

Fire drills

Follow your school's policy for fire drills, but prepare your students for what they must do and where they should go in case of an emergency. Periodically walk through these procedures to instill them in students should such an emergency occur. Always keep a class roster handy to help you account for all students during drills and emergencies. Place this roster in an obvious place, such as by the door.

Materials management

Established procedures for distributing, collecting, and storing instructional materials allow students to complete these tasks easily and efficiently.

Other non-instructional tasks

Set procedures so that students can help you take attendance, collect permission slips, do participation counts, and keep the classroom neat.

Restroom and water fountain breaks

What procedure will work best for your classroom—all students taking a break at one time or individually leaving the room as needed? If you allow students to leave the room as needed, how will they obtain permission? Some teachers set up a hand signal that students use for permission to leave the room without interrupting the whole class. Other teachers post a sign-out sheet to avoid interruptions and to document the frequency of these breaks.

Transitions

Help students transition smoothly to the next lesson or activity by organizing instructional materials and instructions in ways that allow students to get started on their own. Listing necessary materials on the daily schedule is one method to achieve this direction.



5 simple motions

Each of the following procedures has a corresponding hand motion that I use to signal the desired behavior. Signals let me avoid interrupting instruction or pointing out a particular student. The kinesthetic reminder reinforces the expectation. I hang a poster of these procedures accompanied by pictures of students doing the corresponding motions. These procedures work well because students have been reminded verbally, visually, and kinesthetically. Eventually, a verbal reminder becomes unnecessary, and students use the signals to politely remind one another.

- 1. Follow directions.** Extend your pointer finger straight up into the air and make a circular motion.
- 2. Listen.** Show two fingers, then make an L shape with your thumb and pointer finger, and put it up to your ear.
- 3. Raise your hand.** Show three fingers and raise your hand above your head.
- 4. Keep your hands and feet to yourself.** Show four fingers, shake hands, point to feet, and cross arms.
- 5. Never hurt anyone on the inside or the outside.** Show five fingers and then shake your head while pointing to your heart and out toward the audience.

– Erika Lee, Kindergarten Teacher, Aurora Public Schools, Aurora, Colorado

Project-Based Learning

Using the constructivist approach for instruction changes your role and the classroom environment itself. You are not so much an instructor as a facilitator helping students develop their ideas and gather materials necessary to complete their projects. Expect noise and movement in a project-based learning environment as students accomplish common goals together. Curb noise levels with strategies found in **Noise vs. Noisy**.

Proximity Control

Placing easily distracted students near you helps them work more productively. That proximity also allows you to monitor individual progress. When circulating about the classroom, be sure to make frequent stops by those students who are easily sidetracked or needy. Often a

- teacher's physical presence prevents students from misbehaving. If an incident arises, you can readily handle it privately.



Quick-and-Easy Attention Grabbers

With a room full of students, obtaining everyone's attention on short notice can be difficult. That's why teachers use quick attention grabbers to quiet students immediately.

- To ensure the success of your attention grabber, teach your students its meaning and the expected response to the given signal. See **5 simple motions** under **Procedures Pave the Way** for one teacher's silent attention grabbers.



Your attention please

- Turn off the lights.
- Clap a rhythm.
- Hold one hand in the air.
- Ring a bell.
- Say "Freeze."
- Develop an acronym or phrase that means to stop and listen. The Wongs (2004) suggested SALAME: Stop And Look At ME.
- Play a short musical passage. Sound three notes or make a stroke across a xylophone. See **Music to Manage By** for more ideas about using music as a management tool.
- Say "All eyes on me."
- Blow a horn or whistle, especially in physical education settings.



Reflection

See **Take Time to . . .**