



## Discipline Policy

This Policy includes required messaging from the State of Michigan and incorporates our unique approach within it as well. At Little Valley we seek to keep kids physically and emotionally safe, that includes how we practice discipline. We seek to both hold clear safety boundaries as well as understand and support each child, especially when they are having strong reactions and emotions. As mentors we are here to help, guide and support growth and understanding. We are not here to punish or shame or harm your child emotionally or physically, in an effort to correct their behavior.

### Core Principals and Practices to support physical and emotional wellbeing:

#### Respect:

**Respect for self:** We want to support you in respecting yourself. Your body and clothing are yours. You get to decide if you are hugged, hit, tugged, tagged etc.. If something happens to your body that you don't like, we will help you to hold that boundary (if you need help) This also extends to imaginary play. You can be whatever you want to be (but you don't get to tell other people what they have to be) You can be a dragon, a star, an elephant, it's up to you!

**Respect for others:** Just as you get to be the boss about your own body, you will need to respect the bodies of others. If someone doesn't like the way, they are being touched or played with, then we respect that. We will be here to help hold those boundaries of respect if/when needed. Sometimes the kids do a good job without help, in which case we aim to acknowledge and honor that.

**Respect for environment:** We seek to treat toys with care so lots of kids can play with them in the future and to pick up our messes to respect the play spaces and to be gentle with nature, wildlife, or bugs to respect them as well.

#### Healthy Boundaries:

We support you to communicate your need or boundary **without** doing harm to yourself or others

Healthy examples include:

- Use your words!
- Ask for help when needed!

### **Harmful Boundaries:**

- Physical force (ouch!)
- Breaking things (disrespecting environment)

Developing these tools takes time, repetition, and practice. We are here to help you.

### **Supporting Growth:**

- **Meet Basic Needs:** We will develop a routine and rhythm for eating, drinking, going to the bathroom and checking diapers. Additionally, we will be vigilant of emergent needs and encourage the kids to attune to their bodies and seek the support they need whenever they need it.
- **Love and Connection:** Provide opportunities for child led physical connection, such as hugs or sitting on lap during story time. We let the children lead the way on any physical connection they may need.
- **Stimulating/Cooperative Play:** We'll seek to provide games and toys and activities that provide opportunities for everyone to engage and have a way to play, should they want to and reduce the impulse or perceived need to fight over toys.
- **Redirecting the child from an unacceptable activity to a constructive one.**
- **Offering alternative solutions to the problem.**
- **Removing the child from the source of the conflict.**
- **Involving children in solving problems.**
- **Assuring there is a relationship between the behavior and the discipline to facilitate a nonpunitive, natural consequence.**
- **Positive Reinforcement.**

### **Punishment:**

Children will not be punished while in our care. It is our intention to hold a safe physical and emotional space for all children to learn, grow, play and connect. When child acts out or makes a mistake, this can be a signal they need additional support. We do not view them as being "bad" or needing to be punished. We will help to hold healthy boundaries but will never use forms of punishment such as:

- (a) Hit, spank, shake, bite, pinch, or inflict other forms of corporal punishment.
- (b) Use any substance in a child's mouth such as, but not limited to, soap, hot sauce, or vinegar.
- (c) Restrict a child's movement by binding or tying him or her.
- (d) Inflict mental or emotional stress, such as humiliating, shaming, threatening a child, or using derogatory remarks.
- (e) Deprive a child of meals, snacks, rest, or necessary toilet use.
- (f) Confine a child in an enclosed area such as a closet, locked room, box, or similar enclosure.

(g) Use time out for children under 3 years old.

When Time Out's May be Used:

Time-outs should only be used to stop aggressive behavior or to allow angry or upset children to calm down. Use time-outs only as a last resort to help the child gain a better sense of self-control. When using time-out, childcare personnel must ensure:

- Their expectations of the child's behavior are realistic.
- Consequences immediately follow the child's behavior.
- Children are not humiliated or made to feel threatened or afraid.
- The time-out does not last longer than it takes for the child to calm down.
- Children always remain supervised.
- Additionally, at Little Valley Daycare, we generally call a Time- Out, *Taking a Break*. And instead of the message being "you, go to a time out" it's more like, "It looks like *we* need to take a break or take some space."
- We additionally aim to maintain connection with the child, whether that's holding them while they calm down or just being present at a preferred distance to hold space and offer support. We recognize that if a child is left alone and feels alone, their experience may lean more toward a traumatic one vs a growth one. If love and connection are maintained, growth and stronger trust and connections become more possible.

Reasonably appropriate discipline or restraint may be used to prevent a child from harming himself or herself, or to prevent a child from harming other persons or property, or to allow a child to gain control of himself or herself.

If and when restraint is needed, it will be done safely and calmly and with as much kind reassurance as possible. Acceptable restraint methods include:

- Picking up and holding
- Holding in a hug like position from either front or back
- Including the arms in the hug if hitting or punching is happening.

Examples of inappropriate restraint include but are not limited to:

- Grabbing a child by arms, legs, hands, feet, hair, or head.
- Holding a child with undue physical force.
- Holding a child down on a sleep surface with hands or feet.
- Sitting on a child.
- Any physical restraint for the purpose of discipline or punishment, especially with ropes, scarves, belts, ties, or straps.