

# Communicating with Co-Workers: Stop Gossiping and Start Finding Solutions

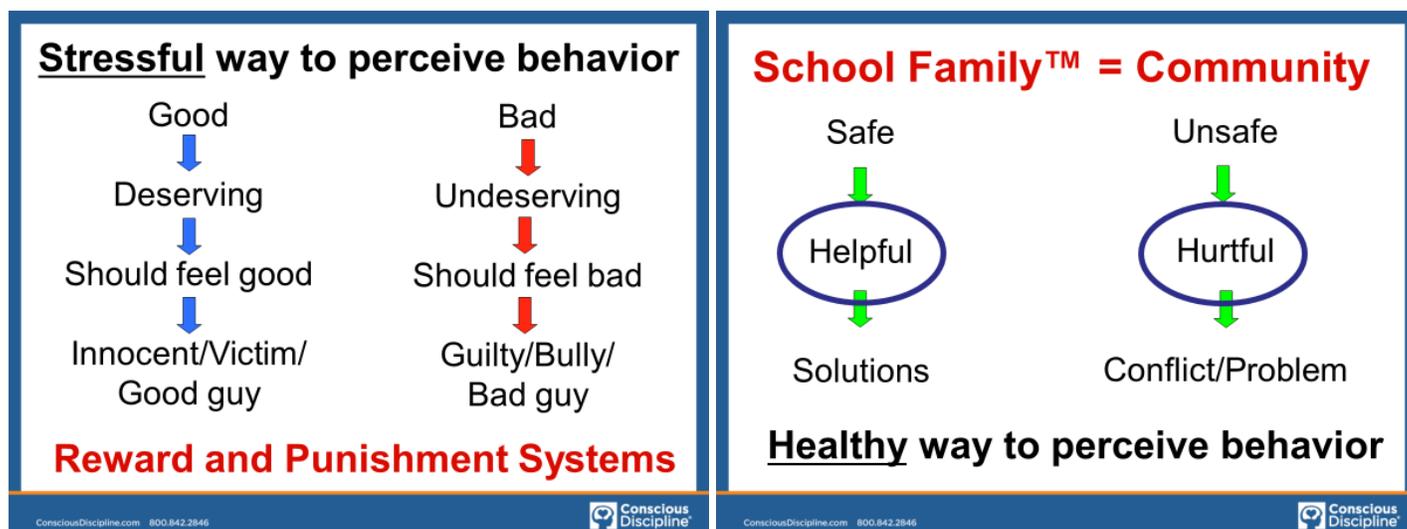
Presented by Mandy Lloyd, Conscious Discipline Certified Instructor, [mandy.lloyd@consciousdiscipline.com](mailto:mandy.lloyd@consciousdiscipline.com)

**Brain Smart Start®:** ★ Unite ★ Disengage Stress ★ Connect ★ Commit ★

Creating an optimal state for learning = low threat + high challenge

Song: "Team of Two" CD: Brain Boogie Boosters by The Learning Station & Dr. Becky Bailey

**The School Family™** creates caring communities. Caring is a product of a community that deems all of its members important, believes everyone has something to contribute, and acknowledges that everyone counts.



## What is a School Family?

A **relationship-based community model** of [employee] management, which relies on **communication skills** that are taught during moments of conflict, instead of an environment where rules govern behavior by rewards and punishments, which rely on fear and coercion for compliance.

## Effective communication begins with relationships!

"The ...teacher wears many hats. S/he is likely to be teacher, comforter, referee, diaper changer, playmate, and storyteller – all in the course of a day. Remaining emotionally available in so many roles to several [children] at once is challenging. Co-teachers, parents, and supervisors each become members of the nesting of adult relationships that support the ...teacher to remain present and positive with the children. **The [children], in turn, observe these adult relationships and learn how to build strong, positive relationships with other people.**"

Caring for Infants and Toddlers in Groups: DAPII [www.ZeroToThree.org](http://www.ZeroToThree.org)

How do you connect with your staff?

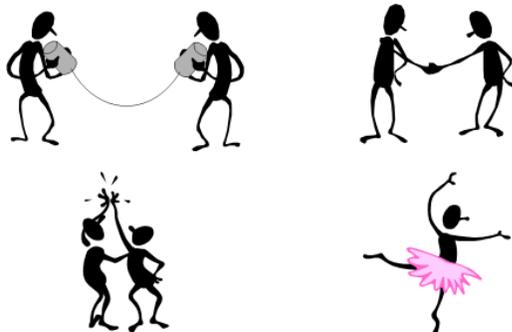
**ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS FOR CONNECTION:** ♥ Eye contact ♥ Touch ♥ Presence ♥ Playful ♥



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## Greetings aren't just for kids!



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Green Valley Elementary  
New Albany, IN

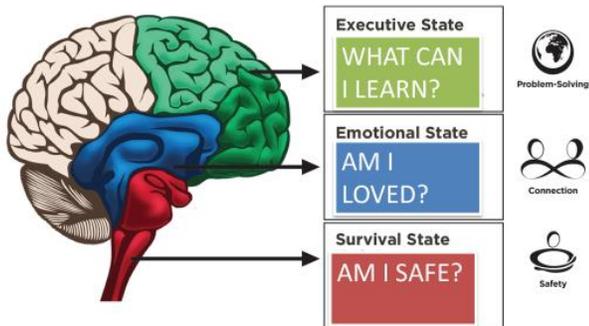
**Guess Who!**



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## Conscious Discipline® Brain State Model



State dictates behavior.



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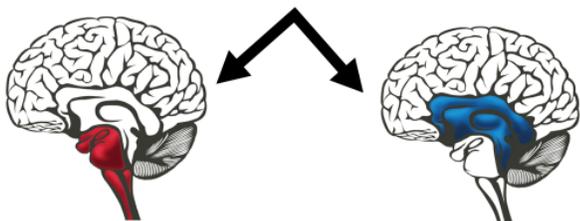
## Misbehavior = Communication

Quit  
Taking  
It  
Personally



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## STRESS



End up in power struggles and/or  
Coercive trap – modeling or reinforcing  
the exact behaviors we don't want.

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## Skill of Composure

**Discipline  
myself  
first!**

### RESPOND instead of react

- Breathe deeply
  - ☆ Smile,
  - ☆ Take a deep breath,
  - ☆ And,
  - ☆ Relax.
- Think calming thoughts  
**Power of Perception**
  - ☆ "I'm safe."
  - ☆ "Keep breathing."
  - ☆ "I can handle this."

**How you  
discipline  
yourself is how  
you will  
discipline  
others.**



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## Power of Love



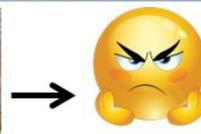
See the best (positive)  
→ peaceful feelings  
→ *respond*

See the worst (negative)  
→ upset/angry feelings  
→ *reaction*

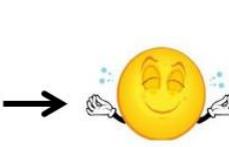


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## Power of Perception & Love



THINK → FEEL → ACT



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## Skill of Positive Intent

♥ Our willingness to look beyond the negative behavior... empowers us to see the [teacher's] true need... and to teach a new skill rather than seek to punish.



She was hoping I'd give her a different answer. Her disappointment overwhelmed her professionalism.

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## Skill of Positive Intent

♥ Our willingness to look beyond the negative behavior... empowers us to see the [teacher's] true need... and to teach a new skill rather than seek to punish.



She wasn't expecting me to notice or comment on her mistake. She doesn't know the words to use to express her feelings.

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- When you see the best in others, you then respond with compassion instead of judgment.
- A person cannot behave differently until they are seen differently.
- See hurtful behavior as a call for help.
- Conflict becomes an opportunity to teach and learn.

The skill of positive intent is used to *begin* the interaction... It does not mean it is the only skill you use.



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## Three types of communication



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## Skill of Assertiveness

- **Focus on what to do**
  - What you want
- **Clear and direct**
  - Make eye contact and start with “I-message”
- **Tone of voice leaves no doubt**
  - **Passive:** asks permission, “Okay?”
  - **Aggressive:** threatens, uses fear, “Or else!”
  - **Assertive:** communicates respect, matter-of-fact, voice of “no-doubt”



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## What is your INTENT?

**Your intent** determines your tone and actions:

- **Manipulate = passive.**
- **Force = aggressive.**
- **Help = assertive.**



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## It is impossible to speak assertively if...

- ...you try to please everyone.
- ...being liked is more important than being respected.
- ...you worry about what somebody might do or say in response to what you will do or say.

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## Speak Assertively

**I need you to...**    **I'm going to...**  
**I want you to...**    **It's time to...**



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## Speak Assertively

- I feel [negative emotion] when \_\_\_\_.
- I don't feel [positive emotion] when \_\_\_\_.
- I've noticed \_\_\_\_.
- It's a problem for me because \_\_\_\_.
- What I'm suggesting is \_\_\_\_.
- I expect you/us to \_\_\_\_.
- We are going to [state plan of action].



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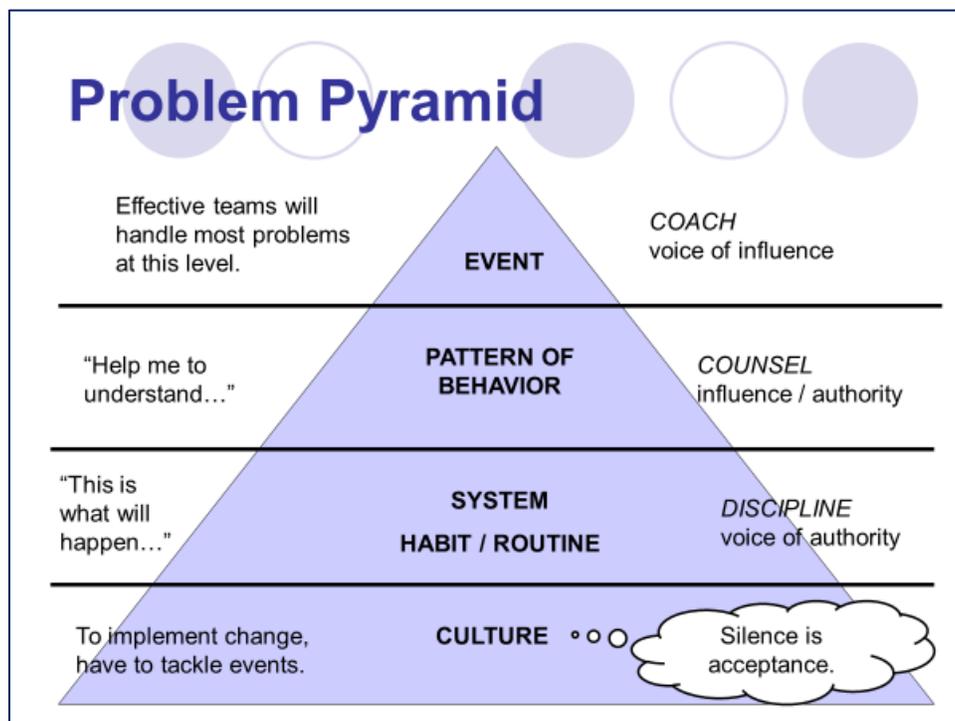
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## Structure first; Discipline second Just like children...

- Teachers need routines to feel safe
- Teachers need **consistency** from adults who mean what they say
- Clear rules and limits enable teachers to make helpful decisions
- Teachers live up to the expectations you set

Caring for Infants and Toddlers in Groups: DAPII [www.ZeroToThree.org](http://www.ZeroToThree.org)



## Silence is acceptance.

If you choose not to address the problem, you implicitly send the message that there is no problem. People cannot change if they are unaware of how their behavior is impacting you.



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## Structure First; Discipline Second

DISCLAIMER: The information provided is not advice, and should not be treated as such. You must not rely on the information on this page as an alternative to legal advice regarding employment practices from your attorney or other professional legal services provider. If you have any specific questions about any legal matter regarding employment practices you should consult your attorney or other professional legal services provider. ([freenetlaw.com](http://freenetlaw.com))

### Examples of Employee Policy:

- Gossip will not be tolerated here at [name of center]. We expect problems to be addressed and resolved in a professional manner. A reminder from the [name of center] Employee Handbook:
  - *Conduct as an Employee.* In addition to expecting employees to perform their jobs competently and reliably, [center name] expects employees to conduct themselves in a professional, ethical and responsible manner that reflects well upon the organization, that promotes a spirit of cooperation and teamwork among employees and that is respectful of the children, families, volunteers and members of the public with whom we interact. Failure to do so may lead to corrective action, including dismissal.
- We are a School Family™ that values team-work and problem-solving. The Director and Assistant Director are always available for coaching you through a problem-solving scenario. We view conflict as an opportunity to learn – it's not necessarily a bad thing!

### Excerpts from Job Descriptions:

- The **Lead Teacher** will provide a positive workplace environment for other members of the classroom teaching team, giving support and guidance as needed, setting the highest possible professional standards as a model for all staff. The Lead Teacher will support the cooperative relationship among families, staff and administration.
- The **Assistant Teacher** will support a positive workplace environment for other members of the classroom teaching team and set the highest possible professional standards as a model for all staff.

### Supervision of Staff for Lead Teachers

- Understand the strengths and weakness of each team member and manage team responsibilities to take advantage of individual strengths.
- Determine the learning and communication preferences of team members and plan training and communication accordingly.
- Maintain a positive approach to problem-solving.
- Accept responsibility for team functioning so that change is possible. Look to yourself for changes you can make before expecting others to be willing to change.

### Excerpts from Staff Development Tool\*:

Attitude and Skills with Co-workers/Teamwork

1. Treats others with respect and dignity
2. Shares information
3. Good communicator
4. Looks for ways to be helpful
5. Avoids gossip
6. Listens to suggestions and makes necessary changes
7. Exhibits a team attitude
8. Consistently assumes a fair share of work
9. Offers and shares ideas and materials
10. Attends and contributes to team meetings

Key: **A**= Always **S** = Sometimes **N**=Never

IDEA: I ask the employee being evaluated to complete the same tool as their peers. Then you may see clear discrepancies in perception and target areas of performance to improve.



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## Structure First; Discipline Second

### “Back-to-School” Staff Meeting; Questions to guide discussions

We may have different “right ways,” so it is helpful to come to *agreements* in each classroom.

- COMMIT TO EMPATHY: being aware of...another person’s feelings, experiences, and emotions
- How to professionally agree to disagree

It is the job of the Director and Assistant Director/Curriculum Specialist to clarify practices when needed and/or define when an idea is not considered best practice according.

#### TEACHER BEHAVIORS

1. When is it appropriate for teachers to have a personal conversation?
2. How do you start the conversation when you disagree with another teacher’s behavior?
3. Practice “I-messages.”
  - a. Someone rearranged materials without consulting the team.
  - b. During planning time, someone suggests an idea that you don’t think is appropriate for your age group.
  - c. Someone comes back 10 minutes late from break.
4. What about children sitting on tables or standing on chairs?
5. Where can children draw with markers?
6. What does licensing require about children eating/drinking while standing/walking?
7. What do teachers do during nap-time?
8. What about food for teachers in the classroom?

#### TEACHER-CHILD INTERACTIONS

1. Reflect on your beliefs about the capability of children
  - a. At what age can/should children
    - i. dress themselves
    - ii. help with clean-up
    - iii. use markers, scissors, etc?
    - iv. feed themselves
    - v. use the toilet
    - vi. solve problems
    - vii. follow one, two, or three-step directions
2. How do teachers handle transitions?
3. Talk about changing diapers or helping children in the bathroom.
4. What does it mean to talk with children rather than at or about them?
5. Talk about nap-time: what are children allowed to do? What are they not?
6. Talk about children wearing shoes and socks in the classroom.

#### PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATIONS

1. How do you greet parents at arrival? How is it the same or different at pick-up time?
2. When/how do you tell parents about an incident/accident report?
3. How do you answer the question, “How was her day?” OR “Did he have a good day?”
4. How do you handle disagreements with parents?



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## Structure First; Discipline Second

*Sample handout given to new employees and reviewed by all staff at "Back-to-School" staff meeting, and as needed throughout the year.*

### Solving Problems with Adults

**The seventh Skill of Conscious Discipline® is Consequences. Problem-solving is a natural consequence. When your behavior causes a problem and/or impacts another person – either knowingly or unknowingly – you are responsible for helping find a solution to the problem. Just as we expect children to work together to find solutions, we expect teachers to solve problems in a direct way with positive intent. We practice and model problem-solving among adults so that we can teach and model problem-solving with children.**

Sometimes the problem is between you and one other adult. The problem should be solved directly between the two adults involved. Ask your supervisor for help if you are uncomfortable or unable to approach the other adult one-on-one. If your supervisor is involved in the problem, ask the Director or Assistant Director for help. If you choose not to address the problem, you implicitly send the message that there is no problem. People cannot change if they are unaware of how their behavior is impacting you.

The 5-step process for adult assertiveness: (Helpful acronym: **O**ld **D**ogs **I**tch **W**hen **H**appy)

- O**ffer positive intent
- D**escribe the problem
- I**mpact on me
- W**hat I want you to do
- H**ow this will help us both.

Concepts adapted from the Conscious Discipline® program with permission. 1-800-842-2846, [www.ConsciousDiscipline.com](http://www.ConsciousDiscipline.com)

**Gossip will not be tolerated at our school. We expect problems to be addressed and resolved in a professional manner. A reminder from the Employee Handbook:**

*Conduct as an Employee.* In addition to expecting employees to perform their jobs competently and reliably, **we expect employees to conduct themselves in a professional, ethical and responsible manner** that reflects well upon the organization, **that promotes a spirit of cooperation and teamwork among employees** and that is respectful of the children, families, volunteers and members of the public with whom we interact. Failure to do so may lead to corrective action, including dismissal.



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Sometimes the problem involves the whole team or more than one adult. The Conscious Discipline® model for problem-solving uses Class Meetings to address problems involving a group or more than one person. Use the following model during a team meeting to address problems.

## Problem-solving during Team Meetings or Staff Meetings

The following five steps will guide you through a team meeting process. By using these steps you involve all adults involved in the co-creation of solutions and any consequences that may be necessary.

**Step 1:** “I’ve noticed \_\_\_\_.” State what you have seen occurring in the classroom without bias or judgment. State the problem specifically.

*“I’ve noticed that the shelves in the fridge in the staff room are often full. When I begin to rearrange items to fit in essentials such as snack or milk, I notice an assortment of unlabeled and sometimes spoiled food and drink.”*

**Step 2:** “This is a problem for me because \_\_\_\_\_. Does it bother anyone else?” This step allows the other adults the opportunity to own part of the problem.

*“This is a problem for me because it is irresponsible behavior by adults who I know to be responsible. Does it bother anyone else?”*

**Step 3:** “So, a team problem is \_\_\_\_.” Summarize the class problem.

*“So our School Family™ problem is that the refrigerator in the staff room becomes cluttered.”*

**Step 4:** “What could we do to solve the problem?” Generally you will have a constructive conversation focused on solutions. At this point focus on what *to do* – be specific.

**Step 5:** “What happens if the team fails to \_\_\_\_.” This step allows you to create a team consequence. Remember the consequence must be fair and safe for everyone.

*The Director will clean out the fridge on Thursday afternoons. Any item not claimed or clearly labeled with a person’s name and/or date will be discarded. I understand that my personal food storage containers will be trashed if I do not take responsibility for removing them from the fridge.*

Concepts adapted from the Conscious Discipline® program with permission. 1-800-842-2846, [www.ConsciousDiscipline.com](http://www.ConsciousDiscipline.com)

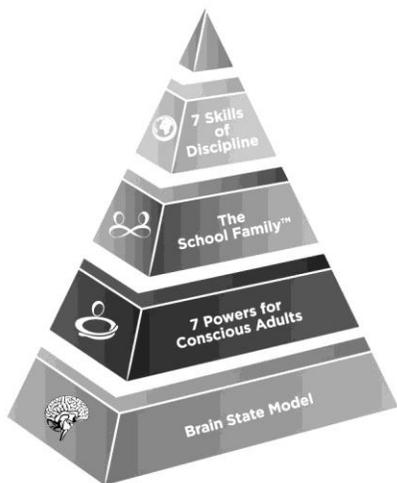


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## Conscious Discipline®

Conscious Discipline is a comprehensive evidence-based self-regulation program that integrates social-emotional learning and discipline.



*Transformative, brain-based and practical*

### Seven Skills of Discipline

Provides adults with the seven discipline skills needed to effectively transform any problem into a life lesson.

### The School Family™

Creates a positive school climate by eliminating reward and punishment in favor of the safety, connection and problem-solving of a School Family.

### Seven Powers for Conscious Adults

Perceptual shift that empowers us to see discipline encounters as an opportunity to teach new skills.

### Brain State Model

Addresses internal state first, using a neurodevelopmental brain model, so adults and children may learn to self-regulate effectively.

Learn more at [ConsciousDiscipline.com](http://ConsciousDiscipline.com)

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## Elevate SEL Conference: Start Strong with Conscious Discipline the First Six Weeks

**July 24 - 26 | Orlando, FL**

Designed for Early Childhood - 5th Grade Teachers, Administrators, Social Workers and Counselors

### Here's what you will take away...

- Learn the keys to cultivating a healthy, connected School Family™ culture that prevents bullying
- Create trauma-informed practices that reduce discipline referrals and teach empathy
- Leave with your complete SEL plan for the first six weeks, laying a solid foundation for a year full of success!



### Dr. Becky Bailey

Author, Educator and Founder of Conscious Discipline, will be presenting with Conscious Discipline Master Instructors.

Special Guest Speaker, DJ Batiste, a former gang leader, shares his inspirational message.

Register now at: [ConsciousDiscipline.com/Workshops](https://ConsciousDiscipline.com/Workshops)

### Early Bird Discount

\$349 per person, until April 14. \$399 per person, after April 14.

Facilitators may change without notice.



## Family Camp with *Shubert*

**Friday, July 27 | Orlando, FL**

Designed for Parents and their Children Ages 4 and Older\*

### Parents and children will...

- Practice skills for managing upset and emotional control
- Play games based on the Shubert books to learn and practice taking turns, sharing and solving conflicts with siblings
- Create and practice *I Love You Rituals* family activities that strengthen relationships and boost your child's brain power
- Enjoy family time together and have a blast!



### Dr. Becky Bailey

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Register now at: [ConsciousDiscipline.com/Workshops](https://ConsciousDiscipline.com/Workshops)

\* Participating children must be 4 and older and potty trained, no exceptions. Facilitators may change without notice.

**\$99 One or both parents, and one child.  
\$29 Each additional child.**

