

Positive Child Behavior Management In The Classroom

Part 2

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What the parents and teachers of the child who's behavior regularly places that child in trouble have to learn is how to provide the child with just the right measure of high quality attention *before* the child engages in serious forms of inappropriate conduct to get more attention. We need to provide the child with the quantity and quality of attention the child needs to feel secure enough to not feel the need to act out inappropriately for the attention she craves.

Additionally, paying close enough attention to the child will alert you as to the signs that the child is beginning to drift into a trouble. These signs include restlessness, inattentiveness, clenched jaws or fists (expressing frustration), a brooding look (expressing unhappiness), getting in the face of other children or handling materials in a rough way (expressing aggression). The sooner you notice what is coming, the more quickly and easily you can redirect the child before her behavior drifts too far into chaos for anyone to control, including the child herself.

Communicating with the child in a way that helps the child feel sufficiently secure about his power may also help. Do this by saying something like, "I hear you, I see you, I understand what you need. You don't have to act out for my attention. I'm paying attention to you and all you have to do is to let me know what you need from me, and I will do my best to help you to satisfy that need. I'm on your side. I'm aware of you. I'm paying attention." As you state these words clearly and in a tone of both strength and caring, be sure to looking directly into the eyes of the child. Make a real connection.

When you combine the practice of self-control, the administering of just the right amount of quality attention, and communicating clearly and in a penetrating manner that you really are there for the child, you employ a powerful formula for leading the child from chaos into order.

Here is an additional way. It is based on the understanding that the disorderly child acts out of the craving for power, caused by that child having been made to feel powerless *until* he behaves outrageously. Give that student opportunities to be the center of attention through responsible behavior. Doing this when *you* choose to make it happen diminishes or eliminates the child's drive to seek that position of power when you do not want it to happen. Let that student's talents stand out and shine and you may not have to contend with his disruptive expression of the dark side of those talents.

It has been said that the more you catch a child in the act of doing something right, the less you will need to catch her in the act of doing something wrong. The child accustomed to gaining disapproving attention through disrespectful behavior generally lacks the belief in herself she needs to attempt improved self-conduct. She expects her "good" behavior to lead to a condition of powerless invisibility. She also regards it as something she cannot excel in. Behaviors like remaining silent during a lesson, following directions, completing work, resolving conflicts with classmates in an orderly manner seem to her beyond her reach and self-defeating. By staying on the lookout for what the child does right or well, and then letting the child know your appreciation and admiration in response, you nurture the student's motivation and self-confidence needed for her to even attempt to improve her self-direction.