

RESOURCE SHEET



Children come to us with different personalities, learning styles, life stories and needs. We want every child to have a positive experience in our class: to learn with their friends and to grow closer to Jesus. However, challenging behavior can get in the way of this goal. Here's some ways that you can help children succeed.

Start with your expectations – Are you teaching how God has designed kids to learn?

- ◆ Know the characteristics of the age group you are teaching. This will help you know what you can expect from your kids.
- ◆ Kids are active learners – engage children in their learning and change things up frequently
- ◆ Kids learn in different ways – use a variety of teaching methods
- ◆ Kids want to learn – Use their inborn curiosity to capture and encourage their interest.
- ◆ Carefully consider competitive activities – for preteens competition can make the activity more engaging, but for many kids competition moves the focus away from the learning goal.
- ◆ Mitigate possible pitfalls. For instance, some kids struggle with reading or writing so keep this in mind when planning.
- ◆ Know that life happens. Kids may come in tired, hungry or over-stimulated.

Set the stage – Are you preparing the way for kids to be successful?

- ◆ See your classroom from you students' point of view. What could potentially distract a student from learning?
 - Kids need a welcoming classroom, but also need one that is not overly stimulating.
 - Think about how your classroom is organized. Is there visual clutter? Are there items that could prove a temptation to busy fingers?
 - Consider putting the items for each activity in a tote or plastic storage box. This allows the item to be ready to go, without being a distractor during the preceding activities.
- ◆ Be ready when the first student arrives.
- ◆ Be thoroughly prepared. This will allow you to be ready to modify or adapt if needed.
- ◆ Remember your attitude and tone of voice speaks more loudly than your words.
- ◆ Love and accept each child. Discipline is most effective when it is done inside a nurturing relationship.
- ◆ Don't assume kids know where the boundaries are. Tell them what you expect.
- ◆ Consider a class covenant. Guide children to choose 4-6 guidelines that will help them stay safe and learn together. Write this up, have every child sign and post in the room.
- ◆ Be clear and consistent with consequences. Consequence should relate directly to the child's actions.
- ◆ Implement "talking" rules. Hand raising, or an object that signifies whose turn it is to speak, will allow all voices to be heard.
- ◆ Establish routines. Many kids need to know exactly what is happening and when to learn successfully. If routines need to be changed, explain this in advance.
- ◆ Be brief and specific when giving directions; break tasks into shorter segments.
- ◆ Plan transitions carefully. Tell kids in advance what is happening next.
- ◆ Provide limited choices. This puts the child in the position where they are choosing to learn and are guided to make a positive choice.



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KIDS MINISTRY
NEW ENGLAND

Reinforce positive behavior - How are you motivating your students?

- ◆ Make sure **every** child knows how special he/she is.
- ◆ Catch the child doing the right thing! Kids need our feedback as they grow in their understanding of what life in community looks like.
- ◆ Encourage class compliance by recognizing the students that are doing the right thing.
- ◆ Kids need to hear many, many more yeas than nays from us.

Keeping things on track - Are you allowing children to own their own behavior?

- ◆ Monitor constantly. Many potential issues can be redirected before they cause a disruption.
- ◆ Move closer or put a hand on the shoulder. Many behaviors can be redirected without a word spoken.
- ◆ Use humor. Humor can disarm a situation before it gets out of control.
- ◆ Know what can be ignored. Attention can reinforce and even escalate behavior.
- ◆ Remind children what the expectations are. Use positive language.
- ◆ Do not compete with students. Use attention getting methods.
- ◆ Provide choices. This allows children to comply with expectations without the redirect becoming a power struggle.
- ◆ Allow kids time to comply and space to calm down.
- ◆ If a redirect is not effective and the child's behavior is distracting himself or others from learning, remove the child to a quiet place for a private conversation.
 - Gently get the student's attention (get on their eye level, speak quietly)
 - Remind the child how important he/she is to you.
 - Allow the child to express his/her view of the situation. Affirm how they are feeling.
 - Be clear in what the expectations are.
 - Provide strategies for success.
 - End with a positive.

