

Addressing Problem Behavior

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Proximity Control

Rather than calling attention to behavior, the teacher moves near the child who is engaged in the behavior. Often standing next to a child calms disruptive behavior. This can easily be accomplished without interrupting the lesson at hand.

Signal Interference

When a behavior is about to occur, the teacher uses a nonverbal signal to let the student know that he/she is aware of the situation. For example, the teacher can place her/himself in a position where eye contact with the student can be achieved. Or a "secret" signal between teacher and the student can be used as a warning to watch the problem behavior.

Many teachers snap their fingers, flick a light switch, or look away to indicate that inappropriate behavior is occurring. Some of these techniques can be used to prevent behaviors from occurring. For example, flicking a light switch may cue students that a quiet lesson is forthcoming.

Touch Control

Sometimes a touch can serve to stop a behavior. Gently touching the foot or leg of a child who is tapping his/her feet loudly may stop disruptive behavior. or shoulder

Antiseptic Bouncing

This technique allow the teacher to remove the child from a situation without punishment. If a child enters the classroom after being involved in a confrontation at home, allow the child to go to an area of the room where he/she can regain composure. For example, let the child check the books on the library table.

Planned Ignoring

If a child is doing something merely to attract attention and is not harming him/herself or another child, simply ignore the behavior. Ignoring must be consistent. If the teacher decides to ignore the behavior, it must be ignored. The rules for using this technique are to keep calm, grit your teeth when necessary, wait for the inappropriate behavior, and reinforce that behavior.

Often when ignoring is first used, the teacher may notice an escalation of the behavior. This is typical. Often the student cannot understand why he/she is being ignored and will try harder to gain teacher attention. Be patient-the student will learn that the way to gain teacher attention to behave in an appropriate manner.

One additional hint: Examine your own teaching style and personality. If you are not the type of person who can ignore behaviors until they are extinguished, then perhaps you might want to consider another technique.

Interest Boosting

Sometimes showing a personal interest in a student and his/her hobbies can assist a student in acting appropriately. This involves (a) simply making the student aware that you recognize his individual preferences or (b) structuring lessons around a topic of interest. Interest boosting can often stop or prevent off-task or acting out behaviors.

Support From Routine

Displaying a chart or schedule of expectations and events can provide security to the student. This technique can also be used in advance preparation of a change in routine. Informing students of schedule alterations can prevent anxiety and save the teacher and class from disruption.