

Behavior Crisis Management Tool #13

Attention Seeking Students

Purpose

The purpose of this issue of the Classroom Management Series is to explain how to short circuit a student's need for inappropriate attention.

Examples

John is a student who gets very little attention or validation at home which has created feelings of insignificance and insecurity. As a result, he constantly seeks the attention of the teacher at inappropriate moments.

Mary is a girl who feels out of control, and as a result, needs to constantly be in control by clinging to the teacher during class time.

Jose is a boy who feels that if he is not noticed, he will feel alone and isolated. He feels unable to relate to his peers so he uses the teacher's time to “connect”. However, the teacher has lost her patience with him because he doesn't listen.

What May Not Work

What may not work in these cases is to constantly "reject", reason or ignore the behaviors of these students. Since all behavior is a message, one must go beyond the behavior to try and understand what the student is trying to communicate. In these cases, as it will be in other similar cases, the student is seeking attention and recognition. While there is nothing wrong with these needs, it is the choice of fulfilling these needs that is creating the problem, not the needs themselves. As a result, the student is the one determining when he/she wants to have his/her needs met, which will often be at inappropriate times.

Try This

Since children who need attention will seek attention, the trick here is to change the control from the child to the teacher. In this way, the timing of the attention is in the hands of the teacher and can be done at appropriate times. What we suggest is that you go over to the child when he/she is not expecting attention as often as possible and either compliment, see how he/she is doing, make a positive observation, ask about something he/she mentioned that was going on in his/her

Classroom Management Series IV – Part 13

life, or ask him/her to do a job for you. This consistent action should alleviate the need for seeking out attention at inappropriate times.

Be aware however, that the child may not believe you will continue to do this so it may take several attempts before they calm down and see that they are getting what they need without "asking inappropriately " for it.

[To top](#)