

Teasing, Tattling, Defiance & More

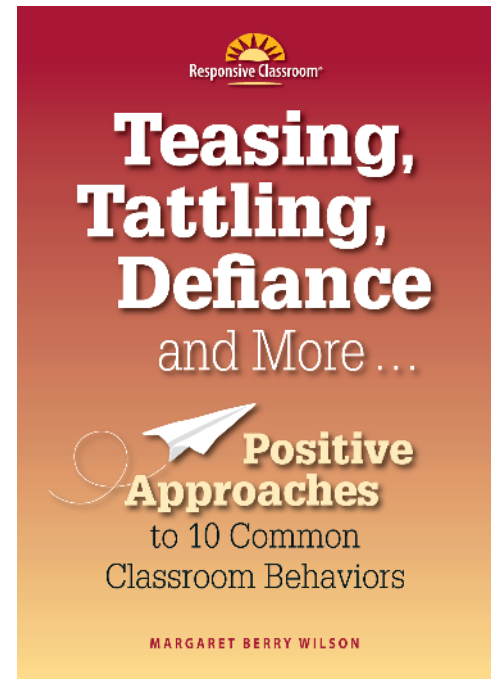
Positive Approaches to 10 Common Classroom Behaviors

Why Do Children Misbehave?

1. Before you delve into reading, survey your classroom. Pay attention to how students behave throughout the day (or several days). In which activities, transitions, times, and locations do they have the most behavior challenges? Write these down and keep them in mind as you read.
2. The author discusses five main influences on children's misbehavior (pp. 5–12):
 - Basic needs
 - Social-emotional needs
 - Lack of social-emotional skills
 - Lack of academic skills
 - Developmental factors

Think of the students you teach and recent issues with misbehavior. How might the information in these pages help you handle future issues with misbehavior in your classroom?

3. The author emphasizes: “Understanding why children misbehave doesn’t mean we excuse the behavior. It means instead that we develop empathy for all our students and form stronger bonds with each one. . . . Children have a great capacity to change, including learning new ways of behaving” (p. 13). Keeping in mind the students you currently teach, what are your immediate thoughts about the author’s remarks on the importance of empathy? Do they change your thinking? How? What questions, if any, do these remarks raise?



Published by Center for Responsive Schools, developer of the *Responsive Classroom* approach, a research-based educational approach associated with greater teacher effectiveness, higher student achievement, and improved school climate.

Visit www.responsiveclassroom.org for further information and additional resources.

The Responsive Classroom Approach to Discipline

- 1.** The author recommends that teachers spend more time on proactive work than on reacting to misbehavior so that children develop the behavior “muscles” they need for success (p. 16). She provides a number of proactive strategies to help teachers promote positive behavior (pp. 17–28). What are your immediate thoughts on this positive approach to discipline? What is one strategy you’re already using? What is one that you’d like to try?
- 2.** After reading about ways to respond effectively when children misbehave (pp. 28–40), compare these strategies with how you’ve handled discipline in the past.
 - What are three big ideas you learned from these pages?
 - What are two questions you have?
 - What is one takeaway, or practical tip, you plan to try?
- 3.** Pages 41–44 give several strategies for communicating respectfully with parents about their child’s behavior challenges. Which strategies do you think might be the easiest for you to implement? Which do you think would be the most challenging? Which are you most excited to try?
- 4.** The *Responsive Classroom* approach to discipline summarized in this chapter is further explored in each of the following chapters. After reading this chapter, what questions do you have about this approach? Write down your questions and keep them nearby so you can look for answers as you read through the book.

Chapter 1 ■ Listening and Attention Challenges: Helping Children Listen and Pay Attention

- 1.** The author discusses proactive steps that promote listening (pp. 51–56).
 - What are three big ideas you learned from these pages?
 - What are two questions you have?
 - What is one takeaway, or practical tip, you plan to try?
- 2.** Review the “Listening Skills” tips on page 51. What is one skill you’d like to focus on teaching to students? How might you use Interactive Modeling (as described on pages 24–25) to help them sharpen their listening skills?

3. _____ S C E N A R I O _____

While the teacher writes a language arts lesson on the board, Tamra keeps her focus on her pencil, picking away at the eraser on its top. Tamra is so absorbed in her activity, she doesn't respond when the teacher calls on her.

Considering the strategies discussed in "Refocusing Students' Attention" (pp. 57–60), how would you respond effectively in the moment to help Tamra refocus?

4. For the preceding scenario, what might you do if Tamra continues to struggle with paying attention? Use the strategies on pages 61–62 as guidance.

5. _____ S C E N A R I O _____

Whenever Victor gets called on, he doesn't know the question the teacher asked. Then he argues that he is listening but demands that she repeat the question. This is a continued issue with Victor that takes up a lot of class time. While working with Victor to resolve the problem, the teacher keeps his parents informed.

If you were the teacher, how might you express your concerns when talking with Victor's parents? Refer to pages 63–64 (and the communication tips on pages 41–44) for guidance.

Chapter 2 ■ Teasing: Teaching Children How to Respect Everyone

1. The author discusses proactive steps to promote respectful language (pp. 72–77). One suggestion is to prompt discussion with students by doing the "Words Can't Be Taken Back" exercise (p. 73). Thinking of the students you teach, what are some other proactive steps you might implement to structure a discussion about recurring teasing in your classroom?
2. The author offers suggestions for how to respond when a student teases, as well as further steps to take if a student continues to tease (pp. 78–82). Jot some notes about:
 - Something you learned that aligns with your thinking
 - A question that comes to mind
 - Three important points you want to remember
 - One new direction (or action) you will take

3. _____ S C E N A R I O _____

In music class, Maribel tells Owen teasingly that it's a good thing he plays the recorder well because his singing voice is terrible. Owen doesn't say anything back but clearly looks uncomfortable. When the teacher informs the children's parents of how she's working with both students to resolve the situation, here's what they say:

- Maribel's parent: "Maribel's right. I went to recital last year, and Owen cannot sing to save his life. Maribel likes Owen. She's just trying to help."
- Owen's parent: "Owen is so embarrassed; he said he'll never sing again. Maribel has ruined Owen's greatest passion."

If you were the teacher, how might you respond? Refer to pages 82–85 (and the communication tips on pages 41–44) for guidance.

4. Thinking about a recent issue with teasing in your classroom, review the proactive steps to promote respectful language on pages 72–77. Which of these steps could you use more frequently to prevent future teasing?

Chapter 3 ■ Cliques: From Exclusion to Inclusion

1. Think of the students in your class. Which ones struggle more than others with making friends? With these students in mind, what do you already do well to promote inclusion? What else might you try? Use the proactive steps on pages 93–99 for guidance.

2. _____ S C E N A R I O _____

The teacher asks Darius, Eva, and Wes to go to the art room to pick up supplies for a class project. A short while later, Darius and Eva return, hands filled with supplies, trailed by Wes, who comes in empty-handed. He says that Darius and Eva gathered all the supplies and headed back to the classroom, leaving him behind. Wes tells the teacher he's used to it—many students exclude him.

How might you respond effectively to Wes? How might you respond to Darius and Eva? Use the strategies on pages 99–103 as guidance.

3. How might you collaborate with colleagues to come up with a consistent approach for preventing and responding to common exclusionary behaviors in your school?

4. After reading about how to talk to parents about cliques and exclusion (pp. 104–108):
- What are three big ideas you learned from these pages?
 - What are two questions you have?
 - What is one takeaway, or practical tip, you plan to try?

Chapter 4 ■ Tattling: Rethinking “No Tattling” Rules

1. Pay attention to common reporting issues in your classroom. Which issues are reported more often than others? Do certain students report more or less often than others? Why do you think that is? Refer to pages 111–115 for guidance.
2. The author recommends that teachers start with self-reflection before teaching students how to report (p. 116). What insight did your self-reflection give you about the word “tattling”? How might you discuss issues related to reporting with your colleagues? What kind of language do you want to be sure to use when teaching students how to report?
3. After reading the section titled “Should I Tell or Not?” (pp. 116–122), use the chart on page 118 as a guideline for structuring a classroom discussion. What is one insight you gained from these pages? From your discussion with students?

4. _____ S C E N A R I O _____

Henri is the first to notice and announce when classmates aren’t following the rules and often causes distraction and frustration for other students. Henri’s overreporting now includes announcing when students *are* following the rules.

What is one reason why Henri might be overreporting? How might you help him learn to stop overreporting? Use the strategies on pages 122–125 as guidance.

5. _____ S C E N A R I O _____

Yvette tells the teacher that Vittoria pushed Padma out of the lunch line so that she could stand behind her best friend. Later, the teacher talks privately to Padma and asks why she didn’t report what had happened. Padma just shrugs. How might you handle this issue of underreporting? Refer to the steps on page 126 for guidance.

6. The author discusses ways to talk with parents about reporting (pp. 127–128). Which might you try when talking with parents? What are some other ways you can involve them?

Chapter 5 ■ Defiance: Reaching Children Who Struggle With Authority

- 1.** Which of the reasons discussed in the section “Why Do Children Defy Authority?” (pp. 133–135) really stand out and make you think about your own experiences with students who show defiant behavior?
- 2.** The author offers proactive steps to help lessen defiance (pp. 136–140). Which are new ideas for you? How might you incorporate these ideas into what you already do well to further promote cooperation in your classroom?
- 3.** The author suggests taking a step back to reflect on your expectations of yourself and of the student after dealing with defiance (p. 145). Think of how you handled a recent incident of defiance in your classroom. What were your expectations? Might another approach be more helpful next time? Refer to pages 141–145 for ideas.
- 4.** When a student continues to struggle with defiance, the author suggests holding a problem-solving conference with the student to collaborate on strategies the student can implement to become more cooperative in the classroom (pp. 147–148). After taking some time to think about this:
 - What are three big ideas you learned from these pages?
 - What are two questions you have?
 - What is one takeaway, or practical tip, you plan to try?

5. _____ S C E N A R I O _____

When the teacher hands out a new science worksheet, Ivan yells at her that he won't do any more of her “stupid worksheets.” In addition to handling the situation with Ivan, the teacher calls his parent to discuss the defiant behavior. Ivan's parent gets angry and accuses her of exaggerating.

If you were the teacher, how might you respond to Ivan's parent? Refer to pages 149–151 (and the communication tips on pages 41–44) for guidance.

Chapter 6 ■ Disengagement: Reaching Children Who Appear Unmotivated

- 1.** Review the chart that describes the relationship between children's development and lack of engagement (p. 156). What are some times when the students you teach seem disengaged? Do you see a pattern? What is one way you might try changing your classroom routine to further promote student motivation? Refer to pages 153–162 for guidance.

2. The author says, “In classrooms where learning is viewed as a process and growth mindsets are fostered, children are much less likely to avoid work because they fear making mistakes or failing and more likely to take academic risks” (p. 158). What about this statement resonates with you? Think of what you already do well to promote academic risk-taking. What might you do to further instill a growth mindset in students?

3. _____ S C E N A R I O _____

During a timed science test, Zahari doodles in the margins of the test sheet instead of answering the questions.

How might you respond in the moment (pp. 162–164) to help motivate Zahari?

4. How might you respond if Zahari continues to struggle with disengagement (pp. 165–168)?
5. How might you collaborate with parents to help motivate students? Refer to pages 168–170 (and the communication tips on pages 41–44) for guidance.

Chapter 7 ■ Silliness and Showing Off: Helping Children Focus on Learning

1. Think about your classroom environment. Do you encourage silliness? Are there times when students are sillier than usual? Does silliness sometimes get out of hand?
2. Take a moment to reflect on your answers to the preceding question. Then write down the plusses and challenges of finding a balance between fun and seriousness. It might be helpful to make a T chart to do this. How might the strategies for promoting productive playfulness (pp. 176–179) help you overcome your challenges? What might help you continue doing what you’re doing well (plusses) and build upon that to find an even balance?

3. _____ S C E N A R I O _____

Students take turns reading their essay about their favorite animal. Every time a new animal is introduced, Sage makes its sound: “Caw-caw,” “rawr,” “who.” Soon, everyone is laughing and copying Sage’s animal noises.

Using the strategies for responding effectively (pp. 180–182), how might you help students refocus on reading their essays?

4. What might you do if Sage continues to act silly and disrupt the class (pp. 183–185)?
5. After you finish reading this chapter on silliness, jot a few notes about:
 - Something that aligns with your thinking
 - A question that comes to mind
 - Three important points you want to remember
 - One new direction (or action) you will take

Chapter 8 ■ Too Much Physical Contact: Helping Children Learn Body Control

1. Think of students you teach (or have taught) who get overly physical. Why do you think these particular students get too physical? Refer to pages 192–194 for guidance. What is one insight you have gained from these pages?
2. The chart on page 195 explains what “taking care of each other and our bodies” looks like, sounds like, and feels like. How might you use this information to launch a classroom discussion about self-control? What is one proactive step you’d like to try to help students find appropriate physical outlets and teach them limits for physical contact in school? Use the steps on pages 194–198 as guidance.
3. Evaluate your classroom space with an eye on the physical proximity of students (p. 197). Are any parts of the room too crowded or cluttered? How might you rearrange your classroom to help students move about more freely?

4. _____ S C E N A R I O _____

During group activities, Glinda often steps on her classmates’ feet or sits on their laps. They yell at Glinda to stop, but she keeps doing it.

What redirecting statement (pp. 199–200) might you make to help Glinda learn how to respect personal boundaries? What logical consequence (pp. 200–201) might you implement if the behavior continues?

5. _____ S C E N A R I O _____

Kyle often gets so excited during transitions that he slams into other students, sometimes knocking them down.

How might you help Kyle (and his parents) find other outlets for his physical energy? Refer to pages 202–204 (and the communication tips on pages 41–44) for guidance.

Chapter 9 ■ Dishonesty: Setting Children Up for Success With Honesty

1. Children need to learn “the difference between what’s true and what’s not, when a ‘white lie’ might be kinder than the cold truth, and other sticky honesty issues” (p. 209). How might you structure classroom discussions about the challenges of being honest (p. 214)?
2. What typical classroom scenario might you role-play (as described on page 24) to help students understand how it looks and sounds to take responsibility for making mistakes (p. 215)?
3. The author mentions using children’s books to provide starting points for discussing honesty and mistakes (p. 213). What books might you use in your classroom? (See the list on pages 252–255 for ideas.)
4. On pages 217–223, the author talks about what to do if a student behaves dishonestly.
 - What are three big ideas you learned from these pages?
 - What are two questions you have?
 - What is one takeaway, or practical tip, you plan to try?

5. _____ S C E N A R I O _____

Every time Alex breaks a rule, she blames it on her imaginary friend “Bandit.” Her parents tell the teacher Alex does the same thing at home.

What advice might you give Alex’s parents? Refer to pages 223–226 (and the communication tips on pages 41–44) for guidance.

Chapter 10 ■ Frustrations and Meltdowns: Building Resilience

1. Read through the proactive steps to build resilience (pp. 234–238). Jot a few notes about:
 - Something you learned that aligns with your thinking
 - A question that comes to mind
 - Three important points you want to remember
 - One new direction (or action) you will take
2. The author gives examples of teaching skills that help build resilience (pp. 236–238). Think of a student you teach who struggles with resilience. What might you try next to teach this student resilience and enable them to practice these skills in a realistic situation?

3. _____ S C E N A R I O _____

Omar prides himself at being the fastest in the class at completing worksheets. Today, however, Teresa is the first student to let the teacher know she finished her math facts worksheet. Omar shouts out, “No fair!” He stomps his feet, crosses his arms, and refuses to finish his worksheet.

Review the reasons why some children struggle with resilience (pp. 231–234). What do you think might be going on for Omar? How might you use reminding and redirecting language (pp. 239–240) to calmly guide Omar to finish his worksheet? Refer to the strategies on pages 239–241 for guidance.

4. How might you hold a problem-solving conference with Omar (p. 244) if he continues to struggle with resilience?
5. Examine your answers to questions 3 and 4. How might you initiate a conversation with Omar’s parents about his struggle with resilience? What advice might you give his parents about ways they can help Omar cope at home? Refer to pages 246–248 (and the communication tips on pages 41–44) for guidance.