



Teacher Tip of the Week

New Teacher Support Program 2008-2009

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Teacher Tip of the Week
New Teacher Support
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Dealing with "Tattle Tales" in the Classroom

The important issue to help children understand about tattling is not *when* to report. Nor is it *what* to report. The critical decision involves *who* to report to. We must help children learn to report *to the right person*.

Children tattle. They do it at daycare. They do it at home. It happens in the primary grades and continues on into high school. Regardless of the grade you teach, tattling will occur in your classroom.

Many teachers don't like tattling and have devised plans to reduce its occurrence and even to eliminate it from their classrooms:

"I use a 'tattleman,' which is a stuffed teddy bear that I keep in the back of the room," says a veteran kindergarten teacher. "I tell the students that if they are tattling because they are upset, they should go tell the tattleman instead. Many kids whisper in tattleman's ear throughout the year and it has significantly cut down the amount of tattling in my classroom."

"I keep a plastic tree in the back of my second grade classroom," another teacher notes. "If the tattling is not about the 3 b's -- blood, barf, or being hurt, I tell my students to tell it to the tree."

"I teach my children to only come to me for medical emergencies," a middle school teacher announces. "When they come to tattle I ask them if it's a medical emergency. When they say 'no' I simply send them on their way. It takes about a month or two, but tattling ends quickly in my classroom. I just don't tolerate it."

"I made a Tattle Tail," one early childhood educator announced. "When kids tattle, they carry the stuffed tail with them for a portion of the day. It works."

A CLOSER LOOK

Although the ideas expressed above might

be well intentioned, the results don't serve to create self-responsible, thinking, caring, children. Let's take a closer look at tattling.

You need to understand that tattling is pro-social aggression. It is a natural stage in the development of the conscience. It is a necessary and desirable part of the developmental sequence. Knowing that it is normal and inevitable will help you be less resentful of it and more likely to deal with it effectively.

Rename tattling. Tattling is a negative word with negative connotations. Because we call it tattling and define that as bad, we work to eliminate it in our classrooms. Why not just give tattling a new name. We suggest you call it reporting. Reporting doesn't have a negative association attached to it. In fact, we even pay people in our society to do reporting. Don't you wish some child had reported the recent school shootings before they occurred?

When should they report? Some teachers

help children determine when it is and when it is not an appropriate time to report a situation, behavior or circumstance. The "3 b's" of reporting -- barf, blood, or being hurt -- is one example. Another is the teacher who asks when children report to her, "Is it going to get them in or out of trouble." If it is going to get them out of trouble, she wants to hear the report. If the reporting is designed to get the other child into trouble she instructs the reporter to keep it to himself or herself.

Our position is that there is no inappropriate time to report. Instruction on when to and when not to report is misguided and unhelpful to the student's development as a self-responsible human being. It is always valuable to report ...to the right person.

The right person

When a child reports to you that a classmate was passing rubbing alcohol around on the bus and asking students to sniff it, he is reporting to the right person. If a child tells you

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HELPFUL WEBSITE FOR TEACHERS



<http://www.theideabox.com/>

Ideas and activities for early childhood education.



Cutting Corners

USING POWERPOINT

Students love to make PowerPoints. This not only will get the students involved but even weak students love to create PowerPoints. The student learns so much about the subject and the technology of creating the PowerPoint.

Part Five: John Holt and Unschooling

NOTABLE JOHN HOLT
EDUCATION BOOKS

PART FIVE:

JOHN HOLT AND UNSCHOOLING

Educator John Holt wrote extensively about school reform in the 1960s. Although he originally proposed the word "unschooling" simply as a more satisfactory alternative to "homeschooling." Unschooling now generally refers to a style of homeschooling, in which learning is not



separated from living, and children learn mainly by following their interests. Children learn best, he argued, not by being taught, but by being a part of the world, free to do what most interests them, by having their questions answered as they ask them, and by being

being treated with respect rather than condescension.



An "unschooled" classroom



The self-exploring student

[Teach Your Own: The John Holt Book of Homeschooling](#) by John Holt and Pat Farenga

[How Children Learn \(Classics in Child Development\)](#) by John Holt

[Instead of Education: Ways to Help People do Things Better](#) by John Holt

[Learning All The Time](#) by John Holt

[How Children Fail \(Classics in Child Development\)](#) by John Holt



"I like a teacher who gives you something to take home to think about besides homework."

- Edith Ann (Lily Tomlin)

Dealing with "Tattle Tales" (continued from page 1)

her friend got sick in the bathroom, she is reporting to the person who most needs to hear the report.

The wrong person
If a student reports to you that another student won't give him a turn on the swing, he has reported to the wrong person. Your job here is to help him find the correct person to report to, and to teach him how to do it effectively. Say, "Sounds like you are wanting a turn. That's something you need to report to Cherrie. Would you like me to help you create some words to use when you tell her?" Then accompany the child to the scene and coach him through the dialog making sure he is heard. Later, after a few attempts with your

presence, you can send the child off alone to report his feelings and desires to the person who most needs to hear them.

High school students can be taught to report to the person next to them that they don't like it when answers are copied from their paper. The correct person to report to in this case is the person doing the copying. If several instances of reporting to this correct person are unsuccessful, a new correct person -- the teacher -- emerges to report to.

Young children can be taught to report to the person who steps on their toes not to the teacher. Middle school students can be taught to report

bullying when they notice the victim is unable or unwilling to stand up for herself. At first, they can report their feelings to the bully. Later, they can report to an adult if necessary.

On occasion, children need to report to themselves. If the behavior is not bothering anyone and is not potentially harmful, the child might need to say to himself or herself, "This isn't my issue," or "This is not a major concern."

Children will tattle. Why not relax into it and accept it as normal and inevitable? See it as an opportunity to help your students learn about the importance of reporting to the right person?

New Teacher Support Participants:



**Jason
Bradshaw**

Mt. Juliet High
School

Agriculture



**Katie
Ackerman**

Rutland
Elementary

3rd grade

WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

"I decided to become a teacher because I want to make a difference in students' lives. I also have a love for the area I teach which is agriculture. As a teacher I hope to teach students something they will eventually use in life."—
Jason Bradshaw

WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

"I became a teacher because I believe that I can truly make a difference in the lives of the children I teach. I can give them hope when they feel like no one cares and I can inspire them to pursue their dreams. My students know that I believe in them and that they can accomplish anything they put their minds to!"—Katie Ackerman

Homework raises grades



Research shows student achievement rises significantly when teachers regularly assign homework and students conscientiously do it.

One study reveals that when low-ability students do just 1 to 8 hours of homework a week, their grades are usually as high as those average-ability students who do not do homework.

homework.

Homework boosts achievement because the total time spent studying influences how much is learned.

On average, American teachers say they assign about 10 hours of homework each week. But high school seniors report they spend only 4 to 5 hours per week doing homework, and 10 percent say they do none at all or have none assigned.

In contrast, students in Japan spend about twice as much time studying outside school as American

Students.

It is essential that classroom teachers make every effort to ensure assignments are: 1) necessary and useful

2) appropriate to the ability and maturity level of students

3) well explained and motivated

4) clearly understood by both child and parent.

Homework should never be assigned as busy work for students and never as punishment.—
Better Teaching/NEA

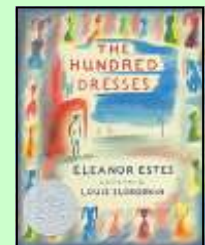
From the Bookshelf:



Reading Essentials: The Specifics You Need to Teach Reading Well
by Regie Routman

REGIE ROUTMAN is an internationally respected teacher and author who speaks at major educational conferences and conducts full day workshops for educators. Her current work and focus involves weeklong school residencies where she does daily demonstration teaching in classrooms, coaches teachers, and facilitates ongoing professional conversations and whole school change. Regie lives in Seattle, WA. Regie's teaching experience of more than thirty-five years includes being a classroom teacher (for most of the elementary grades), a reading specialist, a learning disabilities tutor, a Reading Recovery teacher, a language arts resource and mentor teacher, a staff developer, and a literacy coach.

Her books are widely acclaimed as providing a solid, research-based understanding of language learning along with a wealth of practical ideas and extensive, annotated resources. Because Regie writes in an honest, personal, and encouraging voice based on her daily ex-



9-12 years of age



Master Teacher Tips...

Student Relationships

Like it or not, to develop exceptional relationships, you must remember that people are primarily interested in their own welfare, not yours. Students are no exception to this reality. Therefore, keep your needs, your problems, and your priorities out of conversations with students. Rather, make students' needs and priorities the center of your words and actions, and you'll be more effective in creating the kinds of relationships with students you want and need in order to be an influential educator.

“Whenever a student offers an idea, suggestion, belief, or opinion, keep in mind that the student’s ego is bound up in any offering. Therefore, even if the student goes on and on, be careful how you interrupt. To do so effectively, just remember the rule: Compliment in public, criticize in private. If you must stop the monologue, interrupt gently by saying, “I appreciate your enthusiasm—and I would like to discuss your thoughts with you later.” this approach will keep you from damaging a relationship with a student who may be feeling especially vulnerable.



Teacher FAQ

Question What can new teachers do to help manage disruptive students without sending them out of the classroom?

Answer: First of all, it is critical that you find out why they are disruptive. That's the most important thing. Good classroom management skills can alleviate most discipline problems. In the meantime, when someone is disruptive, I follow this progression: **IGNORE** the behavior—often the student is trying to get a reaction. No reaction, no reason to continue. **STAND** near them while you teach—this way they know that you know there's a problem and are giving them an "out" before you react. **SIGNAL** them—use a hand signal or something similar to get them to stop. **SPEAK** to them—interrupt your teaching and ask them to stop the behavior. **MOVE** them—move their seat to another area of the classroom away from those they are affecting. This is **NOT** for a "specific amount of time." Rather, you tell them they can return when the behavior stops.

For a Laugh!

