



Asking for Help

Although students frequently need help, they oftentimes don't ask for it. Many students compensate for not understanding an assignment, directions, or expectations by calling out that they need help or by stopping their work on an assignment or task. Still others escalate their behaviors in an attempt to avoid completing the task or engaging in the activity. Teaching students to recognize that they need help, identify exactly what they need help with, and appropriately ask for help provides them with a way to get their needs met without infringing on the rights of others to learn or escalating behaviors.

The goal of the lesson is to teach students the appropriate behavioral expectations for the skill of “Asking for Help.”

The objectives of the lesson for students include:

- learning the steps of the skill of “Asking for Help.”
- practicing the skill.
- generalizing the use of the skill to different places and different people.

Introduce the Skill

Ask students to take out a sheet of notebook paper and fold it in half the long way. Ask students to label the two columns “Things I Can Complete Without Help” and “Things I Need Help With.” (Or use the worksheet on page 82.) Ask students to write at least 10 things for each list.

NOTE: Responses for things they can do without help might include getting ready for school, playing video games, making the bed, etc. Responses for things they need help with might include using the computer, doing the dishes, ironing clothes, etc.

Have students share some of their responses from the first list (things they can do without help) when the brainstorming session is over. Discuss with the students how they learned to do the things on the first list and who helped them when they needed assistance.

After that discussion, ask the students to share things from the “Need Help With” list. Ask the following questions as discussion starters or leads:

- How do you decide whether or not to ask for help?
- Whom do you ask for help?
- How can you increase the chances of getting the help you need?

Describe the Appropriate Behavior

Provide students with the behavioral steps for the skill of “Asking for Help.”

NOTE: Steps can be posted on a bulletin board or shown on an overhead, etc. Please adapt the steps to fit your expectations and the needs of your students.

SAY: “Here are the steps of the skill of ‘Asking for Help.’”

- 1. Look at the person.**
- 2. Ask the person if he or she has time to help you.**
- 3. Clearly explain the kind of help that you need.**
- 4. Thank the person for helping.**

SAY: “These are the steps we are going to use for the skill of ‘Asking for Help’ in this class and building.”

Give a Reason

Ask the students to provide reasons for why they think it might be important to ask for help using these steps. Here are some examples of reasons to use in case students have difficulty thinking of ones on their own:

- People may be more willing to help you when you ask using these steps.
- The person you are asking will understand exactly what you need and might be able to help you more quickly.

Practice

Choose one or more of the following activities to complete your lesson by allowing the students to practice the skill.

1. Have students tell their partner the steps of the skill.

2. Journaling ideas

- Ask students to write about a time when they needed help and asked for it. What was the outcome?
 - Ask students to write about a time they did not ask for help when they needed it. What was the outcome?
3. Using a character from a story with which students are familiar (e.g., Pinocchio, for younger students; Romeo and Juliet, for older students), ask the students to determine a time in the story when the character might have asked for help and didn't. Have students change the outcome of the story to show what would have happened if the character had asked for help.
 4. Design a lesson in your subject area where students have to go from person to person to obtain help with answering questions. For example, during a multi-part science experiment, you might have each group conduct a different part of the experiment and have students ask for help from other groups in order to complete the lab activity.

SAY: “Thank you for completing the practice activity. We will continue to discuss the skill of ‘Asking for Help’ for the rest of the week.”

NOTE: Each day of the week, review the steps of the skill, discuss why it is important to use the skill, and practice when possible.

Other Ideas for Practice

NOTE: As you develop other ideas for practicing the skill, write them here and share them with other staff members in your building.

For younger students (K-5), use literature to lead a discussion on how to ask for help. Books by popular children’s author Julia Cook, including *I Just Want to Do it My Way!*, are recommended.

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Things I Can Complete Without Help	Things I Need Help With

Asking for Help

- 1. Look at the person.**
- 2. Ask the person if he or she has time to help you.**
- 3. Clearly explain the kind of help that you need.**
- 4. Thank the person for helping.**