

# Behavior Management- Tips for Creating a Successful Program

## Why are there so many behavior issues in my program?

Often people are not able to communicate exactly what they need. Instead, they communicate their needs through their behavior. This is especially true of children because their understanding of their own emotions is still developing. For this reason, it's important to give them grace and focus on the root cause of the behavior.

Proactive measures can help address some of these needs before they manifest in negative ways. This creates a nurturing community where students feel safe and valued. To accomplish this, we clearly communicate our **expectations**; hold students accountable with minimal, consistent, logical **consequences**; engage them with predictable **routines** and **procedures**; and use **positive guidance**.

## Expectations

Every program should start the year by developing The Right Club Promise, which should be posted every day for reference.

- They should be simple (no more than 5), positively stated ("Treat others with respect," not "Don't call people names!"), and created *with* the students.
- Allowing students to have a say in what is expected of them creates buy-in.
- Once created, remind students of the group expectations by reviewing them at the start of every program (in town hall) and between transitions.
- Learn more [here](#).

## Consequences

As we all know, students will not always meet these expectations. Here are a few things to keep in mind when determining what to do when a student does not meet expectations:

- **Consequences vs punishment.** It's not "You are in trouble!" It's "You made a choice and that choice comes with a consequence." The goal here is to help students make better choices in the future.
- **Consequences should be *logical* and focused on the desired outcome.** Putting a

kid in time out for calling another kid a name won't make them stop. The desired outcome is helping that child understand the impact their words have on others. This logically leads us to other consequences, like talking to the teacher about how the other student might feel or apologizing.

- **Always be consistent.** Kids have a very strong sense of what is fair. If you treat similar situations in different ways, it will be noted.
- **Never punish the group for the behavior of a few students.** This only makes the rest of the group resent you more.
- **Model the behavior you want to see, including admitting when you made a mistake.** Demonstrating remorse and showing everyone makes mistakes goes a long way in helping kids do the same.
- **Build intrinsic motivation for students.** Rewarding positive behavior with prizes teaches kids to only behave that way when prizes are on the line. We want kids to do the right thing because it positively impacts everyone. Recognizing that behavior and helping them make connections between their behavior and the impact on the group can help them can be just as powerful and last longer.
- Consequences are always quick, quiet, and private. Each consequence should be restorative (meaning they learn a skill they can continue to practice in the future)!

## Routines/Procedures

Kids feel safe when they know what to expect. That's why sticking to a daily routine is so important. It also allows kids to engage with various program components so they don't get bored. Because when they get bored, behavior issues start popping up.

- **The Right Club schedule was created with student needs in mind.** Right Moves helps kids get the wiggles out after being in class all day. Town Hall sets the tone for the day. Sticking [with this schedule](#) helps meet their needs, so unwanted behaviors do not become a problem.
- **An engaged student is a student behaving appropriately.** One of the best ways to cut down on negative behaviors is to give students something positive to do. When students are engaged in the Daily Double/Triple Play or PlayRight Fitness, they are too focused on the activity to get into mischief.
- **Plan ahead and teach students procedures.** When you think back to your favorite teachers, you probably think of how nice they were or the fun activities you did in their class. What you may not realize is the amount of planning that went into the procedures in that classroom. There was likely a very specific set of steps students needed to follow to line up, for example. These procedures need to be planned and taught. After school is no different.
- **That includes staff.** Use your team huddle to ensure each staff member knows exactly what is expected of them during each component of the day. Going in with a unified plan and goal ensures everyone is on the same page.
- **Consider your physical space.** While we don't often have free reign with the space the school gives us, we do have options to alter the space to meet the students' needs. How are the students seated? Is there room to move? Where's the best spot for you to address the group? You may need to try different configurations until you find one that works for

your group. Just make sure you left it how you found it.

- **Pro Tip: Ask the kids.** If you don't like how your transitions or bathroom breaks are going, take the kids in as partners. Ask them what's working and what's not. They probably have ideas you'd never even think of.

## Positive Guidance

Positive guidance is the core of all interactions we have with students. We want students to feel safe, valued, and empowered while in program. Positive guidance helps us achieve that by strengthening our relationship with both students and families.

- We have lots of [resources](#) on positive guidance available, including a [Just-in-Time-9, helpful reminders](#) and [effective techniques](#).
- Make sure that ALL students get positive communication home. Some students rarely get positive communication from school. Finding something to compliment them on, no matter how small, can go a long way to making the student and family feel like they are valued and wanted. It will also make the tough conversations a little easier to have if a good rapport has been established.
- When trying to talk to students who are upset, be sure to follow [the 3 Rs](#) in order. Regulate, Relate, *then* Going straight to Reason will end in frustration for both you and the student.
- Give positive behavior positive attention. Call it out for others to notice. ("Luke is doing a great job of waiting quietly in line. Thank you, Luke!")

## Additional Resources

- [The Power of Keeping Cool](#)
- [Intervention Central](#)
- [Remain Calm & Respond Right When A Student Challenges](#)
- [Cetervention – A Classroom Management Plan](#)
- [Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom](#)
- [PBIS Basics for Afterschool Programs](#)
- [Classroom Management in the Out-of-School Time Setting](#)