

# The Dos and Don'ts of Classroom Management: Your 25 Best Tips

from the Edutopia Community

# Introduction

Whether you're a new or experienced teacher, strategies for effective classroom management are vital to keeping your class running smoothly and creating a positive learning environment. In this guide you'll find the 25 best tips for classroom management contributed by the educators of Edutopia's community. Join us at [edutopia.org/community](https://edutopia.org/community).

# Be Picky

Rules & Behavior

Tip: Pick your rules wisely. More rules doesn't always equate to better behavior.

“An environment that is dictated by too many rules is rigid, cold and likely to create an atmosphere of rebellion...Rules and routines are an excellent way to communicate your behavioral expectations, but not the way to completely ‘manage’ your classroom.”

—Dr. Tracey Garrett, Professor of Teacher Education, NJ

# Take it Outside

Rules & Behavior

**Tip: Avoid confronting misbehaving students in front of their classmates.**

“Whenever I had confrontations in front of their peers, it often escalated...I began to ask the student to step out of the classroom to talk to me. I usually remained calm and reasoned, but firm in what behaviors I would and wouldn't accept. 90% of the time, we'd return to the classroom, no one would lose face, and the situation would be resolved.”

—Gary Latman, Retired High School English Teacher, Chicago, IL

# Choose Your Battles

Rules & Behavior

**Tip: Don't waste your energy reprimanding every small misbehavior.**

“Pick your battles when it comes to student behavior issues...we waste precious energy and create more distraction when we jump on every single thing students do. Decide what your bottom line issues are...then be prepared to enforce them consistently every day of the year.”

—Renee/TeachMoore, English Teacher, MS

# Stay Cool

Rules & Behavior

## Tip: Keep calm and carry on.

“When every other element is out of your control, you can still manage your reaction.”

—*Instructional Specialist, AutismClassroom.com*

“Try not to yell. Once you yell, they have won. I get a much better response from students when I simply count backwards or just look at them.”

—*Margie, 3rd Grade Teacher, Rochester, NY*

# Plan Ahead

*Rules & Behavior*

**Tip: Always have a plan in mind for handling misbehavior.**

“Always having a plan. From small to large infractions, being consistent with your plan is imperative. The students will always want to test you, but if your reaction is always the same, the game is over quickly.”

—*Jo Ann Brass*

# Connect & Reconnect

*Building Relationships*

**Tip: Greet your students at the door.**

“Greet every child at the door first thing in the morning or at the beginning of class to help reconnect and set the tone for your day or class.”

—Janofmi, MEA National Board Candidate Support Provider, MI



# Wear Their Shoes

*Building Relationships*

Tip: Try to look at things from your students' perspective and be empathetic.

“I strongly, firmly believe that if teachers do not wear our students' shoes when necessary, we are not doing our job well. This is especially true when dealing with teenagers...we have to be extremely careful about what we say and how we say what we need to.”

—*Roselink, ESL Teacher, Madrid, Spain*

# Get to Know Them

*Building Relationships*

**Tip: Build rapport with your students and show them you care.**

“Spend time participating in their extracurricular activities, attend sporting events, concerts, etc. to support them. [This] has definitely paid off because if I need to have a talk with a student in terms of their academics or behavior, I am able to accomplish so much more because I have developed a trusting and honest relationship with them.”

—Emily

# Slay the Dragon

*Building Relationships*

**Tip: Confront issues head-on to find a solution.**

“I noticed that students that are difficult are usually masking something else. I find out what it is by ‘Slaying the dragon.’ I try to become a friend to the student. I go to their games. Talk to them at lunch etc. I notice how they react to the learning process. If a child has difficulty reading or math we privately work on those issues before or after school.”

–*Tanya Shank*

# No Hard Feelings

*Building Relationships*

**Tip: Don't take it personally when a student lashes out. Treat each day as an opportunity to start fresh.**

“I started my teaching career in an alternative school in a rough part of town. My mentor told me “Don't take it personally. The students want you to hurt as much as they are hurting.” I have never forgotten that and each day, the slate is wiped clean and I harbor no grudges towards my students.”

—*Lisa Brown*

# At-Home Connections

Communication

**Tip: Don't be afraid to reach out to parents.**

“They really are our allies. For every two phone calls that you have to make about a problem that you are dealing with in class, make one positive one to a parent just to say something nice about their child.”

—Elizabeth Ramos, High School Teacher, Chatsworth, CA

# Curious Q's

Communication

**Tip: Ask students questions to help make them feel comfortable.**

“...be friendly with students and make them comfortable. Communication is really very important to make them feel free with you. Engage them through discussions and asking them several questions, as this will boost up their confidence and interest level.”

—Jessica, Math Teacher & Tutor at [1to1tutor.org](http://1to1tutor.org)

# Great Expectations

*Expectations*

**Tip: Make your expectations clear from the get-go.**

“Take the time to teach expectations, and reteach them as needed. This may feel like you are wasting time that could be spent on curriculum, but when you add up the time it would take to do a menial task throughout your semester or year, you are actually adding time spent on instruction.”

—*Carey Rebecca, High School A.P English Teacher*

# Mutual Respect

*Expectations*

**Tip: Embrace the “Golden Rule” in your class(es).**

“I only have one rule: Treat me with the same respect and dignity that you want me to treat you. I always remind them when something is not right: How would you like it if I did that to you? This diffuses so many situations and the other children also look to the offender and ask the same question.”

—Lorraine



# Consistency is Key

*Expectations*

**Tip: Be consistent in expectations and discipline.**

“Consistent execution of the rules helps to maintain the respect fostered in the classroom. Once these rules are in place, I feel the most vital piece of classroom management is developing relationships of trust and equality. If this is the ultimate goal of a student-teacher relationship, real learning can take place.”

—*Jennifer Hendren*

# Transitions

*Class Instruction*

**Tip: Learn to manage transitions smoothly to limit disruption.**

“...learn how to manage transitions! Moving from the restroom back to the classroom, from a group discussion to independent work time, from reading to math...Each transition has to be broken down into steps and explicitly taught and monitored.”

—Tom Stacho, Trainer/Consultant at [BehaviorInSchools.com](http://BehaviorInSchools.com)

# Switch It Up

*Class Instruction*

**Tip: Don't get stuck in a singular mode of teaching.**

“Frequently vary the delivery of your instruction. Often times we as teachers get caught up in doing things one way. We are as much creatures of habit as anyone. When things become boring and too predictable, discipline problems are undoubtedly going to become an issue.”

—Joseph D

# Keep 'em Busy

*Class Instruction*

**Tip: Get students engaged and involved in the lesson to prevent disruptions.**

“If you have an engaging lesson, students are less likely to misbehave...There were times when my lessons were more listening to me talk, and other times when my lessons were full-blown hands-on. There were much fewer issues with student behavior when the students were so engaged!”

—*Simon*

# Tighten It Up

*Class Instruction*

**Tip: Tighten up time management and stay organized.**

“...a lot of misbehavior in my class was the result of me neglecting key aspects of classroom management such as organization and time management. Once I tightened things up in those areas, teaching and learning time increased dramatically. And best of all, classroom culture improved too.”

—David Ginsburg, *Instructional & Leadership Coach, Philadelphia, PA*

# Crystal Clear

Class Instruction

**Tip: Be transparent in your objectives.**

“To catch student attention, motivate them, and keep them focused the best practice is transparency! What are we learning today? Why are we learning that? What will we be able to do at the end of the lesson? How it will help you to improve?”

—*Clemence Rincé-Bonsergent, 6-12 French Teacher, Telangana, India*

# Team Effort

Collaboration

**Tip: Incentivize students to work together using rewards.**

“...we quietly observe throughout the day adding & removing tally marks on the whiteboard for behavior by tables. The table with the most tally marks at the end of the week wins a prize.

We take away tally marks from tables when they are too chatty or acting inappropriately. This helps a group effort and lets the students work as a team for positive behavior. They are accountable to each other, too.”

—*Kimberly R, 1st Grade Teacher, GA*

# Lean on Me

Collaboration

## Tip: Don't be afraid to ask others for help!

“...the biggest mistake [she] saw teachers make was not asking for help, or asking questions. They would struggle alone, not wanting to look like they didn't know what they were doing...You can't figure it out alone, and you need to find mentors and peers to help you along the way.”

—Alice Mercer, Elementary Computer Lab Teacher, Sacramento, CA



# Mood is Contagious

*Attitude*

**Tip: Leave your baggage at the door.**

“I believe 100% that the teacher’s attitude rubs off on their students each day. If you come into the classroom in the morning crabby...your students are going to pick up on it right away. As an educator, if we show our students we don’t want to be at school, then they lose interest a lot faster than they would on a day that we are excited and happy about being there.”

—Lindsay, 1st Grade Teacher

# Show That You Care

Attitude

**Tip: Show your students that you care about their success.**

“[This] has stuck with me for years: ‘*They need to know that you care before they care what you know.*’ Building a positive connection with kids and taking responsibility for how we choose to act in the classroom (bored, tired, engaged, excited, etc.) goes a long way in determining how successful (and enjoyable) the experience is.”

—Bob Sullo, Author & Educational Consultant, Sandwich, MA

# Additional Resources

## More tips from Edutopia:

- Download Edutopia's classroom guide: "[Ten Tips for Classroom Management](#)" (also available in Spanish)
- Edutopia's [Student Engagement Resource Roundup](#) includes articles, videos, links, and other resources that offer strategies and advice for keeping students engaged in learning.
- Rebecca Alber's [Five Quick Classroom Management Tips for Novice Teachers](#)
- Check out Edutopia Pinterest page for [Classroom Management Tips Board](#)

Special thanks go to the educators  
who contributed to this guide.

For more classroom-management tips and tactics, visit [edutopia.org](https://edutopia.org).