

How to Parent Challenged Students



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It is the dead of winter and students are locked up in classrooms with limited time to play outside due to unrelenting wind, cold, rain, or snow. Several students are recovering from viruses and flu. Many survive boredom by spending relentless hours playing computer games and visiting with their classmates online. Teachers are challenged with students suffering from cabin fever and mild winter depression.

Effective Classroom Strategies for Home Use

Here are 10 effective classroom management strategies that teachers use to calm students. These strategies are also effective for parents to use with their children at home.

Create a quiet space for children that is away from

distractions and provides a nurturing environment. My classroom quiet space includes large soft huggable stuffed animals that children can lay on and read mediative books to self-regulate when overwhelmed with challenging situations.

Provide an assortment of fidget toys that may include squish and squeeze toys, rainbow relief sensory viewers, puzzle cubes, and fidget toys. These toys help students reduce their anxiety, relax, self-regulate, and concentrate.

Teach students slogans and cues to help them refocus and relax when learning difficult lessons.

Encourage students to breathe deeply and slowly exhale five times when feeling over-whelmed.

Integrate brain breaks throughout the day that may include dancing and singing with a video song, exercising, playing Simon Says with various movements, and participating in a daily run in favorable weather.

Have students participate in meditation and yoga activities before tests, after lunch time recess, and before large assemblies.

Transition from one activity to another with fun brain breaks.

Reward students working extra hard with stickers and small incentive rewards.

Reward the class with points that are gained from focused learning and successful completion of assignments. A total of 50 points earned can be rewarded with special activities including pajama day, pizza party, popsicle treats, and technology day.

Reward the class on Fridays for a successful and

productive week with 30 minutes of free play at the end of school day.

Emergency Survival Strategies

Some days are excessively difficult for struggling students. These 10 strategies can help teachers and parents reset a challenging day into a calmer day:

Have a staff member escort a student to a neutral area outside of the classroom for a time-out or for added time spent outdoors when weather permits.

Send the student to the nurse's station or to the front office when the student is so overwhelmed with disturbing behaviors that may hurt themselves or emotionally traumatize other students.

Conference with parents on a regular basis to ensure the parents are aware of their child's challenged behaviors and work as a team to solve classroom misbehaviors.

Invite the student's parent to volunteer in the classroom to help calm the student.

Partner with the parent to seek outside professional help for severely troubled students.

Model strategies that parents can use to help calm their child at home.

Encourage parents to practice regularly scheduled and relaxing bedtime preparation activities with their child that ensure sufficient sleep.

Encourage parents to prepare nutritional snacks and lunches that their child can easily eat at school.

Make sure the student drinks sufficient amounts of water daily and uses the bathroom regularly.

Enlist the assistance of the school nurse, counselor, and administrative staff when necessary.

When all else fails, the school staff will meet with parents to create a student success plan to monitor behaviors and ensure the student is receiving adequate support at home with partnership support at the school site.

Much success as you navigate the winter and spring quarters with your child in partnership with the classroom teacher.