

Common Behavior Scenarios

Children Lie Down on Carpet

- If it is quite a few children, you may want to make a general reminder about the behavior expected. This can be done in a fun way, such as: "I see a number of slouchers and loungers on the carpet today. Get up, sleepy heads! Let's see if everyone can sit straight up by the time I count to "3".
- If a child/children persist in behavior, catch the child's eye and give the look. Make a sit up gesture with your hand and when child obeys, give them a mouthed "thank you."
- If the child still persists in lying down, then it is time for a child to be taken aside for a private conversation by one of the supporting teachers, while the lead teacher keeps teaching. Based on the conversation, the child can either be allowed another chance on the carpet, or asked to sit in one of the chairs along the side.
- All of these steps, except the first general reminder, are best done by a teacher other than the teacher leading the teaching, if at all possible. This allows the rest of the teaching time to continue and is less embarrassing for the child.
- If behavior persists after this, pull the child aside again and speak to them. If behavior is slow to turn, but is turning, try to continue to work with the child. Notice and praise even small changes in behavior. If behavior cannot be turned at all, then you will need to call the hall monitor and ask for the parents to pick up the child from class. You will at very least need to talk to the parents when they come to pick up their child at the end of the session.

Children keep whispering to each other

- If it is quite a few children, you may want to make a general reminder about the behavior expected. This can be done in a light way, such as: "I hear a lot of extra noise as I am trying to talk. Let's see if we can be quiet enough to hear the children playing in the floor below us, the wind blowing in the trees, etc." "When everyone is quiet, say, "Thank you, children, for being so quiet. Now, let's continue."
- If a child/children persist in behavior, catch the child's eye and give the look. Make a "shh" gesture with your hand and when child obeys, give them a mouthed "thank you."
- If the child still persists in talking, then it is time for a child to be taken aside for a private conversation by one of the supporting teachers, while the lead teacher keeps teaching. Based on the conversation, the child can either be allowed another chance back with the group but seated next to a teacher and away from the other friends; be asked to sit in one of the chairs along the side, separated from the friend(s) they have been talking to; or, be given a 5 minute "time out" before returning to class (and then seat them next to a teacher and away from friends).
- If behavior persists after this, pull the child aside again and speak to them. If behavior is slow to turn, but is turning, try to continue to work with the child. Notice and praise even small changes in behavior. If behavior cannot be turned at all, then you will need to call the hall monitor and ask for the parents to pick up the child from class. You will at very least need to talk to the parents when they come to pick up their child at the end of the session.
- All of these steps, except the first general reminder, are best done by a teacher other than the teacher leading teaching, if possible. This allows the rest of the teaching time to continue and is less embarrassing for the child.

Children do not want to fully participate

- This is a tricky one! Often this behavior is seen in the oldest children who are being too big to do the activity. The trouble is that their indifference quickly spreads to other children.
- If it is tiredness and an infrequent behavior, then don't worry about it. You may try to re-engage the child by asking them a pointed question or a suggestion that helps draw them back into the activity. You can ask them to help you by holding a sign or some other way.
- If this appears to be a pattern rather than just a one-off occurrence, then it may be time to speak to the child about it in a private conversation and find out what is behind their behavior. Their answer will make a difference in how you respond to the situation. If they are feeling "too big," you may want to give them a way to assist you in leading the group. Or, you may want to talk to the parents: it may be time to encourage the child to sit in the service. This is not an infrequent occurrence with the older children.
- Visitors often do not feel as comfortable to participate with a new group of children. Help them feel at ease. Do not be surprised if they do not participate as fully as the other children. As long as they do not disrupt your class, allow them to watch quietly.

Children keep blurting out answers or comments without raising hand and being called on

- Make a general reminder of behavior expected. Say something like, "I hear voices, but I'm only calling on people whose hands are raised and are waiting quietly to be called on."
- Often times this behavior shows up in excited children who still need practice in raising their hands and waiting. Sometimes, however, it is done in defiance.
- If a child/children persist in behavior, catch the child's eye and give the look. Point to your hand and mouth "Raise your hand" to the child. If they respond with a raised hand, mouth "thank you."
- If the child still persists in blurting out, position an assisting teacher near the child, who can give them gentle, quiet reminders. If you have no assistant available, such as in Small Group Time, ask the child to come sit next to you. This allows you to quietly prompt the child with less disruption to the class.
- If the behavior still persists, then it is time for a child to be taken aside for a private conversation, preferably by an assisting teacher while the lead teacher keeps teaching. Based on the conversation, the child can either be asked to have a time out for 5 minutes or so; or, allowed back in the teaching time, but seated next to a teacher.
- Unless you think this behavior is coming from defiance, show the utmost patience and encouragement. You may find it helpful to speak to the parents about the behavior, if it continues as a long-standing difficulty. It will be good information for them to know and they may have good advice for you.
- If behavior persists after this, pull the child aside again and speak to them. If behavior is slow to turn, but is turning, try to continue to work with the child. Notice and praise even small changes in behavior. If behavior cannot be turned at all, then you will need to call the hall monitor and ask for the parents to pick up the child from class. You will at very least need to talk to the parents when they come to pick up their child at the end of the session.

Children blurt out inappropriate comments

- Most of the time, the children are blurting out answers related to your question or story. Sometimes, though, they are inappropriate “wise cracks” or “complaints.” These comments come from a very different issue than the simple need to learn to raise one’s hand.
- Respond to the child’s wise crack comment make before the group something like this: “Charlie, we all like to laugh, don’t we? And we want to have fun. But it is never good to make fun of someone else (if the wise crack made fun of someone else) or, but as much as I hope you have fun in Praise Factory, I want you to learn. This is our teaching time. If you have a good comment, answer or question to contribute, I am happy to take it. But please keep any other remarks to yourself. Thank you.” If another child has been hurt by the child’s comment, it will be good for an assisting teacher to take the two children aside and help them ask forgiveness and reconcile.
- Respond to a child’s vocal complaint (before the group) something like this: “Charlie, we all like to have fun and always do just what we want to do. I certainly hope that I hope you have fun in Praise Factory, but I want you to learn even more than have fun. This is our teaching time. If you have a good comment, answer or question to contribute, I am happy to take it. But please keep any other remarks to yourself. Thank you.”
- If behavior persists after this, pull the child aside again and speak to them. If behavior is slow to turn, but is turning, try to continue to work with the child. Notice and praise even small changes in behavior. If behavior cannot be turned at all, then you will need to call the hall monitor and ask for the parents to pick up the child from class. You will at very least need to talk to the parents when they come to pick up their child at the end of the session.

Child raises hand to answer question and instead relates a totally unrelated incident

- Children get so excited about things! Perhaps their bodies are in your class, but it was their birthday yesterday, and they are dying for an opportunity to tell about the new bike they were given....right in the middle of your serious question about why Jesus died on the cross! This is a part of childhood that is both endearing and sometimes frustrating!
- As the child starts telling the group their unrelated exciting news, try to break in as soon as you can and say something like, “Charlie, it sounds like you had some really exciting things happen yesterday. I really want to hear them, but could we wait until the break (or some other time you can think of in the near future), when I can hear all about them? Thanks.” Then continue with your teaching.
- If child persists in telling the story, have an assistant teacher take the child to the side and speak to them in a private conversation.

Children push each other

- Depending on where this happens, this can be very, very dangerous! All too many times, it happens on the top row of the risers or on the stairs. Even if it happens on the floor, though, it can be a small action that leads to a serious injury.
- Immediately take aside the children involved in the incident and have a private conversation with them. Help them reconcile any issue between them. Help them to understand what serious consequence could have occurred from the push. This is best done by asking the child something like, “Charlie, if Ryan had fallen down when you pushed him, what might have happened? Help the child/ren understand the consequences that could have happened from their behavior. Warn

the child/ren that this behavior cannot be tolerated at all and that their parents will be called if it happens again.

- If the behavior occurred on the risers, have the child/ren sit on the floor or on a chair near a teacher for the remainder of the activity. At very least, you want to separate the children.
- If the behavior occurs again during the same session, call the hall monitor to send for the parents.
- While the taking aside of the children is best done by a teacher other than the teacher leading the teaching, it is such a potentially dangerous action, that it is worth making a point of this conduct with the whole class.