

# Developing Nurturing Skills (DNS): School-Based Program Grades 4 - 6

Amy C. Schlieve, Ed.D. and Stephen J. Bavolek, Ph.D.

## Introduction and Description

### Introduction: Components of the Program

Welcome to the Developing Nurturing Skills (DNS) School-Based Program. There are three separate components of the DNS Program that can be implemented separately. However, when implemented jointly, all three components form a comprehensive approach to building a climate of nurturing within schools and communities. The three components are:

1. **School DNS Program:** The K-12 School Based Program is designed to enhance the nurturing life skills of children, pre-teens and teens through daily activities and lessons.
2. **Nurturing Parenting Education:** The parenting component is a family based parenting program designed to enhance the nurturing parenting skills of parents whose children are attending school.
3. **Teacher Nurturing Training (TNT):** Incorporating nurturing into school settings begins with the training of the teachers and administration in implementing a school wide philosophy of nurturing. The goal is to change the atmosphere of failure, disrespect and strict obedience into an environment of success, respect and cooperation. School personnel are trained in modeling the behaviors they want the students to emulate.

Additional information about Teacher Nurturing Training (TNT) and Nurturing Parenting Classes are presented in companion manuals.

### Development of the DNS Program

The DNS Programs were developed from 30 years of proven effectiveness of the Nurturing Programs first established in 1983. Based on a three year national study funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, the Nurturing Programs were developed to help families replace old hurtful and unwanted parenting practices for healthier, more positive practices. Including the initial NIMH study, over 25 studies have supported the effectiveness of the Nurturing Programs in treating and preventing child maltreatment. Both parents and their children can enhance their nurturing parenting and family skills.

### Positive Nurturing Skills: Understanding the Philosophy Underlying the Program

The ability to positively nurture is a part of the nature of all human beings. We are born with the predisposition to care for others by forming strong bonds and positive, secure attachments. Unfortunately in some families, harsh and abusive parenting practices have been passed down from one generation to the next redirecting both parents and children away from their compassionate nature to their learned dysfunctional behavior patterns. However, learned dysfunctional behavior can be unlearned and replaced with new, more healthy and nurturing behaviors.

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**Activity 1.2 Getting Hurt**

Construct: Self-Awareness and Empathy

Materials: Smart Board, White Board, or Flip Chart

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**Teaching Goal:**

To increase awareness of emotional and physical behavior.

**Learner Competency:**

Children will be able to express their emotions.

**Procedures:**

1. Have the children sit in a circle on the floor or in chairs.
2. Mention to the group that sometimes people do things that hurt us. Hurt could be physical or emotional. Sometimes it's on purpose; sometimes it's not. Today we will recall something someone did that left us with hurt feelings.
3. Ask each child to respond to the following:

**One time someone hurt me was \_\_\_\_\_.**

**The way I responded was \_\_\_\_\_.**

4. Share with the children that feelings of hurt need to be expressed or often times they will grow into anger.

**Notes and Suggestions:**

This can be a topic guide – children to recognize unexpressed hurt and anger.

**Quiz Question:**

When I feel hurt I could \_\_\_\_\_.

- c. When was the last time someone praised you?
  - d. When was the last time you praised someone?
7. Explain that when someone gives us praise we should say “Thank you.”
8. Next, focus on the opposite of praise – **CRITICISM**. Mention that criticism is using our personal power in a negative way. Ask for examples of criticism. Some examples are:

**Criticism for “Being”**

I hate you.  
You are a jerk.

**Criticism for “Doing”**

What a stupid thing to do.  
Your clothes look stupid.

9. Help the children recognize how they feel when someone criticizes them. Criticism feels bad, sad, cold, etc. Hold up a sad face to help the children recognize criticism. You may want to use the following questions to stimulate discussion:
- a. How does it feel when you are criticized by others?
  - b. Do you ever criticize others?
  - d. What do you think others feel when they’re criticized?
10. Have each child go around the circle giving an example of a praise statement for “being” and a praise statement for “doing” and an example of a criticism statement.

**Notes and Suggestions:**

Praise for being and Praise for doing are practices you should continue with all interactions with the children.

**Quiz Question:**

When I am praised I feel \_\_\_\_\_.

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**Activity 3.3 Anger Painting**

Construct: Emotional Regulation; Self-Awareness

Materials: Paints, brushes, paper

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**Teaching Goal:**

To increase children's awareness and skills of appropriate ways to express anger.

**Learner Competency:**

Children will identify one appropriate way to express anger.

**Procedures:**

1. Mention to the children that they will practice expressing their anger through painting. Provide every child with paper and paints.
2. Instruct the children to paint in any form they choose. Allow 10 to 15 minutes for them to paint.
3. After they are finished with their painting, ask children to share their paintings.

Process the activity by utilizing the following questions:

*How does it feel to express your anger?*

*What are other ways you would be comfortable sharing or expressing your anger?*

**Notes and Suggestions:**

Let children know that feeling angry is ok and normal but learning how to express appropriately is the goal.

**Quiz Question:**

When I am angry I will \_\_\_\_\_.