

THE TEACHER'S BEHAVIOR—A BIG DIFFERENCE IN STUDENT BEHAVIOR

By Bev Johns

It is important to recognize that a teacher's behavior impacts student behavior. If the teacher is agitated, the student is likely to become agitated. If the teacher employs bullying behavior, students will probably engage in bully behavior. It is important to identify trigger behaviors that may result in a specific behavior of a student. When a student is having a problem, the first place the teacher should look is at their own behavior. Student behavior can be triggered by the student; and teacher behavior can be triggered by the student.

Knowledge of triggers for teacher behavior allows teachers to regulate their own behavior and avoid unnecessary confrontations. Perhaps the teacher cannot stand it when a student taps a pencil on the desk, and so the teacher starts to reprimand the student. The teacher does not like it when the student complains and so the teacher reprimands the student when this occurs, maybe overreacting to the situation. This escalates the situation.

Teachers must also recognize their own feelings in interactions with the student. Realistically, there will be times when the teacher becomes especially frustrated with the student or becomes angry. When those feelings occur, the teacher may need to move away from the student or the teacher may want to change the activity in which the teacher and student are engaged. If the teacher has a paraprofessional in the classroom,

the teacher may allow the paraprofessional work with the student so the student does not see the teacher's anger or frustration.

The teacher serves as a role model, establishing the tone for the classroom and setting the example for all of the students. When teachers are enthusiastic and positive, students are more likely to be enthused and positive.

When teachers handle difficult situations in a calm, fair, and rational manner, they are teaching their students that this is an appropriate way to deal with challenges they face.

Teachers can instill a sense of hope in students by being optimistic and providing students with activities in which they can be successful. When working with students who are at risk for school failure, some of them have given up hope and exhibit a defeatist attitude. It is up to their teachers to restore their sense of hope.