Stop Back-to-School Classroom Management Problems Before They Start: How to Have a Happier New School Year
Includes 2 Lessons and 2 Printable Posters

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The time to stop classroom management problems is Day 1, Week 1, Hour 1 of your new school year. Before you start the 2013-2014 school year, let me introduce you to some powerful School Skills Training classroom management strategies that can stop behavior problems before they start. These strategies deliver big results for a small investment of time. In as little as 30-60 minutes per day, you can pro-actively train your K-12 class members to become prepared, motivated students with the specific skills and positive attitudes they need to succeed in school.

Don’t start another school year attempting to provide academic instruction to untrained, unmotivated students. Instead, build a better new school year by first teaching everything students need to know to succeed in your classroom and in school.

Here is an example daily School Skills Training curriculum for the first three weeks of school. Since there are no one-size-fits-all children, the curriculum will vary dramatically from classroom to classroom. Each teacher creates a unique, tailored curriculum designed to precisely fit the specific needs of the incoming students. Recommended areas to cover are School, Coping and Social Skills. Note the special emphasis on building positive motivation and attitudes. The special attention is necessary because students’ motivation and attitude color everything-- for better or for worse:

Lesson 1: MOTIVATION and ATTITUDE-- Motivating Students to See the Value of School
Lesson 2: ATTENDANCE-- How to Wake Up on Time for School
Lesson 3: ATTENDANCE-- Do I Have to Come to School Every School Day?
Lesson 4: ATTENDANCE-- How to Ride the School Bus
Lesson 5: ATTENDANCE-- How to Enter the Classroom
Lesson 6: MOTIVATION and ATTITUDE -- Who Needs School?
Lesson 7: MOTIVATION and ATTITUDE -- Benefits of Diplomas, Consequences Dropouts Face
Lesson 8: SCHOOL SKILLS-- How to Talk to Teachers
Lesson 9: SCHOOL SKILLS-- How to Participate in Class Discussions
Lesson 10: SCHOOL SKILLS-- What to Say, What Never to Say in Class
Lesson 11: SCHOOL SKILLS-- Book, School Supplies and Desk Management
Lesson 12: COPING SKILLS-- Controlling Myself and My Temper
Lesson 13: SOCIAL SKILLS-- Understanding and Preventing Bullying
Lesson 14: SOCIAL SKILLS-- Personal Space and Distance
Lesson 15: COPING SKILLS-- Managing Frustration and Anger in School

To develop your own School Skills Curriculum, list all the School, Coping and Social Skills problems that you anticipate seeing from your new students. Prioritize the list so that any safety and attendance issues are addressed as soon as possible. Those items get special, early attention because safety is always a paramount concern, and, since absent students learn nothing, that issue deserves priority too.

Next, rank the remaining items in whatever order you feel is best for your specific classroom. There is no “right“ order. The rankings should be purely personal, based on what you need in your classroom in order to effectively teach. That means it’s completely acceptable to prioritize improper student dress over problems with mobile phone use.

Now that you have ordered the classroom management issues that you will likely face, find lessons to teach the skills, motivation and attitudes that your students will need all school year. To get you started, you will find two lessons with accompanying student worksheets here: https://www.youthchg.com/teacher-professional-development-resources/.

Even better, at that link, you’ll also find two printable school posters, one best used with older students, and one that will work for many grades. Poster #284, shown here, is one of the posters you will be able to print and post right away. This motivational poster for older students displays the cover of “Graduate Magazine.” It powerfully illustrates the benefits of getting a diploma and implicitly conveys the huge hazards of not graduating. Poster #54, a cute self-control poster, shown here, is also provided to you at the link listed above. Visuals like posters are fantastic 24/7 ways to continuously reinforce the messages you sent in your School Skills lessons.

The typical K-12 teacher loses nearly half of class instruction time to address and manage students’ behavior problems. When you begin your school year by training kids to acquire and use essential School Skills, many of the most common student behavior management problems can be avoided or significantly moderated. Many of the most chronic, time-consuming, resistant student behavioral issues are so much easier to tackle on Day 1 than on Day 91. Common student behavior problems that can be more effectively addressed at the start of the year include disrespect for the teacher, work refusal, defiance, negative attitudes, challenging the rules, talking during class, tardiness, interruptions, and having outbursts when frustrated. Once problems like these have had a significant starring role in the classroom, it can be an uphill battle to turnaround what has become an entrenched part of the culture. That is why tackling classroom management concerns before they start is slam-dunk easier than battling back after a history of problems.

Investing in School Skills Training has few downsides. Most children and teens can benefit from learning how to become prepared, motivated students. The training isn’t really taking away instruction time-- it will actually giving you back much of the time that would otherwise had been wasted on stopping problem behaviors.
If you find that you have become too strict or too focused on conduct, you can certainly ease up and no student will fight you on that. On the other hand, if 90 days into your school year, you realize that you’ve been losing significant time to behavior management battles, students will most certainly fight you every step of the way as you attempt to remedy the situation. That resistance is just one of the many significant downsides to not providing School Skills Training beginning Day 1.

Resolve to make your new school year a happier school year. Start off the new year by incorporating School Skills Training into your first days of school, and enjoy the classroom management benefits all school year long.

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