



Dealing with Pouting

Some students pout because they are accustomed to getting their way and don't know how to handle it when this doesn't happen. Students who feel over-controlled may pout as a mild protest (instead of more blatant forms of rebellion) when teachers require them to do something.

If you scold, threaten, or humiliate a pouting student, you address only his behavior and fail to deal with the belief behind the behavior. It is more effective to use non-punitive methods that allow students to experience feelings while still responding to the situation. Students can learn that their feelings are acceptable but don't need to dictate their actions. They can learn to express their feelings in healthy, respectful ways without resorting to pouting. When students participate in making decisions and feel that they're part of the solution, they rarely pout.

Suggestions

1. Don't scold or humiliate a pouting student.
2. Take responsibility for what you may have done to invite pouting. Are you being too controlling? Is your tone of voice inviting resistance instead of cooperation? Do your students feel that you listen to them and take them seriously? Do you validate their thoughts and ideas?
3. If your student pouts as a manipulative technique, tell him, "I know you're disappointed, but I have faith in you to work it out." Or you might say, "I sense your resistance. Is this something we need to talk about together or with everyone's help during circle time?" When you approach the situation with dignity and respect, he may quickly conclude that pouting isn't effective.
4. Verbalize the feelings that led to the behavior: "I know you're disappointed and upset. I feel that way too, when things don't work out the way I want them to." A student's behavior often changes just because his feelings were validated.
5. Offer a limited choice: "I know that you're feeling upset, but we still need to put away our supplies. What would work best for you: to begin picking up these toys by yourself or choose a buddy to help you?"



Plan Ahead to Prevent Future Problems

1. During circle time, discuss the disappointment we feel when things don't turn out how we had hoped they would. Invite everyone to discuss ways to deal with this and ways to support classmates when they're disappointed.
2. Invite the students to brainstorm about other things that they can do or tell themselves when their wishes go unfulfilled. If some of the following ideas aren't suggested, you can join the brainstorming: try breathing deeply for a few minutes, share feelings with a buddy, or try to look at the situation from another point of view. Set up a role play in which a student can experience a new way to cope with disappointment. She will see that although she may still feel let down, she can take a few minutes to adjust and then can verbalize her feelings respectfully. Tell the students that you know this can be hard and that it may take practice.

Tell the pouting student in private that you don't want to embarrass him with verbal reminders, so you would like to set up a signal that you can give him when he needs to find another way to communicate.

*Would you like to receive one clock hour of training for reading
"Dealing with Pouting"?
If so, complete the worksheet at
www.tymthetrainer.com/onlinetraining.html
and follow the instructions.
A one-hour training certificate will be provided.*