

Aggressive and Unsafe Behavior – Policy on Managing

This policy applies to children who are prone to aggressive or unsafe behaviors. If the child is school age, the *School Age Discipline Policy* will also apply. The *Biting Policy* applies to toddlers and 2-year-olds who are prone to biting behavior (due to developing new language skills, teething, etc.).

The **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** may be implicated in many situations where action plans are required or suspension of enrollment is contemplated, so it is essential to include your RM and legal early in the process.

Directors and RMs are responsible for compliance with state licensing which may require distribution to or signed acknowledgment of this policy by parents, documentation of parent meetings, referral to specific support agencies, signed action plans, notice to Early Intervention (EI) and state licensing, and a record of suspension kept by the Center.

For example, Pennsylvania licensing requires each of the following components:

- State resources should be populated on Family Resources List - Pennsylvania. This is provided to and signed by parents at the first meeting to discuss the behavior, with a copy retained by the center.
- EI should be notified and contribute to parent/resource meetings.
- Centers must request support from the PA Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) before of any decision to suspend occurs.
- A record of suspensions should be kept using the Suspension Log- Pennsylvania.

Identifying Issues and Collaborating with Parents

Whenever a child engages in aggressive behavior, staff should alert the director. The director should monitor Occurrence Reports to identify potential aggression issues, problems, or patterns.

When a child engages in aggressive or unsafe behavior, the center should:

- **meet with the child's family** to collaborate and implement action plans designed to improve the behavior and reduce the safety risks;
- **encourage the family toward the professional supports** needed for the child's success if we do not achieve positive change through redirection and positive guidance in a reasonable time;
- **collaborate with professional supports/resources** to implement and to support our efforts and encourage positive change;
- **maintain a safe environment** while working through an action plan and toward positive change; and
- **consider suspension of enrollment**, in collaboration with the DVP and legal, if an unsafe situation is not resolved within a reasonable period of time.

All centers should have a resource list of evaluation, early intervention, and support services available in their geographic area. These resources are supported financially by the parents, local agencies, applicable health insurance or the local school district, **not** by the center.

Action Plan and Roles

The director is responsible for:

- creating, implementing, and monitoring an **action plan** for any child who engages in unsafe or aggressive behavior **two (2) or more times within a two (2) week period;**

- notifying the RM when a child requiring help is identified and an action plan is needed;
- meeting with the family when the action plan is implemented, and then periodically as progress is made or as additional incidents occur;
- discussing available outside resources; and
- discussing possibility of suspension if improvement does not occur or resources are not in place within a reasonable amount of time.

The RM is responsible for:

- **making direct observations** of the child and classroom to provide insight and suggestions to improve the behavior or dynamic. If a personal visit is not logistically possible, an RM's review can be facilitated using remote resources/technology or someone else designated by the RM can conduct the review.
- **reviewing the written action plan** to offer insight and recommendations before the action plan is provided to parents.
- **helping to identify appropriate resources**, both internal and external, to support the child and the center and encourage positive change; and
- **participating in parent meetings**, as needed, to support the director's recommendations, particularly when it is clear that support services are needed or suspension is likely.
- **participating in all calls to legal.**

Suspension

A decision to suspend requires the participation, review and approval of the **legal department and DVP**. If applicable, the client liaison should be notified and permitted to participate.

Immediate suspension can occur with DVP approval in light of the severity of the safety risk.

Before suspending, the team should evaluate: 1) whether diligent efforts to solve the behavior within our abilities were made; 2) if outside resources were recommended/accessed and participated in our efforts to solve; 3) other strategies to consider; and 4) the severity of the safety risks and likelihood of harm or injury if the enrollment continues.

Suspension is **not** measured by a period of time (i.e. days or weeks), which could be viewed as punitive. Suspension is a pause in the enrollment until the child can participate safely with the right supports in place. If/when additional services are secured or the child's behavior improves outside the center, we will collaborate with parents and the child's resources to determine if/how the child can be returned to the program safely.

Acknowledgement:

(Signature of the Parent/Guardian)

(Date)