

Guidelines for Living With Children

Ask a child "Do you want ..." only when you really intend to give him a choice. Be prepared to accept his right to decide: "No, I don't want to ..."

Put suggestions or directions for behavior in positive rather than negative form. Avoid "don't." Children are doers not "don't-ers."

Build a positive self-image in the child by your interaction with him. Belittling, shaming, or labeling as "bad," "naughty," etc. do not encourage self-esteem.

Avoid comparing one child with another. Avoid competitive situations where children compare themselves with others. Encourage the child to become the best that he/ she can be.

Use simple language and a clear, firm voice when setting limits. Save shouting for an emergency only.

Avoid making models in art media for children to copy. Show the possibilities of new materials without models.

Give children the help that they need, but do not do for them what they can do for themselves (just because you can do it better or faster). Exception: when a child is having a bad day or isn't feeling well.

Help each child to experience success as often as possible. Commend his small efforts and successes if he is trying his best.

Avoid using the word "nice" at all. It infers a judgement about a child or his work which is not ours to make. Instead use words like "polite, thoughtful, considerate" for behavior and phrases like "I see you spent a lot of time on that" or "Your work has a lot of red in it", etc. for projects.

Reinforce your words, directions, and suggestions with appropriate accompanying action. Follow through and be clear.

Encourage the children to care for and clean-up their own areas. Remember, it is their job to care for their own materials. You are the helpful teacher who assists them.