

Discipline Is the Absolute Hardest Part of Teaching: Thoughts on Why I Use Positive Classroom Discipline

Excerpts from postings by Jacque Verrall, National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) of kindergarten from Edmonds, Washington on teachers.net Kindergarten Chatboard

...Stickers and other extrinsic rewards are short-term solutions that seem to work quickly, but offer no long-term learning... when the sticker is removed there is no motivation to continue the desired behavior. **What we want is to create long-term solutions, motivating students to do their best, because it's the right thing to do, not because they will get something for it...**

It takes longer to use intrinsic motivation, but it is what offers long-term results with students striving to do and be their best because it is the right thing to do:

Intrinsically motivating children begins by us looking for ways to individualize positive praise (no more "good job"). ...recognizing the power our positive words have on children (or adults). **It requires forming solid, powerful relationships with children/parents** and really using observational skills to hone in on what they do.

- "Wow, how did you learn to make those "B's" so well?"
- "Your picture reminds me of a storm, look how wonderful those two colors blend together making it look like a dark, storm cloud."
- "Brady, thank you for picking up that trash, it wasn't even yours, but you saw it and picked it up - you really know how to take good care of our room."

It's really difficult for a child to misbehave for someone that he/she really feels loves or appreciates him/her. Many misbehaviors are simply because a child has not been taught appropriate ways to get their needs met.

Single out children doing the right thing - "Everyone, put your eyes on John, I know he's ready to go to Library because he has his eyes on me, his hands are down at his side and most importantly, his mouth is quiet." Choose a few others who are modeling what you want to see too. **Do not go anywhere until they are all perfectly quiet.**

Be calm no matter what. Be matter-of-fact. Be consistent. Don't give too many chances. I give one warning, they don't need more than that. Try to make consequences be logical ones...

Be understanding and convey that you really are on their side. You understand how they might want to _____, but it wouldn't be safe, kind, honest, (whatever) and at school this is inappropriate. **Love and logic works very well... especially being empathetic while still enforcing rules.**

"...Where did we ever get the crazy idea that in order to make children do better, first we have to make them feel worse? Think of the last time you felt humiliated or treated unfairly. Did you feel like cooperating or doing better?" Excerpt from *Positive Discipline*, by Jane Nelsen.

See also *Teaching with Love and Logic*, by Jim Fay and David Funk.

Jacque Verrall is featured on the literacy award site tab on nellieedge.com. We read everything she writes!