Guiding Young Children's Behavior

Segment 5: Responding to Behavior Problems and Resolving Conflicts

TRANSCRIPT for Objective 3

Firm reminders and choice-giving

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Host: A third option for dealing with misbehavior is to use firm reminders and choice-giving, particularly when you need to keep children safe or when children have been repeatedly reminded of the rules without success. There are two parts to this process. First, you use a firm tone to remind the child of the appropriate rule. Second, you provide the child with a choice for performing a more appropriate behavior. A teacher might say, "You'll either need to stop throwing materials or come out of the science area. It's your choice." If the child does not stop this behavior, the teacher can follow up with," You're still throwing materials, so you made a choice to come out of the science area." A firm reminder and choice giving should be used very sparingly. That makes it more effective when the children hear you use it. The children will learn that when you use a firm voice, what you are saying is particularly important and serious. Of course, when we say firm voice we aren't saying an angry or loud voice, but simply firm. Here are some examples of times when you might consider using firm reminders and choice giving. In this picture Anthony has just hit another child, Cedric. This is the third time he's been in a conflict that day. The teacher would say firmly to Anthony, "You can't hit. You need to either play nicely with others on the slide or play somewhere else. It's your choice." In this picture Steven is bothering peers during a story. The teacher has spoken to him twice already about this. She says, firmly, "Steven, you'll need to sit and listen to the story without bothering people or you'll need to go find something else to do. It's your choice." In these examples the teacher is firm, but gives children a choice, so they have a chance to get their own behavior under control.