

Teaching and Behavior Management Techniques

GETTING THE ATTENTION OF THE GROUP

1. **Start speaking to the group only when you have the groups' attention.**
2. **Sing** – For Pre-K and Kinder, singing instead of raising your voice is a very effective way to get the students to listen to what you are saying.
3. **Simon Says Quietly** –Without raising your voice say, “If you can hear my voice, touch your nose. If you are paying attention, pull your ear. If you are ready for the lesson, scratch your cheek. Etc.” The students that are the noisiest will catch on once they see everyone making motions. If you still have talkers say, “If someone next to you is still talking, give them the quiet sign.” And that usually works.
4. **Hand Signal** - Use a hand motion like “give me five” or the peace sign. Be sure and tell the students' what the motion means and what behavior you expect before using it.
5. **Sound Signal** – Make a noticeable pattern by clapping. Students respond with the same pattern when listening and know this means to pay attention.
6. **Focus Attention on the Behavior You Want** - Ask for the students' attention, and wait. When a student responds by looking and listening say, “Thank you Pam for being ready for the lesson.” Continue in this quiet manner until you have everyone's attention. This technique seems to work better for upper elementary.
7. **Raising Your Voice** - Try to avoid yelling over the group noise (although this can work when needed!)

GETTING THE ATTENTION OF AN INDIVIDUAL

1. **Question the Student** - Ask the student a question directly and give at least 8 seconds for a reply (count in your head because it is longer than you think). If they cannot answer, rephrase the question and give them another chance. If still no response, ask them if they would like some help and call on a classmate to answer.
2. **Use the Student's Name** - Point something out to the class but phrase it as if you are talking directly to the student (e.g. Sammy, look at the water bubbling up from the spring. Do you see it?)
3. **Physical Contact:** Touch the student's shoulder while you continue your teaching. The contact will get their attention.
4. **Proximity** – Walk and stand close to the student.
5. **Nature's Teachable Moments** - If the student is distracted by an unusual event like a snake or tree that fell, take time to address the interest with the group.
6. **Ignore** the behavior if it is a small distraction and the student comes back to the group.
7. **Direct Approach** - Call the student's name and ask them to participate (this is distracting to the group, but if all else fails it is the quickest method).

POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

1. Reinforce the behavior you want *often* to be more effective
2. Direct praise
3. Excitement and interest over the students' discoveries and understanding.
4. Material rewards. Use meaningful rewards that reinforce garden activities or reward with the privilege of getting to do a special activity.
 - If all but a few students are following directions, give reward or praise to those who are and point it out loudly, e.g. "Thank you Kelly for following directions." The rest of the group will quickly follow.
 - Give rewards when students participate in the lessons and reinforce with legitimate praise. E.G. "Thank you for putting your tools away in the shed."
 - Consequence: Think of consequences you will have before you are "put on the spot." The type of consequence should follow naturally from the undesired behavior, and be something acceptable to you to enforce.

WHEN TEACHING

1. **Respond Quickly** – It is quite a talent to teach, stay tuned to students' response/behavior, notice what is happening in the environment around you, redirect behavior and not lose your train of thought. This however, is the art of teaching. It is important to know your lesson plan well so you can concentrate on the students. You should be constantly aware of student's behavior and participation, and immediately redirect group or individual misbehavior.
2. **Student Participation** – Call on each student at least one time, even if he/she is not raising their hand. Keep a mental note so the same student is not answering all the questions.
3. **Student Asking the Same Question Right After You Explained** – Ask the group if someone can explain the answer to the student that asked again. A student gets a chance to teach and reinforce their new knowledge and you are saved the frustration of explaining all over again.
4. **Repetition** – If students do not respond to a question because no one knows the answer, tell them the answer then ask the question again. Call on 4 or 5 students, asking the same question and letting them repeat the answer for reinforcement.
5. **Vocabulary** – When a difficult word or concept is presented, repeat it in varied contexts. When introducing a new word, make the rest of the explanation and use of the word elementary. No more than 5 new words should be presented in one lesson. Repetition and student use of the word is imperative for learning.
6. **Rapport** – Students should know you are in charge, but also feel you respect and are interested in them. Interacting with students while they are involved in activities is an excellent way to build rapport. Don't stand back and watch their progress or talk with an adult while students are engaged with activities. You should never allow students to behave inappropriately even during a relaxed time such as lunch or play – stay in your role as teacher/leader.