

S-268 DISCIPLINARY MEASURES



In this document, the non implicit gender applies to both men and women.

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Policy

Research clearly demonstrates that positive, non-punitive parenting is most effective. There is a clear difference between discipline and punishment. Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell do not tolerate any form of corporal discipline.

Punishment implies causing pain, suffering or discomfort for the purpose of correcting some behaviour. It works; but only in the short term. Whereas, discipline, includes teaching rules of behaviour, monitoring the children and educating them to help them understand and accept the consequences of their actions. Parents need to establish rules and appropriate expectations for their families; the disciplinary process evolves as the child grows. Disciplinary measures need to be in proportion to the behaviour displayed and must give the child an opportunity to make amends.

Procedure

1. Examples of prohibited disciplinary measures

- Corporal punishments such as :
 - a) hitting the individual directly, as in spanking, or with an object;
 - b) shaking, pushing, slapping or any other aggressive physical contact;
 - c) authorizing punishment by another person or by a group of children, with the encouragement of a parent, stakeholder or educator;
 - d) ordering or forcing an individual into an uncomfortable position, such as standing against the wall, squatting, etc.;
 - e) ordering or forcing someone to do repetitive physical movements.
- humiliating or degrading disciplinary responses, whether verbal, emotional or physical that undermine the dignity of the client;
- removing someone's basic rights, for example: visits to and from the family, shelter, clothing, bed, social contact, communication;
- deprivation of food is prohibited. Food must not be used to bribe, punish, reward or coax.
- withdrawing all emotional response or social stimulation for a prolonged period;
- placing or keeping someone in a locked room or forcing that person to remain too long in his or her bed;
- making someone stay silent for long periods;
- holding by force or by excessive physical constraint (arm twisting, pinching, ear pulling, hand tying, using a strait jacket,...);
- using methods that induce aversion: forcing someone to take a cold shower, using certain products (soap in the mouth, lemon on the tongue,...);

- use of chemical restraint, (administering or changing a medical dosage without consulting a physician);
- not letting someone enter the lobby, or threatening abandonment;
- making the performance of someone's work excessively onerous or difficult

2. Putting approved disciplinary measures into practice

It is important to observe that discipline, unlike punishment, is a way to give the child a love of learning. The act of disciplining the child and showing him, or her, by our example, responsibility, helps the child develop self-discipline. Communication is a major ingredient when it comes to establishing and maintaining a positive relationship, even during particularly hard times.

It is important to:

- make rules that are clear and consistent;
- let the child know your expectations;
- explain to the child what behaviour needs to change; and what kind of behaviour is expected;
- ensure that there is a logical connection between the action and the consequence;
talk about the current situation, rather than prior conduct;
- give the child guidance to make appropriate choices;
- remove the child temporarily from the situation, so as to calm the situation;
- remind the child that for some kinds of behaviour, consequences naturally follow, (e.g. a child who does not wear mittens will suffer cold hands. Perhaps this natural consequence will cause the child to wear mittens next time).

It is a matter of:

- taking away privileges;
- changing the curfew time;
- performing additional tasks to compensate for damage;
- repairing any damage;
- any other logical consequence

It is important to:

- not judge the child on the basis of his or her behaviour ;
- ensure that the consequence takes place as soon as possible after the action occurs, so that the child can understand the connection;
- ensure that the duration of the consequence is reasonable;
- go back over what happened, with the child,
- always remember to emphasize progress.

3. Investigating a complaint regarding unacceptable disciplinary measures by foster parents

In the event that the agency receives a complaint regarding the use of unacceptable disciplinary measures, a stakeholder will assess the situation and ensure that a meeting takes place with all concerned parties. See the two policies that deal with investigating allegations or complaints with respect to mistreatment of children: FA-19 Complaints against a Foster Family, and DG-09 Complaints of Mistreatment of Children or Adults Involving Employees, Volunteers, and Other Valoris Officers.

Definitions, annexes and references

Definition

Parents: The term "parents" includes biological and adoptive parents, stepfathers, stepmothers and any other person who is responsible for a child before Valoris intervenes.

References

- Ministry of Children and Youth Services Residential Licensing policy requirements 2008-1b food and nutrition – foster care
- S-107 “Reports of Abuse of a Child or an Adult by Employees, Volunteers or Other Agents of Valoris
- S-110 “Physical Restraint Measures for Children”
- S-111 “Physical Restraint Measures for Adults”