

Requirements for licensed child care centers when separation from the group is used as a behavior guidance technique

Separation from the group as a behavior guidance technique Minnesota Rules, part 9503.0055, subpart 4

No child may be separated from the group unless the license holder has tried less intrusive methods of guiding the child's behavior which have been ineffective and the child's behavior threatens the wellbeing of the child or other children in the center. A child who requires separation from the group must remain within an unenclosed part of the classroom where the child can be continuously seen and heard by staff. When separation from the group is used as a behavior guidance technique, the child's return to the group must be contingent on the child's stopping or bringing under control the behavior that precipitated the separation, and the child must be returned to the group as soon as the behavior that precipitated the separation abates or stops. A child between the ages of six weeks and 16 months must not be separated from the group as a means of behavior guidance.

Separation report requirements Minnesota Rules, part 9503.0055, subpart 5

When separation from the group is used as a behavior guidance technique, all separations must be noted on a daily log. The log must include the child's name, staff person's name, time, date, and information indicating what less intrusive methods were used to guide the child's behavior, and how the child's behavior continued to threaten the wellbeing of the child or other children in care. If a child is separated from the group:

- Three times or more in one day (3x in one day), the child's parent shall be notified and this parent notation shall also be indicated on the log.
- Five times or more in one week (5x in the same week) or eight times or more in two weeks (8x in two weeks), procedures for persistent unacceptable behavior must be followed in Minnesota Rules, part 9503.0055, subpart 2.

Requirements for dealing with persistent unacceptable behavior Minnesota Rules, part 9503.0055, subpart 2

The license holder must have written procedures for dealing with persistent, unacceptable behavior that requires an increased amount of staff guidance and time. Additionally, behavior guidance requirements in Minnesota Rules, chapter 9503 specify that unacceptable behavior is persistent when a behavior has resulted in a child being separated from the group five times or more in one week (5x in the same week) or eight times or more in two weeks (8x in two weeks). The procedures must specify that staff observe and record the behavior of the child and the staff response to the behavior. Staff must develop a plan to address the persistent, unacceptable behavior in consultation with the child's parent and with other staff persons and professionals, when appropriate.

Understanding redirection and separation when guiding child behavior

Redirection

Redirection is considered a positive guidance technique. Redirection occurs when a staff person intervenes and guides a child away from potential problems toward constructive activity. A redirection does not require a child to be isolated from the group. Redirections occur when a staff person is actively engaging with a child, and can include walking with the child to another area in the licensed space, as long as it is offered as a constructive activity option. A redirection is not considered a separation and does not need to be noted on the log of separations.

The following are examples of redirection. A staff person:

- Intervenes proactively to provide alternative activities when there is reason to expect that the child's behavior may escalate, such as offering the child a special job to do to redirect the child away from an activity where the child had previously struggled; or
- Interrupts an incident of a child's unacceptable behavior and suggests an alternative, such as "You look frustrated. Would you like to walk with me in the hallway and go get a drink from the water fountain?"
- Gives a child a choice to participate in an alternate activity if they are struggling to participate in a group activity, such as going to the art area.

Separation

Separation is a form of behavior guidance that involves interruption of unacceptable behavior by the removal of a child from a situation, with the intention of allowing the child an opportunity to pause and gain self-control. During a separation a child is isolated from participating in activities with other children. Minnesota Rules, part 9503.0055, requires that other methods of positive behavior guidance were used and that the child's behavior is a threat to the wellbeing of the child or other children prior to the use of separation. A child who is separated must remain within the classroom and be supervised. A separation from the group must be documented on the log of separations.

The following are examples of separations. After trying other methods of positive behavior guidance that have not worked, and the unacceptable behavior is now threatening the wellbeing of that child or other children, the staff person:

- Puts a child in a "time out," such as requiring the child to sit on a chair for a period of time;
- Tells a child to do another activity that is separate from other children in the classroom during free time activities, such as requiring the child to go the book area and read a book alone; and/or
- Removes a child from the group activity and requires the child to sit at a table and work on a puzzle.