

Reviewing the Guidance and Touch Policy

At this point, your program's guidance and touch policy probably feels very familiar to you. You might even take it for granted. It can be a very valuable exercise to focus on reading and reflecting on the policy and what it means for your staff members. Get a copy of your program's policy. Read it carefully. Then answer the questions below. Use this time to think about common concerns you experience about staff members' guidance practices. Think about how you typically respond and how you might respond to situations you have not encountered yet. Begin to think about how you can promote positive guidance in your program. You will learn more about this in the next course.

1. Are there parts of the policy that staff members tend to struggle with? Why? Under what circumstances?
2. What parts of the policy do staff members have misconceptions or fears about? For example, do they think they might get in trouble for hugging a toddler or holding a kindergartener's hand?
3. What support or training do you think staff members will need to follow the policy? Think about new staff and seasoned staff.
4. How do the supports you provide differ if a new staff member violates a policy versus a seasoned staff member?
5. Are there things you don't know about the policy? For example, are there any "gray areas" or inconsistencies that you have a hard time discussing with staff? What would make things clearer for you?

Now take some time to think about standard operating procedures in your program. Talk to your manager about your role in enforcing these procedures. Think ahead about how you might respond in these situations:

1. What is your role in helping staff members understand and follow policies related to releasing children to adults other than parents?
2. What is your role in helping staff members keep children safe on trips outside the building (stroller walks, field trips, etc.)? How will you help staff prepare for these trips (permissions needed, paperwork, supervision, etc.)?
3. What can parents do if they want to visit the program or classroom? What is your role in greeting, interacting with, and supporting families?