GUI101: Classroom Management
Handout

Welcome to GUI101

The goal of this course is to provide teachers with systems and strategies to manage the classroom effectively to optimize student learning. Effective classroom management requires use of many tools and methods, including positive guidance strategies for promoting appropriate individual behavior and a range of methods for maintaining a good group-learning environment.

Course Objectives:

By taking notes on the handout and successfully answering assessment questions, participants will meet the following objectives as a result of taking this course:

- Identify recommended strategies for developing and implementing classroom rules in the early childhood setting
- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of routines for early childhood development as well as for classroom management purposes
- Demonstrate an understanding of strategies for facilitating smooth transitions between activities in the early childhood environment
- Identify aspects of effective praise and encouragement
- Define *mutual interaction* as it pertains to children's behavior in the classroom
- Demonstrate an understanding of positive guidance strategies for promoting appropriate behavior and responding to misbehavior
- Identify the importance of student engagement as it relates to classroom management
- Identify recommended practices for classroom structure and arrangement
- Identify the most effective use of formal and informal acknowledgment systems
- Identify recommended strategies for promoting social and emotional growth and development

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Additional Resources

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2. Bruski, N. (2013). *The Insightful Teacher: Reflective Strategies to Shape Your Early Childhood Classroom*. Lewisville, NC: Gryphon House.

3. DeMeo, W. (2013). *When Nothing Else Works: What Early Childhood Professionals Can Do to Reduce Challenging Behaviors*. Lewisville, NC: Gryphon House.

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Behavior Management

Why should teachers view themselves as ***managers?***

In the *Handbook of Classroom Management,* the authors characterize classroom management as *"those actions taken to create an environment that supports and facilitates academic and social-emotional learning."*

They go on to further state that teachers must:

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In its [report](#) entitled, "Training Our Future Teachers: Classroom Management," the National Council on Teacher Quality states the following:

> *"A paradox exists in the classroom. While many classroom management problems are probably symptoms of poor instruction, it is unlikely that improving instruction is the whole solution, or at least not the solution a teacher needs most immediately. For that reason, specific attention to classroom management itself is necessary. Even if instruction is adequate, it can be enhanced by good classroom management."*

Early Childhood vs. School-Age Classroom Management

Primary Classroom Management Strategies

According to the "Training Our Future Teachers: Classroom Management," report from the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ),

> *"Research indicates that student learning depends on both engaging instruction and a well-managed classroom. In other words, you can have a charming personality and lots of great content to share, but you won't reach students if you don't know how to manage the learning environment. Likewise, there is more to successful teaching than maintaining good order and discipline in the classroom; the students may sit quietly and orderly all day, but they won't learn a thing if the teacher can't deliver content in an engaging way."*

List the "Big five":

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Rules

Try This!
Discussion Rules Game

Before you can have a successful group discussion, it is important to establish rules for what to do during group discussions. In other words, the first step to having a discussion about making rules is to make rules about how to have good discussion. Here is one way to do it. It might seem a little chaotic at first, but it's supposed to be, because the point is to demonstrate why rules are important.

- You can kick off the rule-making process with a fun little demonstration of why rules are important.
- Ask the children to gather in whatever space you would normally use for a group discussion or read-aloud. Do *not* tell them to sit down or any other rules; just have them gather around.
- Tell them you want to have a discussion about the best flavor of ice cream
- Ask: What is the best ice cream flavor? Most likely, you will get a mix of responses, with some raising their hands and others calling out answer.

- Restore order and ask one of the children what the class's favorite flavor is. They will not be able to answer, because so far you have not had an orderly discussion.
- Tell the class that you want to have a conversation about this, but you think it is important to come up with some rules for discussion first, so everyone has a chance to hear everyone else's ideas.
- Using a white board or paper, explain that you want to create a basic set of rules for group discussion.
- Start the process by saying that you think one good rule is for everyone to sit down instead of stand.
- Ask, *"How should we sit?"*
- Then, guide children in the process of determining additional rules, such as raising your hand before speaking, listening to what others have to say, etc.

Once you have established the basic ground rules for discussions, you can have a more general discussion about class rules.

Try This!
Read Books

Books provide an excellent opening to the rule-making process, as well as the rule, reinforcement process (i.e., books are a good place to turn if the rules are not sticking). There are many books out there about classroom rules and about rules and community cooperation in general. Below are some well-known titles:

- *Miss Nelson Is Missing!* by Harry Allard
- *Officer Buckle & Gloria* by Peggy Rathmann
- *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* By Mo Willems
- *Don't Let the Pigeon Stay Up Late!* by Mo Willems
- *Library Lion* by Michelle Knudsen
- *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter
- *Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed* by Eileen Christelow

When reading a book about rules, be sure to follow it with open-ended questions about the plot and characters: Why were rules important in this story? What happened when the character did not follow the rules? Use the discussion that follows as a lead, in to working with the children to make class rules.

How Do Non-Readers Read the Rules?

Enforcing the Rules

An Appropriate, Typical Daily Schedule

Young children need variety in their day. Ideally, this rule should apply to **all** young children through age 8. A good daily schedule should include **a balance** of…

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Children Need Time. Plan Accordingly!

Picture Poster

In order to help children understand the schedule and the sequence of events in their day, create a poster of the schedule with pictures depicting the various parts of their day. For example: arrival, clean-up time, group time, story time, outdoor play, snack, center time and departure.

Transitions

What is lead time and why is it important?

Try This!
Assign Tasks

Young children like to help, and they like to do important jobs. So, another way to ensure a smooth transition is to assign children tasks to set up for snacks or lunch or to clean up after various activities. This helps the transition and also teaches them responsibility.

Everyone does not have to be a helper. You can rotate assigned helpers so everyone has equal opportunity. Be sure the helpers understand that they will be asked to stop their activities a few minutes before everyone else. This will help send a signal to the other children that a transition is on the way.

Praise

Children need _____ feedback from the adults in their lives.

Define praise:

Define intangible feedback:

The Dos and Don'ts of Praise

When giving praise, Do...

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As a reminder, here are some key words to remember from the "do" list. Praise should be:

When it comes to praise, Don't...

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Encouragement vs. Praise: There's a Debate

Explain the difference between praise and encouragement:

Encouragement focuses...

Encouragement is...

Encouragement does not...

Encouragement helps...

Behavior Guidance

The Ideal Classroom

All classrooms are unique in certain ways, simply by virtue of diversity of personality types therein. However, when establishing a set of goals and a vision for the classroom, it may help to consider the following "Descriptors of the Ideal Classroom," as defined by the Kean University Teacher Performance Center ([View Here](#)):

- The classroom is organized in a manner that encourages order, participation, independence and continuous learning.
- There are a small number of meaningful rules.
- Students understand and reinforce rules.
- The teacher is consistently teaching independent behavior management skills.

- Students who demonstrate appropriate behaviors consistently receive positive reinforcement and praise.
- The teacher handles inappropriate behavior in a firm, fair, consistent and caring manner.
- The teacher's interactions with students are positive and reinforce the importance of student success.
- The teacher has several motivators that reinforce and shape positive behaviors.
- Classroom instruction is well organized, meaningful and allows for student differences.
- Classroom management strategies are appropriate to the environment and needs of the students.
- There is an established communications system between home and school.

Nancy Bruski, author of *The Insightful Teacher*, states that **the teacher must reflect on and understand their feelings, values, and perspective** before encouraging the child to behave appropriately. She asks teachers to consider the following questions:

- What are your values as a teacher?
- What are your goals?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What should an early childhood classroom look like?
- What behaviors are acceptable and which ones are not?
- Which situations really challenge you?

Also, consider…

- How do you usually respond to challenging situations, and do you need to do something differently?
- How do you engage the children in the learning process?
- How do you use the physical space in the classroom to encourage engagement and independence in the children?
- How do your interactions with the children reflect your goals, values, and perspective?

What does it mean to say that a teacher should look at children's behavior as a ***mutual interaction?***

Define self-regulation:

Challenging behaviors often serve a function. There are four main reasons they occur, as outlined in *When Nothing Else Works,* by William DeMeo.

1. To escape or avoid an undesirable situation (for example, avoid coming to group)
2. To get positive or negative social attention (for example, receiving a hug or redirection)
3. To gain access to a desired item or activity (for example, receiving a snack or being able to go outside and play)
4. To access or avoid sensory input (for example, enjoying the feeling of shaking their hands or reacting negatively to a hug)

Guidance Strategies for Addressing Challenging Behaviors

DeMeo outlines a variety of intervention strategies or **positive guidance strategies** to try when children display challenging behaviors. The strategy used will depend on the child, the severity of the behavior, and the age of the child.

Positive guidance strategies

Make eye contact:

Be in close proximity:

Model positive behavior:

Reteach classroom expectations:

Regroup or restructure the activity:

Offer choices:

Encourage self-removal from the group or situation:

Encourage peer tutoring:

Redirect:

Distract:

Ignoring:

Natural Consequences:

Logical Consequences:

Engagement

Secondary Classroom Management Strategies

In addition to the five Primary Classroom Management Strategies, there are additional "secondary" strategies that can impact the success of classroom management. The strategies explored in this section are:

- Manage the Physical Environment
- Motivate Students
- Use the Least Intrusive Techniques
- Involve Parents and the Community
- Attend to social/emotional/cultural factors that affect the classroom's climate
- Work as a Team
- Teacher Reflection

Manage the Physical Environment

Use the space provided to record important information from this section of the course.

Smart Classroom Arrangement

Author William DeMeo outlines five ideas in his book *When Nothing Else Works* to consider when designing an early childhood environment to prevent challenging behaviors:

1. Group-time areas – these areas need to be large enough for the entire group to meet together while sitting comfortably without being crowded.
2. Location of Centers – divide the room into several distinct interest centers, placing quieter centers near each other and noisier centers where they will not disturb the quiet areas.
3. Shapes and boundaries of centers – provide well-defined boundaries consisting of low shelves, screens, furniture, etc.
4. Accessibility of materials – display materials neatly, making sure that the children can get them without assistance.
5. Orderly organization and use of materials – labeling shelves and work areas will help with clean-up. Use labels to show children where specific items belong. Use signs to help them associate specific behaviors, activities, and materials with a particular space.

Managing Children's Moods and Stimulation Levels

Clear the Clutter

Reducing clutter and providing adequate storage are important for creating a positive atmosphere in the classroom. A cluttered environment can lead to safety issues, a sense of unrest, and a decreased ability for children to focus and work productively. Aside from safety and learning issues, a cluttered environment can cause negative interactions and conflicts, frustration, and over-stimulation.

Motivate Students

Formal acknowledgment system:

Use the Least Intrusive Techniques

Why is it important to be un-intrusive?

Even though teachers want to be nonintrusive and try not to disrupt children's activities, it is important to remember some basic guidelines about providing verbal acknowledgment. Author William DeMeo suggests the following:

- Be descriptive -

- Be enthusiastic -

- Recognize effort -

- Be positive -

Involve Parents and the Community

Use the space provided to record important information from this section of the course.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Attend to Social, Emotional, and Cultural Factors that Affect the Class Environment

Working as a Team

Teacher Reflection