Components of Conscious Discipline

1. Composure
2. Encouragement
3. Assertiveness
4. Choices
5. Positive Intent
6. Empathy
7. Consequences
Connections to Children and Families

• Maria’s story...
Component #1: Composure

**Skill of Composure:** Being the Person You Want Others to Become

**Big Idea:** No one can make you angry without your permission

**Self Control** = Being in control of your own thoughts and feelings. It is your first priority as a model of behavior.
Principles 1 and 2 of Composure

1. Composure is a prerequisite skill adults need before disciplining children.
   1. S.T.A.R = Stop and Smile, Take a deep breath And Relax
   2. Pretzel
   3. Drain
   4. Balloon

2. Healthy, secure relationships require that we control our own upset. No one can make us angry without our permission.
   - Whomever you have placed in charge of your feelings, you have placed in control of you.
http://consciousdiscipline.com/videos/
How to Manage Your Emotions
Principle #3 of Composure

3. Start the day the brain smart way and implement stress reduction activities.

a. Activity to Unite (Family Handshake)
b. Activity to Disengage the stress response (Breathing, stretching, STAR)
c. Activity to Connect the children to the teacher/each other/family members (Good morning song)
d. Activity to Commit oneself to learning (Today I will.....)
Principle #4 of Composure

4. Your job is to keep the environment safe so children can grow and learn. The child’s job is to help you keep it safe.

“Jose, pushing Kristin is hurtful. My job is to keep you safe. Your job is to help me keep you safe. What could you do now that would be helpful instead of hurtful?”
Component #2: Encouragement

**Skill of Encouragement**: We are all in this together! The power of unity.

**Big Idea**: Create a sense of belonging and interdependence for all children.

**Praise** versus **Encouragement**

- Praise places our personal judgments on who we think they should be
- Encouragement is about accepting children for who they are

“Praise is about forcing our judgments of who we think they should be onto our children. Encouragement is about accepting children for who they are.”

- Becky Bailey, 2000
Encouragement

1. Routines and rituals create safety and security.

2. Rituals—Have connection as their goal. (I Love You Rituals)
   They must occur in the same location, at the same time and for the same reason of connection.

3. **Noticing** children’s contributions to others, by saying,
   “You ___________ so ___________. That was ________________.”

4. **Effective praise** relies on **describing**, not judging.
   1. If you notice their strengths, you teach them about their abilities. If you encourage their contributions, you teach them the importance of sharing their gifts with others.
   2. Children want to be seen, not judged.
Statements to encourage internal confidence instead of external pleasing behaviors

Describing statements: (You did it or Look at You!)
- “You put your toys away. That was helpful”
- “You did it! You put your trash in the trash can.”
- “You built a tall tower. Look at you! That took effort.”

Giving positive messages about the child’s actions.
- “That was helpful, when you gave her a book.”
- “That was thoughtful to give him a tissue.”
- “That took a lot of time to build that tower.”
- “You used a lot of blue in your picture.”
Component #3: Assertiveness

Skills of Assertiveness: Saying “No” and Being Heard: Setting Limits Respectfully

Big Idea: Be Respectful

- http://consciousdiscipline.com/videos/

  Shifting from Fear to Love
### Which “voice” do children hear more?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Am I being.....</th>
<th>Assertive</th>
<th>Passive</th>
<th>Aggressive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intent</td>
<td>• Clarity</td>
<td>Avoids conflict through pleasing</td>
<td>Avoids conflict through dominating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone</td>
<td>Just Do it.</td>
<td>Asking Permission</td>
<td>Or else!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Within</td>
<td>Given away</td>
<td>Taken from others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings</td>
<td>Owned with Direct expression</td>
<td>Projected with indirect expression</td>
<td>Projected with indirect expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Usable, what to do</td>
<td>Non-usuable, confusing</td>
<td>Non-usuable, attacking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief</td>
<td>I am enough</td>
<td>I am not worthy</td>
<td>You are not worthy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focus your attention on what you want the child to do.

_____________________ is sitting with his leg crossed. He is ready to listen.

_____________________ is reading her book quietly. She is being helpful.

_____________________ is walking in line without touching or talking. He is being kind.

_____________________ is using an inside voice. Inside voices help us be safe.
Assertiveness

• When you are upset, you are always focused on what you don’t want.

Be clear when you tell your children what you want. Specificity and assertiveness are essential when you address children.

Instead of “STOP HITTING,” think about what you really want them to do, such as “Keep your hands to yourself.” Or teach the child what you want them to be able to communicate, such as “Give me back my paper.” or “Stop! I don’t like it when you call me names.”
Skill: Setting respectful limits

Fear focuses you on what you don’t want, while love focuses you on what you do want.

If you are **aggressive** in setting limits, you act as a bully and model bullying behavior and tactics.

If you are **passive** in setting limits, you are teaching children to allow others to intrude upon them, and you create the victim mentality (learned helplessness).

If you are **assertive** in setting limits, you are communicating directly what you want more of in your classroom and from your children.
I-Messages

“I don’t like it when you________________ (describe the child’s actions).”

“I feel _______________ (use a feeling word) when you ________________ (describe the child’s actions) because _______________ (relate the action to safety).”
Tattling as a teaching tool

Teach children assertiveness instead of helplessness, dependency, aggressiveness or withdrawal strategies.

Children who do not come to the adult for assistance are taking care of the situation the best way they can by hitting, manipulating, teasing, harassing, and only occasionally by using helpful words.

**Example:** A child says, “Logan pushed me.” The teacher responds, “Did you like it?” Usually the answer is no. The teacher responds, “Go tell Logan, ‘Stop! I don’t like it when you push me.’”
Component #4: Choices

Skill: Building self-esteem and willpower
Big idea: Empowering children while setting limits

Principles:

1. The only person you can make change is yourself.
2. Giving your power away sets you up to blame.
3. Ask yourself, “How do I help the child more likely choose ___ to ___,” rather than, “How can I get/make the child do ________.”
Choices

1. The only person you can make change is yourself.

2. Giving your power away sets you up to blame.

- Giving your power away to children sets them up to be “pleasers” or “controllers.” It also sets you up to blame.

- If you change, “Don’t make me have to” into “I’m going to” and you will regain your power as a teacher.
Choices

How do I give children positive choices??

Ask yourself, “How do I help children be more likely to choose to _______,” rather than, “How can I get/make the child do ____.”

Use the following format for two positive choices:

1. Take a deep breath
2. Tell the child, “You have a choice.”
3. List the two choices by saying, “You can do _______ or you can do _______. You may not do ________.”
4. Ask the child to verbalize his/her choice, by saying, “What do you choose?” or “What would be better for you?”
5. Finish by stating the choice again, “You chose _______! You may do that now.”
Component #5 Positive Intent

Skill: Creating Teaching Moments
Big Idea: Diversity is valued

Principles:

1. See the best in others
2. What you offer to others, you strengthen in yourself
3. Children are either extending love or calling for love (help).
4. Attributing negative intent to children teaches “gang readiness” skills.
5. Children cannot behave differently until they are seen differently.
Principles of Positive Intent

1. See the best in others!
2. What you offer to others, you strengthen within yourself.
3. Children are either extending love or calling for love (help).
4. Attributing negative intent to children teaches “gang readiness” skills. (When we define or label a child as bad, mean, selfish, inconsiderate, etc. we are letting other children know who not to play with. Unknowingly, we are helping bad kids find each other and bond. This forms a gang.)
5. Children cannot behave differently until they are seen differently

How do you attribute positive intent?
1. You uphold the highest image of yourself and others.
2. You foster cooperation, a sense of security and responsibility.
3. You set the child up for a teaching moment.
4. You help children handle and embrace diversity.
5. You encourage the child to develop his/her own free will.
6. You model unconditional love.
This is what Positive Intent sounds like:

Follow these steps:
1. State the child’s positive motive (even if you have to “make them up”). “You wanted ______________.”
2. State the skill s/her used to achieve her/his goal. “So you ______________.”
3. Give the child the benefit of the doubt. “You didn’t know the words to use to ______________” or “You didn’t know how to ______________ without being hurtful.”
4. State the limit and why it is needed. “You may not __________! _______ hurts.”
5. Teach the child what you want her/him to do in the situation. “When you want __________, say (or do) ____________________.” “Say it now.”
6. Encourage the child for being willing to try a different approach. “You did it.”
Component #6 Empathy

Skill: Handling the fussing and the fits
Big Idea: Help children accept and process their feelings so as to see the world from other’s perspective.
Principles:

1. The moment is as it is.
2. Resisting the moment as it is creates upset. Upset prevents you from giving empathy to others.
3. Empathy is the heart of emotional intelligence.
4. Empathy is about understanding and joining with others, not taking on the pain of others as your own.
5. Until you feel your feelings, you will not allow children to feel theirs.
Mistakes when using Empathy

1. Sharing similar experiences from your own life
2. Gushing with sympathy
3. Giving “fix-it” advice
4. Offering humor to lighten the situation/affect the mood
5. Reassuring them
Handling the fits and fussing—temper tantrums too!

Just remember to:

1. Reflect back what you see—What their body is doing.
2. Reflect back what you hear—What they are saying.
3. Reflect back what you feel—How you think they are feeling.

Reflecting on what you see means your words are concrete. Reflecting on what you hear means you listened carefully. Reflecting on what you think the child is feeling may require some guesswork, but the child will correct you.
Component #7: Consequences

Skill: Helping children learn from their mistakes
Big Idea: Consequences teach children cause and effect relationships
Principles:
1. Mistakes are opportunities to learn responsibility
2. Punishments and rewards rely on judgment. Consequences rely on reflection.
3. Your intention in administering consequences will determine their effectiveness
4. Consequences delivered with empathy allow children the opportunity to learn how to be responsible for their choices.
Principle #1 of Consequences

1. Mistakes are opportunities to learn responsibility

- When viewing mistakes (poor choices) made by children as bad, the teacher locates the bad guy and punishes him in an attempt to make him feel bad for his choices. The goal of this is to get the child to feel bad in order to get him/her to act better in the future.

- We feel “good” if we are believe we are “right.” We feel “bad” if we believe we are “wrong.” These equates to “pleasing others makes you a good person, and disappointing others makes you bad.”
Principle #2 of Consequences

2. Punishments and rewards rely on judgment. Consequences rely on reflection.

• A reward or punishment is chosen by an adult when s/he judges a child’s behavior to be good or bad, then delivers something good or bad to express that judgment.

• Conversely, children who learn to reflect on their choices and the outcomes that result become conscious of their own actions. With this consciousness they feel empowered, increase their emotional intelligence, learn from their mistakes and become responsible citizens.
Rewards

“Children love rewards! Their work, effort, compliance, and productivity have improved.”—Popular words from believers in the reward system.

Research:

• Rewards are effective in motivating children for low-level skills such as memorization, completing meaningless, repetitive tasks.
• Rewards reduce higher-order thinking skills.
• External motivation programs inhibit problem solving, delaying gratification and inhibit change.
• Rewards lower anxiety by creating predictability, and at-risk children need more structure, so rewards seem to fit for at-risk children. However, they are seeking the reward to lower their stress levels, not to change their behaviors. Stress can also be reduced by routines (which create predictability), rituals, songs, music, dance, movement, deep breathing, and relaxation techniques.
Principle #4 of Consequences

4. Consequences delivered with empathy allow children the opportunity to learn how to be responsible for their choices.

1. **Natural Consequences**-Arise without prearranged adult intervention. Things may logically happen to children (they do not tie their shoes and they trip) and when they do, the teacher can respond by teaching using G.A.M.E.S.

G=give **Guidance** and positive outcomes
A=Allow the consequences
M=Model self-control
E=offer **Empathy**
S=new **Strategies**
Principle #4 Continued

2. *Imposed Consequences*—These consequences are prearranged, due to safety.

Steps for Imposed Consequences:

1. Present her/him with the choice of skills to use or the rule. (You have a choice to paint in the art center or at your table.)

2. Present the child with choosing the hurtful skill or breaking the rule. (If you choose to paint in the dramatic play area, I will have to remove it for the rest of the day.)

3. State why you have to impose this consequence (relate it to safety or logic). (The paint could get on the clothes in the DPA and stain them.)

4. Ask the child what s/he heard and understood.

5. Listen and clarify any miscommunication.

6. If the child repeats the behavior, deliver the consequences with empathy and choices. (How disappointing for you. I know you like to paint. You will have to play in another area.)
Bibliography