

HELPING STUDENTS LEARN THE RULES



1 Don't overload them with rules

- + Rules should be short, simple, and easy to monitor.
- + The younger the kids, the fewer the rules. Too many rules are confusing for children and hard for staff to monitor.

2 Communication is key

- + Communicate the rules frequently, especially at the beginning of the year, as new children join your class, or after a long break.
- + Ensure everyone on the team consistently enforces the rules.
- + Frame rules by stating what you want children to do, not what you don't want them to do.
- + Be specific with the behavior you'd like to see, such as "share your toys" and "use your inside voice".

3 Model the behavior you want to see

- + Reinforce the behaviors you want to see. Catch them being good and be specific in your praise.
- + For example, a heartfelt, "I see you're cleaning up your center" will go a lot further and have more meaning than the generic "good job."
- + When someone acts up, don't overreact. Children are children, they like to test the waters. When this happens, stay calm and redirect.
- + Putting your fingers to your lips to signal quiet is a great strategy. Gently restating the expectations works well, as does getting in close physical proximity.
- + Do what we teach children to do: step back, take a deep breath, and count to 5. When you calmly redirect, you show them how to react to stressful situations.