



Behavior Policy

“Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.” **Proverbs 11:25**

So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. **1 Corinthians 3:7**

Behavior Policy

The goal of everything we do at IOF Kids is to provide an environment where we connect with God and grow together in Christ. In short, none of that can happen in a chaotic, unsafe environment. We teach children that they are safe and well cared for when we provide an environment that is consistent and trustworthy.

Consistency in people and routines allows children to relax. It removes the question of “What happens next?” and “Do I need to worry?” A consistent behavior policy teaches children they can trust the adults caring for them. When we respond in the same manner over and over again, it allows a child to anticipate what is coming next. It increases engagement and independence. It also sends a very strong message: “You can believe what I say. You can trust me.” When building a trusting relationship with a child, we are setting the foundation for further trusting relationships. Most importantly, it is building the foundation for a trusting relationship with their heavenly Father. If a child learns to trust a person they can see, they have the best opportunity to trust a God they can’t see.

We want our children to understand what it means to love others as Christ has loved us. That means thinking of others first, listening to others, helping others, sharing with others, etc.

Consequences

1. Child will be verbally or non-verbally corrected/reminded in a loving manner when behavior disrupts classroom activities and ministry.
2. Child will be pulled aside for a private conversation and prayer in view of other adult in classroom.
3. If behavior persists to the degree that it is disrupting the classroom overall, parents will be notified in the service and will need to come to the child’s classroom immediately.

4. If a child causes physical harm in any way to another child in their classroom, parents will be notified in the service and will need to pick up their child from the child's classroom immediately.

When a child's parent is summoned to the room, staff may ask the parents to:

1. Discuss the situation/behavior with their child inside or outside of the classroom.
2. Come into the classroom for 5-10 minutes to re-acclimate the child to the group.
3. Check the child out from the class. They are invited to participate in the service from the foyer.

IOF Kids staff and Volunteer's strive to show Christ's love to children in all situations, including the way we discipline the children in our care. The following are some recommended guidelines for child discipline. The director can assist in this area and offer ideas and advice for specific concerns. Praying for your students outside of class will make a difference during class.

1. Never touch any child in a disrespectful manner or make derogatory remarks.
2. Always use good judgment and allow the Holy Spirit to guide your actions when correcting or counseling a child.
3. Corporal punishment is NEVER allowed at any time for any reason.
4. Appropriate discipline methods include redirection of behavior, praising and reinforcing positive behavior, a brief time out, prayer, a teacher-to-child chat, or a restriction of class privileges.
5. When counseling a child, always do so in an open area in view of other screened Volunteer's or staff.
6. The only acceptable time to physically restrain a child is when you believe a child is attempting to do bodily harm to himself or another child.
7. Providing opportunity to engage in the right thing often eliminates the desire for the participating in wrong thing.
8. State directives in the positive. (Ex.: "Johnny, can you show me how to build a house with those blocks?" Instead of, "Johnny, stop banging those blocks".

9. Pray for children in your care.

Sample Prayer for a child:

Dear Lord Jesus, I thank you so much for _____. I know that you made her/him and she/he is so precious to you. Thank you for bringing _____ to church this morning. Please forgive us for our actions that hurt you and our friends. I thank you that you have made _____ with her/his special talents. I am so glad that she/he is part of our class.

Sample Prayer for a class:

Dear Lord Jesus, I thank you for the opportunity to be with these students. Lord, we ask for your Holy Spirit to be here with us today, to bring peace and joy to our class. I thank you that we have this time together and we ask that what we do today would be pleasing to you. Help us to learn from each other and to become the men and women you want us to be.

Tips for Guiding and Correcting Behavior: Prevention and Intervention

PREVENTION

- Think 4:1. Spotlight a child's good behavior, using a ratio of 4:1 - Four praises for every 1 correction. Reinforced behavior tends to continue. Remember, however, that even negative reinforcement is still reinforcement. If a child receives attention only when he behaves poorly, he will behave poorly most of the time. When a child behaves well, say so. Notice and name specific positive behaviors. "I noticed you put all the blocks back into the basket. You were very helpful."
- Communicate your expectations. Follow the schedule so that the kids know what to expect. Be aware of what is going on at all times so that you can be preventative. Everything you do should let the kids know that they are in a safe, structured, predictable environment. You are watching and in control.

- Use proximity. Position yourself strategically so that you are close to children who are displaying undesired behaviors. Sometimes, you may need to position yourself in between certain children.
- Avoid being hurried or hurrying a child. A hurried child is usually a frustrated child, and a frustrated child will typically demonstrate that with his/her overt behavior. With young children, keep everything simple. One activity done well is always better than two rushed activities.
- Use non-verbal communication to your advantage. Instead of always using your voice, use your face and hands to give guidance. A smile, a pat, or a hug provides positive reinforcement of desired behavior. A raised eyebrow or a shake of the head can often stop misbehaviors before they get out of hand.

INTERVENTION

- When correcting negative behavior, discuss the action, not the child. Offer an alternative action to correct/redirect the behavior. Speak in a low, kind, but firm, voice while kneeling down to the child's level. "We are not allowed to throw toys. Someone might get hurt and that would be so sad. Blocks are used for building. Can you show me how to build a house?" This language accepts the child, but rejects the negative behavior. It also extends an invitation of what to do, instead of only correcting what not to do.
- Separate the child from the group and talk/pray with them. This serves multiple purposes: helps them reflect, calms them down, prevents escalation and humiliation, etc. When you bring the child back in to the group, relocating that child may be helpful. Find a new group of kids, toys, etc. Try to keep that child close to you.
- Contact parents by texting them if necessary.

Communicating with Families

Think about the plans God has for each child & family, and our commitment as a church. Let this be a guide to effectively communicate with parents. We want to be gracious, tactful, loving, and mindful of tone and facial expressions. We want to

give helpful information and be honest when it's necessary. Some things are only worth sharing if the parent asks explicitly. If the child was tired or irritable, it's probably not helpful to tell the parent at pick-up. Instead, focus on what was learned or something that happened that day. "We learned about..." "We got to play..." If a child is defiant or disruptive, it is necessary to share this with the parent. "We had difficulty (following the teacher's directions, respecting our friends' learning, etc.)." You may give specific examples. If necessary, share our behavior policy and explain that in the future, the parent may be called to talk or sit with their child. Do not attach emotion or advice to this. Do not portray that you were frustrated or that the behavior is related to the child's character. Remember, we exist to love and support families.

Bathroom Policy

Children are to be escorted to the bathroom in groups. Adults are never to be one-on-one with a child. Children are never to be one-on-one with each other

- In the toddler and pre-K groups bathrooms are located in the room
- In the K-5th grade group, staff will stand outside the door and monitor as 3+ children of the same gender go to the bathroom.
- Never close a stall door when helping a child in the bathroom. If they need help, simply use your body to prop the door open but block plain view.

Following these guidelines, will provide the consistency in the classroom needed to plant and water what God will grow.

Please feel free to reach out to the IOF Kids director if you have any questions or concerns with this policy.

Saved to serve,

Tracey Babich