

TEN CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

So often, when we are dealing with a child who misbehaves, we think we must say a lot and explain a lot. What seems to work best of all is to practice communication strategies that are short and to the point. Children tune out if it sounds like a lecture. And the following ten suggestions are meant to be delivered in a calm and matter-of-fact way. Try them for yourself.

1. Describe:
 - Whoops! The markers spilled on the floor.
 - Uh oh! One person has all the playdo and the other children have none.
2. Give information:
 - The markers dry out when we don't replace the lids.
 - If you need help you can come to me.
3. Say it in ONE word:
 - Markers!
 - Stop!
4. Talk about your own feelings:
 - I feel annoyed when I see children wasting paper.
 - I feel sad when I see children hurting each other.
5. Use POSITIVE directions:
 - Put the lids back on the markers
 - Walk! (rather than "Don't run!")
6. Offer a choice:
 - It's time to clean up. Do you want to put the puzzles back or the crayons?
 - Can you sit quietly by your friend or will you need to sit beside me?
7. It would be helpful if...
 - ...everyone could find a quiet place for their hands and their feet during our story.
 - ...those with extra playdo would share it.
8. Statement of acceptable behavior:
 - We walk inside the building.
 - We use kind words with each other.
9. Put it in writing:
 - Post your agreements on the wall.
 - Use pictures for young children to label things and give directions.
10. The Grandma Rule: When this happens, then we will do (something fun).
 - When all the art supplies are cleaned up, we'll have our snack.
 - When everyone is sitting quietly, we'll have our story.