

RAISING HANDS AT SCHOOL

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Talk with the class about why students should raise their hand when they have something to say in class. Does it matter if students shout out in class? Would they care if someone interrupted or gave an answer that they wanted to share with the class?

Make a connection by pointing out how raising hands before we talk in class helps everyone. Raising hands gives everyone a chance to answer and allows the teacher to see who knows the information. It saves time since the teacher does not have to search around to see who answered and it keeps the class calmer because children are not shouting out. It also keeps some students from monopolizing the chances to answer.

Review the rules for answering questions and talking in class. When do children need to raise their hand and why? Under what conditions is it okay to speak up more freely?

Show the class why raising their hand before they speak is important. What happens to a lesson or a discussion when they are allowed to speak out without raising their hand? How much longer does it take the teacher to see who has answered and are the chances to answer distributed across the class? Are some children disappointed by not being recognized by the teacher? Does class behavior deteriorate as the interruptions and class volume increase?

Practice having everyone raise their hand before they have anything to say, including the teacher. Credit the children for practicing at recess or gym or lunch or during free time, as well as during class discussion. The more the class practices, the stronger the habit will be.

Assign a weekend of practice to students (and their families) who are having trouble remembering to raise their hands. A weekend of raising your hand every time you have something to say builds the habit very quickly!

Make connections by pointing out how raising hands saved you time and made it easier to present a lesson or finish a discussion. Saved time and positive attitudes means more fun and more free time.

Empower the children by pointing out when they were able to channel their enthusiasm or wait until they were called on.

Make it interesting by agreeing to call on the 3rd student to raise their hand (see what the class does) or by substituting raising their hand with making eye contact with the teacher.

Credit children with the correct answer if they raised their hand but were not necessarily called upon. This is a wonderful way to get children to begin to raise their hand because they can get credit without being called upon.

Set a goal with the class. Count the number of questions answered without anyone shouting out or see how long it takes for everyone to raise their hand to answer at least once. Give goal points to the class for meeting this goal and review how different types of goals affect how the class does.

Reduce impulsivity by having the children count to three before they raise their hand or by having the more impulsive children write down the first word of their answer before they raise their hand. Do not call on children whose hands come up too quickly ("your arm went up before your brain had a chance to think of the answer").

Reframe the problem by pointing out the eagerness of children who are shouting out and by giving them a chance to do extra work on the topic (at home or during free time). Children who don't participate may lack confidence and need to review potential questions or topics ahead of time (at home with their parents or with an older student or with the learning specialist).