



Behavioral Interventions and Strategies Series: *Classroom Rules and Procedures*

Why Have Classroom Rules and Procedures: Preventive (proactive) strategies are designed to stop or interfere with problem behaviors *before* they begin and are the first line of classroom intervention for known or typical problematic or disruptive behaviors in the classroom. Preventing problem behaviors is easier than remediating them once they begin. Good classroom rules form the foundation of any proactive strategy to reduce or prevent inappropriate behaviors. They describe the *minimum* expectations for behavior for ALL students in the class.⁴ *Rules* indicate the general expectations for behavior; *procedures* are the steps necessary to accomplish a task or activity. Establishing and maintaining classroom rules is a critical component to effective classroom management and allows for the creation of a learning environment conducive to student engagement, cooperation, and productivity. Classroom rules and guidelines for appropriate behavior communicate the expectations for appropriate classroom behavior.³ Effective teachers spend more time establishing classroom rules at the beginning of the year and periodically review rules throughout the year.^{1,2,3}

Rules alone are insufficient to promote appropriate behavior and academic productivity; rules must be implemented within the context of a comprehensive instructional and behavior management system that includes careful planning to meet the needs of individual students as well as the whole class, learning activities that promote student engagement, and consistent consequences for rule violations. Rules must also be consistent with the culture and established code of conduct of the school. It is not sufficient to simply state the rules or have them displayed; rules must be taught explicitly and monitored for understanding and compliance. Along with classroom rules, rules and procedures for various activities must be established, taught, and monitored.³

Things to Consider When Developing Classroom Rules

- Who is making the rules? You alone? Student input?
- What are the school’s PBIS expectations?
- Consequences for violating rules must be consistent— Say what you mean, and do what you say!
- Consider having all students sign a contract at the beginning of the year when rules are taught
- Consider providing parents with a copy of the rules

Rules for Making Rules

1. Keep the number small—no more than 6
2. State rules positively
3. Make rules simple and specific
4. Refer to observable and measurable behaviors
5. Make rules applicable throughout the entire class period/day
6. Post rules in a prominent, visible location

Interventions & Strategies for Teaching Rules and Procedures:

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| • Active Teaching of Classroom Rules | • Delivering Effective Commands |
| • Say Show Check | • The Timely Transitions Game |
| • Countdown to Free Time | • Good Behavior Game |



References

1. Bear, G. G. (2008). Best practices in classroom discipline. In A. Thomas & J. Grimes (eds.), *Best practices in school psychology V* (pp. 1403-1420). Bethesda, MD: NASP Publications.
2. Bloomquist, M. L., & Schnell, S. V. (2002). *Helping children with aggression and conduct problems: Best practices for intervention* (pp. 262-263). New York: The Guilford Press.
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4. Rhode, G., Jensen, W. R., & Reavis, H. K. (2010). *The tough kid book, Second Edition* (pp. 28-32). Eugene, OR: Pacific Northwest Publishing.
5. Sprick, R. (2009). *CHAMPS: A proactive & positive approach to classroom management* (2nd ed.) (pp. 115-119). Eugene, OR: Pacific Northwest Publishing.