

DEFUSING VERBAL POWER STRUGGLES

- Present yourself in a calm clear manner.... You are in control.
- Keep you tone of voice low, level... matter of fact.
- Make it clear that you and the child need to get calm and that you will discuss this situation later.
- Validate the child's feelings:

I can see that you are feeling _____, it is O.K. for you to be feeling _____ right now because _____.

- Express your feelings:

I am feeling _____ right now because _____.

- Admit that you need a Time out," I'm getting very upset. Excuse me". - leave his/her space
- Never deal with a situation when you are emotional - take the time to come up with logical solutions – emotional/impulsive responses are often regretted.
- Be certain that your body language matches your verbal message.
- Think about your body position:

What message is it relaying to the child?

Are you standing over him/her creating yet another sense of domination? (Perhaps this is not the intent).

- The child may perceive things very differently depending on previous life experiences.
- Ask yourself if this incident will change your life or the life of the child – If Not – get calm and use this as a teaching opportunity.
- Consider the child's motives:

Attention? / Control/power? / Revenge? / Feelings of inadequacy?

- Remember that his/her action is the result of something that is not working – causing built up frustration.

- Ask yourself what it is that you need to have happen right now?
- Do you need to get help for the child? (Send a runner for A.O. or CYCW).
- Do you need to refocus the child on something else?
- Do you need time?
- Give a clear message stating your disapproval and the directive.
- Refuse to debate!
- Remember there are always two sides to every story – What is the trigger? What is the perception? Is it intent?
- Always admit mistakes – adults make them too.
- Avoid terminal statements – Oh, come on....Give me a break... Yah, right!...
- WHY questions set children up for failure – encourages responses that are often associated to lying, blaming, excuses or lack of participation on the child's part.
- A little Humor goes a long way – a smile, quizzical look, or related joke may ease the tension and encourage a more approachable attitude towards solving the issue.
- Sincere Empathic responses generate feelings of being cared for, "I Care" messages often defuse anger, sets the tone for safe communication and refocuses the adult towards a teaching mode.
- The child needs to know that it is his/her behaviour you do not approve of, not him.

With out mistakes, there is no forgiving.

Without forgiving, there is no love.

Mother Teresa

Positive Connections with Specific Feedback

Positive feedback includes making positive connections throughout the day that describes the student's appropriate behaviour. Teachers, as well as students, can complete these statements on **Positive Statement Cards** (refer to page 164) and then give them to certain students to recognize and encourage their contributions or support. These cards give students a specific, written record of appropriate behaviour.

Making a positive connection...

- *I'm glad you're in this group. I like the way you participated in _____.*
- *I'm glad you're in my class because _____.*
- *Thanks for being my friend. I like the way you _____.*
- *I'm happy I know you. I like the way you _____.*
- *I would like to get to know you better because _____.*
- *I like to be with you because _____.*
- *You're fun to be around because _____.*
- *You're a good listener. I saw that you _____.*
- *You're a special person because _____.*
- *You have a good sense of humour. I like the way you _____.*
- *You're a kind person. I noticed you _____.*
- *You're really good at _____.*
- *I like it when you _____.*
- *You did a good job when you _____.*
- *You helped me when you _____.*
- *I like the way you are (state the student's objective or a classroom rule).*
- *I really liked your _____.*

Catch the student doing something right and then make a positive connection!

Handling Minor Inappropriate Behaviour

To handle minor inappropriate behaviour, teachers need to have a range of consequences, set forth ahead of time. Inappropriate behaviour is easiest to correct when it first occurs. If allowed to continue unchecked, it could escalate into greater disruptions and involve more students. Teachers also could lose their credibility. These consequences will work for most minor violations:

- Using a reminder. When giving a reminder, carry on teaching, and quietly walk over to the student to remind him/her of the appropriate rule or behaviour. If he/she has a **Desk Cue Card with Classroom Rules** (refer to page 83), taped onto his/her desk, just tap the card as a fair and clear reminder. Do not involve the classroom in this and do not pause to invite reaction from the student. A good reminder needs to be immediate, unemotional, and private. This discreetness maintains the student's dignity.

A reminder should not take more than 10 to 15 seconds. It could go like this:

1.	Describe the behaviour.	<i>Chris, that is calling out.</i>
2.	Explain the behaviour.	<i>It disturbs the class.</i>
3.	Specify rule.	<i>The rule is to raise our hands and wait to be called upon, before we speak.</i>
4.	Give consequence.	<i>This is your reminder/warning.</i>