

# THE KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

1. Be positive.
2. Be prepared and organized.
3. Look as though you want to be there.
4. All staff must work as a team.
5. Establish classroom rules and stick to them at all times.
6. Let the punishment fit the crime.
7. Do not make idle threats.
8. Never let them see you sweat.
9. Be consistent.
10. Give what you expect, RESPECT!

**Remember, children learn best by modeling adults. They will learn from what you do and say more so than by what you tell them to do. Your attitudes, actions, moods, and tone of voice will impact them the most.**

### Basic Tips on Discipline

Everyone's goal is to be both a friend to the children and someone who has their respect. Don't be afraid to use discipline – the kids will still like you and they'll respect you as a result. You will probably find it amazing how quickly these kids forgive and forget. Remember, everyone has his or her own style of discipline, so you should do what works for you, but below are a few tips.

1. **Be a role model.** Always reflect the way you want children to behave and the way you want them to talk to each other. Children will notice whatever you do and say, and they will treat you as you treat them.
2. **Limits need to be set from the start.** Don't be afraid to discipline anyone in the first few days or weeks. It's far easier to ease up later than to start off lax and try to compensate for it later on. Be friendly *and* firm.
3. **Be consistent and fair in your treatment of the children.** They will notice anything inconsistent or unfair, and they *will* let you know about it.
4. **Follow through on your statements.** If you give a warning; for example, the child should *not* be given a second, and third, a fourth, etc. chance. Otherwise, they will learn they can get away with this sort of behavior.
5. **If a child becomes angry or upset, give him or her a chance to cool off from the rest of the group.** Talk to them calmly and give them the chance to talk about whatever it is that made them upset.
6. **Remember that kids are kids.** They will often do things in order to get your attention. If you feel that a child is doing this, but is not being disruptive at the same time, try to let it pass. They are still kids, and should not be called or chastised for *everything*. Keep in mind that they have spent most of their day before Keylatch cramped up in school. *However, it is important that we don't ignore any behaviors that are out of line or disruptive.* These should be dealt with accordingly, as you see fit.
7. **Encourage the kids when good things happen.** Tell them when they're doing a great job on their homework, that you love their outfit, or that their drawing is beautiful. It really goes a long way.

## THOSE FOUR LETTER WORDS!

When individuals who care for school-age children get together, one of the topics always discussed is the use of "bad" language. The first time you hear a six-year-old let loose with a whole string of unacceptable words, it can be quite a shock!

Inappropriate language is not confined to school-age children. However, it certainly is more evident with this age group. Here are some things you can do to keep those "four-letter words" under control!

### HAVE CLEAR RULES

One of the best ways to avoid problems from the start is to set clear rules at the beginning of the year. If kids understand that bad language is not allowed, they will be less likely to use it. In setting rules, it is important to discuss why the rule is needed.

### UNDERSTAND THE CAUSE & TEACH THE CHILD

When a child begins to use bad language, it is important to determine why. Children use inappropriate language for many different reasons. Sometimes the language is used out of ignorance. Other times children use inappropriate language to meet a need. If you understand the cause, you will be more likely to deal with the problem in an effective way. Here are some reasons why young people may use inappropriate language and some suggestions for dealing with each situation.

*To be accepted by friends.* A child with poor social skills may not know how to enter a group, how to work cooperatively, or how to be a friend. The only way that child may be able to get attention from the other kids is to use inappropriate language. By teaching social skills to the child, you will help eliminate the real cause of the problem and the "bad" language is likely to stop.

*To shock adults.* Sometimes young people learn they can exert power over adults by the language they use. It is difficult for adults to hear kids using offensive or sexually explicit words because we understand the full meaning of those words. However, young people often do not know what the words mean. They say the words simply because they cause a reaction in others. By remaining calm and not overreacting when children use inappropriate language you will take away some of the "shock value" of using the words.

*Because the words are used at home.* Children are exposed to many different family situations. In some homes, use of inappropriate language is common. There is little you can do about this. And blaming the parents will not change the child's behavior in the child care setting. A more effective tactic is to explain to the child that the words are not acceptable in your program. Combine this with teaching acceptable alternatives for expressing emotions (see below).

*To express negative emotions.* Inappropriate language often is used during arguments or when a child is frustrated with a situation. In this case it is important to teach the child acceptable ways to express his or her emotions. For example, you could say "Name-calling isn't allowed here because it hurts people's feelings." If you are mad at Jerry, say "I'm mad at you!"

Or, you might say "I understand you are frustrated with your project. But the word you said bothers people. If you are upset, you may say "Rats!" (or whatever word you feel is acceptable) instead." In the latter case it is also important to consider whether the activity is appropriate for the child. Perhaps an easier project is in order.

*To find out what the words mean.* Many times children use words without understanding what they mean. Sometimes children use these words because they want to know what they mean. This often happens with sexual words. A brief explanation of what the word means will often take care of the problem. Therefore, you may want to let parents know about the child's use of the words. For example, you might say "Mrs. Arnold, Jim has started calling other children "X." This is very common at this age. Jim probably doesn't know what the word means. He may even be saying it because he wants to know what it means."

## ESTABLISH REASONABLE CONSEQUENCES

The above examples show how important it is to teach children alternatives to using inappropriate language. However, this teaching takes time. And some children will need the added incentive of consequences to help them inhibit the use of the forbidden words. It is important to choose consequences carefully and to use them sparingly. The consequence should be reasonable and carefully tied to the behavior. For example, if a child uses bad language around other children, the child may need to play alone for fifteen minutes. If a child continually swears while completing a project, she may need to put the project away until the next day. Children who continually use words to shock the teachers may need to tell their parents what words they said.

Try having the children set their own consequences. You will probably have to tone them down a bit—it's not reasonable to stay out of an activity for a week! However, young people are more likely to accept consequences they have established for themselves.

"Four-letter words" are common during the school years. By understanding why they are used and by using appropriate guidance and discipline techniques, you can help to eliminate their use in the child care setting.

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