Early Childhood Division- Pre-K

Standard Operating Procedure

1. *Area of Focus - CHILD GUIDANCE and DISCIPLINE*

2. Scope

Ensure child safety and quality development and outcomes by employing positive child guidance and discipline strategies with children in classrooms and on the playground. To execute positive child guidance techniques to help children develop trust, social/emotional skills, and self-regulating behavior that will enable them to communicate effectively and be socially competent.

3. Prerequisites

NA

4. Responsibilities

Teacher
Teacher Assistant
School Principal
Center Manager/Director
Instructional Advisor
ERSEA Manager
Education Director
Behavior Specialist
Health Services Advisor

5. Procedure

M-SCS Early Childhood Division sites maintain classrooms in which each child can feel secure and comfortable while learning. Teachers' methods facilitate the development of children's self-discipline and socialization skills.

To plan for and facilitate quality child guidance and discipline, teachers:

1. Arrange classrooms that are comfortable, interesting, and encourage children's self-direction.
2. Help children express their emotions verbally, and through art and play.
3. Allow children to resolve their own conflicts when possible.
4. Model and teach children strategies for solving interpersonal conflicts, like negotiation, compromise, and empathy.
5. Help children learn to anticipate logical consequences for their behaviors.
6. Involve children in cooperative projects.

Documents: *(Child Guidance & Discipline*) SOP short-form

7. Assist children in setting clear, consistent, fair limits for classroom behavior.

Because it's against regulation and contrary to promoting self-discipline, appropriate or improved behavior and sound self-esteem in children, teachers do not:

- Inflict physical pain. Suspected child abuse should be reported to the Department of Children's Services.

- Name-call, shout, threaten, ridicule, or any other similar behavior.

- Isolate children (see clarification in Definitions section).

- Send a child to the office, except in serious cases. Teachers can request assistance from the office, health service/instructional advisors, behavior specialists, or other staff, as needed, when children's behavior is serious. As noted at the end of this procedure, some children need additional help and cannot function in the group/classroom setting without it, so the M-SCS Early Childhood Division Disabilities/Mental Health Referral procedures are implemented to provide teaching staffs and children with the support needed.

- Impose cumulative or delayed consequences.

Classroom Arrangement

All teacher, assistant, behavior specialist, health/instructional advisor, and coach teams make sure the classroom is set up so that children:

- Can walk freely from one area to another as they play

- Find activities that are stimulating, orderly, and organized; teaching staff watch for signs of over-stimulation in children, analyze possible causes and adjust accordingly

- Are comfortable and secure

- Have ample open-ended and soothing daily activities, such as the water table, play-dough, clay, easel painting, etc.

Classroom Schedule and Rules

All classroom schedules follow the M-SCS Early Childhood Division template and:

- Allow ample outdoor or indoor gross motor play

- Allow movement such that children are not required to sit still and listen for periods longer than would be expected for their age

- Follow predictable routines, minimizing down time

- Include large and small group activities that are interesting to the children and suitable for their ages

All teaching staff posts a list of a few simple, specific rules in the classroom and review and reinforce them with children. Rules are individual by classrooms and relate to how individuals treat each other, how materials are treated in the classroom, maintaining a clean learning environment, appropriate and respectful oral communication, safety, etc.

Documents: *(Child Guidance & Discipline)* SOP short-form

Early Childhood Division- Pre-K

Child Guidance Techniques

The following strategies are used by staff, including contractors, to promote our young children's development.

1. Six steps of conflict resolution:
   a. Monitor the situation to see if children will work out the issue themselves.
   b. Move near the area; proximity of the teacher may prompt children to solve the issue.
   c. Use the child's name, make eye contact and get down on their level. Calmly say: "Tell me what's happening."
   d. Restate what has happened.
   e. Facilitate a solution.
   f. Decide if it is appropriate to talk about the issue.

2. Maintain developmentally appropriate expectations. Set clear, consistent limits that allow children to develop self-regulating behaviors. Review classroom and safety rules and post them in the classroom.

3. Model appropriate behaviors.

4. Anticipate children's behavior to give children any additional support they may need, especially at the start of the school/program year and during transitions.

5. Intervene immediately to stop behaviors that are unsafe, destructive or when children are unable to solve problems on their own.
   a. Follow up with predetermined meaningful redirection.
   b. Offer different levels of assistance according to each child's individual needs, skill levels and temperaments.

6. Use a process of observing, anticipating and redirecting children's behavior before it becomes a problem.

7. Assist children to develop age-appropriate skills for solving issues.

8. Use books, stories, puppets, and other experiences to reinforce positive social behaviors.

9. Model respect for feelings and rights of others. Avoid language that passes judgment.

10. Use dramatic play to assist children in identifying and addressing their feelings.

11. Collaborate with parents about child-rearing practices that support the child and that bridge the home and school/center environments to provide consistency for the child.

12. View situations from the child's perspective.

Some Examples and Suggestions to Try

- If a child misuses a toy, he or she is reminded of the pertinent rule, e.g., "We can't splash water because it gets the floor wet;" "We can't throw toys because they could hit and hurt somebody." The child may be removed immediately from area, e.g., water table, blocks, etc. and told to find another area to play in.

Documents: *(Child Guidance & Discipline)* SOP short-form

- If two children argue, teachers first observe to give them a chance to work things out for themselves. If the argument escalates, teachers intervene and tell them, "Wait - stop arguing. We need to solve this problem." Teachers provide them with some things to think about and say such as
  - ✓ "What can you do if you both want the same toy?"
  - ✓ "Elena, you could say: 'Can I play with this now?' or 'Can I play with you?' Cecelia, you could say: 'Not yet, but when I'm done.' or 'You can play with me if you will be the baby.'"
  - ✓ "Elena, what else can you do if you can't play with this toy right now? Can you play blocks for a while and then come back? Can you ask Cecelia to bring you the toy when she is done?"

- If children hurt others, tell them emphatically, "No, you cannot hurt other people here and other people are not allowed to hurt you."
  - ✓ Comfort the hurt child; acknowledge his or her feeling of being hurt. Get another teacher to help if necessary.
  - ✓ Remove the first child to another part of the room; listen to his or her feelings and help them express their feelings. Briefly explain the consequences of his or her actions and tell them other ways to express anger, such as when you are so angry, just say: "Leave me alone!" or "I am so mad!" or "That's not fair!" etc.

- If a child doesn't pick up his or her toys before leaving an area, get the child and guide them back to the area, and tell them to pick up the toys before he or she can do something else. The child may need a little help getting started, if there are too many, or he/she may need help completing a puzzle so it can be stored.

- If a child disturbs the others, stands up, or interrupts the conversation during group time:
  - ✓ Allow the child to walk about the room and play quietly, as long as they don't disturb the group or individuals
  - ✓ Let the child look at a book or play with a small toy
  - ✓ Sit next to the child or hold on your lap
  - ✓ Bring the child into the conversation by asking an open-ended question; or
  - ✓ Ask the child and the whole group if there is something else they would like to talk about; try to accommodate their topics and work them into the lesson

Note. When all positive child guidance strategies do not work, refer to the M-SCS Early Childhood Division Disabilities/Mental Health Referral procedures. Some children need additional help beyond typical child guidance and classroom management.

6.   References

- ➤ Head Start Performance Standards Subpart D- Health Program Services 1302.45 and 1302.46
- ➤ Shelby County Schools Board of Education Policy 6022 Student Conduct
- ➤ TN Department of Education Standards for School Administered Childcare Programs 0520-12-01-.09 section 5(a)(b); 0520-12-01-.14
- ➤ Voluntary Pre-K Scope of Services, F

Documents: (*Child Guidance & Discipline*) SOP short-form

- ➢ Instructional Schedules and Checklist
- ➢ Big Day Child Behavior Log
- ➢ Playground Plan
- ➢ Bathroom Plan
- ➢ Behavior Health Referral Packet
- ➢ Early Childhood Initial Comprehensive Walkthrough Form

7. *Definitions*

- ➢ **Isolation** related to this policy refers to removing children away from the classroom where they would be alone. It does not prohibit moving children from the group within the classroom to the 'cozy corner,' 'book nook,' or other area, as appropriate to their behavior and the functioning of the group.

- ➢ **Use of food as a reward or punishment** related to this policy refers to withholding meals or snacks based on children's behavior. It does not prohibit **classrooms** from earning a popcorn or pizza party or other event for attendance or some other criteria, based on a school's or center's practice. It would prohibit denying an individual child's participation in such event based on their behavior.