

Classroom Management: A Guide for Teachers

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Top Discipline Problems in Schools

1940

- Talking
- Chewing gum
- Making noise
- Running in the halls
- Cutting in line
- Improper clothing

1995

- Drug abuse
- Gangs
- Alcohol abuse
- Weapons in school
- Assault
- Teen pregnancy

Basis for Good Mental Health

- Unconditional love from families
- Self-confidence and adequate self-esteem
- Opportunity to play with other children
- Having encouraging teachers and caregivers
- Safe and secure environment
- Appropriate guidance and discipline

An exceptional experience in which powerful and dangerous stimuli overwhelm the child's capacity to regulate his or her affective state.

Trauma can affect:

- Child's ability to trust adults to keep him/her safe.
- Child's ability to learn
- Child's social & emotional development
- Child's ability to manage anger
- Child's ability to be a child
- Friendships/peer support
- Child's self esteem

Impact of Trauma on Learning

- Decreased IQ and reading ability (Delaney-Black et al., 2003)
- Lower GPA (Hurt et al., 2001)
- Greater school absences (Hurt et al., 2001)
- Decreased rates of high school graduation (Grogger, 1997)
- Increased expulsions and suspensions (LAUSD Survey)

In general, be alert if children show some of the following difficulties

- Decline in school performance/poor grades despite strong efforts
- Sleep troubles, nightmares, fear of falling asleep, falling asleep in class
- Headaches, stomach aches, aches and pains
- Increased aggressive behavior and angry feelings
- Repeated refusal to go to school or participate in activities
- Hyperactivity or fidgeting
- Frequent temper tantrums
- Depression, sadness, irritability, loss of appetite
- Worrying about the safety of loved ones
- For younger children; loss of skills learned earlier (such as toilet training, language skills)

In general, be alert if children show some of the following difficulties (cont')

- Repetitive play or talk about a violent event
- Not showing feelings about anything
- Trouble concentrating
- Daydreaming; not completing tasks
- Feeling life is too hard to handle
- Experiencing suicidal thoughts
- Fire setting; abusing animals; bed-wetting
- Doing things that are life threatening
- Self-injurious behavior

When to refer the child for mental health evaluation/services

- Severe family or child environmental and/or psychosocial issues
- Emotional/behavioral symptoms that cause distress to the child and/or parent
- Mental health issues that are affecting the child's functioning
- Severe disruption in classroom
- Severe withdrawal/depressed behaviors
- In general pay attention to any notable changes in behavioral and emotional functioning

Tips for Teachers: Classroom Management

Teaching Behavioral Expectations

- 1) State behavioral expectations
- 2) Specify student behaviors (rules)
- 3) Model appropriate student behaviors
- 4) Have students practice appropriate behaviors
- 5) Reinforce appropriate behaviors

Tips for Teachers: Classroom Management In General when helping with de-escalation

- Take the time necessary and use appropriate body language
- Clarify what the student is saying and reflect the emotions or feelings you are observing
- Approach students from a position of concern, and take ownership of that concern using “I” statements (e.g., “I’m concerned about how you’re doing”).
- Be compassionate, accepting and nonjudgmental – validate and be persistent
- Giving information about where a person can get help can often be the best kind of help
- Offer to make contact with counseling center and to go along with the student
- If your concern is ignored, if student escalates, if situation is more serious the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) may be next step...

Tips for Teachers: Classroom Management

- Starts Day 1: Preparation/Prevention is Key!
- Clarify Expectations and Consequences for Lack of Compliance
- Set Clear Rules for Your Students
 - Post them in the classroom
 - Point out the rule throughout the year
 - Define and consistently enforce consequences for not following rules
- Rules may include:
 - No teasing
 - No hitting
 - No rumor or telling stories about others
 - Respect “differences” of race, grades, religions, where people come from

Tips for Teachers: Classroom Management

- Teach Problem Solving
 - Treat bullying seriously and don't ignore the problem
 - Help kids deal with schoolyard bullying
- Teach Emotions and Expressions
 - Teach how to read/identify different emotions
 - Can use pictures of kids with different expressions
 - Encourage kids to identify difficult feelings of anger, frustration, sadness etc. as they experience them (without judgment)
- Encourage Role Play
 - Role play scenarios
 - Encourage kids to talk about how and why characters in the scenes might feel certain ways

Tips for Teachers: Classroom Management

- Develop Strategies
 - Help kids develop strategies for dealing with problem behaviors
- Show Conflict Resolution
 - Help kids learn and practice ways to solve problems and resolve conflicts
 - You are an important influence on your students. Model prosocial behavior at all times
- Acknowledging the problem at hand allows you to demonstrate your disapproval of inappropriate behaviors and provides an opportunity to teach kids how to problem solve in constructive ways

Tips for Teachers: Classroom Management Calming Strategies

- Teacher empathy
- Assist student to focus on the task
- Provide safe space
- Provide assurances & additional time
- Permit preferred activities
- Use proximity (when appropriate make eye-contact without getting in child's face)
- Choice of independent activities (when appropriate)
- Passive v. Active activities
- Movement/physical activities
- Student self-management

Tips for Teachers: Classroom Management Defusing Strategies

- Avoid escalating prompts
- Maintain calmness, respect & detachment
- Approach student in non-threatening manner

Tips for Teachers: Classroom Management

Systematic Correction Procedures

- Focus on student(s) nearby exhibiting the expected behavior first, then slowly move to target student
- Secure student's attention
- Inform him/her of expected behavior
- Redirect the student to expected behavior/activity (gesture/verbal prompt)
- Acknowledge the changed behavior when occurs
- Make first contacts least disruptive
- More intrusive measures if behavior persists

Tips for Teachers: Classroom Management

Systematic Correction Procedures

- Note Also:
 - Addressing problem behavior means providing attention which **MAY REINFORCE** the behavior
 - Controlling for attention is critical
 - The next student behavior is often determined by initial (and subsequent) teacher responses.

Tips for Teachers: Classroom Management Reintegration Strategies for De-escalation

- Isolate student
- Engage in independent work
- Decision (send student home or retain)
- Complete necessary paperwork/document (as necessary)
- Determine consequences
 - Start with mild consequences delivered CONSISTENTLY!
- Restore & resume

Tips for Teachers: Classroom Management

- What activities or symptoms should I address or report?
 - Anything that causes you concern.
 - Anything that prevents you from being able to effectively perform your duties.
 - Err on the side of caution and let the appropriate officials make the determination on the level of intervention.
- What is my role in dealing with a student in crisis in and outside the classroom?
 - It depends on the level of distress, disruption, or disturbance.
 - To encourage, support, refer, and report if necessary.

Support for Teachers

- Appreciation & recognition of how hard it can be
- Continuing education on mental health issues and the effects of trauma on children
- Need an opportunity to share your experiences and concerns
- Provide support in classrooms for children who may need more attention
- Provide opportunities for “time-outs”
- Self care

FYI: Other De-Escalation Techniques for Elementary Students (Pa Dept. of Ed., 2004)

- Personal time out/designated safe place
- Calm, soothing music
- Repetition of positive statements
- Redirection
- Drawing angry feelings followed by drawing a happy picture
- Journaling
- Deep-breathing
- Rewards (elicit ideas from students associated with calm)
- Going for a walk/physical activities
- Slowly counting backwards
- Encourage use of feeling words-listen and empathize
- Reflect child's feelings
- Most important, be proactive!