

## **Positive Discipline For Foster/Adoptive Children**

### **Supported Family Living-Lakemary Center**

Discipline is an educational process of establishing an orderly way of life which will protect and maintain the growth of the individual in the context of their environment and will be acceptable to society. It is an essential part of child rearing and when used positively contributes to the healthy growth and development of a child and establishes positive patterns of behaviors in preparation for adulthood.

Emphasis is placed upon encouraging the child to develop self-control, self-responsibility, self-direction, thus becoming self-disciplined. Its purpose is the education of the child to help the child grow toward the child's full potential.

Positive discipline provides the child encouragement, a sense of satisfaction, and helps the child understand the consequences of their behavior when used for the purpose of guiding and teaching the child. Effective, positive discipline imposes behavioral limits on the child which can provide the child a sense of security, order, predictability, and understanding of their surroundings. This type of discipline effectively enlists the child's help rather than locking the child and adult into a power struggle or adversary, punishing relationship, and promotes the child's discovery of those values that will be of the greatest benefit to the child, both now and in the future. This type of discipline takes explanation understanding, patience, and consistency.

There are laws which protect adults against actions which many children must endure and suffer as part of discipline. Many children who are in foster care have previously suffered too much physical pain, fear humiliation, and emotional stress. We cannot perpetuate this when we assume the role of Supported Family Living providers. As providers and as families we must accept and assume that positive discipline is an essential part of developing secure, self-disciplined children.

Therefore, Lakemary does not view as positive, acceptable discipline any action administered in a fashion which may cause any child to suffer physical, or emotional damage. Disciplinary acts which cause pain, such as hitting, including spanking, and hand slapping, beatings, shaking, cursing, threatening, binding, closing, prolonged isolation, denial of meals, derogatory remarks about the child or their family, threatening her/him with removal from your home, threatening to call the worker, are not acceptable.

Building in positive and negative consequences for the child's behaviors is the approach to discipline which is most effective in aiding the child in the controlling of their own behaviors. Consequences need to be related to the behavior and is

administered by the caretaker in a thoughtful manner which is sensitive to the child's needs.

For those situations where discipline is warranted, restrictions of privileges or withholding of rewards are often effective. Time outs, room time (both based on the child's age and offense), extra chores, loss of recreational activity or privileges, are all examples of this. It is always important to tie the punishment directly to the offense. This is called using logical or natural consequences.

When a child become a threat to himself or to others it may be necessary to use physical restraint. The child's support team will review the child's behavioral history to determine if physical restraint is necessary to meet the child's needs. If it is determined that the child needs that type of support the Supported Family Living Providers must complete MANDT. If MANDT is used the Supported Family Living Provider will complete a physical restraint form and contact the Supported Family Living Coordinator. If the Supported Family Living Provider needs to provide MANDT in an emergency situation and have not received MANDT training the family will be enrolled in the next available MANDT class.

As a Supported Family Living Provider it is important to remember that a child's behavior needs extra understanding and their training takes more time. Give him/her the basic rule of your home and their responsibilities as part of the family. Accept his as s/he is at the moment, not as you would want him/her to be. S/he may try to shock you. Stay cool, calm, consistent, and keep your sense of humor.

An essential element of all service planning will be focusing on meeting needs and providing appropriate supports. When this process is successful, there will typically be fewer behavior problems. When a child does show indications of greater needs for support, Lakemary SFL staff will be available to offer suggestions or consultation. SFL staff will work closely with the child's Service Coordinator to develop supports for the child and the family.

Our signature below indicates that we have read the Lakemary Center policy for positive discipline in the Supported Family Living Homes. We agree to abide by these procedures at all times and for all children placed in our home.
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SFL Provider:	Date:
SFL Provider:	Date:
Caregiver in the home:	Date:
Caregiver in the home:	Date:
Informal Visitation Provider:	Date:
Informal Visitation Provider:	Date: