

Strategies to Discourage Minor Behavior Inappropriate for the School Setting

This document describes several strategies that can be used in response to minor misbehavior and is used in an interactive activity.

Table 1. Each technique for addressing minor behavior includes an explanation of the technique and an example of when it might be used.

Technique	Explanation	Example
Proximity	Every teacher knows how effective it is to stand near a child who is having difficulty. This technique is the strategic placement/movement by the teacher in order to encourage positive behavior. The teacher is a source of support and strength and helps the student to control his impulses by her proximity	When Alan is off task or talking, the teacher continues to teach the group while, at the same time, moving toward Alan or even standing next to him for a moment. Once Alan brings his behavior in line, brief specific positive feedback will help to maintain the desired behavior, "Thanks, Alan, for showing respect with your attention."
Signal/Non-Verbal Cue	Teachers have a variety of signals that communicate to the student what is expected. These non-verbal techniques include such things as eye contact, hand gestures, a card system, picture cues, etc. Such simple cues suggest that the teacher is aware of the student's behavior and is prepared to intervene if the behavior continues. This works best when the teacher has a relationship with the student(s) and the non-verbal cues have already been taught to the group.	When Sarah begins to talk to her neighbor, the teacher glances in her direction and holds the look until she is again quiet and attending. The teacher then praises Sarah for her attention. The group of students is getting restless. The teacher uses her hand signal to regain their attention, then praises the group and reminds them of the expectations for independent work time.

Technique	Explanation	Example
Ignore/Attend Praise	This technique is based on the power of praise or specific positive feedback. The teacher praises an appropriately behaving student in proximity to the student who is behaving inappropriately. The praise serves as an indirect prompt for the student who is misbehaving and reinforcement for the one behaving appropriately. When the student exhibits the appropriate behavior, attention and praise is then provided.	James is off-task during independent work time. The teacher briefly ignores James, and specifically praises a student nearby who is on task, "Good work, Keegan. You are working away on your assignment." When James begins to get back to work, the teacher then, immediately, praises him, "Thanks, James, for being on task; you'll be sure to get your work done."
Re-Direct	This strategy employs a very brief, clearly and privately stated verbal reminder of the expected behavior. A re-redirect includes a specific restatement of the school-wide or classroom rule/procedure. A redirect emphasizes the "what" of the behavior instead of the "why."	"Jason, please begin your writing assignment." (Later) "Nice job being responsible, Jason, you have begun your assignment."
Re-Teach	Re-teaching builds on the re-redirect above and re-teaches the specific expectation in question and reminds of the procedures or routine for doing so. It capitalizes on the teachable moment to review the expectation more thoroughly, yet briefly. As in all instruction, you label the skill, teach and show, and give the student the immediate opportunity to practice demonstrating the behavior. Once the student uses the appropriate behavior, specific positive feedback should follow.	"Jason, you need to be responsible by being on-task. That means your desk is clear of everything but your book and notebook, you begin working right away, continue working until done, and if you need help you raise your hand. (Pause) Nice job being responsible, Jason. It looks like you are ready to work. Let me know if you need help."

Technique	Explanation	Example
Provide Choice	Providing choice can be used when re-directs or re-teaching have not worked. This is the statement of two alternatives—the preferred or desired behavior and a less preferred choice. When options are paired in this way, student will often make the preferred choice. Pause after providing the choice, and when the student chooses wisely, provide praise.	<p>“McKenzie, you are asked to get on-task and begin your work or you can finish this task later today during our special activity. I will watch to see if you would rather begin now.”</p> <p>OR</p> <p>“Lynn, you can get organized and work here at you seat, or you can work in the quiet area. Which would you prefer?”</p>
Student Conference	This is a lengthier re-teaching or problem-solving opportunity when behavior is more frequent or intense. The behavior of concern is discussed, the desired behavior is taught, and a plan is made to ensure the behavior is used in the future. A student conference might include practice.	<p>“Will, several times today I have reminded you about being on task. When you are given an assignment, you need to... When you do that you can get done more quickly and move on to things you enjoy more. Tell me what you will do when given an assignment. Let’s practice.... How can I help you to do that if you get stuck?”</p> <p>(Then) “Can I get a commitment from you to do that?”</p>

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