



BUILDING BLOCKS

A Newsletter for Teachers Working with Preschool Educational Equity For All

March 2016

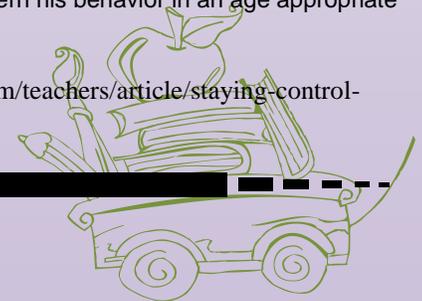
Staying In Control Of Your Classroom

Here are “a baker’s dozen” tips for classroom management in a preschool class.

1. Forget punishment until you’ve had time, at least a month or two, to figure out the problem.
2. When children aren’t there, put up your posters and calendar and make sure the classroom is beautiful with large plants, attractively displayed books, and a pleasing color scheme. When you next see the children, admire the lovely room and tell them you need their help to make pictures and to help you keep the room pretty. Each day give a few children a chance to pin things up or help clean and sort.
3. Also when children aren’t there, arrange your furniture so there are many play and learning areas, each with a theme (restaurant, family home, office, blocks and transportation toys) and interesting, accessible toys and materials. Boundry each area with shelves, each area open only on one side. Make sure there are no wide-open spaces or corridor-like temptations to race around in your room.
4. As children arrive, stand tall and straight in the doorway (body language says a lot!), warmly greet each child by name (being part of a mob allows us to be unaccountable; being individually appreciated makes us feel more responsible), and direct him to put his things in his cubby, choose a book, and sit in his special place at his table.
5. Don’t allow more than ten minutes for all of the above. Don’t wait for the last stragglers to come into the classroom. Cordially invite everyone to sit on the rug near you, each on the colored paper sitting spot you’ve put there with a name on it. Be sure to leave generous spaces on all sides of your seat mats. The teaching assistant and perhaps a parent or two can help gather the children.
6. Start your fast-paced activities on the rug before everyone is seated; the energetic, interesting things you’re doing will attract laggards. (Always do this when attempting to get the children together for the next event.) I would certainly not start with calendar, but with lusty singing, a “Simon Says” type of physically active game, or something like that. (If you are mousy, stern, or joyless, you will lose the children’s attention.)
7. Keep all seated together times short; lengthen them as the children come to enjoy them and remain involved.

8. Explain that two children at a time, partners, will get a turn to play in each play area. Limiting the number of children in each area until the children learn how to play appropriately helps keep things manageable.
9. Observe so you can see which pairs have problems. Try different partners where needed. If you see individuals who can’t handle this freedom regardless of which center they’re in and which playmates they’re with, make them an adult’s partner. This should be a pleasing experience, not a punishment.
10. Observe so you can see which sets of children are losing interest and switch them to another center. Always present things in a positive, not punitive, manner: “OK, now you two get a turn to play here.” Or, “Now you get a turn to play with So-and-So, he’s coming over here to join you.”
11. When more than a few children are beginning to wander or disrupt, it’s time for a chance to another kind of activity. It can be a summary of what they just did, a brain break, or a song related to content.
12. Almost never leave space for transition times between events. Releasing a mass of young children at the same time is an invitation for out-of-control behavior. While the class is busy, send one or two children to the bathroom and to wash for lunch, or to get their snack, or to pack up to go home.
13. If, over time, you realize that one or two of your children have serious impulse control problems and cannot manage themselves regardless of what you do, work with a counselor and the child’s family to discover what can be done to help the child become able to govern his behavior in an age appropriate way .

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/staying-control-your-classroom>



FEATURED IDEA OF THE MONTH

Weather Sensory Bottles



For cloudy use three jumbo white pom poms and some tap water.

Snowy was fun- use tiny plastic snowflake ornaments and dump in a hefty amount of white glitter after adding the glycerin/water.

The sunny day bottle is simply light blue water (tinted with food coloring) to represent the sky and a large yellow pom pom "sun."

The rainy bottle has small blue glass beads for raindrops, three brownish/gray pom poms for clouds, and the glycerin/water mixture.

Last, a glycerin/water bottle filled with leaf-shaped sequins to represent "windy"

<http://www.two-daloo.com/weather-sensory-bottles-circle-time/>

Checking Children's Progress

The more you know about children's academic, social, and emotional development, the more able you will be to meet their needs. Information about how well the children are progressing helps you to plan your teaching. You want the children in your care to feel successful and confident, but you also want to offer experiences that will help them to develop further. In addition, through initial screening and by checking the children's progress, you can identify those children who need special help or who face extra challenges.

Here are some ways that you can keep track of children's progress:

- Observe them daily. Watch as they play with each other, respond to your directions, participate in activities, and use language to communicate.
- Collect samples of their drawings, paintings, and writing.
- Keep notes about what they say and do.
- Encourage them to talk about their own progress.
- Regularly assess their progress so that your instruction will meet their needs.
- Talk with parents and caregivers. Ask them what they have observed at home. Tell them about their children's strengths. Let them know about any concerns you may have.

Also, remember to talk often with the children about what they are doing. Be sure to focus on their strengths—what they can do and the progress they have made. This will help them build confidence and motivation for learning.

<http://www2.ed.gov/teachers/how/early/teachingouryoungest/pagepg13.html#progress>

WEBSITES AND RESOURCES

<http://www.ooeegoey.com/resources/make-and-take-activities/>

<http://www.artprojectsforkids.org/>

<http://www.prekinders.com/free-printables-for-pre-k/>



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Early

Childhood Investigations is an ongoing series of conference-quality free webinars for early childhood educators. The series is produced by [Fran S. Simon, M.Ed.](#), Chief Engagement Officer of [Engagement Strategies, LLC](#). These engaging webinars are presented by many of the thought-leaders and experts in the field of early care and education. The webinars explore critical topics that offer new ideas and insights to early childhood professionals, especially administrators.

Our goal is to offer professional development opportunities that transcend the obstacles of distance, time, and money by offering conference-quality early childhood webinars.

<http://www.earlychildhoodwebinars.com/about/>



Social Play With Peers

With age and increasingly mature social capacities, children's interactive play with peers becomes progressively more common and complex. Mildred Parten (1932) established four levels of social play that are still used today as a broad framework to describe increasing social maturity in play over the early years (typical age of appearance, according to Parten, in parentheses):

1. Solitary play (2 – 2½ years): The child plays alone.
2. Parallel play (2½ – 3½): Children may be engaged in similar activities but they play separately.
3. Associative play (3½ – 4½): Children are playing separately but may share, pay attention to others, and/or communicate with others about their play.
4. Cooperative play (4½): Children are engaged in play with a common goal and they work cooperatively to achieve the goal.

<http://www.mcm.org/uploads/MCMResearchSummary.pdf>