

Dearest daughter,

In just a few days, you will be one step closer to starting your teaching career. Student teaching is the final teacher education preparation and the launch to your time in the classroom. How exciting for you!

Are you ready? I am sure that you are anxious to try many of the lesson plans and classroom ideas you've developed or read about—as you should be. Bring energy and enthusiasm into your efforts and in getting to know the students, and remember that you are a guest in their class. I know that you will do your best. That is why I want to pass along some suggestions gleaned from my many years of running a classroom, instructing students, collaborating with colleagues, working with administrators, and guiding student educators.

How to prepare for your first day of student teaching:

- dress professionally (a vest, polo shirt, matching slacks, comfortable shoes);
- have paper and pencil with you in a planner;
- leave valuables locked in your car and out of sight;
- pack your lunch and any snacks you need for the day;
- take a high-protein snack or fruit break; and
- read the book I gave you: *The Essential 55*, by Ron Clark

When you arrive:

SMILE and LISTEN

Observe the teacher and do what she does. Before the students come in, ask where she would like you to sit. This area will be your desk and planning space. When she is sitting, you also sit down. If she is standing, observe where she is standing and what she is doing and saying. Take notes in your planner.

Do nothing unless directed to do something. Always ask first; let your lead teacher be your guide.

Try to be the quiet one in the back of the room, so as not to disturb the rhythm of the classroom that was set last September. The rules, expected behaviors, and consequences were set up the first day of school. Note this in your planner and look for a posted list of classroom rules.

In your planner:

- Copy exactly the set-up of the whole room.
- Copy every wall and bulletin board.
- Copy her plan book exactly (you can buy a blank one at an office supply store).
- Practice, practice, practice getting a format for your plan book.

- Ask if you may make a copy of the plans that have worked for your teacher.
- Ask your questions before students arrive and after they leave. If it cannot wait, very quietly walk up to the teacher and ask in a whisper.
- Note the answers to your questions in your planner.

LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN

- Always say a student's name when talking to him or her.
- Ask the teacher for a class list, and begin to learn the names of the students.
- Say **please** and **thank you** to everyone.
- Observe how the teacher says hello to students when they come in the door each day.
- Treat the students {always} with respect, and dignity, no matter what THEY do.
- When the day ends, say goodbye to the students, along with something positive.
- Stay calm always, no matter what happens.

I am proud of you.

Love,
Mom

About Marie

Marie joined the Pi chapter at Eastern Michigan University in 1971, where she also earned her Master's in special education in 1976. After teaching 25 years in Michigan, Marie moved to Florida and has taught there 10 years. Marie has been teaching long enough to have students in her classroom twice—as third-graders and again as her student teachers. Her professional experience includes instructing classes for gifted students, as well as developing and teaching online courses.