

# 10 TIPS FOR TEACHING RESPECT



January is the perfect opportunity to re-establish or increase expectations with our students. Consider re-visiting the Golden Rule with a more empathetic perspective.

Here are some ideas:



**1. Model respect & empathy.** Students learn more from *what we do*, than *what we say*. This begins with our greetings, tone of voice, eye contact, and facial expressions with students. Create teachable moments by owning our behavior slip-ups and apologizing when needed.



**2. Teach the Golden Rule with empathy.** Instead of focusing only on how we want to be treated, aim to understand the needs of others, avoid judgment, and show empathy. Encourage kids to imagine how they would feel in someone else's shoes.



**3. Avoid assumptions.** Kids may not know what empathy and respectful behavior look like. Give clear and age-appropriate explanations, examples, and opportunities to practice positive behavior like listening, being polite, apologizing, and celebrating another's success.



**4. Keep your cool.** We can't expect students to be calm and respectful when we're yelling. Become aware of our triggers and reactions. Take a breath, listen, and do not engage. Calmly re-state your expectations or say something like, "Let me know when you're ready."



**5. Reward kindness and empathy.** Actively look for positive behavior. Try the "catch them being good" technique, acknowledge their effort, and respond with a compliment or reward. When possible, share the positive behavior with a call or email home.



**6. Teach them how to disagree respectfully.** This isn't easy and it takes practice. Try a game of "Would You Rather" or post sentence starters on how to acknowledge another point of view while expressing your own. Also, it's okay to set boundaries.



**7. Teach how to question without disrespect.** Students will need to resolve conflicts and politely question someone's statement, feedback, or instruction. Here are some tips: (1) Be assertive. (2) Ask for clarification. (3) Validate perspectives. (4) Stick to facts.



**8. Maintain a growth mindset.** What students can't do today, they can learn to do tomorrow. *They are just not behaving respectfully... yet.* A growth mindset enables us to look for potential, give them a fresh start, and expect growth in time.

