



## Disciplinary Policy Agreement

Foster/adoptive parents, employees, and any other persons partnering with AGL must read, sign and adhere to this *Disciplinary Policy Agreement* before engaging with the children in our care. Each year this agreement must be read and sign by current Foster/adoptive parents indicating that they will abide by AGL's discipline policy.

The children we care for have experienced some form of abuse. They have learned negative behavior by residing in violent, cruel, or demeaning homes. AGL's goal is to always provide each child with a positive home that demonstrates patience, understanding, and love.

AGL is partnering with you as a foster/adoptive parent to protect children from abusive, inappropriate and ineffective behavior. Discipline techniques should be used as teaching strategies to help children manager their behaviors in a socially appropriate manner and assume responsibility for their actions.

In doing so, once you impose a discipline method, you must explain to the child why he/she is receiving the discipline. This will help teach the child what is and is not acceptable behavior.

All discipline must be based on the child's age and level of development. **Infants (birth to 17 months) do not require and may not receive any form of discipline.** Infants are unable to self-regulate their emotions and behaviors, and therefore, are not able to benefit from discipline as a teaching method. Infants may be redirected from undesirable behaviors, such as moving an infant's hand away from your nose, ears, or hair; however, they may never receive "consequences" for their actions.

The child's Service Plan will describe the types of discipline that may be used. Each time the Service Plan is reviewed, the Service Plan Team will discuss what discipline strategies are most appropriate for the child, and any strategies that are likely to be counterproductive. Caregivers

must always follow the discipline plan outlined in the child's Service Plan.

Only an approved caregiver, who is familiar with the child's behavior and personality, and who is already known to the child, may discipline a child in care. A child in care may never be disciplined by another child in care or youth, regardless of their relative ages (unless a parenting adolescent is placed in a foster home with their own child).

AGL promotes discipline practices and Behavior Support and Management (BSM) Interventions that encourage respect, healing, and positive behavior using a strength-based, trauma-informed approach that fosters the opportunity for healthy growth and development.

### **Appropriate Discipline Techniques**

Praise and encouragement should be used to guide the child's behavior. Providing the necessary level of supervision is also key to managing the child's behavior. Increasing supervision when a child begins to act out may prevent a worsening of the child's behavior. The goal of behavior management is to prevent misbehaviors by setting up an environment that encourages a child to behave correctly.

**When a child does misbehave, appropriate discipline measures must be used to correct the behavior** include time-in, natural consequences, logical consequences, restriction of privileges, productive work projects, and writing essays.

**Discipline practices that are non-punitive, developmentally appropriate and based on the needs of each child are required.** AGL's permitted discipline practices include:

1. Using kind and understanding discipline techniques that fosters praise and encouragement.
2. Rely on simple age-appropriate rules and expectations for appropriate behavior and rewards.
3. Ensure that discipline is handled without bias or prolonged delay so that the child understands the relationship between their behavior and the consequences.
4. Remove from situation to help the child regain control for reasonable periods of time. When possible, allow child to help establish limitations.
5. Be sure that behavioral issues are **treated individually and privately.**

### **Inappropriate Discipline Techniques**

Caregivers must never spank a child in care. Caregivers are prohibited from using any form of corporal punishment with the children in care. Many of the children we care for have experienced or been exposed to physical violence. Using corporal punishment, the background, and experiences of a child in care make the use of corporal punishment an especially terrifying experience. **AGL does not tolerate the use of corporal punishment with any of the children in care.**

Additionally, children in care may never be pinched, slapped (on the face, hands, or any other body part), or pushed. Obviously, caregivers may not bite, scratch, kick, or hit a child in care. Caregivers may not pull or grab a child's hair or apply a twisting force to a child's limbs. Caregivers may never intentionally cause pain or physical discomfort to a child as a form of discipline. Caregivers may never use "aversive stimuli" (such as making a loud noise or exposing a child to an unpleasant smell) as a form of discipline. **No child of any age may be shaken for any reason.**

AGL's prohibits the following disciplinary approaches:

1. Use or threat of corporal, degrading or vindictive punishment (spanking, slapping, shaking, kicking, biting, hitting).
2. Humiliation and screaming (use of words or actions that belittle, shame, or degrade the child).
3. Use of derogatory remarks or verbal abusive comments regarding the child, or child's biological parents/family (you are stupid, your family is a misfit).
4. Threatening child with loss of food, shelter, or any other necessities as a punishment (including, but not limited to using snacks as a reward or punishment, sufficient sleep, clothing, or bedding).
5. Keep child out of school.
6. Punishment related to toilet training including, but not limited to bed wetting.
7. Denying communication or visitation with biological family as a punishment.
8. Allowing others, not approved by AGL to discipline child (including a child, unapproved caregiver, or babysitter).
9. Punishing child who was not involved in the behavior.
10. Denial of services required in the child's service plan.
11. Assign physical strenuous exercise or unproductive work solely as punishment or to demean (running laps, sit ups, moving bricks, etc.).
12. Requires a child to remain silent for long periods of times.
13. Close or lock a child in a closet, shed, room, inside/outside home.
- 14. Discipline of any type is inappropriate and prohibited for infants.**

Caregivers may not require children in care to maintain a certain physical position (such as kneeling or holding their arms above their head), or do physical exercises (such as sit-ups, push-ups, or running laps) as a form of discipline. Caregivers may not assign a child unproductive work projects. Caregivers may not require a child in care to be silent or motionless for inappropriately long periods of time. Caregivers may not use or threaten to use a physical restraint as a form of discipline.

Caregivers may never place anything on or in a child's mouth (such as soap or tape) as a form of discipline. Caregivers may not use mechanical restraints on a child (such as tying rope around a child's hands, legs, or any other body part). Caregivers may not place a child in a dark room, bathroom, or closet, or confine a child to a highchair, box, or other furniture as a form of discipline. **Caregivers may never discipline a child for bed-wetting, soiling their clothes, or any other action related to toilet training.**

Caregivers may never ridicule, verbally abuse, yell at, curse at, or threaten any child in care. Caregivers may not make derogatory or humiliating comments about a child in care, or their birth family, ethnic group, or racial group. Caregivers may not use cruel or sarcastic humor. Caregivers may not emotionally reject a child or threaten to have the child removed from their current foster home due to misbehavior. (If a child's behavior causes their foster parents to question their ability to care for the child, they must discuss this with their caseworkers. They may *not* threaten the child with loss of placement in their home. The caseworker will work with the foster parents to support placement in the current home or arrange another placement if the current foster parents are unable to meet the child's needs.)

Caregivers may never deny or limit the rights of any child in care, as described in the hand-out entitled “Client’s Rights.” Caregivers may never deny a child food, water, shelter, medical or dental care, sufficient sleep, clean clothing, personal hygiene items or bedding as a form of discipline. Caregivers may not deny a child visitation or communication with their biological family as a form of discipline.

Food that is required to meet the child’s basic nutritional needs may not be associated in any way with reward or punishment or used as part of a behavior management program. This includes any desserts or snacks used to meet a child’s nutritional needs (such as calcium supplied by ice cream or protein supplied by nuts).

Caregivers may not suspend or restrict any actions specified by the child’s Service Plan, such as counseling appointments, after-school tutoring, or sports practice.

**Investigating Allegations of Inappropriate Discipline**

Staff, foster parents, caregivers, contractors, interns, and volunteers must report any suspicion of inappropriate or prohibited discipline to AGL for immediate investigation. If you use an inappropriate or prohibited discipline technique, in the heat of the moment or in a lapse of judgment, you must inform AGL immediately.

By sign this form, I \_\_\_\_\_  
have read and I understand that I must follow AGL’s discipline policy. I also understand that I must report any suspicious of child abuse or neglect to the Child Abuse Hotline and to AGL immediately.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/ Role Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Role Date