

Positive Guidance

Relevant Satellite Accreditation Standards

III. The Daily Program for Children

I. The provider has clear and consistent expectations and uses positive techniques for guiding children's behavior and helping them develop self-control.

3. The provider uses appropriate positive approaches when guiding a child's behavior.



The Basics

Educators play an essential role in guiding children to make safe choices and learn strategies for navigating their environment, interacting with peers, and managing emotions. Positive guidance, when educators tell children what *is* acceptable rather than what *is not* acceptable, supports children's social and emotional development and behavior.

Why use positive guidance techniques? Positive guidance is an effective strategy for redirecting behavior, solving social problems, and supporting educator-child relationships. Directive can-do statements, such as, "You may drive the cars on the floor," and "You may ask him for a turn," provide children with the information needed to follow directions, remain safe, and achieve self-directed goals (Berube et al., 2019). Positive guidance also supports children's self-regulation. Children learn to identify and manage emotions when adults use emotion language and model regulation strategies, such as, "You are mad. When we are mad, we can take a deep breath." Research shows when educators focus on positive behavior and reinforce expectations, offering behavior specific praise and encouragement, children's behavior improves (Cavanaugh, 2013). Furthermore, implementing more positive statements than neutral, corrective, or negative statements improves children's engagement, relationships, and positive self-esteem (Caldarella et al., 2020).

How do I incorporate positive guidance strategies?

- ❖ Remain calm. When able, pause before responding to detect if intervention is needed. Young children rely on calm adults to organize their emotions and offer verbal and nonverbal support.

- ❖ Label children's emotions or self-directed goal as a demonstration of empathy and respect. For example, "You are sad. You want a turn with the magnet board."
- ❖ Use positive can-do statements with safe, acceptable choice-based alternatives. For example, if a child is throwing blocks, the educator could say, "You may build with the blocks or you may throw balls over here. Which will you choose?"
- ❖ Teach children expectations and emotional regulation skills in fun, playful ways when they are calm. For example, practice taking breaths, discuss book character's emotions and behavior, describe your emotions and techniques to regulate, and problem solve common conflicts with puppets.

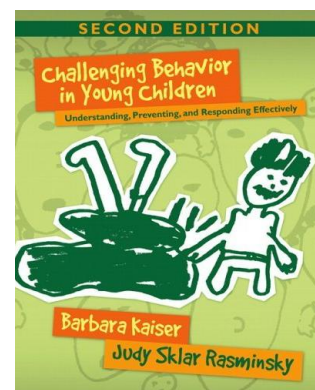
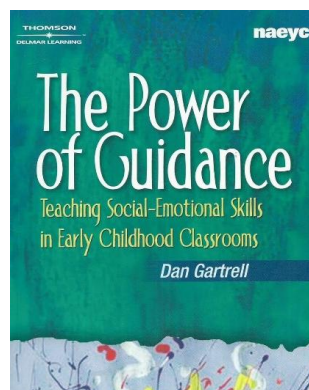
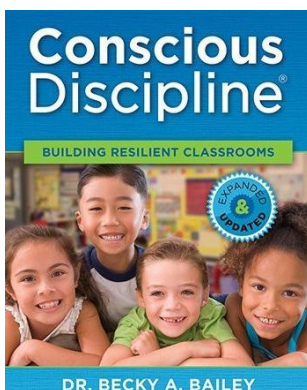
I want to learn more!

- [Planning for Positive Guidance: Powerful Interactions Make a Difference](#)
- [Positive Guidance for Young Children: Be Thoughtful](#)
- [How to Give Clear Directions](#)
- [Considerations for Working with Children who Have Experienced Trauma](#)
- [How to Use Positive Language to Improve Your Child's Behavior](#)

Books available through Satellite's lending library:

(for Satellite participating programs only)

- Conscious Discipline: Building Resilient Classrooms (Bailey, 2015)
- The Power of Guidance: Teaching Social-Emotional Skills in the Early Childhood Classroom (Gartrell, 2004)
- Challenging Behavior in Young Children, Understanding, Preventing, & Responding Effectively (Kaiser, 2006)



This resource is available to you through Satellite Family Child Care System, a YoungStar Connect Partner.