

PROVEN STRATEGIES CALMING THE CHAOS
IN THE GYM AND THE PLAYGROUND

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START THE YEAR ON THE RIGHT FOOT

Class management is key, and it is completely in your hands to set the tone for behavior in your class. No matter how many students or what population I guarantee you will have a well-behaved class as long as you remember one thing **CONSISTENCY**.

Be very clear what your class expectations are and stick to them. Once you let something slide you are back to square one. All kids, at any age, will always test you and see what they can get away with. All it takes is one or two examples of following through with your consequence and the rest of the students will respect your class management expectations.

The foundation of my class management is "**MUSIC**" **when the music is playing the students move and when the music stops the students freeze**. Yes, it is as simple as that and it **WORKS**. Remember, I have taught classes as large as 180 and I have taught all grades general education as well as special ed.

Using music as a signal and management tool works every time.

Teaching and reinforcing this rule is easy and can be incorporated in all activities. Have the students move as you have directed and instruct the students that they are to freeze when the music stops. You can use any music for this and you control when they are to stop.

My second step of class management is **PERSONAL SPACE & GENERAL SPACE**. They are the first two terms I teach in physical education and I will use these terms almost every day for the entire year. Yes, I teach this with kinders. However, I have discovered that I need to review or even "teach" these concepts at the secondary level. It depends on the experience of my students (what type of physical education program did they come from before me). **ALSO...**It is imperative that students know the boundaries for each activity for safety and success.

PERSONAL SPACE: A simple way to explain this is to tell your students to extend their arms and that they now represent a big bubble and that they need to stay away from others, so their bubble won't pop and they won't pop anyone else's. (Silly...but they get it and give me a smile).

GENERAL SPACE: The "playing" area for an activity. This could be a variety of areas on the playground: basketball court, grass area, entire blacktop, big circle, handball court, etc. Teaching in CA, I have not had access to a gym at every school, so I utilize lines on the blacktop or brought out the cones to create my boundaries. Of course, inside, you have 4 walls and lines on the gym floor. Keep in mind however, to have successful activities

you need to not only use the boundaries, but you must make sure the students understand "General Space". (YES, another basic concept that I have needed to include at the secondary level.)

***ACTIVITY (Simple.... great warm-up to get students moving 1-2 minutes...AND reinforce boundaries etc.)**

Start simple with very clear instructions. "Staying in personal space move in the general space of the basketball court." If a student steps out of the basketball court, have everyone freeze and make it a teaching moment being inside general space and outside. Yes, you will go over this again and again, repetition is key, but it is such an important concept that is necessary for all other activities. Vary this activity by changing the way the students are to move: slow, fast, high, low, sideways, backwards, skip, walk, gallop etc. Vary the general space as well. Use the space I indicated earlier but also make it challenging. I have had an entire class move inside the "key" on a basketball court and one square of a four-square court. By varying this activity as I have described the students will stay interested as you repeat this activity over and over...but only 1-2 minutes max.

NEXT STEP of my class management strategies is **ROUTINE**

Starting with DAY 1 I set a class routine. Once again **CONSISTENCY** is key to success on this as well. I first decide where I will have my warm-up area and use poly spots to help the students space themselves out. With a few exceptions I will always start my lesson in the same area and with two warm-up songs; one song to get them moving and focused and then one that

they will jog for the duration of the song. I will vary the songs, but this is how I start every lesson. With this routine, no time is wasted, and the students will soon be on autopilot for the warm-up. When you have the students engaged, you have less management issues.

The key is creating a routine and schedule....and stick with it. 5 minutes to dress.... must be in place for start of warm-up by a set time or in my classes when the music starts. I know life happens but, 99% of the time I do start on time.... I am aware I am setting the example to my students that we start on time. In my classes, if a student was not ready when my warm-up music starts then they are considered tardy.

TAKING ROLL. It can be done many ways and it does depend on your setting and class size. I have had small classes and it has been easy for me to take roll as the worm up is happening. I have had student leaders take roll of their groups, I also have numbered my students (1-180) and they stand on a spot and instead of calling out names, I would jot down the empty number spot.

I do recommend whatever method you choose is one that takes minimal time and can be done during a warm-up activity. I am not in favor of having the students sit and wait to be quiet to take roll. Time is wasted and frankly the kids want to move, they just came from sitting in a classroom. I have found doing a "fun" instant activity for warm-up motivates even the unenthusiastic student.

ADDITIONAL CLASS MANAGEMENT TIPS

NUMBER your students.... The easiest method for class management and grouping...

(1-5) (2 find 6) (odds evens) (1-10 11-20 21-30 etc.

COLOR GROUPS

Equipment comes in colors and in most cases the RAINBOW colors.

In addition to numbering my students I give them a color. I will set up equipment in by colors and quickly assign students to stations...RED go RED. (NO, I do not kids pick the color they want...they get what they get.)

GREAT APP for grouping **TEAM SHAKE** worth the 99 cents!

You can put in your student's names per class...OR just #'s. (This what I do.) Then you select how many teams you will like....and **SHAKE** your phone. In a second you have random groups selected.

Class Management not only for YOU but also your SUB.....Assign jobs to your students. Yes, these positions can be rotated throughout the year and I do recommend that everyone has a job at least once in the school year. It does teach responsibility BUT also can make your life easier and your class can be on auto-pilot for a SUB.

EXAMPLES OF CLASS MANAGEMENT POSITIONS:

Class Monitors (Help take roll)

Locker Room (Report that all students are out of locker room)

Warm-Up Leaders

Equipment Managers (Help Organize and Set-Up)

TECH HELP (kids often know more than the teacher)

Teacher Assistant...used as needed...KEY helper for the SUB

I also have created positions for team/group members. I will rotate students through these positions as well throughout the year. Assigning roles improves time management and teaches responsibilities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION SUPPORT STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

SAFETY

The most basic responsibility of a teacher and aides for students to be safe and create an environment to learn.

Provide active rather than passive supervision.

- Proximity-noting the distance that you are from the students/activity.
- Scanning-looking at the entire area regularly.
- Positioning-placing yourself so that you can see everyone and everything.
- Always have your eyes facing the sun.
- Eliminate long lines or waiting time.
- Speak loud enough for all students to hear.

PROFESSIONALISM

STUDENTS LEARN BY EXAMPLE....

- Be on Time....and in place when the class begins
- Help with set up of day's equipment and make sure you know the day's lesson.
- Provide Support as needed...as teacher is instructing or speaking to the students you need to roam the area and address disruptive behavior.

SUPERVISION requires full attention at all times.

Minimize conversations with students and focused on the physical education environment.

****Breaks/lunch are provided and the only time you can leave the class.**

PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEAM

YES...you are a team member to create a positive learning environment for ALL students. You are to provide support to the teacher providing class management as needed. If you see an issue step up and handle it...NO do not assume someone else will take care of it.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Whether your class is large or small, with little ones, middle, or high school, you must have consequences in place. Two strategies I have used successfully with all my classes and populations are **PAT TIME** and **THINK WALK**.

PAT TIME (Preferred Activity Time) ALL GRADES

PAT TIME is awarded at the end of the month and it is time the students earn by behaving well....and poor behavior will result in taking time away.

Start at the beginning of the month with 10 minutes. Explain to the students that at the end of the month they will get to do an activity of their choice for 10 minutes. **HOWEVER**, they can earn more minutes by behaving well **OR** lose time if they do not. So how do you determine the time? By actually timing them; for example, you blow your whistle to have your students freeze and time them to see how long it takes them to freeze. (1 Minute, 30 seconds, 2 minutes) ...then you subtract that time from the original 10 minutes. (Best to have a small white board so the students can see the time total.) So now, let's say they took 2 minutes to settle down, they are down to 8-minute PAT for the end of the month. But, it is not all about taking time away, **YES**, they can earn time for positive behavior and it is up to you what you want to award. (2 minutes or 5 if they are amazing....) then you add the minutes to your chart. At the end of the month, no matter how much time they have earned you are to do PAT time.... **YES**, even if it is only 1 minute. That is a great lesson in itself....and keep it to the 1 minute.... maybe just enough time to pull out the parachute...then put it away. Next month I am sure their behavior will improve, and they will earn more time.

THINK WALK (6-8th GRADES)

I came up with strategy when I was teaching the large classes of 180. Yes, there were students that did not listen and simply were off task but I did not just want to sit them down. (It was physical education time and they needed to move.) The Think Walk was the simple solution, effective and easy to implement. If and when a student needed to be pulled from an activity I would send them on a "WALK...to THINK" about why they were

pulled from the activity. It was helpful to have a track (or line painted on the perimeter of the playground for the student to follow). Once they walked around the track once they were to come back to me and tell me why they were pulled from the activity. If they said "I don't know" then I would tell them to "Think and Walk some more". Once they were able to verbalize what they did they could return to the activity. I want to emphasize I did not tell them to "RUN A LAP" This was not to punish with exercise...I focused on the "THINK" and I wanted them to acknowledge their behavior. I have used this for years and many schools have implemented it for recess.... instead of taking recess away they walk around the perimeter of the playground and "THINK" about what they did that resulted in taking their choice of activity away rather than taking recess away completely and making them sit. We all know the kids that are in trouble are usually the ones that need to move the most.

CALMING THE CHAOS.....KEYS TO SUCCESS

#1 ORGANIZATION

Class Set up/Space/Grouping Etc.

#2 CONSISTENCY

Routine.... STICK TO IT!

#3 COMMUNICATION

Set Expectations and Post for Students

Send letters home with expectations and grading policy.

Create a webpage or add to the school webpage.

Create a power point to show at the beginning of the year.

GREAT EXAMPLE:

Locker Room Wrong vs Right

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otjVdyI9PQU&t=12s>

EXAMPLE OF A PARENT LETTER/NO DRESSING OUT

Dear Parent/Guardian

Your child will be participating in Physical Education and Health three days a week. This is required curriculum in your child's educational program. Any medical conditions that may affect your child's participation must be documented with a doctor's note.

The Physical Education grade will be based on daily participation and effort, unit tests, and monthly exercise logs. (An example of the log is attached.) Each student will be required to participate in various activities on the grass and blacktop. (You may supply your child with a towel to sit on.) It is necessary for your child to wear appropriate rubber-soled shoes on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Boots, sandals, and any shoe with a heel are unacceptable due to safety. (Please visit the school website for photos of appropriate footwear.)

My goal is to provide a safe environment to educate your child about physical fitness, basic skills, and team activities. If you have any questions or concerns, I can be reached through the school extension #158. Also, I will occasionally give homework. My homework hotline is extension #159. I will update it every Monday and post a weekly class schedule on the outside bulletin board on the playground. I am looking forward to an exciting year.

Please detach the bottom portion, sign, and return to me.

Sincerely,
Carrie Flint/PE

Student's Name

Grade_____

Parent/Guardian Signature-_____

Medical Concerns Y/N

If yes,
please explain_____

*We will be on the grass and use balloons. Is your child allergic to?

Grass Y/N

Latex Y/N

Asthma Y/N Do you have an inhaler at school? Y/N

CALMING the CHAOS on the PLAYGROUND & RECESS

Not all kids look forward to recess. For some, it's a stressful and negative experience that they would rather avoid. But recess is a valuable and necessary component of a child's education. It is the only time of day that a child has free choice of activity and a chance to choose who they want to play with. This is essential for the social development of a child but also allows for a child to discover enjoyment in physical activity.

As educators, it is not only important to recognize the value and benefits of recess but also realize the need to step in and help create a positive recess experience for all students. Recess can be fun and free of conflicts and bullying. However, it does not happen magically. It requires effort and teamwork.

The first step is to identify what the typical issues are that happen on a playground. We may think we know, but Peaceful Playgrounds actually did the research and has identified the 5 most common issues that occur on every playground to some degree.

The Peaceful Playgrounds **CREED**

1. **C**hildren Lacked Problem Solving Skills
2. **R**ules (Too many variations for each game)
3. **E**quipment (not enough/broken/lost)
4. **E**xpectations
5. **D**esigns (Not enough for kids to do)

Now that the issues are identified, you can apply strategies that will minimize these issues and create a positive environment and fun recess for all.

1. CHILDREN LACK PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

- Help children solve problems on their own. Focus on Play rather than arguing.
- Make sure you have plenty of choices of activities and available equipment so they can go to another game rather than be forced to stay at the one and only Four Square game that has the one and only playground ball.
- Teach the students ROCK /PAPER/ SCISSORS...yes it is that simple...IT WORKS!

Helpful Tips: Everyone must do it the same way! Rock/Paper/ Scissors Go...123 Go etc. **CONSISTENCY** is key. One time not 2 out of 3 AND do not allow for creativity (No Bombs, explosions, etc.)

1. RULES

- One set of rules for every game and make sure they are written down, not in someone's head. Rules need to be public information and everyone needs to have access to the rules.
- **NO DO-OVERS**...yes...this alone will make a huge difference on your playground. You have to be black or white...no grey! The kids will get it because very quickly they will discover the benefit of **NO DO-OVERS**. The lines move fast and they are back in the games really quickly.
 - Finally, take the time to make sure students know and understand the rules and procedures of your playground. Implement FREEZE at the bell. For safety purposes more than anything else, having the students freeze at the end of recess allows you to take control of the transition of coming on and off of the playground.

3. EQUIPMENT

- You must provide students with equipment. You must offer a wide variety of equipment to appeal to all the interests of students. Yes, many students do love soccer but not everyone. Your goal is to get

- everyone active and to do so you need to have equipment that students who want to play individually or just with a partner or small group. Kids need more than playground balls; hula-hoops, beanbags, and jump ropes are a must.
- You **MUST** take the time to not only set up an equipment check out system but you must teach the students the procedure. Simply putting the equipment in a cart and rolling it out and assuming the students will return the equipment at the end of recess is **NOT** a system.
- Take the time to bring out the label maker and organize your cart. Create homes for the various types of equipment so it will be very easy for the students to know where to put the equipment away rather than just throwing everything in a "Trash Can". I guarantee you that at the bottom of that trash can you will find broken equipment and popped balls. Taking care of the equipment starts with the adults setting the example.

4. EXPECTATIONS:

The number one necessity to create a fun and positive recess for all is to have everyone on board (administration, teachers, students & parents). You may be the most positive and committed PE/classroom teacher to make recess better but very simply it can not be done alone. Everyone must be on board to be consistent with the rules and procedures and to support one another. Even if the classroom teachers do not do recess duty they do effect what happens on they playground. Very innocently they could share how they played Four Square when they were little, if it is not the rule that is being taught on the playground, that teacher has caused major chaos. "Well my teacher said this...my teacher said that".

5. DESIGNS

You have to keep the kids busy and to do that you need to help them "play". Just telling a student to "play" is not enough. You often get the blank look response "Play What?" Sound familiar? You can teach children games but after 10 days they will forget them. By painting your playground with many designs and with a variety of activities children will be active. When you have plenty of equipment and choices of games the children are spread out on the playground and the lines are shorter. When the lines are shorter the students are playing more rather than being frustrated by standing and waiting for a turn. You need to not only have a wide variety of games but they need to be age appropriate.

Recess should be fun for all not stressful. It should be that welcomed break in the day not the dreaded part of the day. What happens on the playground does carry over into the classroom.....with a little effort you can make it a positive experience for your students.

References:

Melinda Bossenmeyer, Ed. D. Peaceful Playgrounds
www.peacefulplaygrounds.com

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