

**Positive Ways to Correct Behavior:  
How to Create a Positive Learning Environment**

1. Look at every occurrence of inappropriate behavior as a teaching opportunity, not as an opportunity for punishment.
2. Attend to four times more appropriate behaviors than inappropriate behaviors (4:1--positive:negative). For example, be sure to praise behavior that would be considered "expected" such as sitting, having a calm body, using words, initiating interaction, making appropriate choices.
3. If it's not hurting anyone or disrupting the classroom, it is usually okay to let it go. Pick your "battles." Choose the instances where a teaching opportunity is present and you are able to follow through. In addition, if the students are positively engaged to begin with, they are less likely to engage in inappropriate behaviors.
4. "Catch them being good." If you see a student behaving appropriately, praise them! Engage with them!
5. Consider your tone of voice during all interactions. There should be a difference between a demand tone and a praise tone. A demand tone should be of a lower pitch with minimal facial expression, and a praise tone should be paired with an animated expression and a higher pitched voice. Do not yell.
6. Though what you think of as punishment may sometimes feel like the best solution, it typically does not provide a long-term benefit or learning experience for a child. It may temporarily stop the behavior, but it is more important to teach the child what to do instead in those situations so they can receive reinforcement rather than punishment.
7. When your instinct tells you to say No, Stop, Don't do that, What's wrong with you, Why are you doing that, You're going to hurt yourself, That's not okay, or anything else that sounds like a reprimand, take a few seconds before you speak and rephrase your statement to be a direction of desired behavior that can then be reinforced.
8. Let's practice:
  - a. A student is climbing on a table and he does not typically have good balance. What could you say to correct this behavior?
  - b. A student who typically elopes out of the classroom is heading rapidly for the door. What could you say to correct this behavior?
  - c. A student is hitting another student to get something that the other student has. What can you ask this student to do?
  - d. A student is screaming because she wants you to go away. How can you positively correct this behavior?
  - e. You are trying to engage a student in a work session and he is fidgeting with the materials. What would you say to him?
  - f. Other examples?

9. Remember the more praise you provide, the more behavior will occur that merits praise! (Plus it feels good to praise people and be praised.)
10. Give the students the benefit of the doubt. Remember that appropriate behavior is a skill that needs teaching just like any other skill, and just because they are expected to do something (like follow rules) doesn't mean they don't need praise for doing them!