



Tips for Tots



Tip #5: My Kids. Your Kids. Managing Competing Needs

Strategies

Did you know?

Relationships shape the lives of young children and serve as a template for their own growth and development. Managing the needs of the children in your care (including your own children) provides great opportunities to help develop respectful, responsive relationships between child and adult as well as between children. Children develop a sense of who they are through everyday interactions. It is through shared experiences like the resolving of conflicts that children learn what's important in the world and how they can influence their relationships with other people. This helps children to gain a common understanding of which behaviors are acceptable, forgivable, and possible and those that are not. Children in a diverse group setting have the additional benefit of finding ways to contribute to group cohesiveness as they navigate through the opportunities and feedback each relationship provides.

- Be patient with your own children. They may “test” you more often when other children are in your care. Acknowledge their feelings, clearly state expectations & provide individual support.
- Have realistic expectations of your own children. Do not expect your children to be behavior role models. This is unreasonable.
- Give your children their own personal space. Keep children out of your child’s bedroom. Consider using a lock on the door or other barrier such as a baby gate. When children are to share living spaces such as bedrooms, clearly communicate where each child’s personal space begins and ends. For example, one child has the top drawers of the dresser & the other the bottom.
- Create and enforce rules. Create rules that incorporate respecting each other and each other's property. Consequences should be related to the rule and teach a lesson but not punish. For example, if a child rips up a book the child helps repair it.
- Give each child individual attention. Spending ten to fifteen minutes with a child can make each child feel special and give you the opportunity to connect with them. It is important that your own children get additional one- on- one time with you when daycare children go home.
- Give children the rights to their own possessions. Sharing is important, but children should not have to share personally owned toys. Large, communal items like a sandbox play table, or gym set can be shared.
- Don't make everything equal. There is no such thing as perfect equality in a group. An older child will inevitably be allowed to do some things a younger child can't. Instead of trying to make children equals, treat each child as a unique and special individual. Use child’s name, notice his likes/dislikes, and build on his strengths.
- Allow your child some special privileges. Daycare children will not see this as unfair or special treatment because they get similar privileges at home. For example, have a special greeting that acknowledges your child’s relationship with you and allow your child to call you “mom” while others use your name.

Resources:

Keys to Parenting Twins, by Karen Kerkhoff Gromada and Mary C. Hurlburt (1992) Hauppauge
Relationships, the Heart of Quality Care, by Amy C. Baker and Lynn A. Manfredi-Petitt

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