

20 TIPS FOR IMPROVED BEHAVIOR

1. The STUDENT **chooses** the **behavior** AND the **consequence**. Make sure the consequence is appropriate for the behavior, and that it is enforced consistently across the board. If a behavior is not tolerated one day, but is overlooked the next, students will need to test their boundaries anew on a daily basis.
2. **Be firm, yet fair to ALL students.** Do not play favorites. Do not pick on the same students over and over. When you find yourself directing instructions to the same students over and over, it is time to put special effort into catching those students being "good!"
3. Emphasize that it is the student's **BEHAVIOR** that is **unacceptable** - but that you appreciate them, care for them, and value them NO MATTER WHAT they do. Never attack an individual's character by making a sweeping generalization. Never use the phrase "You are ALWAYS so..." or even "WHY are you so _____ all the time?" (whiney? difficult? wiggly? mean?... the point is don't fill in the blank!) Simply state repeatedly that his/her behavior is unacceptable, and make sure that s/he understands WHY, and can explain it back to you.
4. **Be consistent.** If you attempt to follow through with a consequence, but it doesn't seem to pay off the first time, don't just give up. Set up your rules, expectations, rewards, and consequences in advance and stick to them.
5. When dealing with conflict, teach **resolution** and personal **responsibility**. Hold each student accountable for his/her own actions. Emphasize that "the only person that you can control is you." Learning how to make the right choices when faced with a difficult situation builds character. Taking ownership of mistakes and poor choices takes a very strong person indeed.
6. **Dealing with conflict**, and teaching resolution. Make certain your students know that bullying will not be tolerated. The consequence for bullying should be a private meeting with the coach to discuss the feelings and emotions that motivated the student's actions, with a follow-up conversation with the "victim" about how those actions made him/her feel. Each student should have a chance to share. Finish the conversation with a sincere apology or a handshake as closure.
7. When dealing with **bullies**, whether in your own class or out on the playground during recess, emphasize to your class that they are a team and that it is their responsibility to look out for each other. If they see one of their teammates getting pushed around, insulted, made fun of, or bullied in any way, they need to gather their forces (some more of their teammates) and go to the aid and rescue of their classmate. There is strength in numbers, and let them know that **defending what is right** and standing up for others when they are unable to stand up for themselves is what heroes are made of. "Do you want to be a hero? How does it make you feel when someone is mean to you and makes fun of you? How would it make you feel if someone was being mean to you, and then when you turned around you found that 10 of your teammates had your back? **In this class we protect ALL of our classmates.** You don't have to be best friends, you don't even have to particularly like the person, but you stand up for what is right."
8. Incorporate [Dr. Phil's Anti-Bullying Pledge](#) into your class (if not your entire school!).

9. Stress **SAFETY**. When students begin to play "out of control" you can feel an accident waiting to happen. When students are moving too fast and carelessly in an activity, you can simply slow the game down by changing the movement. Instead of running during tag, have students skip, hop, bear crawl or crab walk! That'll slow 'em down!
10. Stress the following **key points** with regard to class management:
 - It is important to listen, so that they know the rules, and know how to play SAFELY.
 - It is important to play according to the rules, so that no-one gets HURT.
 - Therefore... if a student is NOT listening, or NOT playing according to the rules, he/she must be removed from the activity for SAFETY reasons.
11. If you have a student sit out of an activity, make sure he/she is where **YOU can see him/her**, but the **class cannot**. If you have him/her sitting in front of the class, it provides them with the opportunity to clown around even more! In this instance you may want to incorporate a "penalty box" when a student is demonstrating poor sportsmanship or unsafe/unfair play (just like hockey) with a set amount of time, or you may have the student decide when they are ready to return to the game (probably after an acknowledgement of the infringement and an agreement to abide by the rules of the game). If two (or more) kids are sitting out, do not put them together!
12. Offer physical exercise as an opportunity to **release pent-up emotions or energy**. "If running to the fence and back, or doing a few push-ups will make you feel better, help you hone your focus, or enable you to let off some steam, by all means go for it!!!" Use it as an opportunity and a stress management tool – not a punishment.
13. Create a **"WORK IT OUT"** corner where kids can go to blow off steam. Offer suggestions for various emotions. Angry? Try 10 push-ups. Frustrated? Try a sprint to the fence and a cool-down walk back. Pent-up energy? Try 50 jumping jacks. Tired? How about a 5-minute power-nap station?
14. **NEVER use exercise as a punishment.** Exercise should be viewed as a REWARD for your body and something that we want all students to embrace for life. By making any type of exercise a punishment, the student's attitude toward exercise becomes very negative - and that negative association often lasts a lifetime!
15. **Never take away Physical Education time or recess for punishment.** You are taking away something that is beneficial for the brain and body as a punishment. It sends a mixed message. We're telling our kids that they need to spend more time exercising, yet we're taking that time away. For many kids, lack of movement opportunity is the root of their behavior issues, yet we make them hold still LONGER for punishment! Common sense says **"get those kids moving!!"** It's like knowing that your child is overly tired and emotionally wrecked, then punishing them by depriving them of sleep!
16. **Movement is essential for learning.** A simple analogy is to think of the mind like a sponge. Once filled up, you can pour and pour, but no amount of pouring will get more water in. By allowing the kids to move, the brain is actually able to process the information, sort through it, and make more room for absorption. So it only makes sense then, that when kids get squirrely, what they need is to MOVE - not to hold still! (See any study by [Eric Jensen](#), Brain-Compatible Learning, and the Brain and Body Connection.) Try one of these alternatives, or come up with a creative solution of your own. When faced with:
 - **Incomplete Homework/Seatwork:** Rather than having kids miss recess or PE, try calling the parent, sending an e-mail or note home. A quick call with a simple

message such as, "Just a reminder that Johnny will have a night and a half of homework tonight, since last night's homework was incomplete" should give the parents a heads-up. After all, we do need to allow the parents to get involved, and hold them accountable for encouraging their kids!

- **Squirrely students** during quiet learning times: When the gentle reminders are no longer working, or perhaps it is a blustery day and the students are feeling it, or it's the day before or after a vacation - these are times that kids have a hard time keeping their focus. This is the time that you turn on your class anthem (pick up a fitness CD from our Tandalay shop) and perform your class dance!! You'll find a lesson plan on establishing your own class dance in our Rhythm and Dance units. Play the song once, get the wiggles out, then get back to work! For K-2 you can use one of Greg & Steve's songs that have movement instructions written into the lyrics. For all grades you can always use the Chicken Dance or the Macarena!

17. **Never raise your voice in anger.** To really get a student's attention, get very quiet, get down on his/her level, look in his/her eyes, and reinforce your expectations and consequences. "Your behavior is unacceptable. Do you want to have to sit out? If you continue in this manner, you will be removed from the game." Be very direct and to the point, but don't show anger. The student has chosen the behavior and now has another choice to make. Encourage him/her to make the right choice now.

18. **Behavior Management in a nutshell.** (guidelines only)

- **Step One:** General Verbal Reminder emphasizing the behavior you are looking for. ("I like the way Cindy is sitting so quietly and waiting for instructions." or "I like the way Roberto is keeping his hands behind his back and paying attention.")
 - **Step Two:** Eye contact with gentle reminder of unacceptable behavior. ("Now is not the time to be talking.")
 - **Step Three:** Stand near the student as you continue the lesson.
 - **Step Four:** Quiet, respectful, yet firm warning of consequence.
 - **Step Five:** Initiate appropriate consequence with as little disruption to class as possible.
- When student's behavior is **intentionally** disrespectful to the coach or classmate, skip immediately to step five. If a student's behavior is unsafe or causing unnecessary risk of injury to self or others, skip immediately to step five.

19. **Never** use embarrassment, insults, ridicule, or sarcasm as a method of behavior management. It is a teacher's job to instill self-confidence and respect. Insulting and embarrassing a student may give you the compliance you are looking for, but will also foster deep feelings of resentment, decrease the respect the student has for you as a coach, and will damage rather than improve self-esteem. This includes eye-rolling and heavy sighs of exasperation! A student can feel it when you are being disrespectful and condescending and their attitudes toward you will reflect the same.

20. A student's **motivation** for "good" behavior should come from a deep sense of self-respect and a desire to be the best he/she can be. As a coach, if you can instill - in each student - respect for self and others, the rest of your job will be a breeze! "If you show disrespect toward others, you are really showing a lack of respect for yourself." Instill core values into your students at every opportunity. (For core value discussion, read Stephen R. Covey's 7-Habits of Highly Effective People.)