



ALTERNATIVES TO THE CLIP SYSTEM

August 2022

One of the most important relationships in a child's life is the relationship between student and teacher. This relationship can have a profound impact on a child's academic and social development. Unfortunately, clip charts can damage this vital relationship. Clip charts are often used in classrooms as a way to track student behavior. Students who behave well earn stickers or other rewards, while those who misbehave are moved down the chart. However, clip charts are often unfair and arbitrary, and they can lead to feelings of shame and humiliation. Worse yet, they can foster a competitive environment in which students compare themselves to their classmates. Instead of using clip charts, teachers should focus on building positive relationships with their students. There are many ways to do this, but some simple strategies include engaging in daily conversations, providing positive feedback, and showing genuine interest in each child's life. When teachers take the time to build strong relationships with their students, they create a foundation for success in the classroom and beyond.

School psychologists can play an important role in helping teachers to find alternatives to using clip charts. Below are some ways to use this guide at your school.

1. Provide training on positive behavior support and classroom management. Use this document as a guide for your training.
2. Offer suggestions and feedback after observing a teacher in action.
3. Consult with teachers on ways to create a more positive learning environment while still managing student behaviors. Help a teacher identify one to two strategies they can begin implementing in their classroom today!
4. Model positive behavior strategies while interacting with students.

By working together, school psychologists and teachers can develop strategies that will help to create a more positive and productive learning environment for all students.

REDUCE ANXIETY



Teach calming strategies

Engage the "thinking" brain



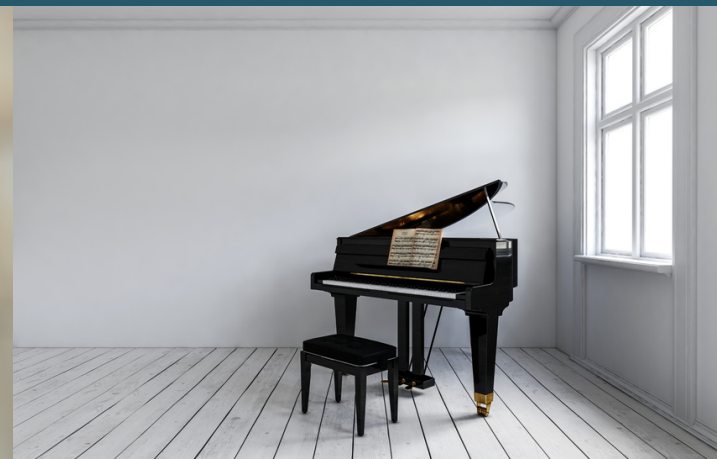
Go outside



Stick to routines and schedules



Encourage positive self-talk



Use soothing light & music

HOW TO REDUCE ANXIETY

Calming Strategies

Teach students to focus on breathing slowly and deeply to mitigate the body's stress responses. Examples include "five-finger breathing," "square breathing," "bunny breathing," and "belly breathing."

Thinking Brain

When students are clearly anxious and other strategies don't work, it may be time to stop talking about feelings and engage their "thinking brain" instead. You can do this by asking questions that require a concrete response, like, "What color are your socks?" "What does your dog look like?" "How many posters are on the wall?" etc.

Go Outside

Exercise and fresh air release endorphins and can reduce the body's physical response to anxiety. Many students are better able to focus after "antecedent exercise."

Stick To Schedules & Routines

Routines help anxious children by letting them know what to expect and giving them a chance to plan for changes. In short, routine helps children cope with change, create healthy habits, and reduce stress levels.

Encourage Positive Self-Talk

Positive self-talk serves as a distraction from negative and anxious thoughts and allows the mind to adapt to the positive words being said. When a student says something self-defeating ("This is too hard...", "I don't know how...", etc.), resist the urge to console ("But you're so smart!", "You've done it before...", etc.). Instead, prompt them to change their statement to something useful, like, "If I take my time, I will get it right," or "It's okay to make mistakes - mistakes are how people learn."

Use Soothing Light & Music

Calming music, especially classical, can slow pulse and heart rate, lower blood pressure, and decrease levels of stress hormones. The same is true for soothing colors and lighting.

FOCUS ON POSITIVES



Avoid power struggles



Praise actions



Tell students what to do
(instead of what not to do)



*Encourage teamwork with
classwide marble jar*



Keep it interesting with a
mystery motivator



Individualize incentives with
behavior bucks

HOW TO FOCUS ON POSITIVES

Avoid Power Struggles

Before setting a limit, be sure that it will truly benefit relationships and learning. Ask yourself why the limit is needed – what goal does it serve? If it's not essential, let it go.

Praise Actions

Be as specific as possible when providing praise. For example, instead of saying, "Great job!" you might state, "I like the way you capitalized each sentence and put spaces between your words!"

Tell Students What To Do

It is harder for the brain to process "don't" statements, which may cause students to respond more slowly and appear distracted or defiant. When redirecting, tell students what you want them to do instead of what you don't want them to do. For example, change, "Don't run," to "Walk," "Stop yelling!" to "Please whisper," "Don't touch that!" to "Please leave that alone," etc.

Encourage Teamwork With Marble Jar

Each time a student exhibits a desired behavior, put a marble in jar. Once the jar is filled, the class earns a group reward. Free homework pass? Extra recess? New desk arrangement?

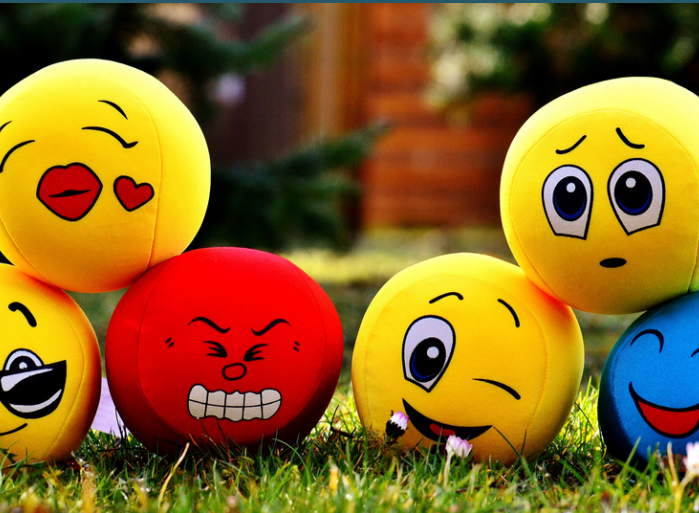
Keep It Interesting With A Mystery Motivator

Enlist students' help to create an academic or behavioral goal. On days when the class meets their goal, select a student to color in that day on the Mystery Motivator calendar to see if an X appears. If X appears, the reward is earned.

Individualize Incentives With Behavior Bucks

Behavior bucks bring positive attention to good choices and give students something tangible they can hold on to. Allow students to earn behavior bucks for demonstrations of desirable behavior. Teachers and students decide together what the behavior goal and associated rewards are once enough currency is earned.

BE PROACTIVE



Start with a feelings check-in



Teach self-monitoring



Incorporate movement into or between lessons



Build relationships

Spelling Menu 1		
Choose from the menu of activities below to earn 5 points in spelling homework for the week. You may choose any combination of activities. You may complete each chosen activity only one time for the week. When you complete your spelling homework to turn in, you must write your first and last name, the date, and the title of the activity you chose.		
Pyramid Write each word starting with one letter only and then adding one letter at a time per row. 1 point	ABC Order Write your list of words in alphabetical order. You may use an Alphabetizing Aid template for reference if you choose. 1 point	In the Spotlight Put the vowels in the spotlight! Write each word. Then, go back and highlight the vowels in your words. 1 point
Take Three	Rainbow Words	Swirly Words

Offer choices



Folder system

HOW TO BE PROACTIVE

Start With a Feelings Check-In

Create a system for students to communicate their needs upon entering your classroom. For example, they might place a clothespin over the appropriate choice from a list, such as tired, worried, ready to learn, energetic, or distracted. This facilitates self-monitoring, reduces anxiety, and allows you, the teacher, to meet kids where they are.

Teach Self-Monitoring

Create a system for students to measure and record their behavior, thoughts, or feelings throughout the day, then compare it to a predetermined standard. This could be a chart taped to their desk or an app on a device.

Incorporate Movement Into or Between Lessons

Short physical breaks reduce stress and frustration, and increase attention and productivity. Incorporating movement lessens the chance of fatigue, distraction, and lack of focus.

Build Relationships

Students are more likely to have a positive attitude toward teachers, instruction, and lessons if they know their teacher cares about them. For the 2x10 strategy, spend 2 minutes a day for 10 days getting to know one student better and behavior will improve.

Offer Choices

Students act out when work is not personally engaging, or presented at their learning level. To offset these challenges, offer "menu items" for assignments, then let students choose the task that works best for them.

Folder System

When a student is struggling, hand them a folder to deliver to a fellow teacher as an errand. Plan ahead with fellow teachers so that they know what it means when a student brings them a folder. When the student arrives at the fellow teacher's classroom, the teacher will offer a few words of encouragement to the student before they return to their own class. (The student is unaware of the purpose of the errand.)

REDUCE DISTRACTIONS



Keep things organized



Use wall space purposefully
and avoid clutter



Create user-friendly
desk arrangement



Toss out broken or unused material



Turn off technology when not in use



Use color coding & folders

HOW TO REDUCE DISTRACTIONS

Keep Things Organized

Having a tidy and organized classroom will help create a sense of stability for students. Well-organized classrooms send clear messages to students that they, as well as their learning, are important.

Use Wall Space Purposefully and Avoid Clutter

It's good to have some blank space on walls, as it gives eyes a place to rest. Consider utilizing wall space for displaying student work and visual aids (i.e., anchor charts, maps, diagrams). Be sure to take down visual aids that are no longer helpful.

Create User-Friendly Desk Arrangement

Consider intentionally arranging desks in the room so that you can gain better control of your class, and create an open and friendly environment.

Toss Out Broken or Unused Material

Get rid of items that are taking up space in your classroom and not serving a specific purpose.

Turn Off Technology When Not In Use

Turning off computers and tablets when not in use will minimize the amount of visual stimuli in the classroom.

Use Color Coding & Folders

Using color coding and designated folders allows students and teachers to visually and quickly identify items by categories.

MEET SENSORY NEEDS



Offer noise-cancelling headphones



Use privacy shields



Allow nondistracting fidgeting



Offer crunchy snacks



Allow weighted materials (such as a fanny pack or backpack)



Offer breaks for whole-body movement

HOW TO MEET SENSORY NEEDS

Offer Noise-Cancelling Headphones

Headphones help to eliminate unpleasant noise and help children cope with problem behavior related to hyperreactivity to auditory stimuli.

Use Privacy Shields

Using privacy shields in the classroom helps students stay focused on their work and eliminates fear of their work being stolen.

Allow Nondistracting Fidgeting

Wiggle seats provide an unbalanced surface to sit on where students are constantly working to maintain their balance while seated. Along with sensory stimulation, students are given an opportunity to wiggle and fidget in a non-distracting way in the classroom, thus ultimately allowing the student to be more engaged and focused.

Offer Crunchy Snacks

Crunchy foods provide oral sensory input. Oral sensory input is an effective way to self-regulate and support attention to task. Some ideas: nuts, pretzels, apples, carrot sticks, edamame, popcorn, and crushed ice.

Allow Weighted Materials

Weighted backpacks, fanny packs, and vests aid in reducing sensory overload and increasing body awareness.

Offer Breaks For Whole-Body Movement

Even just a few minutes of movement allow students a mental and sensory break!