

*Washington State Training & Registry System (STARS)*

Certified STARS Instructor: Lita Tabish, M.Ed.

Study Guide and Workbook for:

STARS 10 Hour Course

# Classroom Management



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# Classroom Management Tips:

## Rules:

To take time to communicate the classroom rules and ask children for their cooperation in remembering and following the rules so the classroom is well managed and children demonstrate appropriate behaviors. Children learn from repetition, it takes at least forty repeated times before the act becomes a habit.

## Tip #1:

From the first day children arrive, they need to know what behaviors are expected, and you need to communicate your expectations to the children. A few simple, positively worded, straightforward rules are best. By posting them on a chart in the classroom, you can refer to them when infraction occurs. It is best to introduce the rules to the students when posting the chart. Explain each rule and talk about examples for each one.

## Tip #2:

If possible, give children an opportunity to participate in make their rules. When youngsters have a hand in forming the rules, they seem to remember them with greater ease. When a rule is broken, you can say, "Remember we made this rule at the beginning o the school year. We agreed that 'indoor voices' are to be used inside. Do you see Rule #4 on our chart? It says, 'use indoor voices inside the classroom.' The voice you're using is ore appropriate for outdoor play"

Here is sample of classroom rules:

1. Listen to the teacher.
2. Listen to one another
3. Follow directions.
4. Use indoor voices in the classroom.
5. Walk in the classroom.
6. Care for your class friends.

Effective classroom management is founded on the development of class rules. Children need to know and understand the rules, and to the degree possible, participate in the in formation. Class rules should also be posted in

the classroom so you and children can refer to them when necessary. Some schools adopt uniform rules that all children follow throughout their years in school.

Make classroom rules as concrete as possible and help children understand them. Telling a four-or five-year-old to “Keep your hands to yourself when we walk down the hall,” or “Hitting others in the classroom is not allowed” is a lot more concrete than “Control yourself.”

Tip #3:

Class rules may need to be explained repeatedly until children grasp the concepts. This helps children understand classroom rules and why these rules exist. Young children need explanations about why rules are part of classroom living, Helping children realize that everyone has a responsibility to develop a “Happy classroom” is an essential component of effective classroom management.

Important democratic principles children must learn are:  
My wants and needs are not the only ones that must be met.  
When I am with others, I need to take turns and share.  
Sometimes I have wait for things to happen.

Once these principles are established and practices, children can learn about assertiveness and negotiation.

Tip #4:

Explaining why rules are essential is part of classroom instruction that helps children begin more adult-like thinking. Explain classroom rules helps a child become less egocentric, and in time, helps them recognize how laws are formed in city, state, and national arenas. Young children need to understand that there are rules of democratic living and why these rules are essential.

Tip #5:

Being Consistent with Rules:

To help children establish inner control by maintaining rules consistently. Children notice when you are inconsistent about following through on rules and expectations. Classroom rules require fair, require follow-through with each child in the class. Apply rules consistently for all children.

Sometimes rules should be suspended for out-of-the-ordinary circumstances. For example, children are not allowed to go to another side of the playground except when a special parade comes by. If the rules are suspended on occasions such as this, review the rules when children are again expected to conform to classroom or playground limitations.

All children test the limits of rules and if they discover that you do not mean what you say, their negative behavior escalates. Children's willingness and ability to learn independence requires that you be valiant in your relationships with them.



## Consequences of Behavior:

Note the appropriate consequences in each of the following circumstances:  
The teacher removes Sally from the Home Living Center because she continues to hit other children. She talks to Sally about her hitting, and then allows her to choose another center.

Dwight appears to be listening to the story his teacher is reading, but he continues to poke and distract the children sitting around him. His teacher calls his name several times to redirect his attention to the book, but Dwight keeps poking his friends. The teacher finally motions for Dwight to come sit next to her while she continues to read. Dwight's behavior improves.

Jerome accidentally tore a page in his library book. His teacher requires him to repair the page before returning it to the library.

Zach throws one of the classroom balls over the playground fence, and a car hits it and deflates it. Zach's teacher talks to him about the consequences of his behavior and allows the deflated ball to be the sufficient lesson for the incident. No one is able to play with the damaged ball.

Trisha bit one of her friends while they were at the water table. After attending to the child whom Trisha bit, her teacher talks to Trisha about her being hurt, telling her that she cannot play at the water table for the rest of the day. The teacher sends a note about the incident to Trisha's parents and to the parents of the child who was bitten. When Trisha returns to the water table the next week she bites her friend again. This time, the teacher talks to Trisha more sternly and removes her again for the rest of the day. She also sends another note home to Trisha's parents about the incident. She requests a conference with Trisha's parents.

### Tip:

No matter the infractions, children need to know that inappropriate behavior has consequences. New teachers occasionally fall into the habit of telling children that something will happen if they continue to behave the way they do, and then no consequence materializes. Consequences help children understand that need for self-control.

Children need explanations about the consequences of their behaviors. Some children have not yet realized that behaviors have consequences. Address negative behaviors and suggest acceptable and positive alternatives.

To help children learn to be independent and to care for themselves and their property, traits that begin in the early years. Consequences give children the sense that what they do has repercussions in everyday life.

Children who do not follow the rules need to experience some type of consequences. Otherwise, rules have no meaning to them.



## Complimenting “Good” Behavior:

To help children feel more secure by letting them know their limitations and the parameters of the classroom setting. Taking time to compliment children’s positive behaviors will communicate classroom values and expectations. Examples of complimenting “good” behavior include:

Tom puts his arm around his friend, Kay, when she begins to cry. Mrs. Sower compliments him by saying, “You’re comforting your friend. Good for you. I’m sure she is feeling better already.”

Marshall raises his hand before speaking in Circle Time, a practice that he does not usually demonstrate. His teacher comments “Good Marshall, I see you remembered to raise your hand.”

Mrs. Martin leans over and whispers into Carrie’s ear, “Carrie you walked down the hall so quietly after we left the gym.” Carrie grins widely in response to the teacher’s praise.

Mrs. Doyle holds up the class’s favorite puppet and asks, “Do you know what Mrs. McGillicutty told me about you today? She said that you were the best kindergarten class that she has ever seen, especially when you walked to the cafeteria. What do you think about that?”

An unfortunate fact about the use of praise is that children who do not receive it begin to say, “Look at me, teacher, I’m quiet now. See me! I’m quiet.” To avoid conflicts among children and hurt feelings, praise must be used judiciously and always genuine.

Children need to be recognized when they exhibit positive behaviors. Parents and teachers alike support their own values when they observe and compliment the types of behavior they want children to demonstrate. Teachers need to look for the behaviors they want in the classroom and support children’s efforts when they see young children demonstrating these behaviors. At the beginning of the school year, praise helps communicate to children what behaviors are expected in the classroom. Eventually, children become self-regulated and do not need an abundance of praise to manage themselves.

## Helping Children Understand Accidental Situations:

To give children the sympathy and comfort they need when faced with disappointments, but also to help them form a positive attitude toward life. Children cannot (and should not) be sheltered from pain and loss.

Marissa began to cry when she noticed that she dropped the ketchup on her dress during lunchtime. She seemed inconsolable as her teacher approached her to comfort her.

Marissa's teacher sat down beside her pulled her close. "Oh my, Marissa, you're certainly upset about something. Talk to me about it." Once the teacher understood the problem, she explained that the dress would be like new once it was washed and suggest that the two of them find some cold water to wash away the stain. Later, she told Marissa that no one could ever tell that ketchup had spilled on her dress.

You need to help children manage their emotions. Obviously, Marissa placed high priority on keeping clothes clean, but she also needed to learn that keeping clothes clean forever is impossible. Often, remedies exist for problems, but in other situations, children may have to live with the results. Disappointments that children need assistance with include:

- Broken toys and personal items
- Messy papers and lost books
- Missing pets
- Death of a classroom pet
- Death of classmate
- Death of a family member
- Broken promises from friends and parents
- Missing the bus or arriving late to the classroom.

When children have more difficulty than usual dealing a difficult life event, such as the death of a pet, suggesting professional assistance beyond the classroom may be necessary.



## Using Cueing Signals:

Formulate a set of signals to cue children for classroom announcements, routines, or a brief discussion about a classroom issue that needs to be addressed. Some teachers even use private signals for individual children as reminders of behaviors they need to remember.

Mrs. Frezia walked to the light switch in the classroom and flicked the light three times. The children stopped their activities and waited for the directions.

Develop cueing signals to gain the children's attention. These cues are also useful when you need to catch the eye of one child who needs a quiet reminder about his or her behavior.

To use cueing systems effectively, make sure children know when and why they will be used. During the first weeks of school, explain the system and practice it with the children. Cueing systems are useful when children become too noisy or seem to be avoiding tasks that are expected of them. Their use is also important when it is time to change activities or move to another component of the daily schedule.

Flicking the classroom lights is one of commonly used signals. Others include:

- Ringing a bell in the classroom
- Clapping one's hands several time
- Sing a song
- Standing in front of the classroom and holding up your hand until everyone's attention is on you.
- Using a specific finger play
- Reciting a chant that children can repeat, such as, "If you can hear my voice, clap three times, if you can hear my voice, clap once"
- Motioning children to look at your eyes
- Walking around the classroom and lightly tapping children on their shoulders until all children have turned their attention to you.

Overusing cueing signals can cause children to think of them as too routine and mundane. Use them when it is necessary to give children gentle reminders about appropriate classroom behavior or for important announcements.

## Using the “Remember When” Technique:

A critical component in the emotional development of young children is their ability to understand the emotions of other children. The “remember when” technique allows children to comprehend another child’s emotions by remembering their own feelings in a similar circumstance.

Dan grabbed the sock puppet from Tom’s hand and ran around the room whooping and making loud noises. Tom’s shocked reaction was the scream loudly at Dan, “That’s mine; I was playing with It first!”

Mrs. Cruz had dealt with this type of problem in previous situations, so she moved calmly into Dan’s path, bent down to his eye level and said, “Dan, remember last week when Marilee took the puzzle you were putting together? How did you react?”

Dan presented a sheepish response, “I yelled at her.”

“Like Tom is yelling at you now?”

“Yes,” and Dan bowed his head lower.

Teaching children about other’s viewpoints will take repeated social interactions with you. In groups of children it will help them recognize that everyone has similar emotions.

Mrs. Cruz simply asked Dan to put himself in Tom’s situation. Once Dan “remembered when” a similar incident occurred to him, he was able to more clearly understand Tom’s feeling. With further discussion, Mrs.’ Cruz persuaded Dan to return Tom’s puppet until he was through playing with it. Later, she noticed they were playing together in the Puppet Center, each with a different puppet.

Sometimes broader applications of this technique are helpful. Understanding the emotions of children in another country might be necessary if youngsters come to school asking about a disaster they have seen on a television news program. “Remember how sad we were when our class hamster died? The people in Mexico City are sad, too, because of the earthquake that killed so many of their friends and family members. Do you think there might be a way we could help them with their problem?”

## Diverting Children's Attention:

Recognize that children have many interests. Their inattention is characteristic of their age, and you need to be able to draw them back into discussions and classroom activities.

Young children are easily distracted by activities are going on around them. They will fidget and turn to their friends during Circle Time, and they will rush to the window if some event is happening outdoors.

Develop strategies to help children focus their attention on group activities. To keep children's attention you will need a variety of strategies for drawing children's attention back to the learning at hand. The following are suggestions for diverting children's attention during group time:

- Asking a child a question.
- Make eye contact with the child and use a nonverbal cue to regain his or her attention.
- Call the child's name and tell her you need her attention.
- Move closer to the child
- Move to the child and put your hand on her shoulder.
- Stop what you are doing and wait until the child turns around to see what you are doing.
- Ask the child to come sit by you while you continue the discussion, book reading experience, or other activity.
- Call the child aside and give her a choice to remain in the group or go to another area of the room (the choice should be a quiet area of the room)
- As soon as possible after group time, talk to the child about why her behavior is distracting to others.
- If children are distracted by a toy or other object another child is holding in his hand, ask the child to put the toy in his cubby or pocket until a later time.

Plan short group experiences. Do not expect young children to sit for longer than 15 to 20 minutes. Sometimes the distracting event may be a more important learning event for the children than the planned experience. Recognize that. For example, if a plumber walks in the room to fix a leaky faucet, the children will learn more by watching him work than continuing the planned activity.

## Using Time-out & Private Time:

Quiet spaces in the classroom and/or naptime or rest time give preschoolers the opportunity to rest, both physically and emotionally. Children should also learn when it is appropriate to find some quiet time for themselves. People of all ages need time away from others. If they don't have it, sometimes they become irritable and grouchy in their relationships with others. Some of the quiet areas in preschool classrooms are:

- A book corner
- A pile of soft pillows in a quiet corner of the classroom
- An old bathtub filled with pillows.
- A tent with sleeping bags, cots, or mats.
- A specially prepared nook
- A cot or sofa

Occasionally, you might ask children to move to a "time out" area for a few minutes. This technique must be used with explanations and only a short period of time. These "time out" chair, sometimes called "power chairs," are most effective when use positively. Using the "time out" chair for children to regain self-control changes the focus of the chair to one of children learning independence, never as punishment.

Demonstrate the use of the "time out" chair, especially when you are feeling frustrated with the children. The children will notice if you are sitting in "time out." This is a "teachable moment" to explain that you are upset and need to regain your self-control. Private time is important to all individuals and should never be utilized as punitive control.



## Using Indoor and Outdoor Voices:

Youngsters need feedback about the difference between quiet voices used inside and louder voices that are appropriate for the outdoors. Most children love to talk, and the more excited they are, the louder they will talk. If children have limited experiences with groups, they will talk with voices that may be too loud in the classroom environment.

Help children use an appropriate voice level when they are inside the classroom. Exceptions may occur when children are highly excited about something they want to tell. When planning classroom rules, talk about the difference between indoor and outdoor voices. Tell the children that when they are indoors, they need to be quieter. When they are outside, they can be louder if they want. The best plan is to demonstrate a quiet voice to children and let them rehearse using quiet voices.

After a few days of reminders, you may discover that children have not recognized the difference between the two. You may need to demonstrate which voice is an indoor voice and which is an outdoor voice. This practice should be a last resort, because negative models are questionable.

Occasionally, children may suggest that they never talk in the classroom. Let them know that this is an unrealistic expectation, but that quiet voices are necessary within the classroom. Until children internalize their understanding of “indoor” and “outdoor” voices, you will need to provide reminders about the difference.

