

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Free Time Kids Playcare, Inc. responds to the issue of bullying very seriously and has strict procedures that will be adhered to should there be any evidence within the Playcare.

What is bullying?

Bullying is not always easy to define, but according to Stopbullying.gov, this would include:

- **Physical** - hitting, kicking, pinching, spitting, tripping, pushing, taking or breaking someone's things, making mean or rude hand gestures.
- **Verbal** - teasing, name calling, taunting, or threatening to cause harm
- **Social** - leaving someone out on purpose, telling other children not to be friends with someone, spreading rumors about someone, or embarrassing someone in public

Bullying can occur during or after school hours. While most reported bullying happens in the school building, a significant percentage also happens in places like on the playground or the bus. It can also happen travelling to or from school, in the youth's neighborhood, or on the Internet.

Early childhood often marks the first opportunity for young children to interact with each other. Between the ages of 3 and 5, kids are learning how to get along with each other, cooperate, share, and understand their feelings. Young children may be aggressive and act out when they are angry or don't get what they want, but this is not bullying. Still, there are ways to help children.

FTKP's Goals and Objectives

- FTKP proactively has implemented policies and procedures to prevent bullying to allow for a center in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- We strive to provide a safe and secure environment where all children can play and learn without fear or anxiety.
- Our policy is to produce a consistent response to all bullying incidents that may occur.
- Our goal is to make all those connected with the Playcare (staff, children, parents) aware of our opposition to bullying. Our staff has a responsibility to eradicate bullying in our Playcare.
- We do not tolerate any kind of bullying in our Playcare and support all parties involved to gain a full understanding of our philosophy.

Rough and Tumble Play

FTKP recognizes rough and tumble play as distinct from inappropriate or aggressive behavior. Television or films, which include superheroes, often influence young children or weapon play and they will mimic this behavior through their play. We endorse the following strategies to manage this kind of play:

- Recognize that this is pro-social play *rather than* aggressive play.
- Have discussion opportunities to explain the concept of 'good' and 'bad'.
- Support the play to find alternative solutions to weapon play, exploring different scenarios.

Hurtful Behavior

Very young children are 'egocentric', which means that they put their own feelings before others. Even the most considerate child will have the occasional outburst due to frustration, anger or over exuberance. FTKP acknowledges that this is a developmental area that needs to be nurtured and supported. If hurtful comments are made, our strategies are:

- To recognize that very young children are not always able to manage their own feelings and deliver them appropriately.
- Assist in this management to support their biological and cognitive development.
- Offer support to both parties and to discuss the issues through play, story times and circle time activities.

According to Stopbullying.gov, the following are ways in helping YOUNG CHILDREN and YOUNG ADULTS get along with others:

YOUNG CHILDREN:

Parents, school staff, and other adults can help young children develop skills for getting along with others in age-appropriate ways.

- Model positive ways for young children to make friends. For example, practice pleasant ways that children can ask to join others in play and take turns in games. Coach older children to help reinforce these behaviors as well. Praise children for appropriate behavior. Help young children understand what behaviors are friendly.
- Help young children learn the consequences of certain actions in terms they can understand. For example, say "if you don't share, other children may not want to play with you".
- Set clear rules for behavior and monitor children's interactions carefully. Step in quickly to stop aggressive behavior or redirect it before it occurs. Encourage young children to tell an adult if they are treated in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable, upset or unhappy, or if they witness other children being harmed.
- Use age-appropriate consequences for aggressive behavior. Young children should be encouraged to say "I'm sorry" whenever they hurt a peer, even accidentally. The apology should also be paired with an action. For example, young children could help rebuild a knocked over block structure or replace a torn paper or crayons with new ones.

YOUNG ADULTS:

- Encourage young adults to talk to someone they trust.
- Help the young adult to determine if the behavior violates policies.
- Young adults may be reluctant to seek help for cyberbullying, although they do recognize it as a serious issue for their age group. Encourage young adults to [report cyberbullying](#).

FTKP Training

- Management of FTKP takes every step to try and eliminate bullying from the Playcare. The policy statement is very clear that we will not allow bullying to take place at our Playcare and that any incidents of bullying that do occur are taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately.
- The management of FTKP monitors the incidents of bullying that occur and reviews the effectiveness of the policy on a regular basis. We keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying and we use these incidents as a measure for the effectiveness of our policies and procedures.
- The management of FTKP will respond within 10 days to any request from parents or staff relating to incidents of bullying.

Anti-Bullying Procedure

The role of management

- It is the responsibility of the management team to implement the Playcare anti-bullying strategy and to ensure that all staff are aware of the policy and knows how to deal with incidents of bullying.
- The management team ensures that all staff has sufficient training to be equipped to deal with any incidents of bullying.
- The management team will set the attitude tone of the Playcare and serve as role models. When children feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming setting, bullying is far less likely to occur.

The role of staff

- Staff in the Playcare take all forms of bullying seriously and are to intervene to prevent incidents from taking place.
- For all incidents of bullying behavior, an incident form should be completed. A discussion will then be made between a member of the management team and the parent of the child that was bullied and the parent of the child who was doing the bullying.

The role of parents

- Parents, who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact a member of the management team.
- Parents have a responsibility to support the Playcare's anti bullying policy and actively encourage their child to be a positive member of our center.
- Parents are expected to help develop their child's social skills at all times, in support of the Playcare's philosophy.