Handling Chaos in the classroom

Always be honest with and respectful to your students. Positive relationships matter. You may be one of the few positive role models in their lives. School should be a safe place for teachers and students at all times. Remember that young children take things we say literally because they are often at a concrete thinking stage which limits their ability to interpret information in an abstract way. This concept also applies to regulation of their emotional responses in classroom situations.

### ***Practical ideas***:

* Breathing and relaxation exercises led by teachers or parents
* Simple yoga or tai chi activities.
* Play soft music and turn off lights.
* Have card decks of positive affirmations for children and hand these out to children for positive reinforcement.
* Take time out to read a book particularly those that affirm children and their emotions.
* Break up the day with periods of simple exercises.
* Put on a “sounds of nature” or classical music dvd and have students close their eyes and put head on the desk
* Play a particular popular song that naturally calms the situation.
* Be silent at your desk or in front of the room and wait until room is quiet.
* If students as a group take times away from lesson write on board as minutes go by how many minutes will have to be given back at some time that day.
* Redirect students to engage in quiet activities.
* Do not engage in verbal altercations with students especially in front of their peers.
* Give students regular times to socialize during the course of the day. They can earn minutes to be redeemed at the end of the day when they are cooperative during lesson times. Note times that students are cooperative and reward them with free minutes at the end of the day.
* If your school does not have a mentor program for new teachers, make a request to initiate one. If that is not possible, find another teacher to talk to who can offer daily support. Mentoring can be an important facet of successfully managed classrooms for new and seasoned teachers.
* Consult with other educators on the NEA Online Community [[www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org)]
* Consult with a professional in your building about any issues at home that may impact school behavior and performance. When children are acting out, consider what your child’s day was like before they came to school or what their family circumstances might be. So much of negative behavior is related to things that happen to children that are beyond their control.
* NEA website [ [www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org) ] has a section entitled Educators Survival Guide. You can interact on line with fellow educators and share practical advice about day to day situations.
* Brain Gym International [ [www.braingym.org](http://www.braingym.org)] is a website committed to providing optimal learning experiences through kinesthetic activities. This website provides links to articles and research that can give you practical solutions for using movement in the classroom. Under the “Learn More” tab there are copies of peer reviewed research and published articles to support movement in the classroom and its many beneficial properties
* Daily affirmation list serves can provide a “quote for the day” that can serve as rules to live by in the classroom.
* Catch children making good decisions and praise them for that..it is amazing how positive intervention can change things quickly
* Redirect children by talking about subjects they relate to such as pets, characters from books and movies, what they did the day before, etc.
* Consider a consultation with a mental health professional in your building or consult with Lutheran Counseling Center for referral sources.

So many stressors in our world today impact children, families and ourselves. Be aware of what is going on around your students in school, in the world and in their homes. Young children take what they hear very literally and can misunderstand complex issues or events. Be alert to any changes in moods, behaviors and habits your students exhibit. Ask parents if there were any recents changes in the family such as recent deaths, new house, new job, separation or divorce, new baby, etc.

Create an environment in your classroom that encourages open communication between students and between teachers and families.

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