

# 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!