Teacher Tool Kit: Discipline Strategies

**Redirect Student Energy**

A teacher can end misbehavior without creating negative feelings, by redirecting the student’s attention.

How to Use:

1. Instead of focusing on the misbehavior, the teacher turns student attention to something else.
2. Walk by the student’s desk to get his attention focused back on the lesson that is being taught.
3. If the first attempt to redirect the student’s attention is not successful, remind the student of the classroom rules that are posted on the wall.

When to use:

* This strategy is appropriate to use if a student is not staying in his seat
* Bouncing in seat
* Fidgeting that is disruptive
* Not focused on the lesson and/or activities that are being taught
* This is a useful approach when direct confrontation is unnecessary

Variations:

1. The teacher could perform a “drive by” and quietly regain the student’s focus.
2. The teacher could also place one hand on student’s shoulder to nonverbally let the student know that the behavior is not acceptable.
3. The teacher could also make stern eye contact with the student directly to signal that disruptive behavior is not acceptable.

**Time-ins**

Time-ins remove the child from a situation that’s causing them distress or harm, to a predesignated and prepared location within the classroom. They will be given options to choose a task from and will work on the task until time is up.

How to use:

1. Create spaces in the classroom for the student misbehaving to go that are calming and comfortable.
2. Offer student a choice to quietly do reading, work on classwork, or complete a classroom chore assigned by the teacher.
3. Student will remain in the Time-in for 5 minutes.
4. When time is up, follow up with the student, asking if he or she knows why Time-in was needed and what are better ways to express oneself or behave.
5. Assist the student with answers if needed, guiding the student to appropriate responses.

When to use:

* Use when student is uncooperative.
* Use when student is disrupting class by speaking out of turn or interrupting teacher.
* Use when there is a power struggle.
* Use when student is having anxiety.
* Use when student is having a temper flare-up.
* Use when student is unkind.
* Use when student has broken class rules.

Variations:

1. 1)Create the spaces to be a calm down center with sensory or calming jars, oversized pillows, fidget toys, and headphones to listen to music.
2. 2)Have student journal feelings and alternative ways to handle the problem during the Time-in.
3. 3)Have one designated space for calm down from anxiety, and another for behavior issues.

**The Visitors Chair**

A teacher can position a student close-by without communicating disapproval.

How to Use:

1. The teacher using this strategy asks a student to sit in a "visitor's chair" close to where the teacher is sitting or standing.
2. Students know they can return to their own seats whenever they feel ready for responsible self-management.

When to Use:

* This strategy is appropriate to use when the student is being distractive to classmates around him
* When the student is not participating in the lesson being taught (focus is elsewhere)
* If the student interrupts or talks over other students while they are participating in the activity
* If the student yells out in class without being called upon
* If the student is not managing his behavior in accordance to the agreed upon classroom rules

Variations:

1. Instead of using a “visitor’s chair”, the student might stand next to the teacher while the lesson is being taught until he can self-manage again
2. The teacher might ask the student to repeat what was just said at the front of the class to ensure active listening
3. The student might be provided with a choice (you can participate appropriately at your desk, or participate appropriately in the “visitor’s chair”

**Teacher Social Problem-Solving**

This strategy involves the teacher educating students on social problem-solving steps and practice them regularly, then using them in real-life situations.

How to Use:

The teacher will review, model, and practice the following steps to social problem solving for the whole class:

1. State the problem.
2. Gather information from self and others.
3. Think of possible solutions.
4. Evaluate each solution.
5. Choose the best, mutually acceptable solution.
6. Try out the solution.
7. Evaluate the solution.
8. Decide what to do next time.

When to Use:

* Use when a student is expressing frustrated with any classwork.
* Use when a student is having a conflict with another student or teacher.
* Use when a student expressing resistance to and stress over an assignment or test
* Use when a student has late or missing homework.
* Use when there is a power struggle.

Variations:

1. Remove teacher from the process for independent implementation by students.
2. Assign a peer mediator, in which a fellow student facilitates the process.
3. Do the process as a class when there is a peer conflict.

**Turn a Card Behavior Plan**

This strategy is used to help monitor each child's behavior and encourage students to do their best. In addition to helping students display good behavior, this system allows students to take responsibility for their actions.

How to Use:

1. A teacher using this strategy gives elementary students a way to see when the behavior is unacceptable.
2. The student(s) start out at green at the beginning of the day and have the opportunity to stay green when the classroom rules are followed.
3. If the classroom rules are broken, a warning is given and light changes to yellow.
4. With the final warning, the light is changed to red.
5. The student(s) has the opportunity to move back to yellow or green by adhering to the classroom rules throughout the rest of the day.

When to Use:

* This approach can be used whenever a student(s) does not maintain an inside voice when asked to
* If students don’t raise their hands prior to blurting out a question
* If a student causes disruption in class via noise or other distractions, etc.
* If a student is disrespectful to one another or breaks a class rule
* If a student is mean or bullies another student

Variations:

1. Teacher can use card system at each student’s desk (red, yellow, green) – this would allow for easy tracking of behavior throughout the day for individual students.
2. Stickers could also be used to show graphical view of student(s) behavior throughout the school day.
3. Teachers could use clothes pins with students’ names on them and move them to corresponding behavior icons.

**Overcoming Resistance**

The teacher will follow a six-step process while confronting the student and give a positive and negative consequence following the student’s choice of a positive or negative action. The teacher will follow through with the consequence and repeat the cycle as needed.

How to Use:

1. **Assume the Best.** Student resistance is natural or normal. It is also a test. I can pass the test by being safe, structured, and consistent. The student wants me to pass the test.
2. **Soft Eyes, Soft Voice.** To be safe during this confrontation, I need to be calm. I need that calm to be expressed in both my verbal and body language. If I concentrate on keeping the muscles around my eyes soft, or neutral, my voice will naturally follow. It is a physiological impossibility to have an edge in your voice if the muscles around your eyes are soft!
3. **Offer a Choice.** The student needs to be clear that he or she has a choice to do what I am asking or to continue to resist. I make it clear by actually saying it: "You have a choice right now. You can choose to (comply with request) and then (good consequence) will happen or you can choose to (not comply with request) and then (negative consequence) will happen." Whatever the choice, there is a consequence. But it is imperative that the student understands that it is his or her choice how this interaction continues, how it ends, and whether the consequence is positive or negative.
4. **Respect the Choice Made.** Whether the student chooses to comply or chooses to continue to resist, this is not personal. I am not being attacked or disrespected. It is just a test.
5. **Give the Consequence.** If the student chooses to comply, he or she earns the positive consequence of the confrontation ending and equilibrium being restored. If he or she chooses to argue or resist, the previously stated negative consequence is instated and we move to Step 6.
6. **Escalate the Choice.** If after being offered a clear calm choice to comply the student still does not choose to do so, he or she receives the negative consequence (from Step 5). And now I will offer him or her a new choice with a more uncomfortable consequence happen, he or she is temporarily removed from the interaction or class.

When to Use:

* Use when a student is refusing to follow instruction.
* Use when a student refuses to stop distracting behavior in class.
* Use when a student is disrespectful to other students or teacher.
* Use when a student has a fight with another student.
* Use when a student has broken a class rule.

Variations:

1. Give student options to also choose consequence, positive and negative choices depending on action student takes
2. Allow student to go to Time-in and given 5 minutes of think time to weigh options and decide.
3. Have student stay in Time-in throughout the remainder of class.