

# Teacher Tip of the Week

## Responding to Behavior Problems

All teachers have behavior problems, even those with the best prevention techniques. Some students will choose to disregard rules and test the limits. When that happens, remember that all discipline problems are not alike. Effective teachers match responses to problems. Here are some approaches you may want to try:



**EYE CONTACT:** Simply looking a student in the eye for prolonged contact while you continue your lesson sends a non-verbal message: "I saw what you did and I want it stopped."

**PROXIMITY:** Continuing your lesson while you move around the room, pausing near trouble spots, can let students know that even though they are not near your desk, they are still expected to demonstrate appropriate behavior.

**PAUSE:** The continuous sound of teacher talk can provide students with a noise screen for their own conversation. A few seconds of silence can bring an off-task student back into focus.

**ASK FOR A RESPONSE:** Hearing our name can be attention getting, even if we're not paying attention. To help preserve the student's dignity, say the name first and then ask a question. The purpose is to get the student's attention, not to embarrass.

**ACTIVE PARTICIPATION:** Having students respond to a question or become involved in an activity can eliminate undesired behavior. Ask for a show of hands, have students perform a physical activity or ask each student to write a quick answer to a question.

**REINFORCEMENT:** Reward students with an enjoyable activity that is contingent on appropriate behavior from the whole class. Peer pressure will help reinforce your expectations. Give incentives for positive behavior rather than taking away privileges.

**SEVERE DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS:** Even though you may have planned your day to avoid down time, planned a stimulating lesson and taught the rules, you will still probably have a situation with severe misbehavior.

Consequences, whether for major or minor problems, should be logical, natural and related to the rule. Now is the time to think about your options:

Can you keep students after school?

Is there a "time out" room?

What is the procedure for getting assistance from the office?

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### Points to Ponder privately...or with colleagues

- State specifically how you would set a positive tone for a conference with a student who is currently a problem in your class.
- Exactly how do you communicate to a student that you disapprove of his or her behavior but not of him or her?
- Do you have the "teacher look" that can stop misbehavior before it starts?

## Advice & Support from the Veterans

Angela Rohen  
Secondary Supervisor



Plan.  
Laugh.  
Read a lot.  
Laugh.  
Ask questions.  
Laugh.  
Learn all you can learn.  
Find a mentor.  
Collaborate with your colleagues.  
Know your students.  
Plan and then plan some more.  
Treat students with respect...it will come back to you.

Reflect...by day, by week, by lesson, by unit...what aspects of my lesson were my students most engaged in? How did they interact with each other? When did they become less motivated? More motivated? Record your thoughts and ideas; how might you change what you did? Keep it in a binder. Include your notes, samples of what you distributed to students with notes and

What kind of procedure for getting assistance from the office?

In what cases should the principal be involved in discipline?

Having this knowledge will make it possible for you to keep your sense of autonomy while handling any situation. Getting assistance from others does not mean giving away your role in discipline.

Enlisting the assistance of families is an important strategy to try. Your approach will have a lot to do with the level of cooperation you might receive. Very few families object to a teacher approaching them with an idea that shows the teacher's commitment to the success of their student. Families may react negatively when told, "Here's what your child did today." Consider families as support for a mutually agreed-upon solution to discipline problems. The good news is that all students can behave.

your notes, samples of what you distributed to students with notes and ideas for improvement, samples of what your students produced with notes about how it was or was not what you expected. Why did the lesson work for one class and not another? By the end of the course, you will have it all in one place which will save you time planning the next time you teach the lesson. A strong instructional program is the best classroom management plan. Deliberate reflection on our own work makes us more effective. Make time for it.



## Teacher Tips...Discipline

Refrain from talking to a clique as a group. They will stick together at almost any cost. If their cliquishness is hurting class performance, talk to the members individually. It is better, however, to work on the leader. After all, he or she is the most influential, and others will abide by his or her decisions. If you have any fear of these students, seek the advice of administrators. Remember, if students sense your fear, their behavior will get worse.



Helpful  
Websites for  
Teachers

Fun facts and statistics for teachers:

[www.factmonster.com](http://www.factmonster.com)

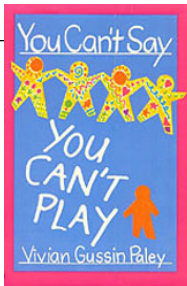
Good ideas for Math teachers:

[www.mathforum.org](http://www.mathforum.org)

Creates a Venn diagram for you:

[www.venndiagram.com](http://www.venndiagram.com)

## Suggested Reading for Teachers



### You Can't Say You Can't Play

By Vivian Gussin Paley

In this brief, ethereal and tender account of social relations among children, Paley--a kindergarten teacher at the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools, a MacArthur grant recipient and the author of *The Boy Who Would Be a Helicopter*--explores how to keep students from being ignored by their classmates. She describes what happened when she asked students ranging from kindergarten to fifth grade to debate the proposition "You Can't Say You Can't Play."

Woven throughout Paley's lessons is a parable about loneliness and rejection, which enables readers to share a child's view of the world. What the kids have to say is enchanting and surprisingly wise. For example, should a "boss" determine who plays with whom, or should there be an election? As a sagacious second-grader observes: "See, the bad thing about voting is, if you don't vote for that person she'll see all the people who don't like her. If it's a boss that's only one person doesn't like you so you don't feel so bad."

## Need a laugh?



# The ABC's for First Year Teachers

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Admit your mistakes—and learn from them.

Be firm but flexible.

Communicate with parents.

Develop a homework policy—and stick to it.

Empower your students; don't just lecture to them.

Find time to attend after-school events.

Get to know all the teachers in your school and make friends with the cooks, custodians, aides, and secretaries.

Have the courage to try something else if what you are doing isn't working.

Institute a clear discipline policy—and enforce it consistently.

Just listen—both to what the kids are saying and to what they're not saying.

Keep a journal.

Learn your school's policies and procedures.

Model desired attitudes and behavior.

Non carborundum ignorami. (Don't let the imbeciles wear you down.)

Overplan.

Prepare interesting lesson plans.

Quit worrying and just do your best.

Remember that you teach students first, then you teach whatever academic discipline you learned.

Stay alert.

Take pictures.

Understand that the learning process involves everyone—teachers, students, colleagues, and parents—and get everyone involved.

Volunteer to share projects and ideas, and don't be afraid to ask others to share their ideas with you.

Work within your limits.

Expect the unexpected—and plan for it!

Yell if you need support.

Zero in on your strengths, not your weakness. (Remember—nobody's perfect!)

—Education World



**Just a reminder of the required in-service day (Success in the Classroom) on Saturday, August 25, 2007 from 8:30 am-3:30 pm at the Teacher Training and Resource Center. Lunch will be on your own this day. \*Please bring a list of concerns you have about teaching, classroom management, discipline, etc. The professional development day will earn you 6 credit hours (3 hours of which count toward your Instructional Strategies category) of the 30 hours that are required for the 2007-2008 school year.**

**You MUST register online to attend this in-service by going to [www.wcschools.com](http://www.wcschools.com) and signing up using your username and password. It is now listed online!!!**

It is the policy of the Wilson County School System not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability in its educational programs or employment policies as required by Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Pay Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.