

Communication Skills for Building the Encouraging Classroom

Gartrell, D. (2004). *The Power of Guidance*. Clifton Park, NY: Delmar Learning.

<p>Guidelines Not Rules Purpose: set standards for the classroom that are written and taught in a positive way</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rather than threaten exclusion, guidelines teach what children can do to fit into and participate as a member of the group. 2. Guidelines set the tone for the encouraging classroom.
<p>Encouragement Not Praise Purpose: to demonstrate that all children are valued uniquely but equally as contributing members of the classroom; authentically acknowledge ongoing progress when children most need kind words</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The key is to pick out details and compliment them either publicly or privately. 2. Can be group encouragement or individual encouragement statements. 3. Statements given are authentic and focused on the child/children at hand; they are not used to coerce the behavior of others, e.g., "I like the way Sally is sitting" to get other children to do the same.
<p>Listening to Life Experiences Purpose: to reduce stress levels child brings to classroom that may prevent productive behavior</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Greet children individually to assess comfort and stress levels. 2. Make time to listen to children in need as soon as possible after arrival. 3. Use reflective listening to affirm child's thoughts and feelings.
<p>Contact Talks Purpose: to enable child and teacher to get to know each other beyond class routines</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use chart of names to assure contact talks with all in classroom on regular basis. 2. Establish physical proximity in a relaxed manner to ensure talk occurs. 3. Follow child's lead; discuss what is interesting to child to talk about.

<p>Compliment Sandwiches Purpose: to guide individuals to productive behavior by giving encouragement for effort and progress already evident and directing to further progress</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start transaction with one (better, two) positive comments about effort or progress the child has shown. 2. Offer one specific suggestion or request for continued progress for each set of compliments given. 3. End transaction again with one or two compliments.
<p>Friendly Humor Purpose: to experience and share enjoyable moments with children and fellow adults</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seek to enjoy the unexpected in words, behaviors, and situations. 2. Share delightful moments with children adults in friendly ways that laugh “with” and not “at.”
<p>Friendly Touch Purpose: to provide reassurance and affirmation to children in ways that words cannot</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss, set, know, and follow policies in the school or program regarding the use of touch with children. 2. Discuss and reach understandings about touch with parents. 3. Respect individual children’s needs for touch and for personal space.