

Managing that UNRULY class – “DON’T”s and “DO”s

Every now and then a teacher finds themselves teaching THAT class, the one that everyone dreads. For some reason they seem to be uncontrollable. The teacher can become very dispirited, feeling that it must be his/her fault - after all, they are only children, aren't they? (However, unless *all* of your classes are like this, the teacher does not need to feel helpless!) So, what can you do?

**Ask yourself: What is the root cause?**

There is often an underlying reason, though it is not always simple to spot. Sometimes the problem is a matter of group dynamics sparked by one or two particular children. So watch carefully, notice and think about these things.

When the children get rowdy:

- What (or who) starts it? Is it the same right through the lesson?
- Is it started by a particular activity?
- Is there a particular child who seems to always be in the middle of things?
- Is there one particular child who is louder than the rest?
- Are there times when things are not so bad?

And watch the teacher (that's you!):

- Are you angry / do you get angry?
- How are you reacting when the children are behaving badly?
- Are the children doing something that 'pushes your buttons' (and makes you angry)?
- Do you have an annoying voice (high, screeching, shouting, yelling ...) that makes things worse?
- Have you recently taken over from a different teacher, and how did they react to that teacher?

**So let's start with some very important basic "DON'T" s:**

- **DON'T** ever get angry.
- **DON'T** ever shout.
- **DON'T** ever touch or manhandle the child/children.

If you do any of these things (regularly), you are losing the battle. Use your **teaching skills** to engage and motivate the children so that even the naughty ones **WANT** to listen and behave.

**And some very basic "DO" s**

Use your skill as a teacher, and:

- Stay calm,
- Remain dignified
- Be nice,
- Be positive
- Be encouraging
- Find the good behaviours
- Ignore secondary behaviours \* (for now)

\* 'Secondary behaviours' are all those annoying little things that children will sometimes do when they are basically doing what they are told to but just resisting a bit. [For example: You say, "Come here, please." and they shuffle slowly towards you instead of walking properly.]

And a very important DO - **Make some changes**

Here are some ideas for changes to try.