



## Checklist for Teachers: Creating a Student-Friendly Environment

### ***Classroom Environment and Layout:***

	Is the daily schedule posted in a spot clearly visible to all students? Include all parts of the daily routine and not just topics or assignments.
	Are visual reminders changes in routine color-highlighted?
	If students are non-verbal, do you use pictorial representations of the schedule?
	Do you have a system for checking off each item on the schedule as it's completed?
	Use of color-coded bins for notebooks, texts, and student work of the same content.
	Consistent places that materials are kept
	Individual student mailboxes
	Does each student have a copy of their own schedule on their desk?
	Count-down clocks
	Are there visual cues posted for upcoming intermediate deadlines where all students can see them?
	Have you arranged to seat students who need frequent refocusing closer to you and next to a student who's a good role model?
	Have you insured that students who have visuomotor integration problems are seated so that they can look directly at the blackboard or your presentation area?
	Have you set up different spots in your room where students can go to work if they need to avoid too much visual or auditory stimulation? Have you created areas in your room that are shielded and cozy, e.g., a piece of carpeting with bookcases around it?
	Do you cluster your students' desks, and if so, have you made provision for students who tic and who don't want to be "on display" or who can't handle the close proximity and need more space?

	Have you allowed sufficient pathways and clear areas in the room so that students can get from their desk to yours without coming into close contact with other students?
	Computer or word-processing center, and music or multimedia center
<b>Transitions:</b>	
	Do you have meetings to point out changes in the weekly routine and enter them on a wipe-off board?
	Have you directly taught the students how to make various types of transitions using the "Say, show, check" approach?
	Do you have a routine or system for cueing transitions? Your routine should have both visual and auditory cues.
	Do you have a routine or system if there's an unexpected change in routine (such as a fire drill)?
	Do you use repetitions and rituals to foster greater ease of transitions? Have you tried to speed up transitions (if needed) by using techniques such as "beat the clock" or "fade to black?"
	When there's a change in routine and the student needs to hurry, did you remember to give them added adult support and a whispered cue such as "Joey, can you help me get the other kids out of here quickly by getting on line and setting a good example?"
	Have you provided cognitive (and even humor cues for some things) to help the student remember the sequence?
	Some students will benefit greatly by having a larger table or a second desk to work at. The second desk gives them a change in environment, and may help them leave the previous task "behind" so that they can start the new assignment.
<b>Organizational Skills:</b>	
	Directly teach all students required but "hidden" skills such as chunking larger assignments into smaller, intermediate tasks and deadlines.
	Have a daily routine for when homework assignments are recorded and for when books and materials are packed -- and show that on the visual cues for daily routine.
	Have a daily routine for turning in homework and notes from parents.
	Have a visual organizer that allows sufficient space for large, sloppy handwriting and that enables the student to look ahead.
	For younger students, you may wish to have a homework buddy system in place for the class so that they check each other's recording of assignments; make it part of the daily routine.
	Have a buddy system in place for the class so that they check and help each other pack up necessary papers and materials; make it part of the daily routine.

	Have a system in place that all students routinely and immediately identify each piece of paper as either class work or homework and date due.
	Have a color-coding system in place for prioritizing papers or for different topics/subjects; coordinate that color-coding system with the bins/baskets you use in the classroom to turn in work.
	Have a system in place that all students routinely highlight important instructions on handouts. Have them also color highlight operations symbols on all math worksheets.
	Have a weekly routine for cleaning out desks.
	Have a weekly routine for cleaning out folders and book bags.
	Have a weekly routine for cleaning out lockers.
	Have all students bring in an extra supply of pens, pencils, tissues, or whatever they tend to lose or use up most frequently. Schedule a date on which they all check their "stash" and write notes to replenish. Follow up to see that they have.
	Use of task cards, to do lists, and checklists on desks. Teach students to check off each element of an activity as it is completed.
<b>Prosocial Skills:</b>	
	Use lavish praise for desirable behavior. Tape record yourself for one full day or score: how many times do you give the class compliments as opposed to corrections or reprimands?
	Use private signals to cue behavior -- no "public hangings."
	Do you have some "graceful exit" systems in place?
	For students who need permission to leave the room as needed, do they have their own permanent pass so that they don't disrupt the class?
	Preview upcoming events with students and discuss expectations and plans. Role play how they might handle situations, using the POSE technique.
	Use "instant replay" to teach appropriate responses and/or to reinforce desirable behavior.
	Have the class develop a team sense of capitalizing on each other's strengths while working around weaknesses or symptoms.
	Have classroom/curricular units devoted to embracing diversity.
	Have classroom/curricular units devoted to conflict resolution skills and appropriate verbal communications -- rehearse these skills and role play.
	Model ignoring minor "infractions" and directly teach students to do the same.
	Teach self-advocacy to all students.

	Model and teach respect for individual "boundaries."
	Have one set of rules for the classroom that can work for all students; have the rules allow for accommodations so that students feel that they are all held to the same standard ("Each of us gets what s/he needs and is expected to do what s/he is capable of.")
	Have every student in the class have some assigned task or responsibility as part of the community.
	Have some group or class-based rewards and teach the students how they can encourage and assist each other in reaching those goals.
	Use proactive rather than reactive discipline, and remember that "discipline" means "training" and not "punishment."
	Teach the students how to show you that they're listening to you.
<b><i>Materials and Presentations:</i></b>	
	Do worksheets and student planners allow sufficient space for large, sloppy handwriting?
	For math worksheets, are there vertical guidelines for lining up columns of numbers or graph boxes to facilitate alignment for students with sloppy handwriting or visuospatial problems?
	Are instructions color-highlighted? If not, teach the students to highlight instructions. Review instructions and check for understanding.
	Doing math? Take a moment and have all the students color highlight the operation symbols in each problem.
	For multi-step projects, introduce one step or concept at a time, and check for understanding.
	Provide study guides, outlines, and copies of any overheads.
	Doing a multi-step or big project? Show students a sample of what completed project should look like. Organize your presentations so that they work for both part-to-whole and whole-to-part learners.
	Use as many modalities as possible. If the student's attention drifts, will they have other cues to help them find out what they missed? Plan each lesson as if you have at least one blind student and one deaf student in the class.
	Have visual cue strips on the student's desk for sequential tasks (such as editing strips).
	Teach cognitive cues and humor cues for sequential tasks, as well as providing visual cues. Teach students to develop their own mnemonics and cues.
	Allocation of sufficient time for instructions, repetition of instructions, and individual student assistance
	Explicit identification of goals and subgoals

	Check for attention and comprehension
	Frequent monitoring of student's work pace and work product. Teach students to monitor their pace using count-down clock.
	Immediate feedback on performance, including reinforcement for both effort and productivity.
<b><i>Managing Time:</i></b>	
	Use direction instruction to teach them to estimate time needed
	Use direction instruction to teach them to allow extra time
	Use direction instruction to teach them to keep track of time (count-down clock or timer)
	Use direction instruction to teach them to monitor their pace
	Use direction instruction to teach them to make a quick and quiet transition
	Use direction instruction to teach them to chunk work into intermediate deadlines and to enter intermediate deadlines in their planner