

Classroom Management

The Brain

BRAIN STEM

- Survival Mode
- Pool of skills very limited
 - ◇ Defend (hide/run away)
 - ◇ Attack (Hit, bite, push, kick)
- Need
 - ◇ Safety – asks – Am I safe?

LIMBIC SYSTEM

- Emotional Center – contains emotions & memories
- More skills available
 - ◇ Verbal/words (You're stupid, butt head, whiny words)
 - ◇ CD rom playing of what you have learned in life so far (Can play positive or negative messages)
- Need
 - ◇ Connection – asks – Do you love me?

FRONTAL LOBES

- CEO
- Pool of skills is unlimited (Hold hands open)
 - ◇ Make decisions
 - ◇ Creativity
 - ◇ Unlimited ideas
 - ◇ Knows answer without knowing how
 - ◇ Brilliant moments
- Need
 - ◇ Problem solving in social situation – asks – What can I learn from this?

Linking the Brain States

- Need to wire the brain so they can all work together
- Can't jump states – moves progressively
- Move from: hitting/hiding to name calling/emotions to conscious choice

Building Connections

- Need to build connections between brain states
- Connections on the outside build connections on the inside

Do this through:

- Eye contact
- Touch
- Being in the present moment – Be a S.T.A.R. brings you to the present moment. Share breathing activity.

A Welcoming Environment

Keeping Everyone Safe

- Your job to keep the classroom safe so children can learn.
- Children's job is to help keep it safe.

Classroom Greeters

Invite a teacher or student to greet the children at the door as they enter the classroom. The teacher needs to be at eye-level with the children. Create a greeting board with pictures and descriptions of fun ways to be greeted.

Additional Support

- If children have toys with them, invite them to place them on a shelf where they can pick them up on the way out.

Clear Expectations

Be clear about how you expect the young people in your group to behave. In discussion with youth, set clear and fair ground rules. Be prepared to enforce them. Teach young people the boundaries on behaviors that are integral to the life of a believer in your church.

Create classroom rules that are easy for young children to understand. It is helpful to add visuals that remind them of appropriate behavior.

Older students need to be included in the creation of the classroom rules. It can be done as a group project at the beginning of the school year. Allowing them to participate in the creation process helps them to have ownership. Post the agreement and have each student sign it.

Responsibility Cards

Even the youngest children can take an active role in managing the classroom. This will set them up to have more confidence in taking care of themselves and in assuming leadership roles as they grow. Classroom responsibilities also empower them to know that church or worship doesn't happen to them but through them.

Introduce the idea of classroom responsibility by creating Responsibility Cards and inviting the children to choose the role they would like to fill each week. At the beginning you will need to describe the role and the task that goes with it. Filling a role gives them a sense of responsibility and reinforces the idea that we are all in this together.

The Safe Space

- Is a safe and comfy place within the classroom.
- It is a place that helps the children feel safe so they can then problem solve.
- Why it helps:
 - ◇ Children know they shouldn't hit, etc. but lack impulse control.
 - ◇ When triggered, the brain stem or limbic system engages – body chemistry changes
 - ◇ Time-out doesn't help the child manage these changes. They remain in brain stem and cannot problem solve from there.
 - ◇ We must help them to move forward in the brain. The first step is to help them reorganize their brain.
- Create a picture routine so they know what to do there.
- Things to do in the Safe Space

- ◇ Relax
- ◇ Regain composure
- ◇ Do calming things
- ◇ Inner Peace is the goal of the Safe Place
- ◇ Have pictures or a box of family pictures for comfort.
- ◇ Lotions – cranky, dream, concentration, comfort
- ◇ .Develop ritual or song to go with creams.
- ◇ Journal for older children where they can write or draw
- Other Ideas
 - ◇ Class activity – Can combine with heart agreement activity. Ask, “What would help you feel better – give chart. What would help your body relax?”
- Safe place for babies and toddlers is next to your heart or in your lap. You must be calm & coherent so they can feel your heartbeat. Adult must be “downloading” peace and a steady heartbeat.
- For children in rage, the safe place won’t work. They need physical outlet like a stepper, jumper or can crusher.
 - ◇ When in rage they need to move their legs because it is the biggest muscle.
 - ◇ Once rage is calmed, they can then go to the safe place.

Routines

- Routines create patterns = predictability = safety

Visual Routines – M.A.P. (Model-Add Pictures-Practice)

- Show how things are done through pictures and words
- When children are upset – what visual routine can we set up.
- Children under 7 have no inner voice and cannot rehearse in their head. If there are no pictures or touching, they can’t do it.
- Teach them to use the tools (Picture routines)
 - ◇ Use pictures – go over them often
 - ◇ Sing songs – repeat as needed
- Older Children – can mentally rehearse
 - ◇ Use pictures to have them rehearse
 - ◇ Show them the sequence
 - ◇ Invite them to see themselves being successful
- Don’t use visual routines in every learning situation, just use them where needed.
- Focus on:
 - ◇ Daily Schedule
 - ◇ Picture rule cards
 - ◇ Daily Routines
 - ◇ Transitions
- Take photos of children following the routines and make picture books.
- Visual routines (images) need to be imprinted into prefrontal lobe so they own it.
- Autistic children need individual schedule in 15 minute intervals
- Put your rules in pictures.
- Where you have chaos you need visual routines
- Use conflict as an opportunity to teach.
- Show a picture of how you want it to be.

Rituals

- Are important in building connections.
- Routines create order – Rituals create connections.
- Think in terms of family – what would a healthy family do?
- Greeting Ritual –
 - ◊ Welcome (Hands out)
 - ◊ We are glad you are here (sign language smile)
 - ◊ Now our family is complete (family sign – OK and all around)
- Ritual for Loss – not our job to take away people’s feelings but give them the tools to manage them.
 - ◊ Acknowledge loss
 - ◊ Remember the good.
 - ◊ Instead of “I will miss you” say “I will remember you.”
 - ◊ End of Year Rituals
 - ◊ Invite children to write 3 things they remember about each child. Collect and create a book for each child with the remembrances created.
 - ◊ Create bulletin boards of Remembrances.

What are your Routines & Rituals?