

Conscious Discipline Cheat Sheet

Conscious Discipline is a behavior management philosophy that promotes emotional awareness in ways that respect a child's personhood. When a teacher is able to be calm, a child will respond. As teachers we never reach perfection, but we can get better through self-reflection.

Start with You

Your job description: You are here to keep children safe.

Before you help a child with their behavior, remember:

1. Notice your own feelings and say, "I feel _____, and it's okay. I am safe and I can handle this."
2. Take a deep breath.
3. "When I put another person in charge of my feelings, I put them in charge of me."
4. The moment is as it is. Notice things. Make no judgements.
5. We work together to find a solution. There is no bad guy.

The Child

A child's job description: Their job is to help you keep them safe.

Foster Good Relationships to Prevent Problems

Ask children how they are. Ask them how their day has been. Get to know them. Many times undesirable behavior is a child asking for attention because something is wrong.

"You did it!" Say this phrase as often as possible. Did they put away the toys? Did they get in line? Did they make a piece of art? This phrase reminds kids that they are capable of good things.

Praise children for the goodness inside of them. "Timmy, you shared your toys. You are so generous." "Dani, you put away the puzzle pieces. You are a helper."

Give children jobs. Need a line leader? Need someone to sweep the floor? Need someone to pass out snack. There are children who would love to help. Don't forget to tell them "you did it!"

Tell kids what they can do. "You may read a book." "You may hula hoop in an area away from other children." "You may build with the blocks." If a child is participating in a dangerous behavior, let them know the safe behavior first. "You may stack the blocks or you may line them up and push cars on them. You may not throw the blocks." Try to have 2 positives and then a negative.

Give kids two good options. "You may hula hoop in the corner or you may play with blocks by the window. Which one would you like to do?"

When a Conflict Arises

A child is having an emotional outburst:

1. Calm yourself with the techniques in the “Start with You” section
2. Calm the child
 1. Notice their body’s reaction and help them figure out the emotion they are feeling. You may need to mirror them with your body.
 1. “Your fists are clenched, like this, and your face is scrunched up, like this. Are you feeling angry?”
 2. Have children repeat after you, “I feel _____, and it’s okay. I am safe and I can handle this.”
 2. Take a deep breath.
3. Offer two good choices.
4. Give children a chance to go to a safe area to deal with their emotions on their own. Check in with them every few minutes.

Children are struggling to get along hints and phrases:

1. “My job is to keep everyone safe. I would not let them hurt you, so I cannot let you hurt them.”
2. Have the child say, “I do not like it when _____. Please stop/Can we do _____ instead?”
3. If children cannot play together, ask the children to go to different play areas. Give them choices in which play areas are available to them.
4. If a child struggles to get along with many children, offer to play with them one-on-one instead and model good behaviors for them.

A child’s behavior is unsafe:

1. Calm yourself with the techniques in the “Start with You” section
2. Calm a child’s emotional outburst, if applicable.
3. “My job is to keep everyone safe. I would not let them hurt you, so I cannot let you hurt them.”
4. Tell the child why their behavior is not safe. They may not have realized. Use your words.
5. Tell the child what they can and cannot do. 2 positives and then a negative. (You can ___. You cannot ___.)
6. Offer two good choices.
7. If a child refuses to listen, say “Let me show you,” and help them perform the task you have asked. At the end say, “You did it!”

Natural Consequences

Consequences should be natural and logical. They should help a child learn what happens when they engage in behavior that is unsafe or how to engage in behavior that is safe.

Some great natural consequences:

1. Being paired with a teacher who will play with the child one-on-one.
2. Being redirected to another play area. “You have showed me that you cannot ___ safely. Now we must pick a different activity/play area where you can be safe. Would you like _____ or _____?”