



13 - How to Establish Trust



Here are some ideas:

1. Be **as good as your word**. If a treat, punishment, special activity, or assignment under the teacher's control is promised, follow through. Children with behaviour problems distrust even the best excuse a teacher gives.
2. Do **not use intimidating** actions or statements as a form of behaviour control. While young children may respond out of fear, the price of such intimidation is high. The message teachers send by using intimidation tactics is that it's OK to frighten smaller, less physically capable people into submission. Older students are more apt to become physically aggressive toward a threatening adult.
3. Deal with noncompliant behaviour **consistently**.
4. Make sure **rewards and punishments relate logically** to the student's actions.
5. Use **punishment as a tool of instruction** rather than revenge.
6. **Be honest** with your students.
7. **Prepare students** in advance for any changes. Substitute teachers, visitors, new classmates, schedule changes, fire drills, and even holiday vacations can catch students by surprise and cause an escalation of negative behaviour. Talking about such events ahead of time and having a plan for dealing with them increases students' sense of self-control and trust.
8. As the students are ready, enlist them in some of the **decision making** in the classroom. If a weekly art or cooking activity is part of the schedule, allow the students to choose which activity they want to do. Giving them increasing opportunities to make appropriate choices increases their sense of trust, control, and positive regard for the rights of others.
9. Use **language that conveys acceptance and trust**. Have students describe what they can do. De-emphasize what they cannot do.
10. Structure academic **assignments for success**. Students know when they are working below their ability level. Real feelings of accomplishment will not develop if lessons are too easy. Moving too quickly may be discouraging. Move students along academically by structuring the introduction of new concepts in small, digestible bits. For example, when introducing equivalent fractions, use different coloured construction paper strips first. For a day or two, have students "play" with the strips to find out how many pinks equal a blue, and so forth. Colour names are easier to talk about at first. After the students are comfortable with the concept, introduce the math words: "Two pinks equal one blue, or two fourths equal one half." In every subject area, use manipulative materials, art, and music at every opportunity to help students bridge the gaps between concrete and abstract concepts. In science, use experiments and models. In math, use

manipulatives. In social studies, use models, 3-D maps and globes, art, and music. In reading and language, use charts, models, art, and music. Active participation not only improves academic achievement, but also captures students' interest, thereby preventing behaviour problems that occur due to frustration, boredom, or dislike of an assignment.

11. **Review the day's events** each morning before beginning academic lessons. If a substitute will be handling a class one day, discuss this with the students and prepare them for the change. If an assembly or some other event will alter the usual class or reading time, explain that. Even older students will resist changes if they come as a surprise. A little grumbling first thing in the morning is easier to deal with than a blow-up later.

