

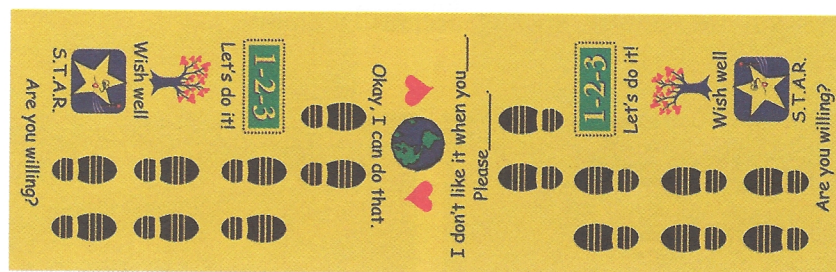
Structure: Conflict Resolution Time Machine

The purpose of the Time Machine is to provide a way for children to change hurtful interactions with peers into helpful exchanges. Assertive language is essential to the success of the Time Machine. The following is a brief demonstration of the assertive communication utilized in the Time Machine. We will discuss the Time Machine in depth as a problem-solving consequence in Chapter 10. For a demonstration of the Time Machine in action, visit Shubert's School.

While working independently on a math assignment, a fourth-grade teacher overhears Lasandra say to Marcus, "Shut up!" The teacher approaches Marcus (going to the victim first) and says, "Marcus, Lasandra just told you to shut up. Are you willing to go back in time for a do-over, helping your School Family learn another way to treat each other?" Marcus answers, "Yes."

The teacher then turns her attention to Lasandra and says, "Lasandra, are you willing to learn another way of communicating with your friends and help our School Family learn a better way?" She agrees. Both students and the teacher walk over to the Time Machine. The mat has footprints representing each step in the conflict resolution process. They start by being a S.T.A.R. and move to the next step where they wish each other well. Next they say, "1, 2, 3, let's do it."

Marcus uses the sentence stems on the mat to say, "I don't like it when you tell me to shut up. Quit it!" Since Marcus did not give Lasandra a positive action to take, the teacher steps in to coach, "Marcus, what do you want Lasandra to say if you are talking and she can't hear the lesson?" Marcus gets an "Aha!" look on his face and says, "Next time, say, *Please be quiet. I can't hear the lesson.*" Lasandra looks down to the mat for guidance and says, "Okay, I can do that." In the final step on the mat, both children give each other knuckle bumps to express the problem is solved and there are no hard feelings. Both students return to their seats and continue their math project. The rest of the class watched the interaction, learning valuable communication skills.



Conflict Resolution Time Machine

Conflicts, disobedience and disrespect happen in every classroom. Seeking a magic bullet to keep them out creates a climate of control and domination, modeling bullying behaviors. Creating a School Family allows small interpersonal conflicts to occur so we can see and scaffold the development of missing social-emotional skills. A healthy conflict cycle begins with connection, moves through disconnection and ends with repairing the connection. This cycle strengthens connection and trust. After a conflict, it is important to repair the relationship. The *Conflict Resolution Time Machine* builds this into the problem-solving process. A brief connecting ritual symbolizes, "We have solved our problem, we've let go of hard feelings and we are moving forward as a compassionate School Family," and is essential to the connect-break-repair cycle of healthy relationships.

Structure: Daily Schedules

Daily schedules are essential for young children. They are the manner by which young children tell time and learn to regulate their internal clocks. A daily schedule is a representation of the main things that will happen during your day. It teaches children to predict what will happen next and helps them feel empowered to tackle the next task.

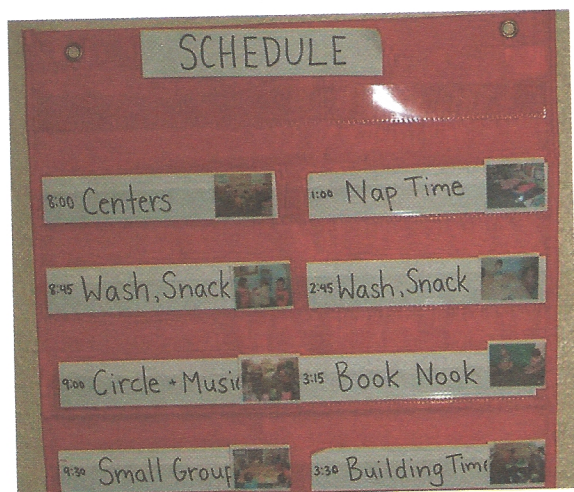
Putting your daily schedule in pictures creates a sense of safety. When a child feels safe, her brain can focus its energies on learning, growth and connection rather than uncertainty, fear and protection. Because children's brains use images to govern their behavior (as we just discussed in Visual Routines), we must post our daily schedule in both pictures and words.

The goal of a daily schedule is not to show every activity that occurs, but to post key events and events that change on a daily basis. Your daily schedule will include a series of photos of these events with a brief description printed below the image. Photos of your students conducting the activities are ideal, but you can also reuse generic photos year after year. Simply apply self-adhesive Velcro to the back of the images and place them in chronological order. Change the schedule as needed on a daily or weekly basis.

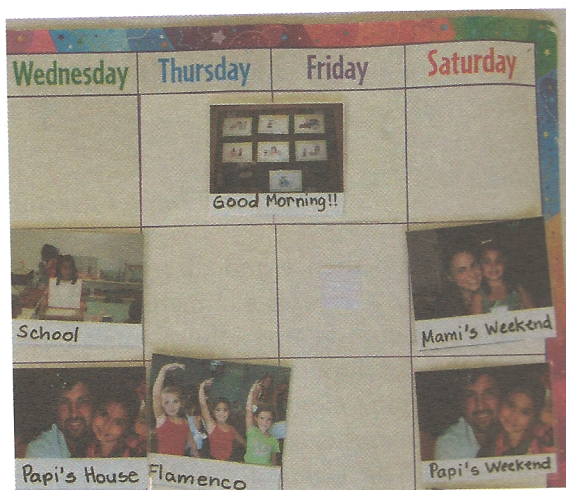
Daily schedules are essential for creating a sense of safety and predictability both at home and in school.

Join with children each morning to talk through your daily schedule so they know what to expect throughout the day. When a child asks, "What's next?" "When do I do Karate?" or "How long 'til lunch?" go to the daily schedule together and locate the appropriate scheduling item. Eventually children will start accessing the daily schedule to answer these questions for themselves. A child who has continued difficulty with transitions or other aspects of the daily schedule may require an individual schedule posted at his desk.

The following images of home and school schedules for different ages will help you get started. Many products can also help you in this endeavor, including the *Daily Routine Cards* and the *Make-n-Take CD-Rom* available through Conscious Discipline.



School Schedule

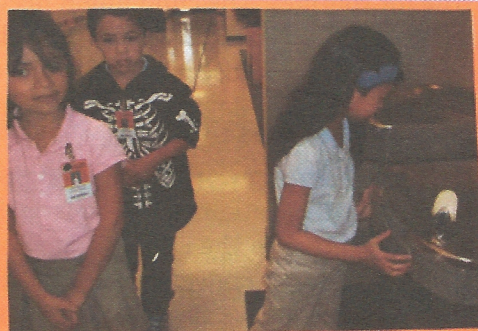


Home Schedule

1. **Write down all the routines** for the day so you can be clear about what you expect your children to do and know. Ask yourself the following questions as a guide:
 - What do I expect children to do upon arriving to my program? (arrival routines)
 - What role do children play in management task routines? (attendance, lunch count, permission slips, cleaning up routines, etc.)
 - What do I expect from children during transition times? (transition routines)
 - What do I expect children to do when lining up? (lining up routines)
 - What do I expect children to do during snack and lunch? (eating routines)
 - What are my hygiene expectations of the children? (toilet use, hand washing, nose blowing, etc.)
 - What do I expect children to do for program dismissal? (dismissal routines)
2. **Systematically and assertively teach** the routines to your children. Begin by writing down the steps to all your routines. This will help you become aware of the amount of sequencing you are asking children to learn and retain. Next, decide which routines you will teach first and what strategies you will use to teach them. Utilize the M.A.P. process and remember that making up rules cannot replace teaching routines.
3. **Create individual and group class-made routine books** for trouble spots. For younger children, take photos of the expected steps in the routine and bind them together in book format. Older children can be responsible for making the books themselves using photos or illustrations and sentence strips. If an individual child is having difficulty, make a personalized routine book featuring photos of him successfully completing each step of the routine. Encourage him to read it just before the troubling transition or event at school, and send the book home for him to read with his family.
4. **Learn more about visual routines** in Chapter 6 of the School Family book and see them in action in Shubert's School on our website.



I stand in a straight line at a level 0 voice.



I wait patiently for my turn.

When children first enter school, everything is new. As predictable and consistent days pass, most children will be able to function without expending much conscious effort on where to put their homework or how to transition to lunch. This leaves the higher centers of the brain free to take in new information. Essentially, establishing consistent routines and rules allows the brain to feel safe enough to learn.

There is a difference between rules and routines. A rule has the goal of stopping misbehavior. They are enforced with consequences. A routine, on the other hand, is simply the way you expect something to be done. It is a taught procedure that brings order and predictability to the classroom. When we create predictable routines for everything from sharpening pencils to throwing away trash, it creates a felt sense of safety for children and helps them maintain and regain composure during times of stress. For routines to be effective, we must consciously take time to teach them. This is best done through the M.A.P. method.

M = Model your procedures and expectations for the children

A = Add visuals

P = Practice, practice, practice

We must post pictures of expected behaviors throughout schools, including the halls, classrooms, cafeteria and restrooms. Children encode these visuals into their prefrontal lobes and ultimately internalize them as mental models. Auditory reminders operate differently in the brain and do not create strong mental models.

If a child refuses to follow the taught routines, the teacher must assume that additional information or a different instructional style is needed. Watch on the portal how one teacher sees a child's need for more information when following a routine. Teaching a routine is no different than teaching long division. If a child fails to understand long division, we do not put his name on the board, remove recess time or have him turn a card from green to red. We simply try to figure out how to relay the information in a different way. The same must be held true for routines. The child might need more modeling, more concrete specific visuals or more practice. If, after all this, they are still unwilling to follow the routines of the day, then it is a relationship issue. Disconnected children are disruptive. We would then begin to work on repairing the relationship with the child and reconnecting the child with his School Family.

Chaos in the classroom or school thwarts safety and composure, and is an urgent call for visual routines. Transitions such as arrival, dismissal, going to the restroom, walking down the halls and eating in the cafeteria are common times of chaos. Providing visual images of what to do in these circumstances is like giving students a mini-rehearsal of our expectations and procedures. It allows students to practice a routine over and over again at any given time.

Take a moment right now to think about where you have chaos in your day. This indicates a place where you need to create a routine and break it down visually. The visual could be a single picture or visual routine book that applies to a difficulty one child is experiencing, or a series of pictures representing each step in a process for the whole class.

Routines add predictability and consistency to the classroom. They are the skeleton that supports the School Family, just as our skeleton supports our body. Use the following brain-compatible practices to strengthen your routines:



struggle so they can feel some control in the situation. To avoid problems, use an assertive voice, and keep fear out of your conflicts with children. Assertiveness begins with us and extends to our children.

Still not convinced to develop your assertive voice? Consider this:

- Assertiveness activates the adult's executive skills and puts us in touch with our wise internal advocate.
- Assertiveness teaches respect to and for everyone.
- Assertiveness paints a picture so children can be successful.
- Assertiveness creates an opportunity to encourage at any moment.
- Assertiveness allows you to set limits without guilt about your own behavior.
- Assertiveness is essential for young children who turn fearful situations into a game or power struggle.
- Assertiveness is the only voice children can hear from a survival state. It supports safety and builds trust.

Assertiveness Creates Safety Through Predictability and Consistency in Your School Family

As you practice the aforementioned perceptual shifts and skills daily, the following tools help create a felt sense of safety in your School Family. This is critical as we guide children to be successful in meeting school expectations.

Routine and Structure: Visual Routines, the Skeleton of Your School Family

Young children's brains use images (mental models) to govern behavior, making visual routines essential to children's success. Visual routines communicate our expectations to children through images. They are the ultimate form of assertive communication for young children. They illuminate the behaviors we expect of children, help them aim their flashlight on the given task, and scaffold their emerging executive skills of attention and time management. Knowing what to do, when to do it and how to do it is essential in building a School Family. Traditionally, rules have been used to provide order in classrooms. In Conscious Discipline, routines clearly delineate expected behaviors, and provide order, predictability and consistency. This structure fosters a felt sense of safety.

The brain is a pattern-seeking and pattern-making device. Our perceptual system is bombarded daily with billions of bits of information. Our brain allows that which is familiar (the pattern) to become background, so we can process new information (learning) in the foreground.

children in the classroom complain to you, “Emily pushed me,” or “Nathan is looking at me,” you will be ready to teach them the words needed to assertively state their limits.

Early in life, we internalize guidelines for social conduct — rules about what is good, polite behavior and what is rude, bad behavior. We learn to conceal and share certain kinds of feelings. We absorb these rules from parents and other role models. They are on our preprogrammed CD-Rom. It is difficult but important to remember that these rules are not cast in stone. We can change them if we consciously decide to do so.

Children cross boundaries with each other and us frequently. Our reactions to these conflicts act as models for children’s development of interpersonal skills. If we yell in response to children’s disobedience, we teach them to be rude to people who don’t do their bidding. If we permissively allow children to ignore our limits, we teach them to infringe on others and let others infringe on them. Our style of limit-setting teaches children how to create and maintain boundaries in their future relationships. We often expect children to possess skills we have yet to develop. We simply cannot teach skills we do not possess!

Assertiveness is a difficult journey for many, especially women and minorities who have spent generations in positions of powerlessness. People who have been historically disempowered in a culture can have a strong message written on their CD-Roms, falsely equating assertiveness with rudeness or harm. As a result, disempowered people tend to believe they must be passive or aggressive to be heard. Assertiveness, however, is the key to communication for all people.

Both the passive and aggressive voices are rooted in fear. An aggressive voice may come from a fear of not knowing how to respond if the misbehavior continues, a fear of losing control or a fear that bigger problems will arise. Children sense the fear behind our aggression, and it frightens them. On the other end of the spectrum, a passive voice is scary because it puts the child in charge of the adult. Children know they are not equipped to be in charge of adults. When young children hear either an aggressive or passive voice, they feel frightened and may turn it into a game to regain a sense of control. Toddlers do this with great panache.

Assertiveness begins with us and extends to our children.

Karen wanted her 2-year-old daughter Christina to get in the car seat so they could keep a doctor’s appointment. Karen said, “Christina, get in your car seat. Over here honey, here is the car seat. Come get in.” Christina paused for a moment to watch her mother. Karen got nervous about her dawdling. Karen’s nervousness flared into anger and she shouted, “Don’t start with me. Get over here now and get in your seat.” Karen was angry because she was afraid they would be late. In response, Christina ran away, giggling as if they were playing tag. This game infuriated Karen who chased her daughter, shouting threats. Karen finally caught Christina, gave her a swat on the rear and forced her into the car seat.

Karen interpreted Christina’s running as disrespect, but it was really a reaction to the fear in her voice. In cases like these, children turn tense situations into games adults do not want to play. Similar problems arise when parents or teachers use an aggressive or passive voice to send older children to the office. The child may run, refuse to go or go with an attitude (rolling eyes and other gestures). Again, they are turning the fearful situation into a game or power

While shopping at the mall, I heard some crying and looked up to see a mother pushing a double stroller with a 4-year-old in back and an infant in front. I watched the 4-year-old use the infant's head like a drum as the baby cried. To soothe the crying infant, the mother (who was unaware of the hitting) was pushing the stroller back and forth. I commented on her lovely children and asked if I could take a closer look. I bent down, looked at the 4-year-old, waited for him to make eye contact with me and said, "See your brother's face. He's crying. He is saying, *I don't like you to hit me. Please drum on your own tummy.*" The older boy had an awkward look on his face as he processed the information. I could almost hear him thinking, "So *that's* why he's crying."

Remember, in addition to specifically teaching assertiveness using "I don't like it," we are constantly teaching children to be passive, aggressive or assertive based on the ways we behave ourselves. We must train ourselves to use assertive communication first and foremost. The two core elements of assertive communication we want to focus on teaching and modeling for children of all ages are:

- **Telling others what to do in concrete terms.** Help children shift their focus from the intrusion or problem to the solution. Teach them to state their wants, needs and expectations clearly, simply and in a positive form (what to do instead of what not to do). Instead of, "Stop grabbing!" teach them to say, "Give me back the marker." State your wants and expectations to other adults this way as well.
- **Sending a nonverbal message of no doubt.** Teach children to use a verbal tone and nonverbal body language that says, "Just do it." If a child's nonverbal cues are too passive, other children may easily choose not to comply. If a child's nonverbal cues are too aggressive, other children will resist in self-defense. When nonverbal and verbal communications are assertive, others are more likely to comply. Facial expression, tone of voice and gestures that convey confidence increase the chances others will heed the child's words. Use the voice of no doubt whenever you speak with children and adults.

Blocks to Assertiveness

To be assertive, we must express our feelings, thoughts and wishes without diminishing those of other people. This sounds simple, but to clearly state our thoughts and desires, we must recognize them, own them and believe we have the right to have them. In short, we must value ourselves. We must shift our focus from what we assume others are thinking and feeling, to being conscious of our own mind's contents. Anyone can acquire assertiveness. It's not a personality trait some people have and others lack. Like passivity and aggression, assertiveness is learned behavior. To learn it, we must do the following:

- **Achieve self-awareness.** Do you tend to interact with your children passively, aggressively, with a passive-aggressive flip-flop or assertively?
- **Monitor your own thought patterns.** How do you talk to yourself? Do you address yourself passively, aggressively or assertively? Once you learn to speak to yourself more assertively, you will naturally use this skill with your children.
- **Teach and utilize assertiveness in all your relationships.** By becoming more assertive with yourself and other adults, you will model this skill for your children. When

The process of coaching assertiveness, especially with younger children, relies heavily on noticing each child's behavior, interpreting that behavior for the other and giving both children the developmentally-appropriate words to use. The older the child, the more complex dialogue they can use. The younger the child, the more you will scaffold the process for them.

Ten-year-olds: Zara and Jackson are on the playground. Zara is carrying a ball over to play with a group of girls. Jackson jump-kicks the ball out of her grasp and across the field. Zara stands there staring at him. Go to the victim first and say, "Jackson kicked the ball out of your hands. Did you like it?" Zara looks at the ground and whines, "No. We were going to play with it." Breathe deeply with her and begin coaching, "Tell Jackson, *I feel frustrated when you horse around like that. We are playing with that ball. Give it back.* Say it now for practice." Zara squeaks out the words. Continue coaching her by saying, "Match your voice to mine," until she is using an assertive tone. Walk over with Zara and encourage her as she faces Jackson and says, "I feel frustrated when you horse around like that. Get your own ball. Give me my ball back." Jackson returns the ball and mumbles, "No hard feelings?" Zara says, "Nope." Now cement the interaction in their consciousness and celebrate their success through noticing, "Zara, you used an assertive voice to tell Jackson what you wanted. Jackson, you gave the ball back! Good for you both!"

Six-year-olds: Zara and Jackson are on the playground. Jackson snatches the ball out of Zara's hands. Zara starts screeching. Go to the victim first and say, "Zara your face is going like this!" When she makes eye contact, download calm and say, "You seem angry. Jackson took your ball and you didn't know what to do. Did you like it?" Zara yells, "No!" You continue, "Take a deep breath with me and then we'll talk with Jackson." Breathe deeply together and begin coaching, "Tell Jackson, *I don't like it when you take my ball. Give it back.* Say it now for practice." Practice with Zara until she is using a calm, assertive tone and then standby as she speaks with Jackson. Encourage Jackson to comply. Now cement it in their consciousness and celebrate their success through noticing, "Zara said, *I don't like it. Give it back.* And Jackson, you did it! You gave Zara the ball back. Good for you both!"

Two-year-olds: Zara and Jackson are on the playground. Jackson snatches the ball out of Zara's hands. Zara is poised to push him to get it back. Quickly go to the victim first and describe what happened, "Jackson took your ball." Then empower the victim with assertive words to use. "Tell Jackson, *Stop! My ball!*" Teach Jackson a socially-acceptable way to get his needs met by coaching him, "Jackson, you wanted a turn. When you want a turn, say, *Turn, please.*" Then celebrate. "There you go, you did it! Zara said, *Stop! My ball.* And Jackson, you gave the ball back and said, *Turn, please.* Good for you both! I'm going to go get another ball so you can both play ball."

"You wanted" is a key phrase for teaching children with limited verbal skills to set assertive boundaries. "You wanted a turn with the crayon. When you want a turn, say, *Turn please!*" "You wanted Jojo's attention. When you want friends' attention, tap them on the arm, say their name and wait for them to look at you." We will discuss "You wanted" at length in Chapter 8, Positive Intent.

Nonverbal children: Use the phrase, "Look at her face," combined with, "I don't like it" to speak assertively on behalf of nonverbal children. "Look at her face" teaches the older child to read the younger child's nonverbal cues, while "I don't like it" teaches what the nonverbal cues mean. When a 5-year-old takes a 1-year-old's ball, say, "See her face. Her face is red, and her lips are quivering. She's saying, *I don't like it. I was playing with that ball. Give it back.*" We must scaffold an assertive voice for nonverbal children until they can speak for themselves.

Tattling: When a child reports, “She hit me,” teachers often respond in one of the following three ways (we’ll discuss tattling as a teaching tool again in Chapter 10):



“How did that make you feel” puts the aggressive child in charge of the inner state of the victim, and keeps all parties involved in their upset emotional states where they can argue over who had it first and who did what to whom. *“Did you like it?” sets children up to problem-solve rather than get more emotional.*



“Use your words” asks children to come up with socially-acceptable words while they are in an upset emotional state or a survival state. If a child hits, the survival state response is to hit back. The emotional state response is to use the skills on their CD-Roms, which might be name-calling. *“Did you like it?” activates the executive state, allowing children to be coached.*



Discern who is at fault and deliver the appropriate punishment. This response misses the teaching opportunity provided by the intrusion. Just as an incorrect answer on a math quiz shows us what math skills we need to teach, grabbing a pen instead of asking for it shows us what social skills to teach. Instead of fault-seeking, we need to use natural consequences. *The natural consequence of being hurtful to a friend is to learn how to be helpful.*

Assertiveness by Age

“I don’t like it” is a powerful statement, but babies don’t come out of the womb equipped with complete sentences. For nonverbal children, we do all the talking. We might say, “See her face. Her face is saying, *STOP!* She wants you to touch her like this.” We would then take the toddler’s hand, help him release the baby’s hair and show him how to touch the hair gently. Below is a brief overview of the developmental progression of assertive language for coaching. The ages listed are a guideline; every child develops at a different pace. View children of all ages using their assertive voices on the portal.

6

Age	1st: Set up	2nd: Set limit	3rd: Tell what to do
Nonverbal children	See his face.	His face is saying, “Stop. I don’t like it.”	“Touch me like this.” See his face. He likes that.
1 - 2 years	He doesn’t like it when you ___.	Say, “Stop,” or hold up a hand in a “stop” motion.	He wants you to ___.
2-3 years	Did you like it?	Say, “I don’t like it.”	She wants you to ___.
3-4 years	Did you like it?	Say, “I don’t like it when you push me.”	She wants you to say, “Scoot over.” Say it now.
5-12 years	Did you like it?	Tell ___, “I don’t like it when you ___.”	What do you want her to do next time to get ___? Tell her, “Next time, please ___.”
12 and up	Is that alright with you?	If you don’t like it, then you could say ___.	

Adult: Your head is down and you are holding your ankle. Something happened?

Victim: Mikael tripped me!

Adult: Mikael stuck his foot out when you walked by. Did you like it?

Victim: Parker just mooed at me and said, "Hey fatty, we're playing over here!"

Adult: Did you like it?

Remember if the victim's response is weak or whiny, work to strengthen the assertive tone. If the response sounds aggressive, take some deep, calming breaths together. If needed, coach the victim in the next step by saying, "Match your voice to mine," until he is using an assertive tone.

Step 2: Next coach the victim to assertively say, "I don't like it when you ___(negative action)___," and quickly pivot the negative infraction to a positive action by helping the child come up with what he would like the aggressor to do instead. Give younger children the exact words to say and ask older children, "What do you want her to do instead of pushing?" Often the first response is, "I don't like it when you push me. Stop it." "Stop it," doesn't tell the aggressor what to do differently. We have not taught a new replacement skill to the aggressor, empowered the victim with assertive language or created a classroom of social skills teachers until we clearly state what we want. "Stop it," must become, "Let me know the line is moving by saying, *Look! The line is moving forward without us.*"

Adult: Go tell Mikael, "*Tap me on the arm when you want my attention.*"

Adult: What do you want Parker to do instead of calling you names?

Victim: Use my name!

Adult: Tell Parker, "I don't like it when you call me names. Use my name, Janice, instead."

Victim: I don't like it when you call me fat. Use my name instead."

Step 3: Finally, encourage the aggressor to complete the requested action or use the new skill. Willingness comes from connection and a sense of belonging. Children who feel connected are more likely to cooperate. Children who are marginalized are less likely to listen to their peers or us. It is essential to establish a School Family culture as our foundation for problem-solving. When the aggressor complies with the new action or language, notice this and celebrate!

Adult: Let's practice together.

(They practice the new shoulder-tapping skill.)

Adult: You did it! Jayce, you taught your friend how to get your attention! And Mikael, you tapped his shoulder! That helps keep our classroom safe!

Adult: Are you willing to call her by her name? Let's have a do-over!

Aggressor: Hey, Janice, we're playing over here!

Adult: You did it! Janice, you assertively told Parker that name-calling is not okay with you! And Parker, you committed to use Janice's name instead of hurtful words! That was helpful.

Asking “Did you like it?” is a powerful phrase when you approach the victim first. This initial question accomplishes three things:

1. It activates the child’s executive state in preparation for problem-solving.
2. It indicates the child’s level of assertiveness.
3. It creates a powerful teaching moment for all involved.

1. It activates an executive state in preparation for problem-solving. “Did you like it?” has the power to activate the higher centers of the brain, calling on children to reflect. We often see this reflected on children’s faces when they tattle on others. Watch carefully the next time children come to you to tattle. They may say, “She wrote on my paper.” Watch their faces carefully as you respond, “Did you like it?” You will see their eyes move up and to the right as they reflect. Sometimes, children are too emotionally distraught for a question to be appropriate. In that case, you would help the children with composure first and assertiveness second.

2. It indicates the child’s level of assertiveness. The child’s response to “Did you like it?” provides important information for effective coaching. A loud, powerful, “No! I don’t like it!” communicates that active calming would be helpful to bring the frustration down a notch before speaking to the other child. Coach this child in taking a few deep breaths and practice the words together to assure his tone is assertive instead of aggressive. A barely audible, “No,” tells us that additional coaching is needed to help him achieve the voice of no doubt. Take some deep breaths, encourage him, and practice the exact words and tone until both his verbal and nonverbal cues are assertive.

3. It creates a powerful teaching moment in which all class members learn a new skill. The good news is we have many wonderful opportunities to teach new social, emotional and language skills. The bad news is that addressing every act of aggression individually is too much for one teacher to manage. Therefore, Conscious Discipline empowers every child in the classroom to be a social skills teacher. Assertiveness is the skill that teaches others how we want to be treated. When we teach a classroom of 22 children to say, “I don’t like it when you grab my marker. If you want a turn say, *May I have a turn please,*” we then have 22 children teaching each other how to behave in the classroom, in the halls, on the bus and throughout their lives.

“I don’t like it” is a phrase utilized in both *Shubert’s BIG Voice* and the *Conflict Resolution Time Machine*. *Shubert’s BIG Voice* is an ideal way to teach assertiveness in the classroom. You can download free activity sheets for BIG Voice at ConsciousDiscipline.com/resources. We will discuss the Time Machine as a conflict resolution tool at the end of this chapter and again in *Consequences*, Chapter 10.

“Did you like it?” is the key phrase in a larger problem-solving process. The following is the complete process to use when you see or hear one child infringing on another:

Step 1: Begin by calming yourself as you prepare to address the victim first. If you saw the event or its aftermath, notice what you see, wait for the victim’s response, clarify as needed and then ask, “Did you like it?” If a child comes to you to report an issue (tattling), then simply ask, “Did you like it?”

Child Assertiveness: I-Messages for Verbal and Physical Aggression

Just as children infringe on the personal space and dignity of adults, they also intrude aggressively on each other. I-Messages are as essential for children as they are for adults. Accidental intrusions (unconsciously bumping into someone) and intentional intrusions (hitting to get something) are so common in schools that preschoolers are suspended at a rate that's 1300 percent higher than children in the K-12 years. In the average preschool classroom, there is one intrusive act every minute of every day! The good news is that we will have an opportunity to teach young children new social-emotional skills approximately every 60 seconds, and that their prefrontal lobes are developmentally primed and ready to learn these new skills at this age! The harsh reality is we, as adults, require new skills if we are to seize these moment-by-moment opportunities. The video "Are Children Safe in Preschool?" on your portal provides additional insights on this issue.



Most classrooms have rules against physical and verbal aggression. The consequence of engaging in these activities is detention or a loss of privileges. As you will learn in Consequences (Chapter 10), these types of consequences are called "logical," and are made up by adults and given to children. Logical consequences motivate children to use skills they already possess; they do not teach new skills. That is why we see the same children losing privileges over and over again. They do not have the social, emotional, or language skills to successfully say, "I don't like it when you write on my paper; write on your own paper," so they push or name call. In Conscious Discipline, we use everyday interpersonal conflicts (not extreme fights) as teaching moments to help children internalize pro-social skills.

The first step in approaching a conflict is to harness our Power of Attention to focus on that which we value. If we value hurtful behavior and want to see more of it, we will go to the aggressor first and admonish him. If we value helpful behavior and want to see more problem-solving, we will go to the victim first and teach a helpful way to communicate. Children will quickly learn that certain behaviors are valued in their classrooms. Will you teach them to value hurtful behavior or helpful solutions? If you value helpfulness, the rule is "victim first." This applies to most situations. However, when we have an aggressive child who hurts multiple children in quick succession, we must attend to the aggressor first to provide safety in the classroom. It's a dramatic representation, but we might remember the victim first rule and its exception by using the following anecdotes:

Victim first: Let's say we're chatting after a workshop when someone runs up, hits me in the head with a baseball bat and races out the door while I lie there bleeding. Would you help me or chase the person with the baseball bat? Hopefully, you would tend to my bleeding wound first and deal with the aggressor later. Remember this image when you're tempted to race after the aggressors in your classroom.

Exception: Now let's say I'm speaking at an outdoor event, and there's a sniper shooting at all of us, one after another. Would you attend to the wounded or address the threat? In this case, you must deal with the sniper as soon as possible to help restore safety to the group.

6. Use I-Messages

I-Messages tell children that we believe they have infringed upon us. Children are not born knowing the difference between respect and disrespect. We must teach them. When children attack us physically and verbally, we can dodge blows, say hurtful words, deliver negative consequences and send children to the office, or we can use the disruption to teach respectfulness and assertiveness by using an I-Message.

I-Messages originate from owning our feelings and claiming our power. We can only use I-Messages when we are in an executive state. So, the first step in delivering an I-Message is composure. If we believe the children are **making** us angry, we will be unsuccessful with I-Messages. We will use statements based on “you,” that send a message of blame and imply the child is in charge of the adult. “You” statements inflict guilt. I-Messages set a limit and teach a new skill. There are several ways to deliver an I-Message. Pick the form that is most comfortable for you. The most important point to remember is to speak calmly but firmly from your heart.

Style 1: “I don’t like it when you _____.”
Follow with an assertive command and relate it to safety.

Style 2: “When you _____, I feel _____ because _____.”
Follow with an assertive command.

Mrs. Railey works with first graders. She instructs the children that it is time to put their journals away. One child completely ignores the command, so she walks toward him to secure his attention. The child makes a growling sound, balls up his fist and lightly punches her in the arm. She responds, “Why did you hit me? Do I hit you? We don’t hit in this classroom.” The child screams, “No,” and begins to cry. As he cries, Mrs. Railey asks, “Why are you acting like this?” and calls the office for assistance in removing the child from class.

This teacher forfeited a teaching opportunity. The child’s actions indicated he was in a survival state. Mrs. Railey asked him questions he could only respond to from an executive state. She also used an accusatory “you” and failed to offer usable information. The teacher would have been better able to teach a new skill by assertively setting a limit using an I-Message like, “Ouch (show exaggerated pain)! Hitting hurts. I don’t like it when you hit me. When you want my attention, touch my arm like this (demonstrate) and wait for me to look at you. Do it now for practice.” Or by saying, “Ouch! Hitting hurts. I don’t like it when you hit me. When you feel angry say, *I feel angry! I want to finish writing.* Say it now for practice.”

When we are treated with disrespect, we must respond assertively. If we respond aggressively, we are treating the child with disrespect while trying to teach respect. Below are examples of conscious I-Messages and unconscious reactions. Which communication style do you most often use?

Unconscious labeling: “You are rude to interrupt.”

Conscious I-Message: “I don’t like it when you interrupt. I can’t remember what I was saying. Raise your hand and I will call on you. Do it now for practice.”

5. Redirection

Redirection shifts a child's attention from what she is currently doing to something safer or something that's preferable. It is a skill that has been around for ages and comes in many forms. Generally a redirection says, "You may not do X, but you can do Y," or, "You may not do X here, you can do X there or there." The most important part of redirection is to join your attention with the child first and then redirect. Below are the same situations handled two different ways, with the adult joining with the child and without the adult joining with the child. See if you can feel the difference.

Situation: Aster is visiting Grandma's house. He's trying to close a box of tea, diligently working on figuring out the latch.

Without joining: Mom says from across the room, "Aster, leave the box alone. Come in here and play with this toy I brought you. Aster, look at the toy! It has a switch! Look at the toy. It's really fun!"

With joining: Mom walks over to him, gets down on eye level and notices, "See this little edge of a tea bag hanging out. What could you do with it that might help the latch close?" Aster pushes the tea bag in, shuts the box, snaps the latch and looks right into his mom's eyes. She celebrates his success and then pulls out a toy she had brought for him to play with. "Come play with this toy in the living room." He takes it and sits down in the living room to explore the new item.

Situation: Amy is 18 months old. She just discovered the electrical outlet covers and is touching and pointing at them.

Without joining: The home care provider says, "No, no, Amy! That is not safe. You can play with your blocks or the stuffed bear. Leave it alone."

With joining: The home care provider walks over, points to the outlet and says, "You found the outlet covers and want to pull them off and play with them. That is not safe." She takes Amy by the hand and walks over to a pile of toys and says, "I am going to find something fun you can pull on and play with using those little fingers." She stays on the floor with Amy, giving her ample time to shift her attention.

Redirection requires face-to-face interaction, joint attention, clarification of the boundaries (exaggerated facial expressions that express "not safe"), and assistance in connecting with the new object. Be certain to use all four of these components when redirecting. Attention is a whole brain activity. When we redirect a child's attention, we are actually scaffolding their prefrontal lobe development. Helping children develop their prefrontal lobes is labor intensive for adults. We cannot facilitate prefrontal lobe development by hollering from across the room.

Sometimes children are so scattered that chaos seems eminent. At these times, a unifying activity is more effective than a signal. A unifying activity brings the whole class together doing the same thing. "Everybody do this, do this, do this. Everybody do this, do this now," is a unifying chant that's best used with a challenging or silly "do this" activity. A call and response activity is also unifying. If you are the Farias Tigers, the teacher might call out, "Farias Tigers!" and the class would chant back, "Helpful, ready and willing!" After the unifying activity, lead the class in being a S.T.A.R. and tell them what to do next.

This is the basic process for giving a command in a group setting:

Step 1: Utilize a signal and/or conduct a unifying chant or movement. Once you have the class's attention, lead them in being a S.T.A.R. (Smile, Take a deep breath And Relax) or one of the other de-stressing activities such as Balloon, Drain, or Pretzel.

Step 2: Notice the children who stop. "Phillip, Reynaldo, Wayne, Ashley, each of you stopped, looked and are ready to listen. You heard the signal and are ready for what will happen next. Phillip you were talking to Reynaldo and you both turned like this (show actions)." Avoid statements that begin with "I like," such as "I like the way Maria stopped and looked up." When you insert "I" in the statement, you make it about you instead of the child.

Step 3: Verbally tell the children what you want them to do. As soon as you have the children's attention, begin telling them what you want them to do. Expecting children to wait (especially young ones) is a recipe for trouble.

Activity to Reflect on Your Current Group Commands

Reflect on the following:

1. Have you taught the class signal? Does it have an auditory, visual and kinesthetic (breathing) component? Did you practice it for 21 days to form a habit? _____
2. Have you framed the experience so children who hear the signal can help those who missed it to also be successful? (Raising hands to alert friends.) _____
3. Do you encourage children who follow the signal by noticing instead of judging their accomplishment? ("You stopped what you were doing, took a deep breath and looked for me.") Do you judge, fostering dependency? ("Good listening!") Do you manipulate through affection? ("I like the way ___ is listening.") _____
4. How are you going to modify your practices? I'm going to _____

Step 4: Notice and download, followed by two positive choices (Chapter 6). If the child's behavior indicates he is still in a survival state, notice his actions. "Your arm is going like this, your body is turned like this." Wait for eye contact, and take a couple of deep S.T.A.R. breaths to download calm and safety into the child. Next, offer two positive choices to help the child to achieve your goal. "Joshua, you have a choice. You can line up behind Malik or you can ask Malik if you can walk beside him in line. Which is better for you?" If Joshua cooperates, say, "There you go. You're doing it. You chose to ask your buddy." If Joshua is still resistant, go to Step 5.

Step 5: Repeat the choices in a consistent and calm state, regardless of what the child says or does. "Joshua, you have a choice: Behind Malik or next to Malik." Joshua might respond with an effort to trigger you into a power struggle. He may say, "You can't make me," or resort to profanity. Your job is to stay calm using all your Q.T.I.P. power. Calmly repeat, "Behind Malik or with Malik" up to four times. Then, if necessary, walk away. If you can remain calm and wish him well in tone, posture and intent, the child will often choose to comply. He may comply by walking with a stomp, rolling his eyes or muttering under his breath. Ignore these behaviors. These behaviors are just the child discharging excess adrenaline and cortisol. Once he complies, walk by Joshua in line and say, "It was tough, but you did it. Good for you, Joshua."

Like any skill, we can abuse Tell and Show. If our intention is for the child to be successful and capable, our actions will be guided accordingly. If our intention is to force the child to comply, we will communicate this also. If a child chronically ignores commands or refuses to comply, ask yourself if your expectations are appropriate and your intent loving. Do you have a connection with the child? Persistent resistance is often a sign to refocus our intent and/or rebuild a connection with the child. Remember, connection is the precursor to cooperation. Tell and Show takes practice, so allow yourself to Oops! as much as necessary.

4. Giving Assertive Commands to Groups

The process for giving assertive commands to groups is similar to the individual process we've focused on thus far, but it begins with a signal or unifying experience to get the group's attention. The signal will help them stop what they are doing and shift their attention to another activity (the new command). Many teachers and child caregivers use blinking the lights, a musical instrument such as a drum or triangle, or a specific transition chant or song. Teach the class both an auditory and visual signal. Give the auditory signal first then the visual one as shown in the following example:

At the beginning of the year, Mrs. Pinder decides to use a drum as her auditory signal and children raising their hands as her visual signal. She frames her discussion of the drum with a Native American folklore story about the drum as a means for people of different languages to communicate. She states clearly that when the children hear the drum beat, they are to stop what they are doing, take a deep breath to help focus, look for the teacher, raise their hands to alert their friends and listen for the instructions that will follow.

First, she provides the children discussion time. "Pretend you are drawing at your table and you hear the drum. What will you do?" "Pretend you are talking with your friends and you hear the drum. What will you do?" Next, she provides practice time. The children engage in activities that require actual talking and movement, and then they practice stopping, breathing, looking at her, raising their hands and listening for instruction. Each time they successfully stop what they are doing and shift their focus, Mrs. Pinder celebrates this accomplishment.

2. The Voice of No Doubt

Your tone of voice is critical. It is estimated that 93 percent of all communication is nonverbal, including voice tone, intention and body language tone, intention and body language (Mehrabian, 1971). To find your assertive tone, do the following: Look around the room you're in. Look up and say, "That is the ceiling." Look down and say, "That is the floor." In the same tone of voice, say, "Sit down and look at me." You have just used an assertive tone! There is no doubt in your voice that the ceiling is above you, the floor is below you and your command is, "Sit down and look at me." Your "no doubt about it" voice ensures your nonverbal and your verbal communications match.

We've all heard a grumpy adult snap, "Yes, I love you. Now go out and play!" When our words say one thing and our underlying tone says another, it is called a mixed message. If our nonverbal cues are passive, our children may easily choose not to comply. If our nonverbal cues are aggressive, our children may resist in self-defense. A child who receives mixed messages does not know whether to believe the words he is hearing or what he is feeling based on the nonverbal message. Over time, this could lead him to distrust himself and lose contact with his internal guidance.

When our nonverbal and verbal communication match, we let children know we mean what we say and say what we mean. Before children decide whether to comply with a command, they will read our facial expressions, tone of voice and gestures. We increase the chances they will obey if we appear confident and in control, sound sure of ourselves, believe they can be successful, and use gestures to provide information.

3. Tell and Show for Children who Resist

Children who do not follow our assertive commands are communicating to us that they need additional support. If a child chooses not to comply with a command, we must change the structure to aid in the child's success. Ask, "What can I do to help this child meet my expectations and meet his own needs at the same time?" One helpful strategy for these situations is Tell and Show. It involves telling children what you want them to do, following up by showing them how to do it and then encouraging them along the way. The intentional message is, "Here is what is expected of you. I will assist you in performing it successfully."

Step 1: Give an assertive command. "Joshua, It is time to go to lunch. Put your pencil down and line up for lunch." If the child complies, say, "You did it," or "Good for you." If the child ignores you, continue to Step 2.

Step 2: Notice and download. When the world is not going our way, we are likely to slip into an emotional state. It's easy to feel frustrated or start shouting from a distance when children ignore us. We can choose to balance this tendency by beginning to breathe deeply as soon as we feel ignored. Take a deep breath, walk toward the child, and consciously notice his behaviors and body language until he makes eye contact. "Your head is down and your hand is going like this (mirror what the child is doing)." As soon as the child glances up to see what you are doing, be a S.T.A.R. to download calm into the child and proceed to Step 3.

Step 3: Say, "There you are! I'm going to show you how to get started." Say, "I am going to show you how to..." Guide the child gently to follow your command. "I am going to show you how to line up with the rest of the School Family." Then touch him gently on the back to physically guide him. If the child chooses to be cooperative, encourage him by saying, "That's it! You are doing it! You've got yourself ready to head to the door!" If he pulls away when you touch him, that would signal a survival state; proceed to Step 4.

The more senses you can incorporate, the more effective your assertive commands will be. Examples of commands to go with each sense:

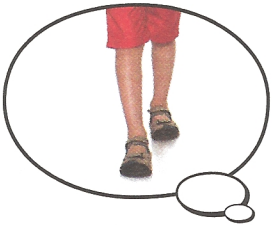
- **Visual:** Utilize eye contact and gestures
- **Auditory:** State the child's name and your expectations
- **Kinesthetic:** Move into proximity with the child
- **Tactile:** Touch the child, offering gentle guidance
- **Energetic:** With a loving, positive intent for clarity and success

Activity to Name, Verb, Paint

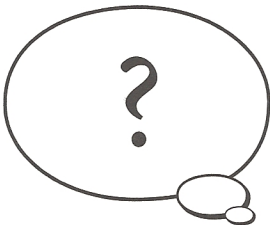
Which commands below create clear mental images? Rewrite the examples that **don't**. Remember, the image we create in children's heads becomes the blueprint for their **behavior**.



"STOP! No running. There is no running in the halls."



"Walking feet. Walking feet. Walking feet."



"What's our rule about running? What should you be doing right now?"



"Carol, walk in the hall just like this (demonstrate with your body), leaving plenty of space for your neighbor so everyone is safe, including you."

This clear and specific visual image wires the brain to successfully meet the expectation.

The more completely we paint a picture with our words and actions, the clearer a mental model we will instill in children's brains. Thus, Name, Verb, Paint significantly increases compliance.

your books for me.” It robs the command of its assertive power. When we word our commands as requests or follow them with, “Thank you,” we are saying, “Behave well for me; be successful for me; do things for me.” Requests inject our relationship with the child into the situation. Children who have had painful relationships will automatically defy these requests in efforts to stay safe. If our goal is for children to choose compliance, we must take our relationship out of the situation by providing clear, assertive commands.

In addition to pivoting (discussed earlier in this chapter), the following skills will help children comply with our commands and follow our directions. Administrators must also utilize these assertiveness skills with employees.

1. Name, Verb, Paint all assertive commands
2. The voice of no doubt
3. Tell and Show for children who resist
4. Assertive commands for groups
5. Redirection
6. I-Messages

1. Name, Verb, Paint Assertive Commands

Mental models govern our behaviors. Most children have a mental model for how to use the restroom by the age of three. You have a mental model for how to drive from your house to the grocery store. Professional golfers rehearse a mental image of each shot before they hit the ball. Due to lack of mature inner speech, children use images for the mental models that govern their behavior. They must be able to visualize our commands in order to be successful in reproducing them. So, assertive communication with children seeks to help them create clear mental images by painting pictures of acceptable behaviors. Passive and aggressive communication fails to achieve this goal. The Name, Verb, Paint process helps us communicate assertively with the following steps:

Step 1, Name: Make eye contact. To establish eye contact, decrease the distance between your face and the child’s until she notices you. For easily distracted or disengaged children, this distance may be as close as eight inches; for others, it could be three feet. If the child does not look up, notice her nonverbal cues and body language to obtain eye contact. “Your hands (head, arms, legs, etc.) are going like this (demonstrate).” Once you achieve eye contact, state the child’s name.

Some cultures instruct children not to make eye contact with adults in specific situations, usually when being reprimanded. Giving a command is not a reprimand; it’s intent is for the child’s success. Investigate further if you believe a lack of eye contact is cultural.

Step 2, Verb: Verbalize what you want to see. Begin the sentence with a verb and be as specific as possible. “Remove all papers and books, and put them in your desk.”

Step 3, Paint: Paint a picture of the expected behavior using gestures and any visual cues possible to help the child be successful. Point to all the papers and books on the tables, then use your arms and hands to show where the child is to put the items as you say, “Remove all papers and books, and put them in your desk.”

Years ago, I was observing a second-grade classroom doing a space program lesson that included NASA stickers. A little boy was struggling to get his stickers off the sheet. He stood up, looked around the room, picked a girl with long nails and went over to ask for help. I noticed this by saying, "You were having trouble getting your stickers off the sheet and looked carefully around the room to find someone you thought could be helpful. Then you walked over and asked for help. That allowed you to be successful." This was my only interaction with this child. Two weeks later, I was back at the school. He saw me in the hall, broke out of line and came up to me. I didn't recognize him at first. He said, "Don't you remember me? I'm the one who is successful at school!"

Activity to Notice Instead of Judge

Below are common judgments. Transform these into noticing opportunities that scaffold children's attention. Find sample answers and videos that demonstrate noticing on your portal.



- Good job on the quiz, Jose! _____

- Karen, do you know how to ask for a turn? _____

- Thank you for cleaning up the sink area. _____

- A common judgment I make: _____

- What I could say instead: _____

The Skill of Assertiveness

Assertiveness is the skill that emerges from the Power of Attention and teaches others how to treat us. It lets us set boundaries on what behaviors we consider appropriate, safe and permissible. It empowers us to say "no" to believing the false messages on our CD-Roms, "no" to behaviors that do not support our goals, and "no" to others. It enables us to say "no" to children and teach them acceptable ways to say "no" to others. It also enables us to say "yes" to interactions that support us and to teach children when "yes" is in order. Assertiveness allows us to express our needs, wants and desires constructively, without devaluing the other person's needs, wants and desires. In short, it is the medium through which we teach respect. Disrespect from children signals a lack of assertive adults in their lives. We must first master the Skill of Assertiveness ourselves, and then we can teach children how to assertively set limits with others.

Assertiveness is the medium through which we teach respect.