The goal of positive guidance is to develop children’s self-control, encourage children to assume responsibility, and assist children in making thoughtful decisions. This section will provide basic guidance techniques to prevent inappropriate behaviors and correct misbehavior.

Taking a look at the reasons children engage in misbehavior/mistaken behavior will provide you with a better understanding of young children.
An introduction to basic guidance techniques that include both indirect and direct guidance techniques will provide you with strategies and tools to use in preventing, resolving, and correcting behaviors. Indirect guidance refers to strategies that are used in establishing a positive classroom environment including room arrangement, consistent routines, class rules, and developmental activities.
A positive classroom environment meets the needs of the children and provides a foundation for building positive relationships between the child, the teacher, and other children.

Direct guidance includes techniques that build on a positive classroom environment by focusing on the individual child, setting realistic expectations, and recognizing appropriate behaviors. Direct guidance techniques include verbal guidance, natural consequences, redirection, and problem solving.
Early childhood teachers enjoy working with young children as they learn new things, use their creativity, interact with others, and communicate their stories. Most early childhood teachers do not enjoy the challenges presented by children’s inappropriate behaviors. Unfortunately, misbehavior or mistaken behavior is an unavoidable part of working with children. Remember, all skills need to be practiced before they are mastered.
Early childhood teachers play an important role in guiding the behavior of young children. Positive child guidance and discipline promote children’s self-esteem, help children develop responsibility, and influence children in making thoughtful choices.
Teaching young children appropriate behavior and self-discipline is a difficult task that requires:

- Patience
- Thoughtful attention
- Cooperation
- Knowledge of the child
- A reflective knowledge of one’s personal struggles with discipline issues

Early childhood teachers who effectively guide and foster children’s appropriate behavior may spend less time in resolving misbehavior. The ultimate goal is to have children learn to self-regulate and guide their own behavior.
Guidance teaches children to solve their problems in socially acceptable ways (Gartell) and refers to all methods that are used to encourage children’s positive behavior.

Positive guidance methods are based on the children’s development and are focused on maintaining the child’s self-esteem and dignity.

Discipline methods help children learn to control their behavior and act according to their ideas of what is right and wrong. People often mistake discipline for punishment.

Punishment is used to penalize the child for making a wrong choice and is detrimental to building self-esteem. It fosters resentment and retaliation. It may make the child stop the inappropriate behavior for the moment but it will not be a learning experience.
The concept of mistaken behavior provides a different perspective of children’s behavior. Children are at the beginning of a lifelong learning process making mistakes is part of the process. Taking the perspective of mistaken behavior requires recognizing that children are learning how to interact and adapt to the world. Part of the early childhood teacher’s responsibility is to guide children’s learning and behavior.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Misbehavior or Mistaken Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Just as children make mistakes in learning activities, they will make mistakes in interacting with other children, following rules, or making decisions. It is the teacher’s role to guide children in learning to choose acceptable behaviors and make thoughtful decisions. The concept of mistaken behavior is compatible with the emphasis of positive guidance methods that include problem solving, natural and logical consequences, and redirection. (Gartell)
The following is a list of factors that may cause behavioral issues in a child care program. As you review the list reflect on possible changes to the classroom environment, schedule, and teacher behaviors that may prevent behavior issues from occurring.

(Adapted from Factors that Create Discipline Problems: Developed by Brenda Jones-Hardin. © WestEd, The Program for Infant/Toddler Care)
1. Teacher has unrealistic high expectations for the age and/or developmental level of the children.
2. Classroom has too little space or too much open space.
3. The amount of learning materials and/or equipment is not adequate for the number of children in the classroom.
4. Classroom learning materials and equipment are too challenging or too simple for the age/developmental level of the children.
5. Children are required to spend too much time waiting that includes: time between activities, the teacher gathering supplies, sitting at the table waiting for lunch to be served, waiting for everyone to wash their hands or use the bathroom, or standing in line waiting to go outdoors.
Causes of Behavioral Issues in Child Care

6. Extremely structured and inflexible routines, classroom spaces, daily schedules and people.
7. There is little organization in the classroom.
8. The daily schedule, routines, staffing, expectations and activities are inconsistent.
9. The classroom environment is loud, distracting or over-stimulating.
10. Learning activities require too much looking or listening and lack concrete/hands-on involvement with learning materials or equipment.
As you read the list of issues that cause behavior issues in child care centers, you may have thought of some ways to prevent the issues creating the problems. It is possible that your solutions involve indirect guidance techniques. Indirect guidance methods are used to prevent behavior issues when developing the physical environment, class rules, and program content.
Young children are influenced by their environment, the people in it and the physical surroundings. In an early learning and care center, children’s behavior is shaped by the physical space, the curriculum and program activities, expectations of the early childhood teachers, and teacher responses to the child’s behavior. Indirect guidance methods can be divided into the same four areas.
1. Physical Space

The physical environment of a classroom provides both cues for appropriate behavior and temptations for inappropriate behavior. A wide open space in a classroom will encourage children to run. A small space with pillows and interesting toys will encourage one or two children to sit down and play with the toys.
2. Curriculum and Program Schedule

Children with a consistent daily schedule that offers a variety of interesting and fun activities are less likely to misbehave. Consistency is especially important for younger children who form attachments based on developing trusting relationships with teachers.
3. Expectations

• Set clear and reasonable expectations for acceptable behavior. Provide children with specific boundaries and limits on behavior.
• Establish class rules stated in positive terms that tell children what to do rather than what not to do.
• Explain the reasons for rules and limits. Example: “After you finish playing with blocks, put the blocks back on the shelf so someone does not stumble and fall down.”
• Older children can be included in developing and posting classroom rules. Involving the children in developing rules creates ownership and encourages the children to regulate their own behavior. Posting the rules is a visual reminder. Remember to refer to the classroom rules when talking about behavior and expectations.
4. Recognize and Respond to Children’s Positive Behavior

Use effective encouragement that is specific and positive to provide meaningful feedback and help children develop self-esteem. Effective encouragement is sincere, selective, specific, focused on an individual child or small group of children, and used to acknowledge a specific appropriate behavior.
Rules help children understand what is expected of them, especially school-age children. But all children need to know that an adult is aware of them and will step in and help when they lose track of their behavior. Stopping off-track behavior and listening to the upset are both necessary so that children can get a chance to think well again to follow rules.

These simple rules can help educators decide when a child needs a limit set:

• We keep ourselves safe.
• We keep each other safe.
• We keep our things safe.
Direct guidance techniques are used to respond to children’s mistaken behavior as it occurs. Behavior methods that are effective with one child may not be effective with all children.

Each situation and each child is unique and behavior methods need to be based on the specific circumstances of the inappropriate behavior.
Basic Guidelines

- Communicate with children in a respectful manner that validates the child’s feelings.
- Provide children with the acceptable behavior and explain the reasons why the behavior needs to change.
- Assist the child in learning an appropriate behavior. For example ask the child what they might do if they were angry at another child. An acceptable alternative behavior may be to walk away from the situation.
- Clarify the classroom rules and expectations providing reasons for the limits.
- Model the behaviors you want children to follow by explaining and showing children the appropriate behavior. Example: “Put the books back on the shelf one at a time.”
Offer children manageable choices. Help children learn to make appropriate choices. Provide choices that are acceptable by offering two acceptable alternatives. Example: “Do you want to go to the book nook or block center?” Avoid offering choices when there is no choice and avoid asking closed questions where children are not allowed to answer such as “Do you want to take a nap?”

Change the situation. Some inappropriate behaviors can be resolved by changes to the physical environment, adding materials, removing equipment, splitting children into smaller or different groups.
Redirect children and offer acceptable substitutes: Provide children with an alternative behavior. “Alex, books are for reading. Let’s go to the book nook and find a place to look at books.” “Lizzie, the water needs to stay in the water table. You need to move to another area. There is playdough in the art area, let’s go over there.”

Redirect older children by teaching the child how to complete an activity in a safer or more acceptable way. “Donovan, you are really working hard on building the block city. How can you make the block structures safer and more stable?”
Facilitate problem solving by teaching children the following process to resolve conflicts with other children:

• Ask the children to identify and explain the problem. Listen to all parties involved in the conflict. “What is the problem?”
• Ask the children to develop possible solutions to resolve the conflict. “What can you do?”
• Ask the children to consider possible solutions. “What might happen if......”
• Ask the children to select a solution and use it.
• Ask the children if the solution is working.
**Time out** is really for you (*the adult*) to get a break when you cannot think anymore. (Use a soft, cozy place like an easy chair with pillows for the child)

- Time out is not to be used as a punishment.
- A good rule of thumb--1 minute per year of child’s age (and time out is not appropriate before 3 years old).
- Time out doesn’t solve the problem but can get the child out of harm’s way, including from your angry response.
- If you find you are using time-out often, it’s time to invest in more “time in” or set limits and allow for emotional release.
This slide show is complete.

Click on next page to continue with the training.