



Raising Voices, One Story at a Time.

Classroom and Behavior Management

The Young Storytellers Way!

We believe that every behavior exhibits a need.

- For example, someone who is talking a lot may feel the need to feel heard and seen.
 - Someone who is withdrawn or quiet may need more trust in the group or might be feeling over stimulated and need a chance to ground.
 - A person who is distracted may need an opportunity to take in their surroundings when they spend most of their day focusing on and thinking about school.
 - Someone moving around a lot or talking loudly might need to expend some of their energy.
- It is not our role to identify or address every need, but this framework and acknowledgement allows us to **approach with empathy** when there is behavior that needs to be addressed.



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Address behavior by establishing trust and care.

- If you feel comfortable, **we recommend redirecting disruptive behavior towards positive behavior or speaking with a student one-on-one.** We don't want to shame them for their behavior, but approach them with curiosity and neutral language.
 - Redirecting behavior might sound like:
 - “Hey, I appreciate how excited you are to talk today, can you read what we have so far out loud for the group?”
 - “I notice you're ready to move today, why don't you act out what the character is doing in the scene?”
 - When speaking one-on-one, you might want to check in with them about how they're doing outside of this session. That might sound like:
 - “Hey, I notice you don't seem to like anyone's ideas today, is there anything that's stressing you out about this session or at school?”
 - “I appreciate your eagerness to share and it makes me see you as a leader in this group. I was wondering if you'd be able to help me come up with some questions to get others to share their ideas like you?”

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Your head mentor, partner teacher, and school liaison are your best support system.

- If you don't feel comfortable addressing behavior one-on-one, or if you think a behavior warrants a more serious response, talk to your head mentor or partner teacher. They want to and are trained to assist, but they don't know what they don't know so they need your help to keep them updated on what's going on with the students you're working with.
- You can make agreements with your groups and take this philosophy as you think about behavior management, AND you can call in the leaders to help you because you're not alone in this.
- The schools and teachers have their own best practices, we respect that we are in their space and follow their lead around how they manage the whole class. They manage discipline.

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Our purpose is to provide a structured, stimulating, and comfortable environment for them to creatively explore.

- The head mentor or partner teacher goes through the agenda and explains all the activities to guide us through very carefully thought out lesson plans.
- Mentors are there to guide students through a process that may help them express themselves. We do that through creating a story, but if they're really not into it, it's okay to give them some space. We want them to feel comfortable throughout the process, even if it means the final product looks different.
- HMs and Middle and High School partner teachers also send out information to mentors before each session about what is going to happen during the session with the intention that mentors read it and go into the sessions prepared to work with their students, which helps foster this comfortable environment.

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We are not here to provide punishments, threaten, or control behavior – we don't have that power.

- We are often not full, active members of the school community and are guests in their space, so we leave discipline to those who are in this community like the teachers and administration.
- **So when we talk about consequences, we view them as restorative, rather than punitive.**
 - We come up with agreements together in the first session.
 - We might say “if you're late, you have to do a silly dance” so the classroom is still a fun space where we can experience things together.
 - If it's too chaotic to focus, the consequence is we're going to take a breath together to ground ourselves.
 - If participation is low, the consequence might be that we do a shakeout to warm our bodies up. If someone breaks an agreement, the consequence may be that it's named and we review the agreements.

All of this is in service of fostering a positive, consistent environment.