Positive Discipline Techniques

1. Front-load expectations
   a. Before you start an activity, go over what you will be doing, about how long it will take, what the students are learning, and what the expectations are. “We are going to be reading a story together for the next 20 minutes and will practice creating a summary after we finish reading. When you are not reading aloud, it is your opportunity to practice your listening skills. Reading isn’t just about sounding out words correctly, it’s about getting meaning from the story, so make sure you are quietly listening. If you have a question, raise your hand.” When you front-load expectations student know what they need to do to be successful.
   b. For K-5 students, you can ask students to show you (not tell you) what listening looks like and then compliment the whole group on how what a good job they did showing you what listening should look like (once they are all actually doing it). It allows you to show a positive example instead of pointing out negative examples.

2. Take Away Distractions
   a. To prevent students from distracting each other with erasers, pencils, water bottles etc. only let students have what they need for the activity. If they aren’t writing, then you can tell your students to put their pencils and erasers away. If they are going to write, you can say we aren’t going to touch our pencils or erasers until we start answering the questions, so students know your expectations.
   b. When students are reading aloud, make sure you have a system. For example, say we are going around the circle starting with Andrea, so students know the order. Otherwise they will ask why Andrea got to read and not them, which can distract the group.

3. Focus on the positive role models in the group
   a. If students are interrupting each other, instead of correcting the negative behavior, you can point out a student who is doing a good job listening. “I love how Monica is doing such a good job listening.” Or “I love how Carlos is waiting until he is called on before sharing his idea/asking his question.”
   b. If you have corrected a student, asking them to sit still or stop interrupting, be sure to acknowledge publicly when the student is doing a good job. “I love how Jason is doing such a good job on his homework.” So the student isn’t only getting attention for negative behavior.
   c. To encourage role models, say you are going to call on the person who is quietly raising their hand and then tell the group how difficult it is to pick someone because everyone is doing such a great job.
   d. Always tell your students what a great answer they gave or thank them for participating, to support the students who are engaged. It can be upsetting to answer a question publicly and not get acknowledged for your thinking.
Homework Tips!

1. **Start by asking the students to read the directions aloud and check for understanding.**
   Sometimes students don’t want to get started on their homework because they don’t understand what to do, which can be frustrating. Asking students to read the directions out loud gives you chance to make sure they understand the directions, which can save you a lot of time when trying to figure out what is not understood.

2. **Model a simpler version of the problem and apply it to the student’s life.**
   If your student seems frustrated or disengaged, it may be because he/she is having trouble with the concept. It can help to do an easier version of the problem (and not actually do the homework problem for the student). If they are unscrambling words for instance, you can model how to complete the activity by scrambling the student’s name and the unscrambling it together. If the student is doing subtraction over multiple zero’s, you may want to create and solve a problem with one zero first to help your student understand the basic concept. It is ALWAYS helpful to relate the homework to something relevant in their lives, for instance, turning the subtraction problem into something related to buying a toy/game at the store.

3. **Explain strategies out loud.** If the student isn’t sure about the definition of a word, show the student how to look it up (dictionary or computer), how to skip the word and see if they can figure out the meaning based on the context clues in the sentence, and show the student how to sound out the word – all of these strategies will help the student have their own tools to problem-solve when you are not there to help.

For math or reading questions, even when your student gets the right answer, ask them to explain their thinking. If you are asking questions in a group setting, ask another student to explain why the answer is right before moving on. This can help expose areas that your student may be unsure of and, in general, is better for their cognitive development because it is a more challenging approach.

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Reading Strategies

**Reading for Meaning!**
Struggling readers are so often asked to work on fluency (being able to read words accurately) that sometimes our students forget how important it is to also understand what you read. Always emphasize that we read to learn or to follow a story. Books can be a like a movie and your imagination makes the pictures.

**What does a good reader do?**
Make sure your students know that good readers think of questions before and while they read, predict based on the text what will happen next, and infer (go beyond what is exactly said) to make meaning. These are all things we naturally do as readers and can help your students improve! You can demonstrate this by:

1. **Read the title and quickly look at the pictures in the book (if there are pictures),** Ask the student to guess what the book is about based on the title/pictures. Make sure they are predicting based on evidence.

2. **Ask relevant questions while you are reading,** you don’t have to wait until the end to ask questions because we, as readers, are constantly thinking while we read.

3. **If the student doesn’t understand something or can’t answer the question,** go back to the book and look for clues. Let the student know that the answers are always in the book!