

Cool Tools Behavioral Lesson Plan

Universal Expectation: Responsible

Name of the Skill/Setting: Thinking Chair/Positive Time Out

Purpose of the lesson/Why it's important: Used in a consistent, calm, and nonpunitive way, time-out can be a valuable strategy for helping students develop self-control while preserving the smooth flow of the classroom.

Teaching Examples: Establish one or two places in the room for time-out, not isolated or in the middle of activities. This gives children the separation they need in order to refocus, yet allows them to keep track of what's going on. Use it early, for small disturbances, so they have an easier time pulling themselves back without losing control. Use a calm voice, and few words, even a visual signal, such as a capital T with the hands. Time-out is used for everyone, for subtle acting out, not just obvious misbehaviors. Explain the purpose: "time out is for someone who has made a mistake or broken a rule. It lets that person regain control, and is not a punishment. When they have regained control, they will be welcomed back into the group."

Times to use time-out:

A child talks continually to a neighbor during a group activity

A student bangs his pencil and drums his hand on the table

A child takes extra turns or pays no attention when it isn't their turn

A child makes a negative or sarcastic comment

A student refuses to work with a partner or participate in a project

Say: take a break, chill-out time, vacation time, rest and return, time-out, or give the T hand signal

Kid Activities/Role-Plays: Demonstrate, model and practice taking a break. Have each child take a turn sitting in the spot for a minute, then return to their desk. Let children know that they can initiate a break when they feel the need to calm down. This is a battle between the 'wannas' and the 'gottas', they can learn to use their brakes to slow down, shift gears, and gain control over their impulses.

Follow-Up Reinforcement Activities: Have the sensory box materials near the thinking chair, encourage children to use the spot when they feel themselves starting to break a rule, and to return to their desk when they feel in control. Periodically practice and remember to have every child have a turn. Use a calm voice, and few words. Be willing to talk about the situation later. (This may not work for every student – if the behavior continues without improvement, try another strategy.)