



Penn State Better Kid Care Distance Education Lesson

Avoid Behavior Problems – Teach Self-Control

Professional Development Code K2C2
Child Development Associate CDA 3

Avoid Behavior Problems – Teach Self-Control

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Assignments & Required Forms



Lesson Instructions

1. Watch the educational video.
2. Read the workbook.
 - Plan time each day to work on the lesson.
 - Set a goal to complete the lesson in about two weeks.
3. Complete all assignment pages and forms in ink. Save a copy of all completed work for your files in case there is a need to refer to your saved copy. We will not return incomplete lessons. You will be notified if lessons are incomplete.
4. We encourage the use of distance education lessons in staff meetings; however, all assignments need to be completed independently. Copied answers, “does not apply” answers, or incomplete assignments are considered not complete.
5. **To avoid delays in processing your registration for this professional development, be sure to go over the check list on the Registration Form, include all items, and mail to :**

Better Kid Care Program
The Pennsylvania State University
341 North Science Park Road - Suite 208
State College, PA 16803

Please note:

- Two professional development hours will be given for successful completion of this lesson.
- Completed assignments will be checked and returned to you with a certificate of completion.
- Penn State University Better Kid Care Distance Education provides:
 - Continuing Education Units (CEUs)
 - Keystone STARS professional development
 - PA Dept. of Public Welfare required hours
 - Act 48 hours for certified educators
 - Child Development Associate (CDA credential hours)
- Completed assignments must arrive at the Penn State Better Kid Care office for processing at least **6 weeks** before your certification or registration renewal due date.
- The video portion of this lesson was a previous satellite broadcast. Please be aware that some contact information may have changed.
- Discussion questions are included in most lessons. They can be used by a group of staff members in a child care center or group home. They can also be used in planning a family night to help spark discussion among families.
- If you are completing this as a Web-based lesson, please refer to the online instructions at <http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu/AngelUnits/GeneralDirections.html>

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Important Information about This Lesson

Better Kid Care continually strives to improve the distance education materials we develop. The format of this distance education lesson is different from previous lessons. Be sure to have the handouts ready to use with the video portion of the lesson. You will find that you are more actively involved as you complete questionnaires that will help you analyze the level of self-control in children and help you understand developmental progression for helping young children learn self-control skills. You will be encouraged to discuss your results in a group setting. If that is not possible, be thinking of how to apply what you are learning in your child care program.

After you have viewed the video and gone through the handouts, you are ready to begin your assignments. The assignments will involve your active participation as you apply the goals learned in the lesson.

Mail **only** your completed assignments (**not the handouts**) and required forms to the Better Kid Care office for review. See Registration Form for a check list of all items.

Avoid Behavior Problems – Teach Self-Control

Distance Education Lesson Overview

Helping children learn to control their behavior and their bodies are important goals for adults who work with young children. Self-control is a skill that children need when they start school and throughout life.

It's important for child care practitioners to understand what they can realistically expect from young children of various ages. Conflicts often arise when caregivers set expectations too high for a child's developmental level.

This workshop includes a self-assessment of knowledge about the developmental progression of learning self-control skills and individual analyses of children's self-control skills to determine which children need help building these skills. Video segments present the developmental progression of learning self-control from infancy through preschool and activities to do with children to promote self-control.

Distance Education Lesson Objectives

- Participants in this distance education lesson will be able to understand the developmental progression for helping young children learn self-control skills.
- Participants in this distance education lesson will be able to analyze the level of self-control for each child in their care.
- Participants in this distance education lesson will be able to identify three ways to adapt their programs to help children build self-control skills.



Handout 1

Do You Know What To Expect?

Self-control Milestones in Children

At what age can you expect young children to do the following:	Age
Sit still and listen for 5 minutes	
Sit still and listen for 10 minutes	
Sit still and listen for 15 minutes	
Follow a one-step direction	
Follow a two-step direction	
Solve a problem with another child without hitting or hurting	
Handle a frustrating situation without hitting or hurting	
Wait for a turn	
Share a toy with another child	
Help another child	
Deal with some frustration without having a temper tantrum	
Tell others to STOP what they are doing	
Use words (more than just one) to solve a problem with another child	
Stay in one activity area for 5 minutes	
Stay in one activity area for 10 minutes	
Stay in one activity area for 15 minutes	
Understand someone else’s feelings	



Handout 2

Self-Control Skills

	Child's Name					
Think about each child in your care and their level of self-control. Select a few children and check the skills that you have observed in each child. Reflect on the child's developmental abilities and determine what self-control skills are appropriate goals for each child at the bottom of the page. Make extra copies of this page as needed.						
Sit still and listen for 5 minutes						
Sit still and listen for 10 minutes						
Sit still and listen for 15 minutes						
Follow a one-step direction						
Follow a two-step direction						
Solve a problem with another child without hitting or hurting						
Handle a frustrating situation without hitting or hurting						
Wait for a turn						
Share a toy with another child						
Help another child						
Deal with some frustration without having a temper tantrum						
Tell others to STOP what they are doing						
Use words (more than just one) to solve a problem with another child						
Stay in one activity area for 5 minutes						
Stay in one activity area for 10 minutes						
Stay in one activity area for 15 minutes						
Understand someone else's feelings						
Doesn't need help with self-control						
Needs some help with self-control						
Needs lots of help with self-control						



Handout 4

Animal Relaxation Exercises

Children get tense just like adults; more relaxed children are better behaved. Try these fun activities to help children relax and behave better. These exercises use a mix of styles: some are breathing, some relax muscles, and others help children use their muscles, with concentration. Find the style that works best.

Try bunny breathing

Teach the children to breathe like a bunny. Close your mouth and suck air through your nose in three short, sharp breaths and then slowly breathe out through your mouth. Your nose will wiggle like a bunny. Great refresher when you are tired.

Belly-breathe with a friend

Ask a child to lie on the floor with a friend's head on his tummy and see if he can make his friend's head go up and down as he breathes. This gets kids to breathe deeply.

Be a rag-doll or a popped balloon

Ask children to act these things out. This helps them let their muscles go loose.

Ask children to pretend to carry a very fragile gift to someone.

This is good for a child who was acting wild to help her to practice control and concentration.

Jawbreaker

Ask the child to pretend she has a jawbreaker in her mouth and to press down hard with her teeth and then let it go. Then press again and let it go.

Turn the lights down and ask the children to lie down on the floor.

Tell children a story to imagine in their head. Imagine you are a sailboat — get children to imagine the sounds, smells, sights and feelings of being a sailboat. This works well for older preschoolers.

Relaxation exercises can be fun, and as a bonus, they help get everyone back on their best behavior.

Handout 5

More Ways to Help Children Build Self-Control

Here are some more ways to help children gain the self-control they need in life:

Learn and watch for signs that children are becoming stressed. Each child will have his own signs. You can help by tuning into each child and providing some support before he becomes overstressed and loses his self-control entirely. For the children in your care, notice what behavior happened before the problem, so you know what to look for next time.

Do you teach and encourage children to use self-talk? Many children talk to themselves especially as they reach the later preschool years. Later, children learn to do it silently in their heads. Experts have noticed that children with self-control problems often don't show this behavior. You can help children learn to use self-talk by modeling talking about a problem out loud. You might look outside on a rainy day and ask aloud if it is too wet to go outside and then talk aloud about your thinking.

Games are a great way to help children practice exercising their self-control muscles. For older preschoolers, try the old game "red light/green light." It is best to play this game outside. You stand a distance from the children. The children are told to walk but not run when you say "green light" and to stop the moment you say "red light." The object is to get across to you. If you don't like playing competitive games you can have the children play the game in a circle and just go around the circle. The goal is to have children get better and better at stopping at red lights.

Another fun way to build self-control is through musical games that ask kids to control their voices and movements. Slowing down and speeding up can be practiced with music; many children love

marching faster and faster and slower and slower, or singing louder and louder and then softer and softer.

Expect children who are going through stressful times at home, such as a move, divorce, or birth of baby, to have less ability to control themselves. Respond by providing extra support. Reading books together can really help. Your local librarian can suggest books on these topics and many others. Share these books at a quiet time with the child. It can be such a comfort to children to know that they are not alone, and you can help them learn to identify their feelings. Suggest that they do drawings or paintings about their feelings. This way they learn to express their feelings in a more positive way.

Experts have observed that many children with problems developing self-control are also not strong dramatic players. You can help these children develop needed skills by encouraging them to take on roles in play. You can provide props for play that you think they might find interesting, and if you are comfortable you can take a role in the play, and help them take their own role. This is helpful with children who don't seem to be thinking before they act.

A simple self-control song or rhyme can remind kids what to do when they are mad:

**When I'm mad or when I'm sad
It's not OK to hit.**

Make sure you have a soft private space in your child care room for the children to use when they need time to themselves. Encourage children to go to this place when they need to be by themselves and have a break. We all need time to ourselves once in a while.



Handout 6

Everyday Transitions

Make a list of the transitions that the children in your child care program make each day.

Transitions	Notes



PARENTS COUNT

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR PARENTS



Helping Your Children Learn Self-Control

Teaching your child to handle her feelings in a positive way without temper tantrums, biting, and hitting is one of the most important jobs for parents. If you think of misbehaviors as a chance to teach self-control, you can help your child grow.

Self-control

What is self-control? Self-control is the ability to think before you act, rather than being controlled by your feelings. Self-control means that a person takes time to think about the consequences before choosing an action instead of acting on feelings alone. You might ask your child to wait calmly in line for a turn on the slide.

Children who are learning self-control will be able to stop themselves from pushing and shoving the children ahead of them because they understand they might lose a turn on the slide from this misbehavior. Children with self-control can make decisions that lead to positive things like having fun on the slide.

Self-control matters

When children do not have much self-control they will do things without thinking about the consequences. This means they often end up facing the negative consequences of their own impulsive behavior. When the child is young, this causes many

frustrations. As the child grows the problems can grow as well and the consequences can become more and more serious even leading to self-destructive behavior like the use of drugs and alcohol. So it is important to start young to build the skills that children will need later in life.

What can I do to help my child?

It is never too late to help a child build more self-control, but self-control lessons start in the first year of life.

Birth through toddler years

The beginning of self-control comes when your baby cries and you respond. Many people believe that you can spoil babies by responding to their cries. Research shows that when you respond predictably to an infant who cries, later on that baby is likely to cry less rather than more. Get to know your baby's style of soothing. For instance, some children need movement to calm down and love

to be rocked. As your baby grows he may begin rocking himself back and forth in his crib. Allow your child to comfort and calm himself in this way.

Toddlerhood is a demanding time both for parent and child. Many toddlers become frustrated because they may have trouble making themselves understood or may be too little to do the things they want to do. Expect toddlers to have little self-control.

You can help your child behave at her best by keeping her on a regular schedule as much as possible. Help her to get enough rest and serve regular meals and snacks. Watch carefully for signs that your child is becoming hungry and overtired. At this age children are very distractible — you can redirect them to another activity when they are doing something unsafe. If your child has a temper tantrum, make sure she's safe and keep her from hurting herself or others. After the tantrum is over she'll need your comfort and support. Teach some basic words, such as NO and STOP, to use in difficult situations. These words will

help your child feel safer. The goal of self-control at this age is to help children begin to use words to express themselves.

The preschool years

Preschoolers are eager to play with children their own age, but this play is rarely smooth. The goal of this stage of development is to learn how to talk about a problem and solve it with words rather than aggression. Even a three-year-old can begin to use conflict resolution to solve problems with an adult's help. Encourage children to say what the problem is and ask them to come up with ideas for a solution. The solutions that kids come up with can be wonderfully creative. As long as all the children involved agree, let them try out their own solutions.

This is the time to introduce family chores. Simple jobs like setting the table and putting away laundry are good for children of this age. Research has found that children who have regular chores from the age of 4 are more successful in early adulthood.

Expect that children will still have trouble waiting for a turn and sharing, but that they will become

better at doing these things. When your child shows self-control make sure you notice and praise him.

Stress and self-control

Expect that children will lose some of their ability to control themselves when they are under stress. Normal stresses, such as the birth of a sibling or the start of a new child care program, can strain children's controls. Other stresses include a parent's job loss, divorce, and death of a family member. These also can make it harder for a child to manage her feelings.

When you are under stress it can be hard to talk about painful things with your child. What most children need is a chance to express their sad and mad feelings. There are a number of books written for children on these difficult situations. You can ask your local librarian for suggestions. Your child care practitioner can be a great source of support for your child during changes and stressful times. Let them know what your child is experiencing, so that they can better understand and respond to your child.

The work of helping your child build self-control continues through the elementary school years and into the teen years. Children learn to be responsible by handling homework, family chores, and obligations to friends and family. Starting early and teaching self-control throughout your child's developing years is the best way to give the gift of healthy self-control.

Early to bed

No one is at their best when they don't get enough sleep. Most of us are crabby and irritable. Did you know that many preschool children are not getting enough rest? Most people are surprised to learn that it is recommended that children of this age get eleven to thirteen hours of sleep each night. Often children are not even getting the lowest recommended amount. We can't expect our children to behave at their best when they are not getting enough sleep. So make sure your children get the sleep they need.

Discussion Questions

1. It can be hard to have realistic expectations for young children since there is such a large range of normal behaviors. Discuss how this impacts the work you do with the children in your care.
2. It helps when you expect misbehaviors and social problems. Talk about treating them as opportunities for learning.
3. Talk about the importance of releasing energy for helping children's self-control. What activities can you plan that would help the children in your care release energy?
4. Observing children is very important. Talk about how you can observe children for their ability to control themselves.
5. Planning for successful self-control was discussed in the show. How can you arrange your child care day to give children the best chance at controlling themselves in your program?
6. Scaffolding is helping children move from one stage to the next. Talk about the ways in which you scaffold children's behavior.
7. Discuss three skills of self-control and share ways that you can work on these skills with individual children in your child care.
8. What is the foundation of self-control for infants?
9. How can infants, toddlers, and preschoolers learn gentle touch?
10. What activities can you do to help preschool-age kids learn that they can stop themselves and control their voices?



Assignments

Name
Address
City/State/ZIP
County
Phone Number

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1. Review what you wrote on Handout 2 about Self-Control Skills. Briefly tell us what you learned about your group of children.

2. Think about two changes, based on what you learned about children's self-control, that you would like to try. Put your ideas to work with the children, and then tell us what happens. Remember: children learn self-control skills over time.

a. Describe the first change you would like to try with the children.

What do you hope to accomplish by making the change?

Describe what the children did.



Assignments *(continued)*

Name

Tell us what you could do to improve or change the outcome of your idea.

b. Describe the second change you would like to try with the children.

What do you hope to accomplish by making the change?

Describe what the children did.

Tell us what you could do to improve or change the outcome of your idea.



Assignments *(continued)*

Name

3. What can you do to lay the groundwork for self-control for the children in your group?

4. Review the Animal Relaxation Exercises listed in your workbook. Try one of the exercises with a child or a group of children and tell us about it.

What exercise did you try?

Why did you choose this exercise?

What was the result of teaching this exercise to a child or a group of children?



Tell Us More About You...

Since we can't meet face to face, we are interested in knowing more about you. This information is very helpful to the early education specialists who review your assignments. Please return this sheet with your assignment pages.

1. Which of the following best describes you?

- I provide child care in my own home
- I provide child care in someone else's home
- I work in a child care center
- I'm thinking about becoming a child care professional
- Other, please describe

2. How long have you been a child care professional? _____

3. What are the ages of the children in your care? Check all that apply.

- Birth to 12 months
- 13-24 months
- 25-36 months
- 3 years
- 4-5 years
- 6-8 years
- 9 years and over
- Special needs

4. Please feel free to tell us a little about yourself and/or the work you do with children.

5. Other comments (please use the back of this page if necessary).

**Thank you for taking the time to help us make a connection to you
and for being part of our program!**



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Web site: www.betterkidcare.psu.edu

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