

Spirit of DI and Strategies for Managing Behavior

The following strategies are practical suggestions for managing misbehavior. The strategies are listed in order of appropriateness from minor to major misbehaviors.

1. **IGNORE IT.** At times, ignoring a minor misbehavior is necessary so as not to interrupt the flow of the team meeting. Be cautious when using this strategy. Ignoring may indicate to the team that you are unaware of what is going on. Keep in mind the main goal which is to deal with misbehavior in the least disruptive way possible.
2. **USE PROXIMITY.** Minor misbehavior can often be “nipped in the bud” before it becomes a major problem. One proactive measure is to circulate the room, using physical closeness to get team members back on track.
3. **GIVE “THE LOOK.”** Make use of facial expressions, eye contact, or hand signals while circulating the room to indicate to children you are aware of what is going on.
4. **USE VERBAL INTERVENTIONS.** Sometimes, verbal interventions are necessary to redirect the team or a team member. If the misbehavior occurs during a group discussion or lesson, ask the child a question about the topic to draw him/her back in. Sometimes just saying a child’s name is often enough to prompt them to determine the appropriate behavior.
5. **USE “I” MESSAGES.** This is a form of a verbal prompt most effective with older children. “I” messages contain three components:
 - a. Describe the unacceptable behavior in a non-blaming way: “When people talk while I’m giving directions...”
 - b. Describe the tangible effect this behavior has on you, the team manager: “...I have to repeat the directions and that wastes time...”
 - c. State your feelings about the tangible effect: “...and I get frustrated.” “I” messages don’t put children on the defensive and the team member may be more willing to change their behavior.
6. **ENFORCE A CONSEQUENCE.** When non-verbal cues or verbal reminders are not enough, enforcing a consequence may be necessary. Consequences should logically relate to the misbehavior.