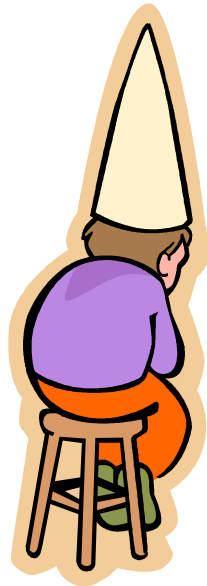


Classroom Management 101



**Managing Everyday
Classroom Behavior**

By Jennifer Wagaman

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Effective Classroom Management

Taking Control of Your Students' Behavior to Enable Learning



Teaching can be difficult in today's society when students are more and more disrespectful. Through your positive tone, clear rules, and consistent consequences and rewards, most students will begin to respect you and your classroom rules. A behavior plan may help those students who still have difficulty, and help you find your way to the end of a successful school year.

Set a Positive Tone

Kids smell fear. They also smell disrespect, uncertainty, and insecurity. When setting the tone in your classroom, you need to be confident, respectful and quick on your feet. Greet each day with a smile, act like you want to be there, and are excited to see each and every one of your students. Excitement is contagious, so be excited about learning, about good behavior, about weekends and about snow falling outside your classroom window! If the students are distracted by something, draw attention to it, acknowledge it, and then bring the focus back to the topic at hand.

Set Clear Expectations for the Students

Ensure that the rules you have posted are positive. Tell the students what you want them to do and how you want them to act, instead of telling them how to not act. If you have clear expectations for students' actions, then you are more likely to have them follow the rules.

Consistent Consequences and Rewards

Consistency is one of the key elements in any discipline or behavior plan. Set the expectations clearly, and expect them to obey those expectations. When a student deviates from the expected behavior, remind him of the rules. If the students expect a reward for a certain behavior, be sure to give them that reward each time. If the students are expecting a consequence for misbehavior, do not give repeated warnings or reminders without following through. Students will quickly learn that you will not back your own words up, and that they can get away with anything.

You may have to send notes home to parents or follow through on your other consequences several times in the first weeks of school before the students realize that you mean what you say and that you will not back down. Once this happens, your students should start to listen, and follow the rules.

Behavior Plans

If you have a specific student in your class who is consistently disobeying a rule, acting out, or otherwise behaving badly, a behavior plan may be an effective option. Choose that specific action that you want to see that student change (stay seated, keep hands to himself, etc), and develop a list of rewards that the student can earn as he follows that rule.

Through setting a positive tone, having clear expectations, and being consistent, you will be able to begin taking control of your classroom so that your students will be able to learn.

Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom

What to Do With a Child Who Continually Acts Out In Class



If you notice unusual behavior from a student in your class, there are several things you should do. Documenting what you see, and what you do in response, will help provide vital information to the guidance counselor or special education teachers who will help you gain control of this student.

Document the Behavior You See

Document the behavior that you notice. Is the child mimicking those around her? Document what the child mimics, and how often you notice the behavior. Does the child act out aggressively? Write down what happened immediately prior to the aggressive act each time it happens.

Documenting exactly what you see will enable those who are specially trained in special education to be able to better understand what is going on in your classroom. The most helpful information includes what happened directly prior to the action (the triggering event) and exactly what the child did or said in response.

Document Your Reaction to the Behavior

So the child threw a fit and ripped up his paper, flinging the pieces on the child sitting next to him. How did you handle the situation? Documenting your verbal and nonverbal reaction to the child will help special educators know what interventions have already been tried.

Some verbal interventions include verbal redirection, time outs, having the student apologize, missed recess, conference with the teacher, notes or calls home, or conference with the parent. Non-verbal interventions including ignoring the behavior, proximity to the student, shaking your head and a warning look. You can also try a behavior plan to control the behavior.

When to Go Directly to Your Guidance Counselor

Through out the process of documenting unusual behavior in your classroom, you should be in communication with your guidance counselor or special education teacher. There will be some instances where you need to go directly to your guidance counselor.

If the student in your class draws a disturbing picture, take the picture to the guidance counselor and be sure to tell the counselor what was going on in the class when the student drew the picture (free time, assignment, math class?). This includes pictures of violence, pictures of a sexual nature, and anything involving weapons or injured people or animals that seem out of place with the lesson.

Report if the student tells you or another student about violence at home, about someone hurting him, or touching him inappropriately. Also, any talk about bullying or being bullied should be reported to the guidance counselor. If a student comes in with a bruise, if possible, have 2 adults ask what happened, if the

story is plausible and consistent, then it is probably true. If the story changes, the student seems uncomfortable, or the story seems implausible, it might be worth a trip to the guidance counselor as well.

You will have students who act out in your class. The younger the grade, the greater chance you have of the student having a disability not identified yet. If you are concerned about a student in your class, start documenting what you see, and then talk to your guidance counselor or special educator to find out what else can be done.

How to Motivate Your Students

Nine Motivating Ideas for Teachers



Each child is different and requires a different motivation. What works for one child may or may not work for the rest of your class. Finding what motivates each student will help increase student achievement. Here are nine methods that may work in your classroom.

Remain Positive

Yelling and threatening students is not an effective way to motivate. Remaining positive and focusing on achievement will motivate students and help to create mutual respect for each individual and for learning. Consider creating a student of the week bulletin board to focus on the positives in each student.

Provide Opportunities for Success

Struggling students need to succeed in some small ways in order to be motivated to achieve in greater ways. Without lowering your expectations, find ways to allow these struggling students to succeed. This may require adding simple questions to homework assignments, or asking a few basic questions when introducing a

new topic and ensuring that the weaker students have a chance to answer.

Be Excited

The more excited you are about something, the more excited your students will be. If you find the topic you are teaching boring, so will your students, so find creative ways to teach the most boring lessons. For example, when reviewing material for a test or quiz, turn it into a game of *Jeopardy*, and play around the world when reviewing math facts.

Allow Students to Earn Rewards

Individual and whole class rewards can be a great motivation, especially when looking for appropriate behavior. This can be as complicated or as simple as you make it. Individual behavior plans can provide specific motivation for individual students while earning a handful of marbles to fill a jar can motivate a whole class.

Teach Teamwork

Have activities that your students can work on together. Group your students for simple projects such as finding a current event to share every week. Have your students work in teams on projects that enable learning through exploration. Consider your student groupings carefully so as to motivate students to work harder and not allow others to pick up their slack.

Public Praise

Make a habit of publicly praising students for achievement. You can even go as far as to create a certificate of achievement, have

the student stand to receive the certificate and send it home for the child's parents to display on the refrigerator.

Appropriate Praise

Praise students appropriately. If you are struggling to motivate a child, be careful to not praise him for a non-achievement. Praise him for a job well done. Rewards and praise should not be handed out left and right, instead, they should be selective and appropriate in order to motivate your students.

Teach Problem Solving Skills

Teaching your students to solve problems will allow them to be naturally interested in what they are learning. Providing opportunities for students to make mistakes and figure out how to accomplish a goal will make school more interesting, and thus motivate them to try.

Provide Opportunities for Varied Experiences

Different children will succeed in different areas in their lives. Include opportunities for learning each of the multiple intelligences theorized by Dr. Gardner in 1983. This allows students to succeed in a variety of ways. The more success a student sees in the classroom, the more motivated he will be to continue to succeed.

Motivating students takes a little effort, but the reward is well worth the work. Be creative as you figure out what motivation works for each student in your class. The more motivated your students are the more learning will take place.

When to Ignore Student Behavior

Ways to Curtail Unwanted Behavior in the Classroom



In order to promote well behaved students, teachers must have clearly established rules and consequences, a consistent response to misbehavior, and an understanding of when to ignore student behavior. Teachers need to keep an eye out for students who misbehave in class in order to receive attention, and reverse that mentality through praise for positive behavior.

Clearly Established Rules and Consequences

Less is more when deciding on rules for your classroom. Decide on three to five positively stated rules either before the first day of school or with the students help on the first day of school and post them in a clearly visible spot in the classroom. These rules should state the expected behavior, not the misbehavior. For example, stating that students remain in their seats is better than stating that students are not to get out of their seats.

The consequences for student misbehavior should be clearly posted or understood. These consequences can be established by the students, by school policy or by the teacher. Those consequences thought up by the students are generally the most effective consequences as many teachers have discovered. Students who know what is expected of them and know what the consequences are for bad behavior are more likely to be respectful in the classroom.

Consistency is Key

On the first day of school, teachers set the tone and expectations for students. Through tone of voice, body language and actions, you need to demonstrate that you are in charge, not the students. When a student breaks a rule, the entire class will be watching to see how you respond. React decisively and appropriately when a student misbehaves, and be consistent each day to establish the expectation that students must follow the rules and be respectful in your class.

Know when to Ignore Student Behavior

Although it is not prudent to ignore students who misbehave or show disrespect in your classroom, it may be beneficial to draw as little attention as possible to the student. Many times students who do not receive attention from their parents at home unless they misbehave will act out in school as well, assuming that to get attention from the teacher, they must misbehave in class.

Minor infractions may be ignored altogether, but remember that this behavior is likely to get worse before getting better. Most times, though, ignoring student behavior will result in more students joining in as they learn that they can get away with misbehaving in class. Respond consistently, and find ways to provide increased attention to students for good behavior to help

reduce the attention seeking behavior. Ideas of how to do this include:

- Praising the student in front of the class
- Quiet thanks for staying focused
- Frequent positive comments as the teacher walks around the classroom
- Fast paced learning environment to keep the student on his toes
- Have the student be a special helper or run errands for you
- Assign the student to help a classmate
- Individual behavior plan with incentives such as lunch with the teacher
- Other comments such as "I like how Johnny is sitting quietly in his seat" to call attention to positive behavior.

Most often, students misbehave for a reason. Not understanding the expectations, inconsistency from the teacher, and the desire for attention are three common reasons students act up. Remind students of the expectations and consequences when necessary. Remember to remain consistent in your response to misbehavior and watch for attention seeking behaviors in the classroom to help create a positive atmosphere of respect and learning.

Responsive Classrooms at the Elementary Level

A Research Based Program for Schools and Teachers to Implement



The Responsive Classroom concept was created by the Northeast Foundation for Children, founded in 1981. It emphasizes the importance of a social curriculum, how students learn, social interaction, social skills, knowing the students and their families, and working well with the other teachers in the school.

Practices in a Responsive Classroom

Each of the following concepts is included in the Responsive Classroom, and can be learned about in greater detail at the Responsive Classroom Website where you can find resources for your class and school: www.responsiveclassroom.org

Morning Meeting: Each morning the students and teacher begin the day by greeting each other, sharing any news or announcements and warming up with a quick activity.

Rule Creation: At the beginning of the year, the teacher is to have the students collaborate to create classroom rules. Many teachers first discuss the student's hopes and dreams, having them write down what they hope for and illustrate it for display on a bulletin board. Once the students have verbalized their hopes and dreams, they can then create class rules that will enable each other to meet these dreams. Once you take the bulletin board down, you can turn the papers into a class hopes book for reference later in the year.

Interactive Modeling: Students learn from watching their teacher and peers, so maximize on this and focus on modeling proper social interactions and behaviors.

Positive Teacher Language: Teach students self-control through demonstrating positive words and tone of voice. This can affect student learning, as well as the community atmosphere in the classroom.

Logical Consequences: Every classroom will have students who misbehave at one point or another. Providing opportunities for these students to learn from their mistakes through logical consequences for their actions is a big part of a Responsive Classroom.

Guided Discovery: Teaching in a way that allows students to learn creatively, independently and responsibly is another big part of what a Responsive Classroom looks like.

Academic Choice: Allowing students some choice in what they learn will not only keep students engaged, but will effectively increase student learning as well.

Classroom Organization: The physical layout of the classroom needs to promote student learning in an independent and yet in a cooperative way.

Working with Families: Involving parents in the education of their children can provide new ideas and a greater collaboration for your teaching.

Collaborative Problem Solving: having a weekly conference or student meeting during which students can share problems and help each other is a great way to bring students together. This is also a time to use role playing to learn how to properly handle problematic situations that may come up.

School-wide Practices that Support a Responsive Classroom

In addition to the classroom practices, the entire school can implement practices that support the individual teacher efforts. These school-wide practices include ensuring that all school policies and procedures are in line with the Responsive Classroom philosophy, providing the time and money necessary to implement the practice, planning all-school activities to build community, welcoming families and the community to partner with them in the education of the students, and organizing the school in a way that sets a positive tone for student learning.

This program has been researched extensively since the 1990s. Children have showed increased math and reading test scores, had better social skills, and felt better about school while teachers felt more effective and were able to teach more effectively thanks to this program.

Role Playing to Teach Specific Behavior

Teaching Children Appropriate Behavior



When traditional behavior plans do not work, parents and teachers may use role playing to teach correct behavior. This can be effective for students who have a behavioral disability, for students who simply do not respond to a behavior plan alone, and perhaps should be used in addition to other efforts to curtail inappropriate behavior.

Role playing should be done during a time when the child is calm, and not as a punishment or immediate reaction to a moment of inappropriate behavior. Start by setting the stage for the behavior, discuss the child's emotions, and teach the appropriate behavior for the situation.

Set the Stage for Inappropriate Behavior

When you have a child who needs behavior modification through role playing, the first step is to set up a scenario for the child. This

scenario should be one that the child either has been put in already, or one that the child is likely to experience in the future. For example: someone takes the child's turn on the recess field, someone bumps the child in the hall, or someone laughs at the child in front of the class.

Set the stage by telling the child what is happening and where it is happening. Include a triggering event, which would be the action or statement that has in the past or has the potential in the future to elicit inappropriate behavior. These can be true to life examples of things that have happened in the past, or examples of things that may happen in the future. Remember, the idea here is to teach appropriate behaviors, so be sure to use a wide range of examples through multiple role playing sessions.

Discuss the Child's Emotions

Once the child understands the situation, ask him how it makes him feel. For example: how does it make you feel that your friend took your turn on the playground? Helping the child verbalize his emotions will work towards enabling that child to identify his feelings in the situation and choose a more appropriate response, despite his emotions.

Teach Appropriate Behavior for the Situation

Ask the child how he can respond to the situation. You are looking for several options here. For example, he could walk away, he could start a fight, or he could tell a teacher. Once there are several options for responses, ask the child which option might be the best option given the specific situation. Be sure to use the teaching moment here and make sure the child knows that in some situations, more than one response can be appropriate. Take this time to also discuss why the other responses are inappropriate.

Using the steps outlined above will enable you to break down the specific behaviors that need to be taught, and teach them in an effective way. Be sure to use situations that are appropriate for the child and to discuss the child's emotions and appropriate behavior for the situation.

Student Behavior Plans

Individualized Approach to Classroom Behavior Management



One of the biggest problems teachers face every day is effective classroom management. Students with an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) may already have a behavior plan in place, but special needs students are not the only students who benefit from a behavior plan. The student who needs a behavior plan does not follow one or more of the class rules, does not listen to teacher redirection and needs to learn how to control himself in classroom situations.

How to Write a Behavior Plan

There are two steps to write an effective behavior plan: Decide on target behaviors and chose rewards for proper behavior.

First, you must decide on one or two target behaviors that you desire to see in your student. These are not the misbehaviors (talking out, hitting), but are the positive behavior you want to see (listen when teacher is talking, keep hands to yourself). Although

you may be able to come up with a long list of target behaviors, pick one or two of the most important behaviors you want to see.

Second, you must choose rewards for the student to receive for behaving appropriately in class. In order to do this, you should either conference with the student to find out what rewards he or she would like to have on the plan, or put together a list of 6-7 rewards and during the student conference, allow the student to pick 3-4 of those choices to have on the plan.

Two key points to remember when choosing rewards: The student **MUST** be motivated by the rewards, and there **MUST** be a choice of rewards.

How to Implement a Behavior Plan

Once you have written your behavior plan and held a conference with the student to choose the rewards, you must consistently implement the plan in order to see results. First, split your time with the student up into sections, and then rate your student's behavior during each of those time periods.

In order to earn the reward, your student should behave appropriately throughout more than half of time periods during the day. As the student behavior begins to improve, raise your expectations. For example, in the following sample, instead of requiring 10 points to earn the reward, require 12 points.

You can tape the plan to the student's desk to remind the student of the expected behavior. If student does not respond well to a whole day plan, consider splitting the plan into two sections, allowing the student to earn a reward twice a day.

Sample Behavior Plan:

Target Behavior: Student will remain seated

Reward: student choice of

- computer time
- snack
- lunch with teacher

Points:

0 = did not sit

1 = Sat after multiple reminders

2= one reminder to sit

3 = remained seated without any reminders.

Sample scoring:

- Morning warm up: 1
- Math: 3
- language Arts: 2
- Specials: 2
- Social Studies: 2

Student must receive score of 10 or greater to earn reward for the day

When thoughtfully written and consistently implemented, a behavior plan can help curtail problem behaviors in individual students.

Teaching Children about Bullies at School

Show Students What a Bully Does and How to Respond Appropriately



Bullying can be a big problem at school for many kids. Just as prevention is best to control classroom behavior, prevention is also best at preventing bullies. Even so, students need to understand what a bully is, and how to respond to a bully.

Make Students Aware of What a Bully Does

Some students may not even know they are being bullied. Teach students what a bully is, and how to know if they are being bullied. A bully is a child or an adult who does not treat you with respect. They make you feel unsafe in places that should be safe, such as the classroom, lunch room and the playground. A bully can be the same age as you or older.

A stereotypical bully is one who will threaten a younger child out of lunch money. Today's bullies may be more subtle in their methods, but that makes them no less dangerous. A bully may call you names, push you around, and scare you into giving up a toy or

game that you want to play with. Have a class discussion with role playing for students to learn what a bully does.

Teach Students How to Respond to a Bully

Students need to understand the appropriate manner of handling themselves in the presence of a bully. Depending on the method of bullying, students should know how to respond without escalating the situation. All bullies should be reported to a teacher immediately. Teachers should take appropriate action when a student reports a bully. All such reports should be taken seriously, in order for students to feel safe and be willing to seek help when necessary.

Have students role play again, this time to teach them how to respond to various situations they may find themselves in with a bully. For example, how should you respond when another student calls you a name? What should you do when another student pushes you on the playground? Through discussion and role playing, you will be able to help students learn what to do in each situation.

Through your education in identifying and responding to a bully, take time to watch your students for silent signs of bullying. Students who spend a lot of time at the nurse's office, or who dread going to school may be being bullied. Students who are reluctant to play at recess time or who show an unusual lack of self-confidence may be being bullied as well.

Creative Discipline Ideas for Teachers

Classroom Discipline Methods that Work



Students respond differently to different types of discipline. One student may respond really well to a punishment while another student may only respond to rewarded good behavior. It may take some trial and error, but a little effort will result in a well behaved and focused class.

Write a Brief Constructed Response

Megan Hartman's class decided that they should have to write a BCR for homework upon the second warning and be asked to leave the class upon the fourth warning. In order to return to class the student would still have to hand in a BCR. This method provides incentive for the students to obey, as well as an academic challenge when they disobey.

Instructional Time for Recess Time

Using a stop watch, keep track of the amount of time that your instructional time is interrupted by a discipline problem. Then at recess time, explain to the whole class that since they used your instructional time for their own purposes, you get to you some of

their recess time for your instructional time. Provide a simple quiet activity for the class to complete during the amount of time you are keeping them in, such as independent reading, or opportunity to get started on their homework. The idea is that by keeping the entire class in, peer pressure will convince the one or two students who disrupt the class to start listening.

Addressing Bad Language

Jody S. from New York addresses bad language in a unique way. Instead of directly addressing a student who uses inappropriate language in class, she effectively translates the language for the student. For example, when the student uses poor language choices in reference to an assignment, she calmly rewords the complaint by saying something like: this is difficult and is frustrating me. This throws the students off guard and as she continues to translate the language, the students get the idea, the situation remains calm, and the students learn more appropriate vocabulary to express themselves.

Catch Students Being Good

Crystal Alfano-Gallegos uses raffle tickets and walks around the room to catch students being good. She then raffles off prizes once a month. Sometimes she raffles off prizes weekly or even daily. This idea will cost some money to provide simple prizes, but the pay off will be a well behaved class that strives to be the best they can. Crystal uses the idea to teach her students about probability as well.

Write an Apology Letter

When catching a student making fun of another student, require a letter of apology written to the student. This letter then needs to go home and receive a parent signature, then be brought back to school and read aloud in front of the class. This punishment is very

effective, and you will most likely only have to enforce it once before students get the idea that they are to be encouraging to one another.

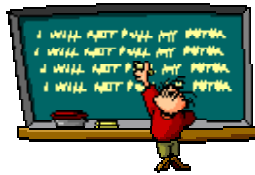
Allow the Students to Decide

Many of the best ideas for student discipline, including several mentioned in this article, were thought up by students. Allowing the students to decide on the method of punishment for misbehaving will result in a more effective classroom management plan as students will become the classroom police for one another as well as ensure that the punishment is carried out.

Be creative when coming up with a new discipline strategy for an unruly class or student. What works for one class may not work for your next class, so keep that in mind when deciding each year how you will manage discipline problems.

More Classroom Management Tips

Creative Ideas Teachers Use to Control Student Behavior



Teachers frequently come up with new ideas to improve their classroom management. When one idea does not work, or quits working, change it up with a new idea. Here are a few of those ideas that may work for your students.

Mystery Students

Some teachers will use the idea of a mystery student to encourage students to act appropriately. A teacher can look for a mystery walker while the students are walking in the halls, a mystery reader to encourage focus and effort, a mystery student of the day and even a mystery piece of trash to involve all students in the classroom cleanup process. Picking one boy and one girl to help you choose a mystery student will involve the students in watching for appropriate behavior.

Think About What You've Done

Some teachers will have a desk set aside in their room for behavior modification. At the desk, students have to write down the answers to three questions:

1. What did I do wrong?
2. What could I have done instead?
3. What will I do differently next time?

If your students are not capable of writing the answers to these questions, they can think about the questions and answer each one verbally.

Fun Friday

Taking recess away can often back fire on a teacher who then has to deal with a hyperactive student all afternoon who did not get to run off some of the excess energy. An alternative to this is to have Fun Friday, or a Preferred Activity Time. This can be as simple as a half hour of free time. The children who have not earned the right to participate must sit at their desks with their heads down.

Turning a Card

Many teachers use a card system: starting on green at the beginning of the day, students can receive a warning (yellow card) and a consequence (red card). Once they have a red card, the consequence can be calling the parents, a note home to the parents, or a consequence that the students have come up with. Having students call home and explain to a parent what they have done in class can be very effective in promoting good behavior.

Pay Day for Good Behavior

You can come up with your own class currency and pay students for good behavior in the classroom. The students should also have to pay the teacher when they have poor behavior. A store filled with little trinkets for the students to purchase will teach not only good behavior, but provide excellent opportunities to teach money skills.

Act Your Age

For older elementary level students, having them play on the younger end of the playground during recess can be a huge deterrent to childish and immature behavior in the classroom. If the playground is not divided in this way, you can always assign a specific area that the students can play on without talking to students from other classes.

Earning Free Time

Using a time bank, so to speak, you can encourage children to demonstrate appropriate behavior all day long. Start off with a set amount of time, for example, twenty minutes. Students can then earn additional time or lose time based on their behavior throughout the day.

Coming up with creative methods to keep the entire class in line may seem difficult, but with a little effort, you will be rewarded with a well behaved class. The better your students behave for you, the more instructional time you will have with them, resulting in better test grades, and more respectful students.

Classroom Management Tips for Specials Teachers

Managing Class Behavior in Classes Outside Home Room



Classroom teachers have to manage the same students all day, but specials teachers see every child in the school over the course of a week. These classes include music, art, gym, computer, library and sometimes science or another subject. Coming up with an effective classroom management plan that easily transfers to every grade in the school can be complicated, but when thought through, it can provide effective motivation for each student.

Card System

Teachers can number each seat in the classroom, and correlate each number to a card. Each student starts on a green card, and when necessary the teacher can give a warning by turning up a yellow card. If the student continues to misbehave, the teacher can then turn a red card and provide a consequence for the student. Consequences can include a note or phone call home, an extra assignment, or other idea that the students come up with. Teachers can also offer a reward for not having a card turned, such as a sticker or small snack.

Point System

The students in the class can work together to earn points throughout the class period. The teacher should list each section of the class on the board including entry, warm up, lesson, closing, exiting, and any other appropriate sections. Then, rate the students based upon their behavior. If the class as a whole comes in appropriately, they get a check, if they are a little talkative, they receive a dotted x as a warning and for inappropriate behavior, they receive an x. At the end of the class period check marks are totaled and the class earns a specified number of points per check.

Create a chart that lists each class to display in the room for students to be able to see their progress. They should be working towards a point goal at which point they have earned a free class period or a Fun Friday. The competition between classes can also help urge students on towards more checks in order to make it to Fun Friday first.

In younger classes you can create a separate chart to display the classes' progress towards the point goal. This chart can look similar to the Candy Land Game board, and even provide mini rewards along the way as they get to specific points on the path. Students will love the visual reminder of where they are heading, and work together to earn more points.

It may take a bit more creativity to come up with an effective discipline plan for teachers who see every child in the school. Even so, there are some great ideas that work well, including the card system and a point system. Talk to other specials teachers in the building to see what systems they use for other new ideas.

Classroom Management for Substitutes

Managing Classroom Behavior as a Substitute Teacher



When substitute teaching, there are several things you can do that will make your day go more smoothly. Through clear expectations, plenty of work to keep the students busy and a positive attitude throughout the day, you will be able to enjoy your day while keeping student behavior under control.

Reinforce Class Rules and Expectations

By familiarizing yourself with the class rules set up by the regular classroom teacher, you will be able to reinforce these expectations with the students. Most classrooms will have the rules posted somewhere. Look at them, and learn the wording. This will help you during the day as you remind students of the rules. Common expectations you should enforce include mutual respect, listening when the teacher is talking, and keeping hands to self.

Set Your Own Class Rules

Although you need to have students follow the set expectations of the regular teacher, it is important to have your own set of rules and expectations that the students will follow. This will provide

you a way to handle situations that come up when the students say “but our teacher lets us...” Explain to the students that your rules are for them to raise their hand before answering a question, or whatever happens to be the issue at the moment. While you are the teacher in the class, the students must listen to you and respect your rules. Some ideas include:

- Walk
- No name calling
- Raise hand to talk
- Respect one another
- Follow directions

Keeping Students on Task

In order to prevent wasted moments and prevent behavior problems, it is important to keep the students on task. In order to do this, you need to begin instruction as immediately as possible. If you finish before time is up, use a quick filler activity in order to prevent down time. Walk around the class to monitor student behavior. This will also provide you an opportunity to learn student names. If you cannot remember a name, walking to the student’s desk and quietly redirecting the student allows you to look at the nametag on the desk discreetly.

Remain Positive in Class

Modeling a positive behavior for the students is important as a substitute teacher. If the students know that you do not want to be there, they will be more difficult to manage. Never let students smell fear. Find opportunities each class period to reinforce student responses and provide praise for good behavior. Not only will this help the students behave better in class, but it will help to create a safe atmosphere for the students to learn in.

Lecture as little as possible and use questioning strategies as you teach. Student led investigations may not be easy depending on the lesson plans left by the regular classroom teacher, but whenever possible, resort to a questioning style of teaching instead of a lecture style. Ensure that all students have the opportunity to participate as well.

When substitute teaching, behavior management is one of the more difficult things to get the hang of. Creating a learning environment where all students feel safe and desire to learn is possible, though, with a little effort. Remember to reinforce the class rules, and set a few of your own, keep the students on task and set a positive tone in everything you do.