

This booklet has been provided to acquaint you with Creek Day School's program and philosophy, and also to serve as a reference for you regarding our policies. Please read it carefully and keep it to refer to in the future. If you have any questions, we will be happy to answer them.

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SECTION I

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ADMISSION TO THE CENTER

The center is operated on a non-discriminatory basis, according equal treatment and access to services without regard to race, color, creed, political persuasion, handicap, or national origin.

ELIGIBILITY POLICY

Creek is licenses to serve a maximum of 35 children ages 18 months through 8 years of age.

ENROLLMENT POLICY

Parents are requested to make an appointment with the Director prior to enrolling their child at Creek. At this time, parents will receive the necessary enrollment materials and have an opportunity to view the center.

REGISTRATION FEE

The registration fee is required for each child for enrollment and re-enrollment in the Center. The fee is not refundable.

COMMITMENT FEE

A commitment fee of one week's tuition is a down payment for future enrollment (more than 4 weeks) This fee will be applied to the first week's tuition. It is non-refundable.

TUITION

Tuition is charged according to the following categories:

Full-time: Children attending 5 days per week for more than 6 hours per day.

Half-time: Children attending for up to 25 hours per week.

Part-time: Flexible schedules are allowed as space permits. A minimum time commitment of 3 full days is required. Part-time fees are prorated according to the time requested.

Fees paid one week in advance of childcare services provided are eligible to receive a 5 % discount. Any other payment schedule must have prior approval from the Director. Bills will be sent at the end of the month detailing any unpaid portion of the month's tuition.

Families receiving funding from outside sources must have written authorization before a child may attend. Any co-payment amounts are the responsibility of the parent.

Fees are paid on a weekly basis for each week the child is enrolled in the Center. There are no reductions due to absences for holidays , illness or center closing days.

Any other exceptions for payment must be appealed to the Board of Directors, which will consider exceptions on a case-by-case basis.

Unpaid bills (including interest and collection costs) remaining after a child is withdrawn from the Center will be turned over to a collection agency.

Any bank charges as a result returned checks will be billed to the parent.

VACATION

One week each calendar year may be used as a vacation week. There is no charge for this week.

HOLIDAY BREAK

Creek will be closed from December 24 through January 1 each year. There will be no fee charged for a one week period at this time.

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

Each child must be signed in and out daily. If you need a change in your child's attendance schedule, it must be pre-arranged with the Director.

FORMS

Parents receive a packet of enrollment forms upon deciding to enroll their child at Creek. Prior to the first day of attendance we must have:

1. The signed Registration Agreement
2. The Child Enrollment Form, including permission to authorize emergency medical treatment, health history information, permission for field trip participation and persons authorized for pick-up.
3. The Child Information Sheet which provides the staff with important information which will help provide your child with a smooth transition in to the Center.
4. The CACFP Enrollment form.
5. The USDA Household Income form.
Forms due 30 days after the first day of attendance:
6. The Immunization Form.
7. The Medical Form which must be completed and signed by a physician.

PROBATION PERIOD

Upon enrollment there will be a one-month period of probation during which the adjustment of the Child to the Center will be evaluated. After this evaluation period the Center or Parent/Guardian may choose to terminate enrollment without financial penalty.

TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

Parent terminations:

A two-week written notice of withdrawal shall be required after the probation period. Refunds will be given for any advance tuition paid beyond the cost of care if proper notification has been given.

Center termination:

It is a goal of Creek to meet the needs of each child enrolled in the context of a group setting. If a child's placement seems inappropriate or if problems arise, the following steps will be taken:

1. Any problems will be brought to the attention of the Director and the child's Parent(s).
2. A meeting will take place to develop a written plan of action to address the problem. Outside agencies may be consulted with the consent of the Parent(s).
3. A period of evaluation will be established. Staff will keep in close contact with the parents and apprise them of the situation.
4. If at the end of the evaluation period there are problems which can not be resolved, the parent will be given a two week notice for dismissal.

SUMMER WITHDRAWAL

Parent who wish to withdraw their children for the summer months when public school is not in session, may pay a fee equal to one week's tuition to reserve a space for their return.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Creek is closed for the following days:

1. **Memorial Day.**
2. **4th of July** (if the 4th falls on a weekend day, Creek will close on either the Friday before or the Monday after the 4th).
3. **Labor Day.**
4. **Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday.**
5. **The one week period from December 24th through January 1st.**

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event that the weather poses a threat to the safety and well being of the children, the Center will be closed. Creek will follow the Madison Metro School District closing schedule for inclement weather. When the Madison schools are closed for the day, Creek will also be closed. If hazardous weather conditions develop during the day, parents are encouraged to pick up their children early. The center will remain open until all children have been picked up.

ABSENCE POLICY

Parents (guardians) are required to notify Creek when a child will be absent. If you have not notified the Center within 2 hours of the regular drop-off time, a staff member will call you at the designated notification number.

ILL CHILD POLICY

Children who are ill are not allowed to be in attendance. Any child who shows symptoms of illness while at Creek will have their parent (guardian) called. Arrangements must be made for the child to be removed from the Center within 1 hour.

Guidelines for exclusion from the Center are vomiting, diarrhea, any communicable disease (such as pink eye, strep throat, chicken pox) fever over 100 degrees, or the inability of the child to participate in daily activities.

Children may return to the Center when they are symptom-free or have been on medication for 24 hours.

MEDICATION

State law requires that no medication be administered to a child by the Center staff unless the following requirements are met:

Non-prescription drugs will only be administered under the direction of a physician.

The following information is required :

1. Name of the drug.
2. Exact dosage to be administered.
3. Clear directions for administration (times, with/without food, etc.)
4. Medication must be in original container labeled with the child's name.

Prescription drugs

Requires a prescription or note from the physician stating:

1. Name of the drug.
2. Exact dosage to be administered.
3. Clear instructions for administration from the physician per the pharmacist.
4. Medication must be in the original container with the child's name.

HEALTH POLICY

We want to keep the environment healthy for the children and staff at Creek. We do this by following these precautions:

1. Hand-washing before and after meals and snacks, and whenever dirty.
2. Preventing the transmission of airborne germs through the use of tissues for wiping noses or coughing, and washing hands afterward.
3. Hand-washing after handling pets.
4. Sanitizing toys on a regular basis (immediate removal if they have been mouthed).
5. Sanitizing classroom surfaces when they become dirty.
6. Staff will follow universal precautions as defined by OSHA when exposed to blood or any bodily fluid.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

All staff members have received training in child abuse and neglect laws, and in the identification of children who have been abused or neglected. Any member of the staff who knows of or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected shall immediately contact the Dane County Child Protective Services or the local law enforcement agency.

FIELD TRIP POLICY

The children at Creek regularly go on field trips as a part of the program. Children walk, are transported by City bus, ride a chartered bus or may ride with parent volunteers to places of interest within the community. Notice of field trip destination and times of departure and return are given to parents prior to the scheduled date. If your child does not participate in the field trip, other arrangements for care should be made.

CHILD EVALUATIONS

Formal evaluations of children occur annually. Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled to provide a time for the teachers and parents to meet and discuss goals and share information regarding the child. Care is taken to ensure that information regarding children and families is treated confidentially. Staff are readily available to parents to provide information about their child. We encourage parents to use the staff as a resource regarding their child's development and behavior.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

We support and encourage parental involvement in the program and activities at Creek. Social gatherings are planned several times a year to provide families with an opportunity to become more familiar with each other and the Center. Creek is open to parents for visits and we welcome helpers for field trips, lunch visits, or special occasions. The Board of Directors serves as a channel for interested parents to become involved in the decision-making policies at Creek. Meetings are held monthly and are open to all parents.

Parents are required to perform 5 hours of volunteer service for Creek annually. This can be accomplished through attendance at parent workdays, assisting on field trips or in the classroom or helping with special projects as needed. A fee will be charged to families who choose not to participate in these activities.

Parents are informed of the activities at Creek through a daily classroom report, regular newsletters and a monthly activity calendar. On the Parent Information Board there is information pertaining to Licensing including the last licensing visit report, minutes from past Board of Director's meetings, USDA food program information and the weekly menu, and other program information.

A copy of Creek's DCF childcare license and the City of Madison Accreditation certificate is posted outside of the childcare office. A copy of the non-compliance report is posted on the door to the childcare office.

PROBLEM RESOLUTION

In the event of a complaint of a licensing regulation violation or a conflict regarding the procedures of Creek Day School, the director will meet with the Complainant within 24 hours to discuss the concern. A solution to the problem will be resolved using the Day Care Licensing Regulations, Chapter HSF 46 and the Creek Policy Manual as references. In the absence of the Director, the Complainant will give the Board President a written notice of the complaint. The Board of Directors will be responsible for the satisfactory resolution of the problem within one week of receipt of the written complaint. A copy of the written complaint will be sent to the Licensing and the City Accreditation units.

CLOTHING

Parents must send a complete extra set of clothing, labeled with the child's name, and replace it as needed. These will be stored in the child's cubby. Soiled clothing will be returned for your care.

We suggest that children attend wearing play clothes in which they will be comfortable as they proceed through an active day. Creek provides opportunities for exploration which are stimulating, but may be messy. We feel that such activities are important at this age and ask that children be dressed in clothing that they will not have to fear soiling. We do provide smocks, but accidents happen. Shoes are particularly

important. Comfortable shoes with ties or straps provide more safety as the children go through an active day which includes running and climbing.

REST TIME

Children will have a nap each afternoon. Children who awake early, or are awake after resting for 30 minutes will be allowed to choose quiet activities. Please provide a blanket for naptime which will be sent home weekly for washing. Feel free to send a comfort item for naptime.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS-TOYS

We ask that children refrain from bringing toys from home. There is a rich supply of materials and toys available to children at Creek. Learning to share materials and play together is an important part of a child's development, and a difficult task. Having personal items sometimes results in unnecessary conflicts.

The exception that we make is for Show and Tell. On Show and Tell day, we encourage children to bring an item of interest which they can show to the rest of the class. We ask that parents discuss the item with the child beforehand (where it came from, what it is used for, etc.). In sharing information with others, the child develops descriptive language skill and sense of self-confidence when speaking in front of others. The child may choose to play with and share the item throughout the day. If s/he feels uncomfortable doing this, the item can be kept in the child's cubby after show and tell.

We are not responsible for lost toys. We discourage war play at school. We ask that toy guns, knives and other weapons not be brought to school.

OUTSIDE PLAY

We play outside each day as part of our daily routine. Please provide clothing that is appropriate for the weather. We use the following guidelines for outside play:

WINTER

1. The temperature (including wind chill) must be above zero degrees.
2. Children will be dressed to ensure that they stay warm and dry. Please provide jacket, snowpants, hat, scarf and waterproof mittens.

SUMMER

1. Children will not play in direct sunlight if the temperature is above 90 degrees.
2. Children will be protected with sunscreen (provided by parent) and protective clothing and hats when playing outside.

SECTION II

PROGRAM AND PHILOSOPHY

HISTORY

Creek Day School was established in the fall of 1973 by the Ridgewood Trace apartment complex to provide quality care and early childhood education for the children of its' residents. The program grew to include children from all of Madison and Fitchburg. In the Spring of 1975, a Board of Directors was formed comprised of staff, parents of children attending Creek Day School, Inc. was established as an independent, non-profit corporation. In 1978, Creek relocated to the present site at 2509 McDivitt Road. Creek is licensed through the State division of Child and Family Services. In 1980, Creek obtained accreditation through the City of Madison Day Care Unit. This is a voluntary program and is established to promote high quality programs for young children.

PHILOSOPHY

The program philosophy at Creek Day School, Inc. is based on three basic tenants of the developmental needs of preschool children and how they learn.

1. We believe that play is a fundamental learning experience. Play for adults may be more on the order of relaxation or recreation, but for children it is the fundamental learning experience. The program at Creek is designed to promote learning through both structured and free-play situations.
2. We believe that the preschool years are critical for the development of sensory-motor coordination (learning to use the hands and eyes together to produce an object) and form the foundation for all future learning.
3. The preschool years also coincide with the stage of personality development in relation to other people. Children gain valuable skills for forming relationships with others through daily interactions with peers and staff.

Although the center provides structured learning situations, it is not a copy of elementary school. What is important is that the preschool experience build the functional foundation which will allow the child to participate on an achievement level in society.

Creek Day School serves as an extension of the family sharing the tasks of nutrition, healthcare and problem-solving.

OBJECTIVES

1. To provide a warm, comfortable and pleasant environment for children to learn and socialize in.
2. To help children develop emotional maturity and independence.
3. To provide situations for guidance for the purpose of developing communication and socialization skills.
4. To help the child develop self-confidence and pride in his/her skills.
5. To encourage self-discovery and problem-solving at each child's level.
6. To help children begin to develop age-appropriate responsibilities for their actions, basic self-care needs, health, nutrition and safety.
7. To provide children with opportunities for speaking, listening, reading and writing.
8. To encourage a sense of freedom and creativity.
9. To provide situations where children can construct an understanding of mathematical concepts.
10. To assist children in learning to think scientifically and construct meaning from their experiences.

11. To help children develop an awareness of the larger world around them.
12. To provide children with physical challenges to aid them in the development of body awareness and coordination.
13. To work cooperatively with parents to achieve mutual objectives for their children.

DAILY SCHEDULE

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| 7:00 – 8:45 am | Free play |
| 8:45 – 9:00 | Clean-up |
| 9:00 – 9:30 | Morning Snack |
| 9:30 – 11:00 | Small group activities |
| 11:00 – 11:30 | Outdoor play |
| 11:30 – 12:30 pm | Lunch |
| 12:30 – 2:30 | Quiet activities and nap |
| 2:30 – 3:00 | Stories, bathroom |
| 3:00 – 4:00 | Snack |
| 4:00 – 5:00 | Outdoor play |
| 5:00 – 5:30 | Free choice inside |

CURRICULUM

At Creek we have chosen to set up an environment in which different ages groups of children mix throughout the day. We believe that this is a natural situation conducive to learning. Within this environment we find that younger children have the opportunity to learn from older children; that children developing at different rates are allowed to do so, free of peer or adult pressure; that children developing skills can learn to share and help; that all children develop an awareness and respect for the individuality of others.

Within this framework we provide many small group learning situations during the day that are geared to each individual's developmental level. We have time each day during small group when each age level can engage in activities that are appropriate for their developmental needs.

ART

Art projects are used as a pleasant means of developing such important skills as eye-hand coordination, fine motor coordination, ability to follow vocal and visual directions, etc. These are all-important functions for future learning. Art also serves as a means of creative expression.

LITERACY

We provide an area especially designed for the exploration of books (storybooks, science books, counting books). A rich selection of books is available to children throughout the day. Children are read to in groups several times each day. Children also choose to look at books independently or with their friends or may choose to listen to books on tape.

In addition to books, the environment is set-up to promote literacy. Items are labeled throughout the center, posters, alphabet letters, games, notebooks for writing, and a variety of activities are provided to give children rich exposure to print. Teaching preschoolers to read is not a goal at Creek per se. Rather, we expose children to good reading experiences and help foster a positive attitude for reading.

MATH

Counting and other math concepts are taught informally in a variety of ways at Creek through such activities as cooking, sand and water play, block play and table games. Beginning counting and math concepts are taught more formally in the small groups.

MUSIC

Music is used throughout the day in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes. We use music experiences to teach, to entertain and to relax. We attempt to expose children to different kinds of music, to help them become aware of music and to appreciate it and to develop their own musical abilities.

DRAMATICS

For self-discovery we provide a dress-up area which offers materials for a wide variety of role playing experiences. Children also have opportunities to participate in puppet plays, acting out stories and creative movement activities.

SCIENCE

Science activities are intended to help children become aware of and feel comfortable with some of the basic patterns and principles of the physical world. We explore such topics as plant and animal development, seasons, weather, climate, evaporations, gravity, magnetism, etc. We encourage curiosity about and respect for the world's physical environment.

PETS

Animals may be present in the classrooms from time to time. Children are fascinated as they observe different kinds of life and learn to develop respect and responsibility for the care taking of pets in the classroom. Pets are limited to fish, small animals (mice, hamsters, birds etc.) or insects. Adults are always present to supervise any contact between children and pets.

COOKING

Children are given regular opportunities to help prepare and taste different foods. The purpose of doing cooking activities with preschoolers is to help them experience in a concrete way many fundamental concepts that are new to them. Examples are: color, texture, smells, measuring, comparisons, volume, solids, liquids, converting substances from one to another. Social goals include learning to take turns, sharing, listening to the project leader, learning to vocalize about experiences and learning about different cultural foods.

SMALL MUSCLE DEVELOPMENT

This skill, essential to future writing and other school-related activities is encouraged in planned activities throughout the day. The center also provides a large selection of small manipulatives to promote fine-motor skills such as puzzles, legos, peg boards, blocks, etc.

LARGE MUSCLE DEVELOPMENT

Large muscle developed is encouraged indoors through a wide variety of games and movement experiences, and through the use of equipment such as climbers, tumbling mats, large blocks, etc.

A playground is available for outdoor play. We feel particularly fortunate to have a large, pleasant outdoor area that provides an interesting variety of natural materials for play.

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

We attempt to develop an awareness of and respect for cultural diversity by representing the art, literature, music and food of different cultures in our activities. Our equipment and materials are selected with careful consideration so that they reflect cultural diversity and other individual differences.

RELIGION

Creek Day School has no religious affiliation. Religious concepts are not taught in our program. Families in our program have differing religious beliefs. Holidays and Celebrations are reflected in the program across cultures. We ask for your help in sharing with us any special way that your family has in celebrating special events which occur throughout the year.

SECTION III

NUTRITION PROGRAM

One of the aspects of our program that has absorbed a lot of our time, effort and imagination is our food program. To merely fulfill USDA requirements is not enough. Our standards have become higher as we evaluate the importance of sound nutrition in our lives. Our menus reflect this concern – we favor fresh, whole and natural foods.

We serve a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables cooked minimally or not at all, to minimize nutrient loss, and preserve the flavor and texture. In addition to nutrient loss, processed foods often contain chemicals, coloring and preservatives which have an unknown effect on the body. We also serve whole grain breads, pastas and crackers which are richer in vitamins, minerals, and higher in fiber than grains which have been processed.

Creek offers a morning and afternoon snack and a home-cooked hot lunch. Snacks are an important way to supplement the high-energy needs of preschool children who need to eat frequently throughout the day. We try to steer clear of highly processed and sugary foods. We plan our snack menus to supplement our lunch menu. The snacks provide protein, vitamins, minerals, and fiber as well as the calories that are energy. Some examples are fruit juice popsicles, whole grain crackers with cheese or raw veggies with cottage cheese dip.

Eating habits are learned. There are many ways to influence the development of healthy eating habits. One way is to offer balanced, varied meals prepared with care which are appealing to children: visually and texturally. Another is to talk about food. Where does it come from? What is it? What is in the spaghetti sauce? Another way is to allow children a certain amount of freedom to regulate the amount of food they eat so they can become familiar with their own appetites. We also encourage children to be involved in the cooking process: from baking cookies for snack to planting a garden and growing tomatoes for the lunch salad.

Generally children can be trusted to eat a balanced diet when provided with a wide variety of wholesome foods. Occasionally, however, a child causes concern by seeming to eat less than is required to keep a sparrow alive. Though the impulse to “do something” is natural, we feel that it is more effective to allow children to discover the natural consequences of not eating (i.e. hungry) than to scold or nag them to eat throughout mealtime. By showing more attention to the children who are eating, we seek to decrease the attention-getting device of poor eating habits.

We recognize the importance of a positive atmosphere at lunch and snack time. We strive for a warm, relaxed environment which encourages adventure (trying new foods or food combinations) while accepting a child’s likes and dislikes. Though we feel it is disrespectful to require a child to eat everything on their plate, we strongly encourage children to try one bite of everything on their plate. This allows them a wide exposure to a variety of foods and often results in surprise (“Wow, Jessica had seconds on tamale pie!”). As children become familiar with food, (we repeat our menu cycle every four weeks) and when they see their friends eating enthusiastically, new foods become less threatening.

Food allergies are becoming more common, and we have adjusted our food service to reflect this. We have a peanut and tree nut-free menu. Other allergies are handled on an individual basis. Any special dietary requirements can be discussed with the director to see what accommodations can be made.

Our menus are posted weekly. We invite your involvement and welcome any suggestions or questions you may have.

SECTION IV

PHILOSOPHY OF POSITIVE GUIDANCE

At Creek we feel that the ultimate goal of guidance is to develop self-discipline. It is our belief that discipline handled in a way that respects the dignity and the will of the child and fosters self-concept has a good chance of becoming internalized by the child. This philosophy suggests that cooperation is preferable to blind obedience because the child has input; the child participates. The child does something because it makes sense, because it is needed and not because the teacher has told him/her to do it.

METHODS OF POSITIVE GUIDANCE

1. **Environment** – The environment at Creek is set up to accommodate the needs of children. It is our belief that where most needs are met most of the time, the child will feel secure enough to be able to cooperate when requested. We provide an environment which is developmentally appropriate for each child: one which is challenging without being too frustrating. Children are encouraged to make choices according to their interests. Children who are actively involved are much less likely to engage in disruptive behavior. We also feel that boundaries are an important factor in producing an environment in which the child will feel secure. An environment where limits are inconsistently or not enforced at all is frightening to a child.
2. **Staff** – The teaching staff at Creek is skilled in helping guide children. They serve as role-models for appropriate behavior, set expectations which children can handle and are there to provide support. A nurturing staff is key on promoting an environment where children feel free to try new things because they know that help is there if things don't go as planned. The staff is aware that each incident creates an opportunity to develop problem-solving skills. Disagreement provides practice in verbal skills, conflict resolution, recognition of and empathy for the needs of others.
3. **Redirection** – This is a guidance technique in which the adult suggests an alternative choice in order to avoid conflict. This method is particularly effective with the very young children, who have not yet developed reasoning skills.
4. **Praise** – Children need to know when they are doing something good. The teachers provide positive reinforcement through the use of hugs, smiles and verbal encouragement to children throughout the day. We really focus on the positive aspects of each child's behavior.
5. **Time-Out** – The purpose of a time-out is to allow children some time and space to regain control of their behavior. If a child is out of control and not able to make acceptable choices, the child will be removed from the group until he/she is able to be cooperative. Any violence or aggression is not acceptable behavior and needs immediate attention. If a child exhibits these behaviors or is likely to cause harm the child will be moved away from others until self-control is restored. The teacher will then discuss the situation with the child. It is important that the child understand the problem: what caused it, why the behavior was unacceptable and how the behavior needs to be changed to prevent future problems from occurring. A time-out is not viewed as a punishment and is not a guidance technique used for children under the age of 3.

DELEGATION OF DISCIPLINE

Only the Creek teaching staff will be allowed to discipline. Other persons should bring a situation or incident to the attention of a teacher who will deal with it.

PROHIBITED PUNISHMENTS

Prohibited punishments shall include all punishment which is humiliating or frightening to a child, such as, but not limited to the following:

1. Spanking, hitting, pinching, shaking or inflicting any other form of corporal punishment.
2. Verbal abuse, threats, or derogatory remarks about child or family.
3. Binding or tying to restrict movement or enclosing in a confined space such as a closet, locked room, box or small cubicle.
4. Withholding or forcing meals, snacks or naps.
5. Punishments for lapses in toilet training.

ROLE OF THE PARENT

We encourage each parent to talk with their child about the day. We also encourage each parent to check in with the teacher about the day's events. Regarding discipline, it is helpful to us if the parents and teachers are working together to consistently respect the rules.

Where rules are different than at home, we hope the parent will help the child understand that group situations sometimes call for different rules. We also ask you to keep the staff informed of any behavior changed you may notice at home, and how you are dealing with them. Consistency is very important in the learning process. We need to work together with you to guide your child in the same direction.

HOW TO PUT THE GOALS OF RESPECTING A CHILD'S DIGNITY AND ENCOURAGING A HEALTHY SELF-CONCEPT INTO PRACTICE

First let's dispense with what doesn't work. Under this category would fall: intimidation, threats, punishment and any form of character attack (e.g. labeling a child negatively). Examples: "You are naughty, careless, clumsy, messy, rude, etc. These methods might work initially, but chances are they will eventually backfire because they make the child feel bad. Rarely will a child who feels bad also feel cooperative. Since it is cooperation we seek, we work against ourselves when we make a child feel awful. A cooperative child is not the same as a compliant child. A cooperative child exercises the will, which a compliant child suppresses it.

There are a number of techniques that we have found helpful and effective. The best of these methods encourage children to think for themselves. This allows the children the opportunity to participate which gives them a sense of responsibility.

There are many ways of asking a child to do something. These ways can be examined in light of two criteria: (1) whether they further our goals of respecting a child's dignity and encouraging a healthy self-concept, and (2) whether they work. Fortunately, the methods that work best usually further our long term goals. For instance, consider the situation where a child leaves her boots in the middle of the hall. Which of the following responses allow the child participation in terms of figuring out what needs to be done? Which attack the child's character or personality? In which might the child feel good about complying? In which might the child feel defiant, humiliated, resentful, etc.?

1. "I see red boots in the middle of the hallway." (a description)
2. "I expect boots to be put in your cubby when you take them off." (stating an expectation)
3. "Boots belong in your cubby." (giving information)
4. "It would be helpful if you would put your boots in your cubby." (pointing out a way to be helpful)
5. "Sally, the boots." (Sally thinks: "What about the boots? Oh, they go in my cubby.")

6. "I get irritated when your boots are left out." (description of your feelings. It is ok to let children know that you are upset. There is no attack, just an identification of your feelings.) "Who forgot to put their boots away?"
7. "I told you 3 times to put your boots away, how many times do I need to tell you? Can't you remember anything?"
8. "You better put those boots away right now!"

EMOTIONS

Emotions are great moving causes in behavior. They can be found at the root of actions that we would consider both positive as well as negative. We feel that the ability to recognize, accept and express emotions is part of a healthy self-image. We encourage the expression of emotions in acceptable ways: "It's ok to be angry, it's not ok to hit." We also avoid denying any emotion; all emotions are valid. Children cry, they get mad and sad, lonely and tired. They need to learn how to handle their emotions in a productive manner, not deny them.

RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility is a key word. Children can learn responsibility by experiencing the consequences of their behavior. This is more effective than lecturing, yelling or moralizing a child. If a child fails to put away his toys after an appropriate request, perhaps the toys need to be put away until the child can demonstrate he is able to take care of his possessions. This is not a punishment, it is a logical consequence of the behavior (children who don't put their toys away won't have any toys left to play with).

Another way to encourage a child's participation is to offer a choice. "You can pick up your toys by yourself, or I can help you. Do you want me to help?" It is important to realize when a choice is being offered and to accept the child's decision. For example, "Put your toys away, ok?" is a choice providing an option of refusal. To then deny the choice, "I said put your toys away" confuses and frustrates the child.

CONSISTENCY

Children often test limits as part of their growth. It is important to provide them with the security of consistency. Imagine the scenario where David has been smashing the legos together. He knows that smashing them can break them. He is given a choice: "You can handle the legos more gently or you will need to find another activity. You decide." David continues to smash legos. "David, I see that you will need to choose something else." David says: "Oh, I forgot. I won't smash them together anymore. Please give me one more chance." There are two options:

1. You follow through with your directions to have David find another activity.
2. You give David one more chance.

Which option will encourage David to behave more responsibly in the future? Which response might confuse David? Which one allowed David to manipulate the adult? Which one increases the likelihood that David will continue to manipulate others in the future?

Helping children learn to make good choices is a day-by-day, year-by-year process. With the proper

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