

## Thinking about Guidance and Culture

You can help staff members think about their own experiences and beliefs about child guidance. You can use the rating scale below to spark conversation or reflection. Ask each staff member to rate how strongly they agree or disagree with each statement.

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
Adults should listen to children's ideas, suggestions, and opinions.				
Rules inhibit children's creativity.				
Children will take advantage of you if you offer choices.				
The most important thing is that children like me and consider me a friend.				
I have a hard time being consistent with children.				
Children need to respect my decisions. There is no room for discussion.				
If left to their own devices, children would always make trouble.				
Giving children choices shows weakness.				
I like to discuss options with children.				
It's important for adults to explain their decisions and help children understand consequences for unsafe behavior.				
It is okay to use prizes or rewards to get children to follow the rules or listen to me.				
Consistent limits are important for children's development.				

After staff members have completed the rating scale, you can use the following information to help them process their answers.

<b>Guidance Style</b>	<b>Items “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”</b>	<b>What it Means</b>
Authoritative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adults should listen to children’s ideas, suggestions, and opinions.</li> <li>I like to discuss options with children.</li> <li>It’s important for adults to explain their decisions and to help children understand consequences for unsafe behavior.</li> <li>Consistent limits are important for children’s development.</li> </ul>	<p>Staff members believe in a balanced approach to guidance: they set firm limits but interact respectfully with children. They are transparent and consistent in their interactions, and they nurture two-way conversations with children. They support children’s development of self-discipline and decision-making.</p>
Authoritarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children will take advantage of you if you offer choices.</li> <li>Children need to respect my decisions. There is no room for discussion.</li> <li>If left to their own devices, children would always make trouble.</li> <li>Giving children choices shows weakness.</li> <li>It is important for children to learn to respect authority.</li> </ul>	<p>Staff members see themselves as an absolute authority figure and may value obedience and compliance from children. Some children might fear staff members who have this style. Children might become very good at following the rules with this staff member, but they might not have the opportunity to develop self-discipline.</p>
Permissive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rules inhibit children’s creativity.</li> <li>The most important thing is that children like me and consider me a friend.</li> <li>I have a hard time being consistent with children.</li> <li>It is okay to use prizes or rewards to get children to follow the rules or listen to me. (This could also be a marker for Authoritarian; the emphasis is more on control).</li> </ul>	<p>Staff members may respect children’s choices, but they may also avoid putting demands on children. Be prepared to help staff members consider whether they have appropriately high expectations for children’s behavior. Help them consider whether some children might struggle with the lack of structure they provide.</p>