



This guide walks you through presenting **Behavior Guidance: Creating Classroom Rules**. These are suggestions, so please use the materials as you see fit. This in-service suite includes PowerPoint slides and supporting materials.

## MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Presenter PowerPoint slides (17)
- Optional slides (4)
- Projector and audio equipment
- Optional Learning Activities:
  - » *Making Rules **U**nderstandable Checklist*
  - » *Writing Classroom Rules*
  - » ***D**etermine Consequences*
  - » *More Times to **GUIDE***
- Tips for Teachers
- Tools for Teachers
- Tools for Supervisors
- Helpful Resources
- Flip chart or similar large paper and markers for writing participant ideas

## BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

- This presentation will help participants create and enforce classroom rules through a process called **GUIDE**.
- This in-service suite is part of the series, *Behavior Guidance*, which is itself part of the *Well-Organized Classrooms* unit.
- Participants are encouraged to share ideas and experiences.
- Learning activities offer participants opportunities to produce a draft of rules for their own classrooms.
- Optional slides and learning activities are described in detail at the end of this document.



## EMPHASIZE



This suite is part of a series of in-service suite training offerings on *Behavior Guidance*.

## SLIDE 1: CREATING CLASSROOM RULES

### Introductions:

- Begin the training by giving participants background information on yourself and your agency/organization.
- Provide an opportunity for participants to introduce themselves.

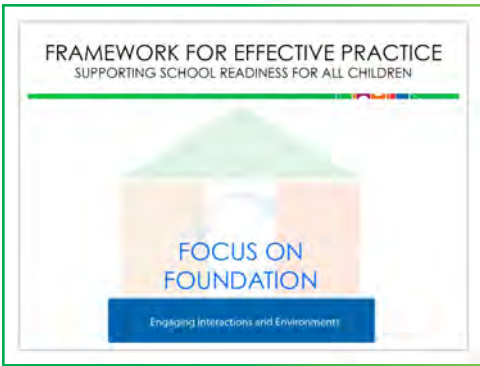
Use an icebreaker that emphasizes creating classroom rules:

- In a small group or with the large group, ask participants to share a rule that they remember from their early childhood years.
- Prepare a selection of classroom rules and put the rules into a cup. In small groups have participants draw one rule out of the cup, discuss why this rule is important in the classroom, and talk about potential challenges for children in following this classroom rule. If time allows have groups share highlights from their conversations with the large group.

### Introduce the topic:

- *Creating Classroom Rules* is one component of a well-organized classroom.





## SLIDE 2: FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

### Introduce NCQTL.

The NCQTL framework for effective practice supports school readiness for all children.

Review NCQTL framework for effective practice:

- The House structure supports school readiness for all children.
- The foundation represents effective and engaging interactions and environments.
- The pillars represent research-based curricula and teaching practices and ongoing child assessment.
- The roof represents highly individualized teaching and learning.
- All components interact with each other and are essential for effective everyday practice for all children.

This in-service suite brings us to the foundation of the House framework, *Engaging Interactions and Environments*.

- Classroom rules support engaging and well-organized classroom environments for teachers and children.
- Creating classroom rules is important for helping children become members of a group. Rules also help create a consistent and predictable classroom environment.

### EMPHASIZE \*

Classroom rules support engaging and well-organized classroom environments for teachers and children.



## SLIDE 3: OBJECTIVES

Outline objectives for the presentation:

- To define what it means to create meaningful rules for early childhood classrooms.
- To introduce and highlight a process for creating classroom rules called GUIDE.

### DISCUSSION

Pose the question: What are some reasons for having classroom rules? Record, if desired. Possible reasons include setting clear expectations, promoting self-control, and consistent enforcement.





Length of video: Approximately 31 seconds

## SLIDE 4: VIDEO: CHILDREN'S DEFINITION OF RULES

Children arrive at the first day of school from a variety of experiences (child care, no pre-school, returning child) and with different expectations of how to behave in a group.

This video introduces the concept of classroom rules from the perspective of children.

VIDEO 

DISCUSSION 

Solicit feedback from participants using questions such as “Does this sound familiar?” or “What rules would children you know come up with?” See note below to learn the developmental progression for rule creation in children.

NOTE 

Ann Epstein outlines a developmental progression for creating rules in *Me, You, Us: Social-Emotional Learning In Preschool (2009)*. When children create rules they first parrot adult rules, then reinvent (elaborate) established rules, and finally they invent original rules. Children in multi-aged classrooms benefit from involvement in rule creation but will display varying levels of understanding.

OPTIONAL SLIDE 

Optional Slide 1 provides more information on the benefits of classroom rules.





## SLIDE 5: RULES

Many words are used to define rules: standards, guidelines, and norms. For purposes of this in-service suite let's look at how rules have been discussed in the literature.

- The first quote is from Dan Gartrell (2007): "Standards for behavior, understood by all (p. 259)."
- Carolyn Webster-Stratton (2010) defines rules as: "...consistent limit-setting and norms of behavior that help students feel calm and safe and likely to succeed (p. 50)."

### DISCUSSION

Ask participants to discuss other reasons why rules are important in their classrooms. Some answers might be to teach the difference between rules at home and school, teach how to behave in a group setting, and how to treat materials and toys unique to a school setting.

### OPTIONAL SLIDE

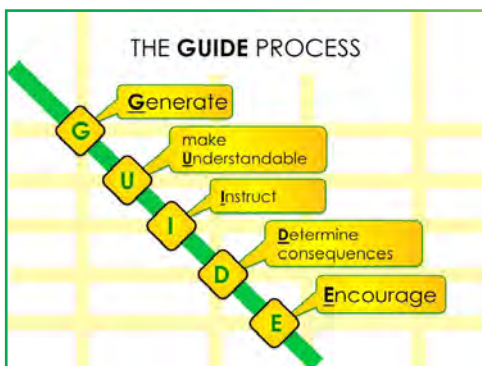
Optional Slide 2 provides information and visuals for three different types of rules.

### NOTE

References:

Gartrell, D. (2011). *A guidance approach for the encouraging classroom* (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth CENGAGE Learning.

Webster-Stratton, C. (1999). *How to promote children's social and emotional competence*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.



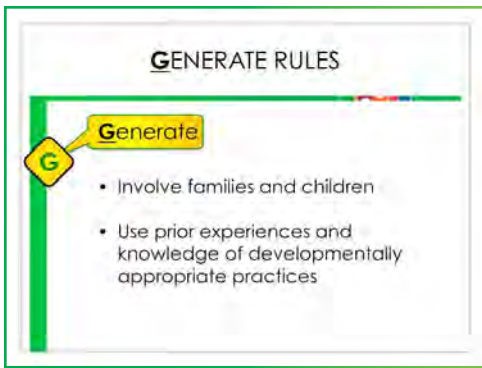
## SLIDE 6: THE GUIDE PROCESS

The GUIDE process is designed to assist teachers in creating classroom rules. There are five steps in this process:

- G** = **Generate** ideas for the rules.
- U** = Make the rules **U**nderstandable to children.
- I** = Provide **I**nstruction on rules.
- D** = **D**etermine consequences.
- E** = **E**ncourage children to use the rules.

Each of these steps are explained using video and classroom examples on the following slides.





## SLIDE 7: GENERATE RULES

First step in GUIDE is to **Generate** ideas about what rules are needed in the classroom.

Why are rules important for early childhood classrooms? Rules promote a feeling of ownership in children, and help staff and children learn about families and cultural-community connections.

Involve families and children in generating rules. During home visits or conferences, ask for family involvement identifying expectations for children's classroom behavior.

- What are your expectations for how your child interacts in the classroom?
- How would you like your child to treat other people in the classroom?
- How would you like your child to be treated by other children?

Involve children in identifying important classroom expectations during class meetings or in informal conversations.

- What can we do in this classroom to take care of our toys?
- How can we take care of our friends in this classroom?
- How do we take care of ourselves?

Use prior experiences and knowledge of developmentally appropriate practice when generating rules.

- In previous experiences working with children, what classroom rules have successfully helped organize children's interactions and behaviors?
- Consider how old the children are in your classroom. What are appropriate expectations and behaviors for this age range of children?
- What are the guidelines and policies for classroom rules from my center and expectations in other classrooms?





Length of video: Approximately 1 minute and 37 seconds

## SLIDE 8: VIDEO: RULES: ASK FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

### Introduce the video.

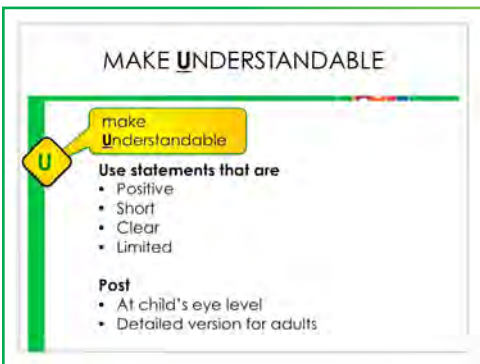
In this interview two teachers talk about how they involve families and children in generating classroom rules.

VIDEO 

DISCUSSION 

Ask for reactions to the video. Possible question:

- Have you asked families to share their home rules?
- Possible answer: parents' reactions to their children following (or not following) rules at home can give us great insight to children's behavior in the classroom.



## SLIDE 9: MAKE UNDERSTANDABLE

The next step in the GUIDE process is to make the rules **Understandable**.

Understandable rules include statements that are:

- Stated in *positive terms*
  - » Consider the following behaviors:
    - » Interaction with others (e.g., touch gently, be kind, be safe, etc.)
    - » Interaction with adults (e.g., listen to directions and start right away, follow directions, etc.)
    - » Movement inside the classroom (e.g., use walking feet, etc.)
    - » Voice volume (e.g., inside voice, three-inch voice, etc.)
    - » Treatment of materials (e.g., keep our things safe, respect our classroom things, etc.)
- Short
  - » Use few words, "just enough" to get an idea across.
- Clear to children
  - » Use pictures/graphics.
  - » Use home language.
- Limited in the total number of rules.
  - » Between three to five statements

After statements are written, post them in the classroom:

- Where children can see them
- Where adults can see them
  - » Rules may be stated in more detail on staff bulletin board.



## EXAMPLES OF CLASSROOM RULES



## SLIDE 10: EXAMPLES OF CLASSROOM RULES

These are examples of rules used in actual classrooms.

### DISCUSSION

Pose the questions:

- What are the strengths of these examples?
- Are there any changes you would make and why?

Key ideas to highlight if not mentioned in discussion:

- Use limited text.
- Frame statements in positive ways (e.g., “We walk” vs. “No running”).
- Write in children’s home language.

## OPTIONAL

### LEARNING ACTIVITY: MAKING RULES UNDERSTANDABLE CHECKLIST

This learning activity provides additional practice for participants to analyze classroom rules.

#### NOTE

Presenter notes for this optional learning activity are provided at the end of this document.

## OPTIONAL

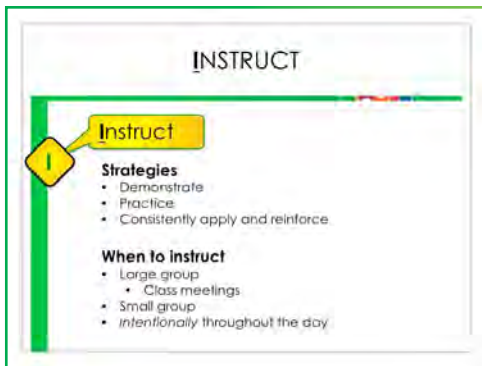
### LEARNING ACTIVITY: WRITING CLASSROOM RULES

This learning activity provides an opportunity for participants to create rules for their early childhood classrooms.

#### NOTE

Presenter notes for this optional learning activity are provided at the end of this document.





## SLIDE 11: INSTRUCT

Step three is to **Instruct** children in the use of rules. Intentionality is important, as rules at home are different from rules at school. All members of a classroom community need to understand rules of the classroom.

### **Strategies:**

*Demonstrate:* It is important for children to see all adults modeling and following the classroom rules. For example:

- While sitting at lunch with children say, “I passed the milk to my friend.”
- While playing outdoors with children say, “I’m waiting for a turn on the tire swing. I’m being a good friend.”

*Practice:* Provide specific instruction and opportunities for children to practice classroom rules. Practicing is most important when children are learning rules and can be faded out as needed.

- Use a variety of modalities (e.g., physical, auditory, tactile, etc.).
- *Provide* specific instruction.
  - » “I do it.” (e.g., Teacher demonstrates rule.)
  - » “We do it.” (e.g., Teacher and children act out rule together.)
  - » “You do it.” (e.g., Children act out rule on their own.)

*Consistently apply and reinforce:* Consistency is important as children learn classroom rules. The classroom rules should be applied across all teachers and to all activities. This assists children with following the rules and teachers with enforcing them.

### **When to Instruct:**

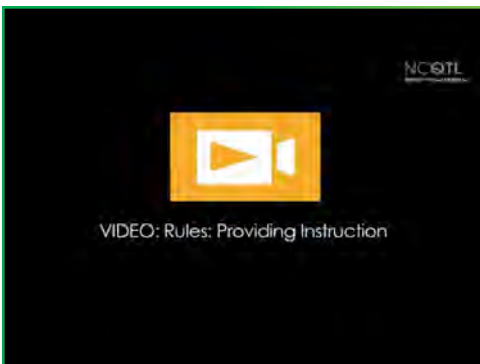
- Large group settings provide opportunities to introduce classroom rules.
  - » Give a few examples of behaviors that are and are not desired.
  - » Call on children to model a rule.
  - » Role play the use of rules.
  - » Puppets (Caution: Never use a puppet to demonstrate extremely inappropriate behaviors.)
  - » Books (e.g., published books and books made by children in the classroom)
  - » Songs (e.g., teacher generated or published)
- Class meetings
  - » Proactive, preventative measure—works best before there are problems.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE





- » Give everyone a chance to speak (use a prop like a talking stick, if needed).
- » Establish that everyone listens to each other.
- » Treat everyone with respect.
- » May work best when focus is on one issue.
- » Gather information.
- » Develop solutions.
- » Choose a solution.
- » Make the solution into a rule.
- Small group settings provide opportunities to work with a smaller number of children and to go into more depth.
  - » School rules BINGO
  - » Rules charades
  - » Decorate posters of rules
  - » Collage of children following rules
    - Make class books.
- Intentionally throughout the day—use “teachable moments.”



Length of video: Approximately 1 minute and 27 seconds

## SLIDE 12: VIDEO: RULES: PROVIDING INSTRUCTION

### **Introduce the video.**

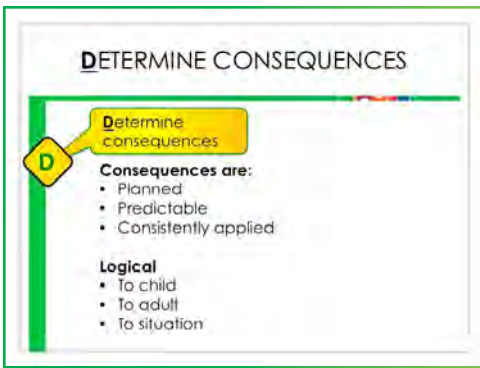
The teachers in this video provide examples and model what each rule looks like for children.

VIDEO 

DISCUSSION 

- How have you or how would you teach classroom rules?





## SLIDE 13: DETERMINE CONSEQUENCES

The fourth step is to **D**etermine consequences. Consequences are used as part of the teaching process.

Plan consequences ahead of time.

- Explain and role-play with children the consequences of forgetting or not following a rule.

Create predictability in consequences for not following classroom rules.

- Predictability provides a sense of safety for children.
- Predictability maintains classroom community, as all children have similar consequences for not following classroom rules.
- It is important for rules to be a predictable part of the classroom organization. Children should be aware of the rules and reminded of them when needed. During the beginning of the school year, while children are learning classroom rules, these reminders may need to happen more frequently. If a rule needs to be adjusted or adapted for a specific activity, make sure to discuss this change with children prior to the activity (e.g., field trip, special art activity, new large group gross motor game).

Apply consequences consistently by all staff members.

- Staff may need training to assure consistency. It is important for adults new to the classroom to know the expectations for children and how to work with a child who may be unable to follow a classroom rule.

Consequences need to be logical:

- To children
- To adults
- To the situation.

Examples of Consequences:

- In our classroom we walk. If you run in the classroom a teacher will remind you that running is for outside time. A teacher will also hold your hand and practice walking around the classroom with you.
- In our classroom we keep our bodies safe. When we use the tapping sticks we can tap the floor and tap them together, but we cannot tap on our friends. If you tap on your friends I will have to take the tapping sticks away, until you are ready to be safe with the tapping sticks.
- In our classroom we keep our friends safe. When we hit or hurt our friends and are not safe we cannot play with them. If you hurt friends in our classroom you will have to leave the activity and play by yourself, until your body calms down and then you can play with your friends again.



## OPTIONAL

### LEARNING ACTIVITY: DETERMINE CONSEQUENCES

This learning activity provides an opportunity for participants to think through consequences related to their classroom rules.

#### NOTE

Presenter notes for this optional learning activity are provided at the end of this document.



#### EMPHASIZE

Children want to follow classroom rules but may need support and encouragement as they learn.

### SLIDE 14: ENCOURAGE

The final step in GUIDE is to **E**ncourage children's efforts as they put rules into action.

Encouragement may involve the entire class-wide community:

- Cultivate a classroom culture that is safe.
- Cultivate a classroom culture where children *recognize and encourage each other*.
- Cultivate a classroom culture that is joy-filled and one where children want to follow the rules.

Encouragement is given to individual children and therefore must be:

- Specific to that child
- Appropriate to the child's age
- Scaffold children's learning by helping children think ahead, plan and solve problems.
- Acknowledge frequently! Children need repeated encouragement and support to internalize the rules.





## SLIDE 15: EXAMPLES: ENCOURAGE

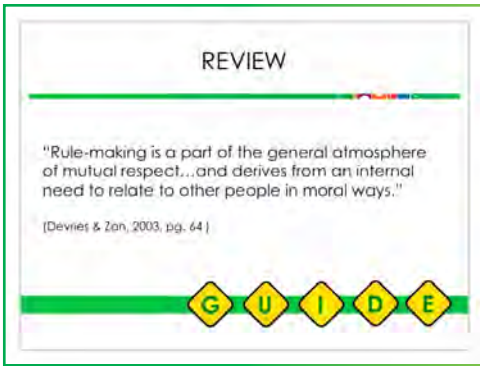
Encouragement helps boost self-confidence, acknowledges effort, and can be public or private.

- Be specific; relate words to the rule and support effort. For example, when I see you putting away the toys when you are finished, it shows me that you are taking care of our classroom.
- May use whole-class systems. With a whole class system, children work together to achieve a goal. Whole-class systems can be used to focus in on a specific rule and draw attention to children following this rule. For example, to practice being safe teachers created a stadium with fans. When children were observed being safe they put a fan in the stadium.
- Provide children with behavior-specific praise as they work hard to follow rules throughout the day. For example: Giving a child a high-five for safely playing with his friends.

### DISCUSSION

What strategies do you use to encourage children to follow classroom rules? A few examples are giving a child who followed the rules a special job like being line leader, filling a jar and when jar is full having a party, and sending notes to families about how well their child followed rules.





## SLIDE 16: REVIEW

### HANDOUT

Distribute the handout *More Times to **GUIDE***. Begin review by reading the quote at the top of the screen.

- Definitions of rules have been provided.
- A process called GUIDE has been introduced.
- Creating classroom rules is important for supporting children in participating as members of a group.
- Creating classroom rules helps create a consistent and predictable classroom environment.
- Creating classroom rules helps prepare children for success in further schooling.
- Refer to the opening video.
  - » When these children talk about rules in the future, we hope they can say what **to do** and have fewer don'ts.

### HANDOUT

Distribute and review handouts based on participant roles:

- *Tips for Teachers* – a quick handout for classroom staff highlighting how to create classroom rules.
- *Tools for Teachers* – a handout that teachers may use to create a poster of the GUIDE process.
- *Tools for Supervisors* – an observation tool for creating classroom rules.
- *Helpful Resources* – further information about creating classroom rules for staff and/or supervisors.

Ask participants to share their thoughts/questions/comments/concerns on creating classroom rules.

## OPTIONAL

### LEARNING ACTIVITY: MORE TIMES TO **GUIDE**

This learning activity provides additional practice for participants to create classroom rules. Use Optional Slide 4 for this activity.

### NOTE

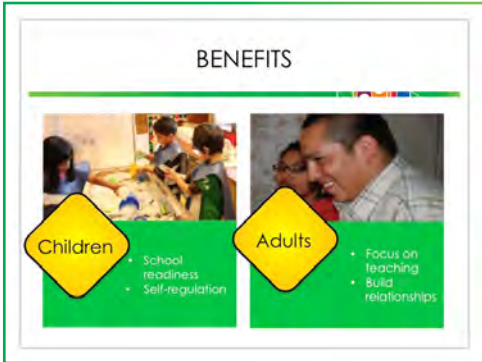
Presenter notes for this optional learning activity are provided at the end of this document.





## SLIDE 17: CLOSING

Provide participants with NCQTL contact information and encourage them to visit our website for additional resources on effective teaching practices.

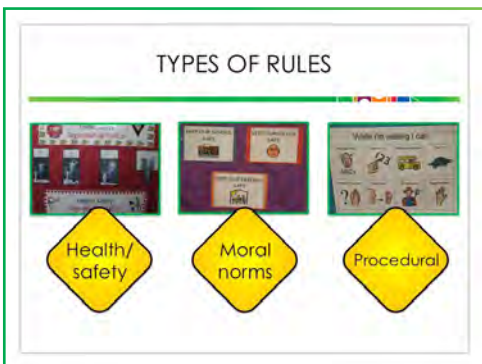


## OPTIONAL SLIDE 1: BENEFITS

*Recommended placement is after Slide 4.*

Benefits of classroom rules for children:

- Promote school readiness.
  - » Learn societal norms
  - » Learn school norms
  - » Friendship skills
  - » Add others pertinent to community.
- Support self-regulation.
  - » Impulse control
  - » Sustained attention
  - » Planning ahead
    - Solve problems.
- Benefits for adults
  - » When children follow classroom rules, adults can focus more on teaching.



## OPTIONAL SLIDE 2: TYPES OF RULES

*Recommended placement is after Slide 5.*

- Health/safety
  - » Based on children's well being.
- Moral norms
  - » Respect for people , property, and animals.
- Procedural
  - » Procedures to make the classroom run smoothly and make learning possible.

## OPTIONAL DISCUSSION

What are some health and safety rules/moral norms and procedures that are needed to help a classroom run smoothly? Examples of health/safety rules are handwashing and wearing helmets. Moral norms include how we treat each other like using polite words and taking the appropriate amount of food at meal times.



## OPTIONAL



### LEARNING ACTIVITY: MAKING RULES UNDERSTANDABLE CHECKLIST

#### OPTIONAL SLIDE 3

*Recommended placement of this activity is after Slide 10.*

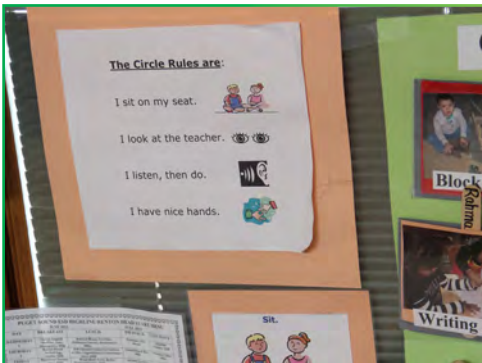
The slide labeled “Learning Activity” shows four examples of classroom rules.

#### HANDOUT

##### Directions:

- Divide large group into smaller groups.
- Distribute the *Making Rules Understandable Checklist* handout.
- For each set of classroom rules, have participants discuss whether the rules are understandable and then re-write any rules they find hard to understand.

## OPTIONAL



### LEARNING ACTIVITY: WRITING CLASSROOM RULES

*Recommended placement of this activity is after Slide 10.*

#### HANDOUT

##### Directions:

- Divide large group into smaller groups. For this activity, it is best to divide into teaching teams, if possible.
- Distribute the *Writing Classroom Rules* handout to teams to create rules for their classrooms.



## OPTIONAL



### LEARNING ACTIVITY: DETERMINE CONSEQUENCES

*Recommended placement of this activity is after Slide 13.*

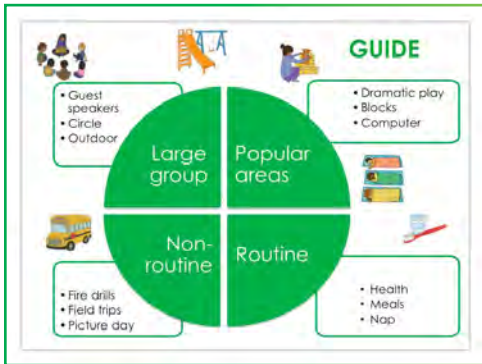
#### HANDOUT

- Divide large group into smaller groups. For this activity, it is best to divide into teaching teams, if possible.
- Distribute the *Determine Consequences* handout to teams to determine consequences for their classroom rules.





## OPTIONAL



### LEARNING ACTIVITY: MORE TIMES TO GUIDE

#### OPTIONAL SLIDE 4

*Recommended placement of this activity is after Slide 16.*

#### HANDOUT

#### Directions:

Review Optional Slide 4. Here are a few more times in which you may want to use GUIDE.

- Large group
- Guest speakers, circle time, outdoor time, etc.
- Popular areas
- Dramatic play, blocks, computer, etc.
- Non-routine
- Fire drills, field trips, picture day, etc.
- Routine
- Nap time, health-related, meals/snacks, etc.

#### NOTE

A quick discussion after each area may be appropriate.

- Divide large group into smaller groups, teams, or pairs.
- Distribute the *More Times to **GUIDE*** handout.
  - » Row 1. Direct participants to write answers to the following question: "What are some non-routine times/place, or large group... in which you might use GUIDE?"
  - » Row 2. Direct participants to select one time/place from each column and write rules applicable to that time/place (or more depending on time).