers they tend to be more aggressive and wild. When they are with the 9-18 months old they tend to be calmer and they are the protector of the “babies”. The energy level is completely different when they are with older toddlers. They tend to fight over bikes more and more injuries occur. With the 9-18 months they tend to play more. They interact with one and another. Another challenging aspect of the day for me is hand washing time. The song will encourage most of the children to come over to the sink however, not all. Then you have problems with the children standing in line bumping, grabbing and touching each other while they are waiting their turn to wash their hands. This time of day seems to be hectic and problematic for me. The Power of Guidance has taught me that it is all part of their development.

**Bibliography**

Gertrell, D. (2004). *The Power of Guidance* (pp. 6-18). Washington: Delmar Cengage Learning.

**Child Guidance Philosophy**

In order for children to develop naturally and flourish they need to be in a setting that is safe, warm and inviting. Children need to feel welcome in their home away from home. In order to support children’s development I will provide a classroom of developmental appropriateness from the toys to the activities. Providing children with various developmentally appropriate activities that touch on the individual interests of the children encourages learning. Mistaken behaviors will be handled in an appropriate way that encourages growth. If the behavior is a group behavior I will conduct a group meeting where we discuss the behavior and we will come to a solution as a group. We are a classroom community will be a strong emphasis in my classroom. Each child will be welcome and their individual characteristics will be valued. We will encourage families and different cultures in my classroom one way in particular children’s family photos will be hung up. This will help encourage diversity but still unifying us as one. If the mistaken behavior is a single child it will be handled in a private manner. The child will know that the behavior is not appropriate and I will let him and or her know what is appropriate. I will observe the children in my classroom providing enough toys and materials so fighting over a truck should not be a problem. When conflict arises I first observe to see if the children can work out the problem together if needed I may probe questions helping the children come to a solution on their own. Children will be guided to learn strategies on how to solve conflicts themselves. Each child will be respected and valued in my classroom. The children will have responsibilities such as jobs line leader, door holder etc… this encourages belonging. I will be actively observing throughout the day with the children watching to see if I am needed to help support the children. This leads to the development of life skills.