

# SOUTHWEST HRA HEAD START

Section: Early Childhood Development  
Subject: Discipline Policy  
Revised: February, 1998

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## **REGULATION REFERENCE:**

NAEYC Guide to Accreditation by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs  
45CFR Part 1304 (Nov. 1996) Performance Standards 1304.52(h)(1)(iv)

## **POLICY:**

The Southwest HRA Head Start Program provides an environment which encourages appropriate behavior in children and, also, instills acceptance in each child. Our major goals are to instill high self esteem and to teach children how to get along in a group situation, keeping in mind that our expectations of child behavior are realistic and that we are giving them generous amounts of love and affection. We accomplish these goals with a variety of techniques:

1. The adults set good examples for the children to model. All adults will use pleasant and low tone of voice, speaking to individual children eye to eye on their level.
2. The Teaching Staff let the children know what is expected of them by teaching them the rules. We express the rules in a positive way—the children are told **what** to do rather than what **not** to do.
3. We let the children know they are doing a good job when they are behaving appropriately (examples: “I like the way you are sharing.” or “Thank you for putting the toys away.”)
4. We redirect a child that is off task to do something else or “help” another child or adult with another activity.
5. As a last resort, we use “time out.” “Time out” is not a punishment, but the opportunity for a child to regain “self-control” needed to participate in the classroom activities. The teaching staff may use the terms, for example, “losing your self-control” and “getting your self-control back,” when talking to a child during the procedure. Before using “time out,” the staff person will warn the child that he will have to take “time out” if he is unable to participate properly, and give the child the opportunity to correct the behavior on his own. The adult will be sure the child understands why he is being asked to set away from classroom activities. For example: “John, the others can’t see the book when you do that. Please sit at a table and come back when you are ready to listen without disturbing others.” The teacher will choose a place for “time out” that is a short distance from the activity the

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child has had difficulty in participating, making sure there is nothing the child can hurt himself on, such as electrical outlets. **The child is never placed out of sight. There should not be a designated chair or area for “time out” in any classroom!** The child will be asked to return to the group when he/she feels ready to participate. A general “rule of thumb” is that “time out” should not exceed one minute for each year of age (3 minutes for a 3 year old, 5 minutes for a 5 year old). If a child chooses to remain in “time out” for a longer period (i.e., 6-8 minutes), it is okay. When the child rejoins the group, the teacher should use a positive comment to encourage the child’s future acceptable behavior, such as “We’re glad you decided to be with us.”

6. Frequent disruptive and/or aggressive behavior of a preschool child may indicate physical or emotional problems which the Head Start program must take steps to address, beginning with referral to the Assistant Director for Health Services. Course of action then could include: conferences with parent(s), referrals to appropriate professionals, observations by these professionals, and/or transferring the child to another classroom in the program (where possible). Failure of the parent(s) to cooperate with these procedures could result in termination of the child from the Head Start Program with referral to an agency where child’s needs will be met.

ACYF/HS 4.02 sets forth the policy forbidding the use of corporal punishment and total isolation as disciplinary measures in the Head Start Program.

**The Southwest HRA Head Start Program does not allow ANY physical use of discipline such as spanking or slapping even if the child is your own (this applies to staff as well as Head Start parents). This pertains to the classroom, playground, and on field trips (class, medical, or dental appointments).**