

# Developmentally Appropriate Guidance: The Basics

You play an essential role in guiding children to make safe choices and learn strategies for navigating their environment, interacting with peers, and managing emotions. Here are some considerations based on context and developmental level.

**Are your expectations consistent?** Refer to your program rules when guiding children's behavior and social interactions. Ensure the messages are consistent. Examples include:

*Be kind to others. Take care of our space. Be safe.*

**How much support does the child need?** Consider how developmental level may impact whether children need additional support and skill building to meet your expectations.

**Is the child dysregulated?** Use simplified, direct language with children experiencing big feelings. Once you support the child to calm, you can refer to program rules and what would be acceptable next time.

## Infants and toddlers

Use simple phrases to remind children of what is acceptable. Infants and toddlers will likely only focus on the last three words you say. Examples include:

*Feet on the floor.*

*Gentle hands.*

*Walking feet.*

## Preschoolers

Use one to two sentences to remind children of what is acceptable. Refer to program expectations for why it is acceptable. Examples include:

*You may build with the blocks. We take care of our materials.*

*We use walking feet inside. Be safe.*

*You may ask for a turn.*

*We use kind words.*