

Dealing With Disruptions in the Classroom

When a minor disruption occurs in your classroom, you have to decide if it is worth stopping what you are doing to deal with it. Minor disruptions frequently build into more troublesome ones. Therefore, they need to be addressed with the least amount of disruption to the class. Think of things you could do to stop the unwanted behavior without giving the offender the “power” of bringing the class to a halt. If that solution works, that is great. If it does not, move to step two, and so on. Try non verbal communication first. Consider the following discipline plan:

Begin with nonverbal communication by:

1. Observing the behavior. Make a mental note to observe that student.
2. Looking at the offender. Establish eye contact.
3. Walking toward the offender. Stop walking when the student stops the unwanted behavior.
4. Standing next to or behind the disruptive student.
5. Putting your hand on the offenders chair.

If the student does not respond to non verbal cues:

1. Ask if help is needed and quietly resolve the problem.
2. Direct the student to work at a table alone. After five minutes, give the student a choice to return to the group or remain alone.
3. Direct the student to explain the disruption either orally or in writing, and say what should be done.
4. Make a file on each disruptive student by writing a short description of the problem.
5. Give the student a realistic choice, “Will you get to work or will I have to telephone your parents?”
6. If the child does not cooperate, call and discuss the problem with the parents. Document the conversation, and put in the student’s file. Make sure you follow up on any arrangements made with the parents.

Dealing with major disruptions:

1. Send the student to the office with a note or a behavior referral form describing the behavior.
2. Set up a conference with the parent, the principal, and the student to resolve the conflict.
3. Continue to document and follow school policy for disruptive students.

Remember to be:

1. Consistent
2. Respect the basic human needs for belonging and self esteem. When basic needs are threatened, individuals fight back and the problem escalates and becomes more difficult to resolve.
3. Distinguish between minor and major disruptions. Minor disruptions are those that can be dealt with inside the classroom.



A VITAL FACTOR IN ACHIEVEMENT

We must never give up the belief that all children can learn. If we do, all is lost—for us and students. Yet, those we teach have a wide range of abilities. They come to us from diverse social and economic backgrounds and with varied academic records. These facts can, unfortunately, diminish our expectations. However, it needs to be recognized that when our expectations are lowered, our effectiveness will be altered too. That's why it's vital that we hold to our resolve to teach all students out of our belief that all children can learn.

Certainly, not all children can or will achieve at the highest academic level. But all can achieve to their potential at any point in time. This should be our goal. And make no mistake, it's an attainable goal if we apply what we know about teacher expectation and student achievement.

High expectation is, without reservation, a self-fulfilling prophecy for student and teacher alike. The research, as well as the day-to-day experiences of classroom teaching, points clearly to the importance of our holding high expectations for students. Unfortunately, the research also indicates that negative communications regarding expectation abound in many classrooms and schools.

Studies show, contrary to popular belief, that low-ability students aren't seated in the front of the room next to the teacher's desk where they might get special help. Rather, they're generally grouped and seated farther away from the teacher. Likewise, low-ability students are called on less often than those with high ability. This is probably because we know—or think—that they can't answer our questions. As a result, we may actually pay less attention to those students whom we believe have low ability.

In addition, low-ability students are given fewer clues and less time to answer questions. We probe our bright students—even when they say, "I don't know." But when a poor student doesn't have the answer immediately, we pass quickly to another student. Therefore, our bright students get more time to use their minds. Worse, studies tell us that wrong answers from low-ability students are criticized more often than wrong answers from high achievers. Oddly enough, correct responses from low-ability students draw less praise. Finally, research indicates that the work of low-ability students is interrupted more often and more easily by teachers. Maybe this is because we don't feel they're achieving much even when they are working—so we don't worry about interrupting them.

Make no mistake, teacher attitudes and actions toward the less able often do communicate lower expectations. They may reveal less tolerance—and even less caring. Consequently, some students can and do develop negative feelings and beliefs that lead them to become less confident and less productive.

There are definite steps a teacher can take to help all students meet higher expectations. First, we must accept students for just being. This means we must avoid words and deeds which indicate students must perform before we will accept and help them. Second, we can give low achievers more time to work at a task. We know that time on task aids achievement. Third, we can give low achievers more time to respond in class. They need more time to think. Fourth, we can be long on praise and short on criticism. Fifth, we can begin recording success rather than only failure. Remember, students will not be motivated to keep trying if only their mistakes get attention.



Sixth, we can analyze interaction patterns in our room. In the process, we can analyze negative teaching behaviors—and communicating low expectations in any way is a negative behavior. Seventh, we can examine classroom rules and procedures. We must ask if our rules contain more than six negative statements. Remember, negative rules convey the teacher’s assumption that cheating, talking, and fighting will occur. On the other hand, positive rules such as “Walk quietly” and “Keep your work space clean” convey positive expectations.

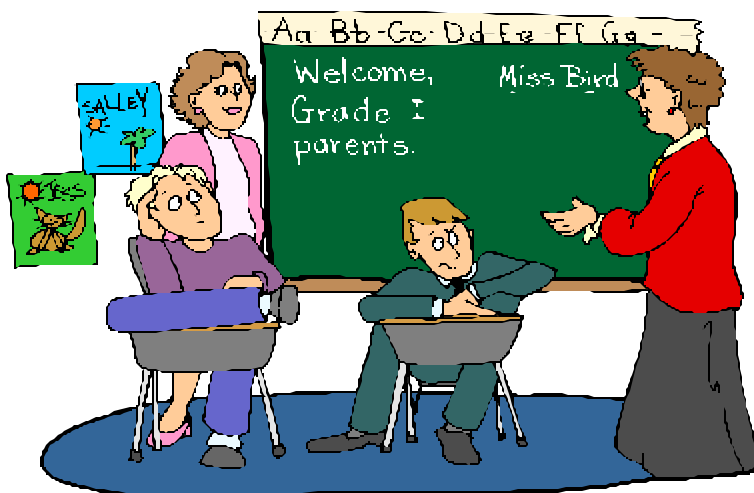
The Master Teacher knows the research consistently indicates that young people learn about as well as we expect them to learn. However, it’s not just teachers’ expectations that are important. Parents, friends, classmates, and relatives form these expectations as well.

Yet, the Master Teacher realizes that we hold a dominant position which enables us to change the expectations of others. That’s because once a child begins achieving in school, the perceptions others hold can change. If our expectations for athletic ability are high, but our expectations for English proficiency are low, we can count on the obvious. We’re quite likely to have winning teams and good athletes, but our English program may be only average. Worse, many students may conclude that proficiency in English isn’t important. That’s why our expectations in every area must be high. After all, the evidence is in: **Our students’ success depends on us.**

Tips for Parent Relationships

Whenever a parent asks you a question, try to follow one guideline for maximum effectiveness. Make your answer both brief and honest. Above all, be careful not to give a lengthy answer which goes beyond the question. Such action causes two problems. First, parents tend to think you don’t really know the answer and are simply talking to hide this fact. Second, parents will think you are trying to discourage further questions. When either is the case, you lose the parents’ confidence.

Courtesy: Master Teacher
Manhattan, KS 66502



20 Brain-Based Ways to Prevent Discipline Problems

The Brain Store

www.thebrainstore.com

1. Limit the amount of focused, directed learning time and switch activities frequently. To determine the suggested learning time per activity, use the relative age of the students in minutes to a maximum of 20. For example, with an eight-year-old student, teach a directed, lecture-driven manner for a maximum of eight minutes. Then move to a more diffused activity like group work.
2. Use low-level baroque music in the background to soothe and inspire. Good choices include: Handel's Water Music, Vivaldi's Four Seasons, and Bach's Brandenburg Concertos.
3. Create more "W-I-I-F-M" for the students: (What's in it for me?). Have them generate reasons to do things. Ask them what they want to get out of the learning.
4. Make sure rules are fair, purposeful, and enforceable. The fewer the rules, the better. Make sure that students know the reasons behind every rule you have.
5. Put students in cooperative groups or teams (with accountability!). Use groups as a source of fun, socialization, and positive peer pressure.
6. Make positive contact with each of your students within the first five minutes of each class. Also, connect with parents regularly, if possible, whether or not there's a problem! When a problem does occur, communicate with both parents and students.
7. Boost the ways students can have more input in the classroom. Provide designated question time, seek their input, and install a suggestion box. Respond to suggestions in a timely manner.
8. Provide more outlets for auditory expression: affirmations, group or team time, discussion, cheers, sharing.
9. Let students play the "what if" game to make rules concrete, to find exceptions, role-play, or brainstorm.
10. Make the classroom more interesting. Change the bulletin boards and peripherals frequently. The room ought to look busy, colorful, fresh, challenging, and relevant.
11. Anticipate and respond swiftly to student statements. Know that frustration often leads to states of apathy, anger, or revenge. Make statement management a number one priority to prevent problems.



12. Build rapport with students—both verbally and non-verbally. Start with those you relate to least. Know the tendencies of auditory learners who tend to talk a lot and mis-matchers who accidentally disrupt class in an attempt to learn. They're often pointing out what's "off, different, missing, or wrong." Use non-verbal signals with them to prevent the disruption of the class.
13. Incorporate movement and physical activity into every hour of class time (i.e., Simon Sez, hands-on, stretching) or switch activities.
14. Reduce your own stress level. Incorporate regular activity that energizes you and balances out the workload.
15. Work towards progress in areas related to your personal goals (i.e., parent communications, improving administrative policies, or staff communications).
16. Give clear mobilizing directions to students. Make them consistent, re-check for understanding, then use same congruent call to action.
17. Give students more control over their learning through choice (i.e., ways to do things, topics, rules, time partners, scoring, music, etc.)
18. Get parents involved in your discipline program from the very start of the year. Send the plan home and seek agreement.
19. Have lunch with a student to build or maintain a relationship with him/her.
20. Teach using the multiple intelligences. Make sure that when you plan out your week, you have covered all of the seven intelligences.



Report Card Messages

It is often difficult to generate appropriate messages for each student when under the pressure of doing report cards. Try out some of these messages.

Self-Confidence

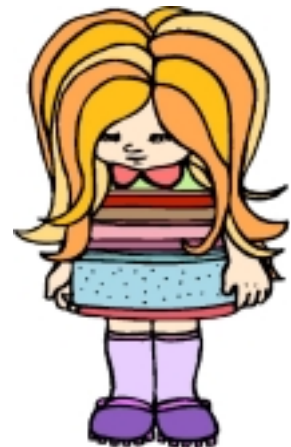
- .. has gained much self-confidence. This has given her a feeling of success in her work. She is easy to get along with and a pleasure to have in class.
- .. is inclined to be timid and shy. Practice in reading at home may give him more confidence.
- .. is overanxious and worries about her work at times, which is probably indicative of a lack of self-confidence. She requires a great deal of praise and attention. She seems tense and needs to relax more.

Attitude

- .. is showing improvement in her subjects. It is obvious that she spends time at home on her schoolwork. Please continue to give her encouragement.
- .. has shown improvement in reading this grading period, and he is now completing his work. He is trying to improve his attitude, and I think he deserves credit for this. However, he does slip back often and still needs help and encouragement from both of us.
- .. has matured nicely socially, and his attitude toward his schoolwork is better. He responds well to praise.

Tardiness/Absences

- .. does good classwork when she is present, but her frequent absences cause difficulties. Please make an appointment to discuss this with me.
- .. I am finding it difficult to make an accurate evaluation of _____'s progress at this time because of her frequent absences.
- .. is tardy frequently. This not only disturbs his classmates, but it also affects his work.
- .. For a while, there was an improvement in _____'s attitude and approach to work in our room. However, her frequent late arrivals have harmed her this grading period. Her tardiness affects her own performance and also disrupts the class.



More Report Card Messages

Academic Performance

- .. is a dependable boy and one of our better citizens. He is very cooperative and takes an active part in all our activities. His oral reading is fluent and his comprehension is good. He takes great pride in his work and always does a neat job.
- .. continued outside reading of library books and drill on number facts will be profitable.
- .. is showing good growth in the basic skills. She takes pride in doing her work neatly and correctly. I feel sure that if she spent time each evening on math assignments, her speed would improve.
- .. volunteers often. He needs to increase his speed in doing written assignments, however. Considerable effort to improve will be necessary.



Appropriate Adjectives

- | | | |
|---------------|--------------|----------------|
| aggressive | domineering | self-confident |
| ambitious | eager | self-reliant |
| appreciative | enthusiastic | sensitive |
| bashful | imaginative | serious |
| capable | impertinent | talented |
| conscientious | inattentive | talkative |
| consistent | inconsistent | tattling |
| courteous | resentful | thoughtless |
| defiant | reserved | unhappy |
| dependable | restless | withdrawn |

Appropriate Phrases

- .. Capable of achieving a higher average in the areas of _____.
- .. Has difficulty retaining processes of addition, etc.
- .. Is inconsistent in his efforts, especially in _____.
- .. Sacrificing accuracy for unnecessary speed in his written work.
- .. Most of her mistakes are due to carelessness. She needs to slow down and check her work.
- .. Needs to listen to directions.
- .. Fails to finish independent assignments.
- .. Comprehends well, but needs to work more quickly.
- .. Has shown improvement in his academic work - but more self-control is needed.
- .. Needs more respect for other students' ideas.
- .. Is learning to listen to directions more carefully.



What to Teach Your Kids . . .



Before They Leave Home

It would be great if every young person could do the following - before they leave home. These are skills to work on with your children.

Domestic Skills

- Cook a traditional breakfast, lunch and supper.
- Wash and iron clothes - without ruining them.
- Replace a button, baste a fallen hem and polish shoes.
- Make a loaf of bread (without a machine) or bake a cake from scratch.

Physical Skills

- Throw and catch balls of all sizes without breaking your fingers.
- Swim half a mile, tread water for half an hour and float for an hour.
- Ride a bike with confidence.
- Be able to get a kite up in the air, keep it there and bring it down in one piece.

Outdoor Skills

- Hike with friends all day without



getting lost, bitten or covered with a rash.

- Plan and manage a weekend camping trip with friends.
- Know enough about the wildlife in your area to recognize and feel like a friend to the animals.

Practical Skills

- Type will with both hands in the proper manner.
- Set up your own computer system without help from anyone.
- Drive a car, including one with a manual transmission and maintain it properly.
- Change a flat tire.

Organizational Skills

- Create a budget. Realize it takes longer to earn money than to spend it.
- Balance a checkbook manually - even if you bank on line.
- Maintain an address book and a personal appointment calendar.
- Set up a filing system to keep all of the paperwork in your life in one place.



Social Skills

- Carry on a conversation for 15 minutes with a person you don't know well.
- Speak before a small group of friends for a few minutes.
- Tell a joke well enough so that everybody gets it and maybe even laughs.

Artistic Skills

- Draw an illustration at least well enough to get your point across.
- Have enough confidence to sing aloud, even when everyone else can hear you.
- Know how to play a musical instrument well enough to enjoy playing in a group.
- Learn how to take a decent photograph, so you won't be disappointed later, when it's developed.

Human Skills

- Care for a dog, cat or other animal, including when it's sick.
- Baby-sit for children ranging in age from 6 months to 6 years.
- Aid elderly or handicapped people without looking superior.

Orientation Skills

- Get around town on a bus, even if you usually walk or drive.
- Read a map, including road maps.
- Know what to do if you find yourself in a bad neighborhood.
- Know which direction is north, south, east and west - without a compass - whenever you're outside.

Recreation Skills

- Play a team sport instead of just watching.
- Maintain a fitness regimen.
- Learn a game you can play with friends for life.
- Know how to ride a horse, handle a boat or enjoy a snow sport.

Survival Skills

- Know basic first aid and maintain a complete first-aid kit.
- Know what to do if you get sick, especially if you're alone.
- Know when to defend yourself; then know how to be effective.
- Know CPR.



Best Ways to Help Your Kids Handle Peer Pressure



The very idea of “peer pressure” strikes fear in the hearts of most parents. Images of their kids following the crowd rather than remaining independent thinkers is enough to start any parent lecturing children about good judgment.

But what too many parents overlook is that sometimes peer influence can be instructive – and even healthy. Kids engage in this social dynamic with their friends because it teaches them how to get along in the world.

So how can parents best help their children develop the judgment necessary to determine when it is beneficial to go with the flow and when it is critical to walk away?

n **Listen compassionately, not judgmentally.**

When your child comes to you upset because he/she was picked on or rejected by other children, it's not the time to jump in and intervene.

However, you can't always protect your child from hurt feelings. By nature, kids are fickle. They're insecure about who they are and whom to admire. The child who is “in” today may be “out” tomorrow merely because of what he wore or said – or for no reason at all.

These rejections can be painful for any child, and they seem even more cruel when our children are the recipients.

Example – Your child always gets picked last for the team in gym.

What to do – Avoid making derogatory comments about other kids or telling your child it is not worth getting upset about. Listen to his complaints, and acts as a supportive sounding board. You can't make the pain disappear, but you can make it safe for him to vent his feelings.

n **Don't back down from your values.**

Parents worry that peer pressure will undo all of their efforts to teach positive values. As they get older, your children are going to test your values. They may hear the message from their peers that it's cool to smoke – or that it's wimpy to be respectful to adults. Your kids will try on behaviors and attitudes that are contrary to your values.

Important: Your children will still look to you for moral guidance, and you must constantly reinforce your values, not just by what you say but – more important – by what you do. However, your efforts can backfire when your children think you're being “preachy.”



Example: You overhear your 13-year-old daughter and her friend making disparaging, mocking remarks about a new classmate. Your daughter says, “What a weirdo. That outfit she wore today looks like it came from a garbage can.”

You’re distressed to hear your thoughtful daughter talking this way. Yet it would be a mistake to attack her in front of her friend by saying, “What’s gotten in to you? You used to be such a nice girl.”

Better: Calmly mention the incident when the two of you are alone. You might say, “I was surprised to overhear you talking so unkindly about the new girl. You’re usually so compassionate. It must be hard for her to come to a new school where she doesn’t know anybody.”

n Teach children to stand up for themselves

When your child is facing a problem with a peer, the best thing you can do is help him figure out how to handle the problem on his own. Sometimes you have to get involved directly if your child can’t handle the situation on his own or is in danger. Ideally, however, helping your child develop his protective responses will enable him to become more self-sufficient.

Example: Your 10-year-old complains that a classmate picks on him every day. Instead of expressing outrage, help him work out a solution by role-playing. Suggest that you’ll play the classmate and he can try out responses – such as making a joke, ignoring the classmate or standing up to him.

If the problem persists, it’s often best to meet with the teacher. Children have to feel safe and protected in school.

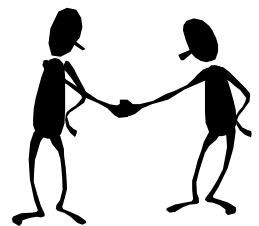
n Encourage your child’s self esteem

The compulsion to compare and compete happens early with kids. That’s why they brag so much. The pressure to be as cool as the coolest kid is intense. Your child may be convinced that he simply can’t survive without the latest \$120 sneakers . . . or that she must dress exactly like everyone else . . . or that she’ll die if she isn’t part of the “in” crowd.

In fact, most children don’t want to be unique. They want to be just like everyone else – and be **liked by everyone else**.

How can you help your child develop self-esteem when all that matters to him is being accepted by peers? What happens if your child is rejected by a clique?

Key – Acknowledge your child’s hurt feelings, and let him know you understand how bad it can feel to be rejected. Then help him evaluate the situation beyond his feelings. You might say, “It must be hard not to be in that group. But are those boys people whom you really admire? Do you think you could trust them to be good friends when the going gets tough? These are things for you to consider.”



n Praise your child for doing the right thing

Recognize that the hardest thing is when your child takes an independent position because he believes it is the thing to do. The child who learns to limit the influence of peers is the true leader with a steady moral compass.

Example: Your daughter stands up for an overweight kid who is being picked on. Don't take her response for granted . . . or say, "Well, I expect you to do the right thing, no matter what your friends are doing." Instead, express your admiration. Tell her, "Going against the others took guts. I'm proud of you for sticking up for her when everyone else was being weak."

Courtesy of: Bottom Line Personal
Nancy Samalin, 8/97



Math Approaches for Children

A Parent Handout

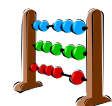


- n Appreciate Math. Make friends with math; use it daily; and add to your knowledge and skill in computation, problem solving, mental estimation, use of math tools, and computers.
- n Talk about Numbers. Count, measure, and calculate out loud in your child's hearing from his birth onward.
- n Demonstrate and Name Quantities. Show numbers from 1 to 10 on your fingers without counting until quantities are recognized. Say numbers in order.
- n Show Adding and Subtracting. Use items such as food, toys, or money that hold children's attention. Later use the same things for multiplying and dividing.
- n Teach Numeral Recognition. Point out and name numerals, then have children name or find them in many contexts and print formats. Practice forming numerals.
- n Associate Numerals with Quantities. Play matching games or quiz orally.
- n Read Math Fact Charts – addition first, then multiplication. Read these aloud daily with your child following along until he joins in, then says them from memory.
- n Show Fact Families. Use manipulatives to demonstrate the relationships between the numbers in each addition fact and its inverse subtraction fact. Then drill with triangle cards.
- n Skip-Count Multiples. Whisper one, say two, whisper three, say four, etc., to count by twos. Do the same for counting by other numbers. After this is learned, start on any odd or even number and count on from there.
- n Involve Children in Measuring. Provide measuring tools, both metric and English, and let children learn how quantities are related by watching and doing.
- n Get Your Child a Calculator and a Watch. The numbers will start to make sense to him in time.
- n Introduce Unknowns and Variables. Use symbols, then letters to represent these numbers in equations or expressions, then solve or substitute values.
- n Name Shapes. Teach specific terms such as rhombus, cube, triangle, rectangle, and



sphere when you encounter these shapes.

- n Teach Geometric Terms. Point out perpendicular lines, acute angles, etc.
- n Provide Worksheets. As soon as your child shows interest, give him a simple workbook and let him do as much as he likes, increasing difficulty when he shows facility.
- n Play Games. Any game can use some math for moves or scoring. Add some games that specifically teach math concepts or drill facts.
- n Solve Real Problems. Keep alert for daily opportunities to use math in real situations. Use the same basic strategies every time you meet a problem until they are second nature to your child.
- n Use a Number Line. Many math concepts (counting, adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing, fractions, negative numbers, temperatures, x/y coordinates, latitude and longitude, history time lines) become clear when seen on a number line.
- n Use a Balance Scale. Get a real one with labeled weights if possible. Show equalities, inequalities, and equations by adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing quantities on each side.
- n Diagram Problems. Visualize any math problem or story problem on paper. Break down numbers as needed. Label all known and unknown parts.
- n Simplify Hard Concepts. Substitute smaller or more convenient numbers for larger ones or unknowns to see what to do.
- n Expand on Simple Concepts. Add up columns of huge numbers as well as one or two-digit ones, learn thousands and millions as well as tens and hundreds.
- n Use Manipulatives for Place Value. Use money or sticks and sets of tens to portray numbers and perform regrouping operations.
- n Do Mental Math. Figure the cost of a case of 24 cans of chili at 69 cents a can by rounding off, then adjusting for the extra pennies. Or play a game like "24" where a given four numbers must be manipulated (add, subtract, multiply, or divide each number only once) to give a result of exactly 24.
- n Find Math in the News. Look fo statistics, graphs, etc., and interpret them.
- n Be Logical. Learn to recognize a logical fallacy and explain it to your child.
- n Explain Your Finances. Involve your child in your budgeting, banking, and bills a little at a



time.

- n Assess Skills Often. Review all math skills every week (some daily) in mixed problem sets to pinpoint weaknesses. Use speed drills to determine your child's level of facility.
- n Provide Math Challenges. Enter a contest or post a "brain teaser" problem for fun and interest.
- n Play With Numbers. Look for shortcuts and patterns for multiplying by larger numbers.
- n Combine Math with Motion. Some children learn math facts better if they recite them while bouncing on a mini trampoline or jumping rope.
- n Play Store. Use real or toy money and items for purchase.
- n Cook Together. Measure ingredients with implements other than the obvious ones (example: use a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup to measure $\frac{1}{2}$ cup and vice versa or even use $\frac{1}{3}$ for $\frac{1}{2}$).
- n Make or Buy Flash Cards. Cards may show a number of objects, a numeral, a math fact with or without the answer or with another part missing, a shape, a sequence of shapes or numbers to be finished, fractions or decimals, etc.
- n Modify Your Math Curriculum. Streamline math instruction by skipping lessons that only repeat previously mastered material. Used skipped lessons as sources of daily review problems.

