



Strategies for Presenting and Reinforcing Rules

Helping children understand classroom rules and expectations is a priority at the beginning of the school year. How rules are developed, posted, and reviewed is important for children. Even in environments where the term 'rules' is not used, these strategies help set classroom expectations.

1. Post in Easy to See Locations - Rules should be posted in locations that are easy to see throughout the classroom. This provides a visual children and adults can refer to if there are questions about the rules. Post rules at eye level so children can easily see them. Also, some children may benefit from an individual list of rules at their desk.

2. Use Understandable Words or Visuals – When designing a sign or poster with the rules, use words or visuals that are understood by all of the children. Simple line drawings, photographs, or short phrases can be used alone or in combination to help children independently understand the poster.

4. Review Regularly – At the beginning of the year, review classroom rules daily. Remind children as needed throughout the day of the rules and where they are posted. As time passes, children will need less frequent verbal reminders, but they still may need reminders at the beginning of the week and after returning from a break.

5. Enforce Across Environments – Involve families by sending a copy of the rules home. Ask parents to review and discuss the importance of the classroom rules. Keep the format of the rules the same (visuals and/or words) so children recognize the familiar format and can participate in identifying and discussing the rules.

6. Involve Children – In many cases, children can be involved in determining the rules. For example, a group activity discussing classroom respect and safety can incorporate formulating classroom rules. After the rules are chosen, children can make posters with all of the rules or individual rules. Display the posters in the classroom. This can be an individual or a small group activity. By allowing children to participate in rule selection and posting, they have ownership in the ideas. To encourage literacy and reinforce the rules, have children write short stories about why the rules are important and examples of following the rules.

7. Address Other Rules – The cafeteria, playground, hallway, library, and bus are school related areas with different rules. Although broad rules such as respecting property and people may cover different areas, prepare children for expectations across environments by addressing rules specific to these places. Some schools post and review the rules in individual locations. However, other schools do not post them; therefore, reviewing them in class or having activities addressing them can be very helpful.



From *School Rules*

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