

Fewer Mean Words, More Kind Words

Proactive Steps to Promote Respectful Language

Preventing teasing, name-calling, and put-downs requires teaching children how to be kind and respectful to one another while still having fun. **Here are nine ways to promote respectful language in your classroom.**

Teach children what to do if they notice teasing

Teach the difference between school speech and out-of-school speech

Reinforce kindness and respect when you see them

Teach what respectful language looks and sounds like

Continue to build community

Revisit the rules as necessary

Teach students about teasing's impact

Include respectful language in class rules

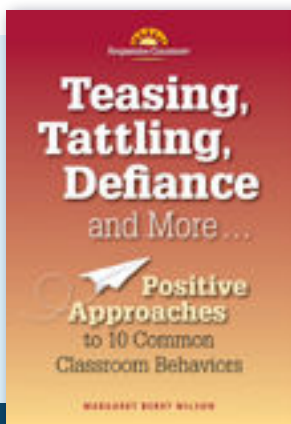
Model what respect looks and sounds like

Words Can't Be Taken Back The Toothpaste Squeeze Activity

1. **Show the students** a tube of toothpaste. Explain that when they say a hurtful word, it's like squeezing out toothpaste.
2. **Go around the circle** and let each student squirt a little toothpaste into a plastic bowl.
3. **Go back around** and challenge students to put the toothpaste back. They'll try but find that it's impossible.
4. **Tell students** that words work the same way: once out, we can't put them back.

If you have older students who need the same teaching, consider using children's books to discuss how characters felt in hurtful situations or talk about the effects of bullying incidents in the news.

Young children often think they can take back hurtful words by saying a quick "I'm sorry." They need to learn that once words leave their mouths, they can't be taken back. To teach them this lesson, try this toothpaste squeeze activity.



Teasing, Tattling, Defiance and More...

Positive Approaches to 10 Common Classroom Behaviors

Learn practical strategies and easy-to-implement practices to stop misbehaviors respectfully and positively redirect them.

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