

## **Classroom Management: Dos and Don'ts for New Teachers**

Jeanette Laaning and Carmen Rowse\*

### **Dos**

1. Try to spend time watching other teachers manage their class.
2. Be flexible in your activity planning.
3. Have backup plans when a given activity is not working.
4. Use teachable moments.
5. Plan for different learning styles (i.e., visual, kinaesthetic, audio, verbal).
6. Plan for different learning ability levels.
7. Be aware of student s previous knowledge and abilities when planning learning activities.
8. Plan activities involving movement and singing.
9. Vary the teaching environment.
10. Allow children a choice in projects.
11. Focus on the process rather than the product.
12. Let children be risk takers and make mistakes.
13. Let children figure out their mistakes.
14. Let students work in pairs or groups.
15. Assign tasks to each member of a work group (e.g., leader, helper, cleaner, recorder).
16. Establish clear simple rules, e.g., be safe, be respectful, be responsible.
17. Establish appropriate listening and speaking behaviours.
18. Allow students to suggest appropriate rules and routines.
19. Remember that children respond well to regular routines and these should be established early.
20. Start teaching children routines to be used in independent centres early, so they can use these later on in the year, e.g., work quietly, ask a friend, work together, know where all manipulatives are in a centre, complete an assigned task.
21. Praise appropriate behaviours.

22. Explain “123 Magic”.
23. Explain consequences to inappropriate behaviour.
24. Demonstrate inappropriate behaviours, have children explain what was wrong.
25. Establish looks or signals rather than drawing verbal attention to inappropriate behaviours.
26. Establish songs and actions to gain student attention.
27. Begin speaking rather than always waiting for silence.
28. Use motivating games, situations to encourage students to line-up quickly.
29. Always make your activity appear more fun than what the lingering child is doing.
30. For the first days of school, change a situation rather than force a child to join an activity they don't want.
31. Practice routines such as fire drills in small, manageable chunks to ensure success.
32. Allow extra time for changing shoes, putting on coats, the first few days (or weeks) of school so that this activity does not become stressful.
33. Make school fun, the battle is won if the children want to go to school everyday in September
34. Stop an activity if children are tired, by Thursday they may be worn out and not willing to take on new tasks.
35. Let children explore their classroom to become comfortable with their surroundings.

### **Don'ts**

1. Overwhelm children with rules and routines the first few days of school.
2. Overwhelm children with too much talking the first few days.
3. Force children to answer too many questions or perform too many tasks.
4. Expect routines to work well the first few days.
5. Judge children by their behaviour and performance the first few days, give them time to adjust to routines and new situations.
6. Don't give too many worksheets. Allow students opportunity to complete open ended activities.
7. Leave the impression that school will be all hard work, that you have to sit all day.

8. Don't have the classroom fully decorated. Let children decide what art to put up and where it should go.
9. Leave material and manipulatives out unless you want the children to use them.
10. Have too many choice materials at each centre.

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\* Both Jeanette and Carmen are experienced tenured teachers. Jeanette has been teaching for the last two decades, and Carmen for the last twelve years. I proposed that they write a few *do's* and *don'ts* for this issue of *the Morning Watch* as Pauline Finlay-Molloy did (see my footnote to her observations). I am thankful to these three highly experienced teachers for their contributions, which should be seen as “practical tips” for classroom management from the “field”. (Amarjit Singh)