

## Early Childhood Behavior Management: Rule Reminders

Est. Time: 15–20 Minutes

### Objective

Understand several strategies that early childhood educators or providers can use to remind young children about rules, and identify situations in which they would use these strategies.

### DEC Recommended Practices

This activity addresses the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Recommended Practices topic areas outlined below. (DEC is a division of the Council for Exceptional Children).

#### Environment

**E1.** Practitioners provide services and supports in natural and inclusive environments during daily routines and activities to promote the child’s access to and participation in learning experiences.

#### Instruction

**INS4.** Practitioners plan for and provide the level of support, accommodations, and adaptations needed for the child to access, participate, and learn within and across activities and routines.

**INS5.** Practitioners embed instruction within and across routines, activities, and environments to provide contextually relevant learning opportunities.

### Overview

If children are to be successful in the learning environment, they must be able to apply classroom rules in the context of classroom activities and routines. Early childhood educators can use three key strategies to encourage and remind children to follow the rules.

- 1. Connect children’s behavior to the rules:** Help a child understand the relationship between his or her behavior and the rule by clearly linking the two.

Example: “Daphne, I like the way you are following the rule. You used a gentle touch to get Finn’s attention.”

- 2. Provide precorrections:** Remind a child of appropriate behavior before the child can make an error.

Example: “We are going outside. Remember, feet-first down the slide.”

- 3. Reference the rules when challenging behavior occurs:** When a child is having trouble following a rule, simply remind him or her of the rule.

Example: If Caleb is in the art center with friends and refuses to share supplies, the teacher can say, “Caleb, remember to share materials with friends.”

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### Activity

Read each vignette below. For each of them:

1. Decide which of the three strategies to use to remind children about the rules. Explain why you chose this strategy.
2. Write down what you might say to the child or children. Refer to the classroom rules below when writing your response.



**Vignette 1:** You are on the playground with your preschool class. You bring out the equipment, including a ball with a cartoon character on it. Adelaide, one of your children, has a strong preference for the cartoon character and doesn't like it when other children use the ball. You notice Tomás pick up the ball and begin to play with it.

**Vignette 2:** Anjette and Olivia are sitting beside one another, putting together puzzles. Anjette has Down syndrome and has difficulty with fine motor skills. Olivia notices that Anjette is struggling with her puzzle and reaches over to do it for her. Anjette shoves Olivia's hand away and starts yelling at her.

**Vignette 3:** Elliott and Maribel are working together on a block tower. Their tower is very tall and extends out of the block area into a common area. They are excited to show it to you. Elliott, using a loud, excited voice, screams across the room, "Teacher, we made the tower really, really high! Come see!"

**Vignette 4:** When it is nearing snack time, you tell the children to clean up their centers and wash their hands. Joshua, who has a language delay and often has a hard time following directions with multiple steps, immediately puts away his art materials and washes his hands.

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### References

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- Stormont, M., Lewis, T. J., & Beckner, R. (2005). Positive behavior support systems: Applying key features in preschool settings. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 37*(6), 42–49.

### Additional Resources

The National Center for Pyramid Model Interventions (NCPMI)  
<https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/>

The National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI) assists state departments of education “in their implementation of sustainable systems for the implementation of the Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children (Pyramid Model) within early intervention and early education programs.” Visitors will find information on the Pyramid Model and PBIS, evidence-based practices, and technical training and assistance opportunities, among much more.