

Classroom Management Strategies

Classroom Management

Resource Guide



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Welcome

We hope you are able to use this Classroom Management Strategies Resource Guide to meet your specific needs and the needs of your organization. It is a training requirement if you are implementing a Youth Prevention Education program that you attend our classroom-based Foundations of Youth Prevention Education training. Schools, classrooms, and students are constantly changing and we realize for providers spending time facilitating either a standards-based or model programs, classroom management is frequently a struggle. If you have attended Prevention First's Foundations of Youth Prevention Education training, information included in this resource guide will build upon the classroom management techniques introduced in the training.

This Classroom Management Strategies Resource Guide will also provide you with some general information, guidance, and websites that can be used as resources as you create, implement, and fine tune your classroom management plan and strategies.

Prevention First is a nonprofit resource center committed to building and supporting healthy, drug-free communities through public education, professional training, and providing effective tools for those working to prevent drug use and related issues such as violence, teen pregnancy, and academic failure.

Since 1980, Professional Development Services Department at Prevention First has provided training, consultation, and information services in the prevention of public health problems, specializing in those associated with alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse. Its mission is to provide leadership and develop leaders in the prevention of substance abuse and related issues.

Go to www.prevention.org to view additional resources and information regarding the current training calendar and opportunities. If you need further support regarding this topic, please reach out to your assigned Prevention First Provider Network Specialist.



Classroom Management Strategies

OVERVIEW

Effective classroom management is necessary for all teachers and facilitators. Classroom management involves all aspects of what is going on in the classroom while a lesson is being taught. Not only does classroom management include how the teacher or facilitator delivers the curriculum, but also how the students interact with the teacher and with others in the classroom, and extends into the classroom environment in which students learn as well.

Students cannot learn in chaos. Classroom management includes elements of classroom discipline, but focuses more on creating a peaceful learning environment that is comfortable, organized, engaging, and respectful for both the teacher and the students.

Teaching Youth Prevention Education places us directly in a classroom in the teaching or facilitating role. While we are guests in the classroom and it is the role of the classroom teacher to provide the necessary discipline needed, our classroom management strategies can help set the tone for positive interactions, cooperative learning, and to provide a plan ensuring the lesson runs smoothly regardless of any disrupting behaviors by students.

Having effective classroom management strategies should be the goal of everyone implementing a Youth Prevention Education program.

It almost goes without saying, but it is an important reminder, that in the end kids will be kids. If we are not taking the steps and putting in the effort to actively engage students in the lessons we are facilitating, they will actively engage in something else...and that's what we all want to avoid.

Below you will find information on several topics that will help you develop or strengthen your classroom management strategies. A little thought and effort up front spent on developing classroom management strategies can save providers a lot of time and effort in the long run if problems or issues arise in the classroom.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND CURRICULUM FIDELITY

Classroom management strategies need to be planned, be thoughtful, and in line with curriculum fidelity. It is important to prioritize curriculum fidelity when selecting classroom management strategies. While some classroom management strategies focus more on setting clear rules and some focus more on transitions, the strategies should not change how the lesson is taught. Classroom management strategies should add organization for the students and classroom, but not change the content of the lessons or the fidelity of the curriculum. It is important for all providers to deliver the curriculum with the highest degree of fidelity as possible.

DEVELOPING A CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PLAN

A classroom management plan is where clear rules are set, class norms are developed, expectations are stated, and consequences are defined. The classroom management plan does not have to be lengthy, complex, or intricate. A simple set of rules or class norms and consequences hand-written on a piece of flip chart paper is all you need to create your plan. The classroom management plan, also referred to as a classroom management contract, is a contract you create with your students focusing on providing for their needs in the classroom and a commitment to help students learn without interference and disturbances. Once the classroom rules or norms are developed, the contract is presented to the class and is the document that defines the classroom norms. The contract should be followed at all times and requires teachers and facilitators to hold students and themselves accountable at all times. This applies to both the Youth Prevention Education teacher or facilitator or the classroom teacher. While we rely on the classroom teacher for handling most discipline issues, it is often our responsibility to keep students on task and deal with smaller classroom management issues.

It is important for students to know what is acceptable and unacceptable in the classroom as well as what the expectations are. By allowing students input on developing the classroom management plan, they are invested in following the rules, but should they break a rule, they know what the consequences are.

Some important points to keep in mind when creating a classroom management plan or classroom management contract with students:

- Involve students in all aspects of creating the classroom management plan.
- Create no more than five rules or class norms – Keep things as simple as possible. If you create too many rules students will feel overwhelmed by the classroom management plan. Look for rules that cover behaviors that could interfere with the learning and engagement of your students. Creating a classroom management plan should be a short, rather quick activity meant to set the tone for the rest of your time together. Always state rules or classroom norms positively and be as brief and to the point as possible. Rules that work well in most situations would be:
 1. Respect yourself, your classmates, and your teachers.
 2. Raise your hand before speaking or leaving your seat.
 3. Keep your hands, feet, and materials to yourself.
 4. Listen, follow directions, and ask questions when needed.
 5. Be positive.
- Work with the classroom teacher ahead of time to know what some appropriate consequences might be if a student breaks a rule. You don't want to create a rule that isn't enforceable or doesn't match the teacher's classroom management plan. Students often times come up with very harsh consequences, so having the conversation with the classroom teacher ahead of time might give you some ideas to suggest to students if needed. The classroom teacher may have some very valuable insight into what might help keep students on track or what is currently working well in the classroom. Our goal is to work with students to create consequences that can be carried out and offer

valuable life lessons. Here again, you want to keep the consequences short. Usually you can have a three step consequence plan allowing for a more severe consequence each time a rule is broken. As a rule of thumb it is always good to have students receive a warning the first time they break a rule. A warning works well as a first consequence because it doesn't take up a lot of class time, doesn't involve conflict, is stress-free for the teacher and student, and isn't personal. Even if students don't suggest a warning as a first time rule violation, the teacher should try to establish a warning as the first consequence.

- Block off a portion of the flip chart paper so students can sign on the sheet that includes the rules/classroom norms and consequences. Take the flip chart paper down after every lesson and post it up at the beginning of every lesson and in a brief overview at the beginning of each lesson review the rules.
- Remember to include both the class rules or class norms and the consequences. Neither listing the rules alone or the consequences alone does much to change the classroom environment. Students need to know what the rules are and be aware of what will happen when a rule is broken. By including the consequences on the flip chart it allows students to know what will happen if a rule is broken, and that the consequences are the same for everyone. It makes the rules predictable and your responses predictable, which can help establish trust in the classroom. Students don't have to wonder what will happen, they know what will happen and that it will be the same for all students, every day.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Proactive classroom management strategies focus on implementing strategies emphasizing how students should behave in the classroom, the expectations in the classroom, and how to make the classroom as structured and predictable as possible to avoid disruptive behaviors. Class-wide strategies are implemented with all students within the class and address the needs of most students in terms of behavior, while individualized strategies might be needed for a small number of students who will not respond appropriately to class-wide strategies.

Before providers begin implementing a Youth Prevention Education program, it is imperative that providers learn about existing classroom management strategies the classroom teacher is implementing. Often times providers can incorporate the classroom management strategies the classroom teacher is already implementing or the provider can build upon the already established classroom management strategies.

As discussed above, a classroom management plan will help a provider establish clear rules, set class norms, and define consequences, while classroom management strategies work to keep the students engaged, connected, and keep students on-task as much as possible and therefore less likely to be disruptive or exhibit challenging behaviors during class time.

While providers can often piggy-back on the classroom management strategies of the classroom teacher, many times providers will need to have options of additional classroom management strategies to ensure class time is as productive as possible and runs as smoothly as possible.

Whether implementing class-wide or individualized classroom management strategies the provider sets the stage by being on-time, prepared, organized, and able to move the lesson along at an appropriate pace.

Class-wide Strategies:

- **Create a classroom management plan** - Although creating a classroom management plan is a short activity it is crucial in establishing how the classroom will function. As mentioned above, the classroom management plan should be posted during every lesson, reviewed often, and referred to when challenging behaviors arise.
- **Understand the power of day 1** – Day 1 is the first day you are in the classroom with the students. Day 1 is the most important day you will spend with students because you set the tone for the classroom and the rules and class norms are established. Work to create a classroom that is warm, inviting, and inclusive. Show enthusiasm for the lessons you are teaching and show students you are excited about being able to spend time with them. We want students to leave the classroom after Day 1 and look forward to the next lesson and the time they will spend in the classroom while you are facilitating.
- **Access a seating chart ahead of time** – Young people want to be addressed by name. If at all possible access a seating chart ahead of time so you can make name tents for each student to grab on their way into class and take to their desks or arrange with the classroom teacher a time before your lesson starts for students to create their own name tents on a piece of paper. These name tents should be used each time you have class and will not only assist in you learning the students names, but will eliminate the need to reference a seating chart and take time and attention away from the students. The simple act of looking down at a seating chart and searching for a student’s name is plenty of time for students to start to disengage.
- **Greet students as they enter the classroom** – Even in the beginning when you aren’t certain of student’s names, it is important for students to feel a sense of belonging and to know you are excited about being at school and are happy they are a part of the class. Simple phrases like, “I am glad you are here today” or “welcome to class” can help students feel connected and engaged. Also, to show students you enjoyed your time with them and look forward to seeing them again, always say good bye and reference when you will see them again for the next lesson.
- **Create an agenda for each day** – Start each lesson on time and quickly review what is listed on the agenda for the lesson. Check off agenda items as they are completed to build on a sense of accomplishment and to help students know what is coming up next. This helps students understand there is a routine followed during your class time and a predictability of what is coming up next.
- **Be genuine and sincere with praise** – While praise is very important and is often times a great prompt to the class acknowledging appropriate behavior, empty praise or praising for small tasks or less than adequate work can actually cause students to disengage and lose interest in your feedback. Be thoughtful in what you say to students and work to find ways to offer genuine praise and feedback. Always try to focus genuine praise on the work and behavior of a student and not the student themselves.

- **Balance teaching and facilitating** – While maintaining fidelity to the curriculum, look for ways to balance teaching and facilitating. Teaching is typically the class listening to the information being shared by a teacher or facilitator, while facilitating involves sharing knowledge and including the audience in the lesson. Look for opportunities to have students actively respond and participate. Offer opportunities for students to read aloud, write on the board/smart board, answer questions out loud, and assist you during the lesson. Depending on the student’s learning style they may learn best when reading, listening, writing information down, or maybe even moving around the classroom a bit. While we can’t accommodate each student’s learning style each time, we can make an effort to allow students opportunities to actively respond.
- **Circulate the room** – Facilitators should circulate the room as a way to keep students engaged and attentive. Not only do students have to pay attention and follow where you are, but it allows you the opportunity to check to make sure students are on-task.
- **Find a seating arrangement conducive to learning** – While during some lesson activities you may have students working in groups with desks connected, typically when student’s desks are arranged in rows students tend to stay on-task, focus, listen, and complete more work. During activities promoting or encouraging student engagement a u-shape or circle might be effective, but overall other arrangements may help with managing disruptive behaviors. Check in with the classroom teacher ahead of time because the teacher may already have a seating assignment that works and has certain students in certain seats.

As a rule of thumb it is best to avoid any seating arrangements which cause your back to be to the class or even part of the classroom for any length of time. If there is the need to write materials on the board it is a good idea to delegate different students to write on the board for you while your facilitate class instead of turning around and writing on the board.

- **Be effective when giving instructions** – It is important when giving instructions to provide information in a way that is clear and concise. Once we have gained the student’s attention it is important to:
 1. Wait until students are seated and not moving around the room.
 2. Give one instruction at a time.
 3. Use a clear firm voice and repeat each instruction.
 4. Wait for student compliance.
 5. Provide an opportunity for students to acknowledge understanding of the instruction given. This can be by done asking for thumbs up or thumbs down and answering questions or concerns of the students with their thumbs down.
 6. If a class is struggling with following verbal directions you might want to write out ahead of time and post directions for an activity. Having a posted copy of the instructions allows students to refer to this information if they are confused or have questions or concerns.
- **Avoid answering too many questions and stalling the lesson** – Always have a way students can get questions answered, even when there isn’t time in class. You can provide a “parking lot” flip chart sheet that is posted in a certain location in the classroom during each lesson and post-it sheets with pens near the paper and students

can write questions and post them to the sheet to be answered next class period. Also a question box can be located in the classroom each class period and have index cards and pens so students can write and submit questions.

Finally, as a way to minimize interruptions and keep students and lessons on track, you can decrease pause time between student responses and move on to the next question or task.

- **Handle disagreements with respect** – Let students know throughout your lessons information may be presented that a student might disagree with. Create a classroom atmosphere where students know it is ok to disagree, but disagreements are always to be respectful.
- **Integrate students' interests when appropriate** – During activities, such as role plays, try to use language youth can connect with and names they connect with as part of their culture. It is important to remember the goals and messages of the role play must remain unchanged and prioritize curriculum fidelity.
- **Be willing to give a little to get a lot** – Some days students enter the classroom and you can tell the energy level is high and it is going to be an enormous challenge to keep students focused and on-task. Whether it's the weather, a school holiday or break is coming up, or a student has a birthday, offering a small incentive might be just the key to get students to tune in and be alert. Incentives don't have to cost money, but can offer students an opportunity to interact with each other and relax. You can tell students if they work hard, stay focused and on-task for the 45 minute lesson they can have the last 2-3 minutes of class to talk to each other, stand up, and use up some of their energy. While we don't want to give up our facilitation time, many times offering an incentive can help your facilitation time go smoothly and instead of dealing with constant disruptions, you can focus on the lesson and make the most of your time in the classroom.

RESPONDING TO CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

With the exception of encountering a student who is extremely belligerent or disruptive, most disruptions in the classroom will be mild and just disruptive enough to slow the lesson. Proactive class-wide strategies alone are rarely sufficient in dealing with all classroom behaviors. While the classroom teacher may know a little more about a student's situation, we typically come into the classroom as a guest and will not know or be aware of each student's skills or academic challenges. The classroom teacher will likely handle any major challenging behaviors from students, but often times the disruptive behavior can happen while we are facilitating a lesson, so being prepared and having some strategies to deal with challenging behavior can help us more effectively manage the classroom and keep the lesson on-track. Some common challenging behaviors in classrooms range from students wanting to dominate discussions, students who call out answers or don't wait to be called on, to the students who hum, click pens, and can't sit still. We might also encounter a student who asks too many questions, wants to know personal information about us, or who wants to debate any information presented. While all of these behaviors would be considered low level distractions

or disruptions, we know they can have a high impact on the classroom learning environment. Along with implementing class-wide strategies, facilitators can implement any of the strategies below to help deal with disruptive students and challenging behaviors.

- **Use proximity to stop disruptive behavior** – Place yourself in close proximity to the student and conduct a few minutes of the lesson standing by them. You don't need to be overly obvious about moving toward the student, but many times having you near will subdue the disruptive behavior.
- **Stop and wait** – On occasion you might need to simply stop the lesson, pause, make eye contact with the student and wait for the student to quiet down and focus. This can also cue the classroom teacher in on which student is being disruptive or that their assistance may be needed.
- **Location, location, location** – While many teachers have created elaborate seating charts to keep certain students away from each other or in the front of the room, if where the student is seated is causing some of the disruptive behavior, it might be worth consulting the classroom teacher about having the student moved to another seat. Often behaviors are not as disruptive to you or the class if the student can be seated in the back of the classroom and close to the classroom teacher. If you have an extremely disruptive student you might want to consider putting them in a seat closest to the classroom teacher's desk.
- **Use your voice** – Students often match the volume of the teacher's voice in the classroom. If you want to gain a student's attention or the attention of the class, instead of increasing the volume of your voice try decreasing your volume. It's not productive and effective to try and talk over a student or the side conversations of students. Silence can be very effective and sometimes it is very appropriate so students have to focus and really listen to hear you.
- **Stay cool** – Remember to stay calm and keep your composure when presented with challenging behaviors. You don't need to accept or tolerate the behavior, but you will lose credibility if you lower yourself to his/her level.

It is important to stay professional at all times and even when students are disruptive it is important to reach out to the classroom teacher for assistance, but to refrain from sharing frustrations, venting, and complaining.

If you encounter a student who was consistently disruptive during class you can use the following steps to try and work with the student to correct behavior:

1. Speak with the student after class. Never try to engage in a conversation about behavior during class or while other students are able to hear the conversation. Be as private as you can with the conversation, but have the discussion out in the open where other people are around, but not included in your conversation.
2. Speak only for yourself and don't speak for the classroom teacher or the other students in the class. Make the conversation very centered on just you and the student.
3. Try to understand and see things from the student's point of view.
4. Help the student understand your point of view, but understand many adolescents are not able to see beyond that moment or understand how their behavior can affect others.

5. While it is important to state what the disruptive behavior was, focus more on finding a solution so next class period the student knows how to handle the situation and knows what the expectation for behavior is.
6. In the end you want the discussion with the student to be short, focused, and solution orientated.

Lastly, persistent disruption by a student may ultimately mean the classroom teacher will have to remove the student from the room. While we value having each student in the classroom, at some point we must prioritize the needs of the class as a whole.

THOUGHTFUL TRANSITIONS

Transitions within the classroom are often times unavoidable, but a common time for student disruptions and behaviors. Students deal with transitions at the start of the lesson or class period, when topics are changed, at the start and end of lesson activities, group activities, and at the wrap-up and conclusion of a lesson or class period. Time spent dealing with disruptions and behavior problems during transitions takes away from valuable lesson time. Effective transitions help minimize disruptions and problem behaviors and maximize the time spent in an ideal learning environment. Effective transitions help make the chore of moving from one task to another a more predictable and manageable event. A student's ability to stay engaged, focused, and on-task depends largely on how efficiently and effortlessly the facilitator moves from one activity to the next. Below is a list of some common ways to help students as they transition into your classroom at the start of your class, during an activity, or leaving your classroom.

- Be on time and ready to start class on time. Nothing starts a class off in more chaos or confusion than when the teacher or facilitator is late or rushing in the door at the last minute. Give yourself enough time to arrive to the classroom early and get set up, post the classroom norms or contract, and set out your lesson plans so you can greet students as they enter the classroom.
- Be organized and prepared. Many of the model program lessons move quickly from activity to activity and if you aren't prepared and organized ahead of time, any time you take to look down at notes and review while class is going on is time for students to engage in disruptive behaviors. Try your best to keep students engaged at all times and leave little down time for students to have to entertain themselves or wait for you.
- Tell students how long they will have before class starts and how long they will have to complete a task. While students are working on a task give students a heads up and warning on how much longer they have to complete a task. It is hard for students to suddenly be done with a task or an activity, but if given notice that an activity will end in five minutes and then another two minute warning it allows students to prepare for the end of the activity and the transition ahead.
- Develop a routine with students at the start of class to get them on-task and focused. Many teachers create a short daily question students answer at the beginning of each class that allows students to express their opinion on a topic and relates to the day's lesson. You can create challenges with each question and limit the students to a 10

word answer or write down only five words that express how they feel about the topic. Students know to come in the room, grab the slip of paper from a designated spot in the classroom, sit down, write down their answer, and be prepared to hand the slip in shortly after the class time starts. This activity shouldn't take away from class time, but rather keeps the students calm, focused, and ready when it is time to start class.

- Teachers or facilitators should circulate the classroom when students are engaged in completing activities or working in groups. This allows you to see the progress students have made, gauge if less or more time is needed, and answer questions students might have.
- Along with the classroom management plan or contract many teachers or facilitators bring a visual, such as a stop light, to each class period. The first day of class the facilitator helps the class understand certain parts of the class lesson and activities will have a different level of classroom volume and motion. When the stop light is on red, everyone is working quietly at their own desk and classroom motion is at a minimum. When the stop light is on yellow, people may be up and getting around with permission and the classroom volume might be louder because their might be students in groups or working in pairs. When the stop light is on green the class might be engaged in a game or activity where the classroom volume is louder and the classroom is very active.

THE ROLE OF A LINKAGE AGREEMENT IN CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

A formalized linkage agreement or a memo of understanding (MOU) allows the provider, teacher, and school administration to define shared expectations and clarifies the role of the provider and classroom teacher.

A linkage agreement or MOU is especially helpful in defining who will be responsible for the management of classroom behavior, that the provider will lead all lessons, and that the classroom teacher will remain in the classroom while the provider is facilitating.

It is also valuable when negotiating a linkage agreement to include the need for your Youth Prevention Education program to be delivered in a classroom setting. Many times providers are so desperate to implement YPE in a school they are willing to take any space offered. It is hard to implement a classroom management plan and classroom management strategies in space students don't typically relate to an academic setting. The gym, art room, music room, or basement might not be optimal settings for teaching. Students don't just need chairs, they need desks and sitting on the floor can be distracting and challenging for students to complete assignments and activities. Advocate for a classroom setting where students can be comfortable, engaged, and on-task. Including the classroom setting in a linkage agreement helps ensure the school is invested in the success of your Youth Prevention Education program and achieving positive outcomes.

To avoid future problems and possible miscommunication, the more information included in the linkage agreement or MOU typically the fewer problems there are during the implementation phase of the YPE program.

Linkage agreements or MOU's should be updated at least yearly, or more often if there is a necessary change, including a provider staff change or school personnel change.

Lastly, when creating or renewing a linkage agreement or MOU it is important to make sure the program implementation is planned in accordance with best practices and adheres to the substance abuse prevention program standards.

COMMUNICATING WITH SCHOOLS AND KEY STAKEHOLDERS

It is important to prioritize proactive communication with the school and classroom teacher to clarify expectations. A formal linkage agreement or memo of understanding (MOU) plays a key role in clarifying expectations, but consider other ways and opportunities to check-in and discuss successes and challenges as often as possible.

Schools and teachers are partners in implementing Youth Prevention Education programs and as a way to get them fully invested in the success of the program we need to stay in constant communication with them.

RESOURCES AND WEBSITES

Listed below are resources and websites you can reference for further information on creating a classroom management plan, implementing classroom management strategies, and planning for thoughtful transitions. Click on the topic or resource you are interested in reading about.

[Video Playlist: 9 Strategies for Effective Classroom Management](#)

[The Critical Role of Classroom Management](#)

[The Why and How of Classroom Management](#)

[Tips Every Teacher Can Use](#)

[Inside Classroom Management: Ideas and Solutions](#)

[Classroom Management Strategies for High School Teachers](#)

[Classroom Management Tips for Guest Speakers](#)

[Creating Shared Classroom Rules Through a Classroom Contract \(for younger students\)](#)

[Transitions in the Classroom](#)

[101 Ways to Cope with Teaching Stress](#)

Resources Used to Develop Youth Prevention Education Resource Guide

- Ashley, O.S., & Chilcoat, D. (2014). *Classroom management*. Washington, DC: Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau.
- Resnick, M.D., Bearman, P.S., Blum, R.W., Bauman, K.E., Harris, K.M., Jones, J., Tabor, J., Beuhring, T., Sieving, R.E., Shaw, M., Ireland, M., Bearinger, L.H., Udry, J.R. (1997). Protecting adolescents from harm: Findings from the national longitudinal study on adolescent health. *Journal of the American Medical Association*.
- Classroom Management Strategies by TeacherVision
- Classroom Management Tips by TeachingChannel
- www.SAMHSA.gov



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