

# CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

INCORPORATING SUPPORTS AND TEACHING SAFE BEHAVIORS IN THE CLASSROOM



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# WHY IS CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT IMPORTANT?

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- Children cannot learn unless they feel safe.
- Teaching safe behaviors and alternatives benefits the whole classroom.
- Using a variety of strategies and supports is a proactive way to promote appropriate behavior.
- Every child will test where the limits are and exhibit inappropriate or unsafe behaviors at least once.
- Children 3 and under usually have “tantrums” because they are tired or hungry.
- Children 3 and older often display unsafe behaviors because they have limited self regulation skills, and they are inexperienced in using appropriate social skills.



# 10 WAYS TO IMPROVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

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1. Create clear rules and establish expectations for appropriate behaviors within the classroom
2. Teach routines and create rituals
3. Post a schedule and talk about activities/ subjects for the day
4. Integrate sensory supports into the classroom
5. Incorporate Therapeutic Limit Setting (A.C.T)
6. Be consistent in using consequences
7. Help students develop self regulation skills
8. Teach problem solving and finding solutions
9. Integrate movement into daily activities
10. Be flexible and reflect constructively





# RULES FOR APPROPRIATE/ SAFE BEHAVIORS

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- Children usually use inappropriate behaviors because they do not know the rules or have not been explicitly taught.
- Post rules in the classroom, using pictures, and talk frequently about why each rule is important and helps keep us safe.
- Phrase the rules concisely, telling students what they need to do: “Use walking feet inside the school” instead of “No running in the classroom.”
- Demonstrate examples and non examples to help students visualize what safe behaviors look like.
- Rules we used: Watching eyes, listening ears, quiet voices, and calm bodies.
- If students are having difficulty following a certain rule, talk about and model the appropriate behavior more often.
- Create a social story to reinforce the rules.
- “Quiz” students on rules. “What do we need when we walk to music class? Right, we need walking feet and quiet voices.”



# ROUTINES AND RITUALS

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- Routines contain directives for activities which occur regularly and contain multiple steps.
- Post routines in the classroom, using clear and simple pictures for each step.
- Talk about the routine and pictures associated with each step.
- Ex: bathroom routine: Pull pants down. Pull underwear down. Go to the bathroom. Wipe with toilet paper. Flush. Pull underwear up. Pull pants up. Wash hands.
- Rituals are also activities which should happen several times per day.
- Rituals help foster connections and meaningful relationships, creating a school family.
- Ex: Checking in at circle time, who's here? Who's not?
- Ex: Goodbye ritual- saying goodbye to each student and giving a high five, shaking hands, fist bump, etc. as they leave.
- Create rotating class jobs. This encourages cooperation among the students to help take care of the classroom and keep it safe.



# SCHEDULES

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- Creating schedules and referring to them often helps clarify information.
- Schedules give structure to the day and provide predictability for students, making them feel safe.
- Use pictures and words to show the schedule for the day.
- Transitions are easier because students know what comes next and can learn sequences concretely using the pictures.
- Provide individual schedules if needed.



# SENSORY SUPPORTS

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- Incorporating sensory supports helps students modulate, concentrating on learning and tuning out distractions. By engaging multiple senses, students are better able to attend and participate.
- Sensory supports may include alternative seating- chair balls, beanbags, stool chairs, or simply standing up to work.
- Other objects- fidgets, stress balls, Velcro under the desk, stretchy rope, rubber bands connected to chair legs, and balloons filled with flour or beads.
- Teach students when and how to use them appropriately.





# THERAPEUTIC LIMIT SETTING (A.C.T)

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- Empowers students to make their own choices and decreases “power struggles.”
- Students learn choices, decision making, consequences, emotions, and solutions.
- A.C.T stands for Acknowledge the feeling, Communicate the limit, and Target alternatives.
- A: Shows the student you see them and validates their feelings and desires. Start with “you...”  
“You really want to keep playing.”
- C: Be specific and brief  
“But its time to clean up now.”
- T: Give the students 2 acceptable choices.  
“You can choose to clean up the trains or you can choose to clean up the cars.What is your choice?”
- Repeat A.C.T up to three times, allowing at least 15 seconds of wait time after the choices.





# CONSEQUENCES

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- Consistency is key. Follow through with consequences, whatever they may be.
- Give specific, objective feedback about what the student did and the consequence.
- Help students to see the relationship between their behaviors and the effects.
- If the student has the language to talk about cause and effect, ask her what happened (what she did and the result). Ask what they could do differently next time. If the student has trouble producing alternatives, suggest a few and ask which is best for them. Re state what happened after her actions and explain why the specific rule is pertinent.
- Praise appropriate behaviors and when students use alternative behaviors.



# SELF REGULATION SKILLS

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- We develop inner speech around 7 years old, which helps us self regulate. Young children aren't able to self regulate, so we must act as their regulators and co regulators.
- When a student is upset, take a few seconds to breathe and regulate yourself first.
- Inappropriate and unsafe behaviors tell us that the student is lacking skills.
- Encourage eye contact by repeating the student's behavior; showing them what they did. "your hands/ feet were doing this..."
- Give choices or instructions
- "Your hands went like this and the papers fell on the ground. Put the papers on the table so that the classroom is safe."
- Teach students by modeling safe behaviors for when they are mad, sad, or frustrated.
  1. Create a safe place students can go to calm themselves down
  2. Take deep breaths and exhale through pursed lips
  3. Identify feeling from pictures on a poster
  4. Choose an activity that will help. Ex: Tearing paper, squeezing a stress ball, blowing a pinwheel, using lotion, drawing, reading a book or social story, or shaking a sensory bottle.
  5. Help students solve the problem. Older students may be able to write the problem and solutions. Younger students will need additional coaching.



# PROBLEM SOLVING

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- Problem solving requires:
  - Teaching students how to ask for help
  - Helping students resolve conflicts with others
  - Helping students learn strategies to manage difficult situations at home
- Students cannot solve problems if they are in crisis. After going through self regulation strategies and the student is calm and rational, talk about what happened.
- Use A.C.T if possible
- Prompt the student to think about solutions they can do themselves
- If they need help finding solutions, offer 2-3 suggestions and ask which is best for them.
- By creating and choosing their own solutions, students are more willing and empowered to use that alternative in the future.





# MOVEMENT

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- Movement benefits everyone by
  - Improving attention
  - Helping refocus and refresh the body
  - Increasing blood flow, oxygen levels, endorphins, and decreasing cortisol levels (stress hormone.)
- After movement and exercise, students display less inappropriate behaviors and are better able to focus on difficult tasks.
- Students need brain breaks and movement for every 30 minutes of sitting (even more so for younger children.)
- This could involve stretching, reps of different movements: hopping in place or jumping jacks etc., singing songs with actions: hokey pokey, head and shoulders, Simon says, or using Super Simple Songs/ Go Noodle to get moving.



# FLEXIBILITY AND REFLECTING CONSTRUCTIVELY

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- Some days are not going to smooth sailing, and that's okay. There will be hard days.
- If something is not working, try a different approach. Collaborate with other professionals.
- What would help the students be successful at \_\_\_\_? Think about what you want the students to accomplish and what would help them get there.
- If you have 5 lessons planned for the day and only get to 3, it happens!
- Progress happens little by little. If you want preschoolers to be successful at sitting at the table and participating in a structured activity, start with 4 minutes lessons, then 6, then 10. Engage them and reinforce their success. Their attention will eventually last longer and longer.
- Take 5 minutes at the end of the day to reflect (don't dwell) about what went well and what didn't. Think about what you would do differently next time. Planning out what you will do and say next time will help prepare you for when that situation happens again.
- Write down successes and progress students made that day. Over the course of the year, you will be able to look back on what new skills students have learned. Seeing that positive growth helps encourage us on hard days.



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