

Responsive Classroom Overview



The Responsive Classroom approach is a way of teaching that emphasizes social, emotional, and academic growth in a strong and safe school community. One of the guiding principles of this approach identifies a set of social skills: cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control that all children need in order to be successful academically and socially. These skills form the simple acronym of CARES, which is implemented in all elementary schools across the district. Purposeful instruction is provided to students early in the school year using interactive modeling, guided practice, and reinforcement of these social skills throughout the school day in order to build a foundation for a productive and cooperative year of learning.

At the elementary level, schools also utilize the Responsive Classroom Approach to Discipline. The following four goals are associated with this approach:

1. Establish a calm, orderly, safe environment for learning.
2. Help children develop self-control and self-discipline.
3. Teach children to be responsible, contributing members of a democratic community.
4. Promote respectful, kind, and healthy teacher-student and student-student interactions.

This approach offers clear expectations for behavior and actively teaches children how to live up to established expectations through the use of the following four proactive strategies: Morning Meeting, Teacher Language, Interactive Modeling, and Rule Creation. When students misbehave, teachers use visual and verbal cues, reminding and redirecting language, increased teacher proximity, and logical consequences to stop the misbehavior and restore positive behavior as quickly as possible so that children can continue to learn and the teacher can continue to teach.

Logical consequences can be utilized both in the classroom and at the school level. There are three types of logical consequences: reparation, loss of privilege, and time-out. With any consequence, it must connect to the following three R's: respectful, related and realistic. All consequences are handled in a respectful manner, where relevant and realistic consequences directly relate to the misbehavior. Alternative strategies may also be utilized as appropriate. These include, but are not limited to the following: buddy teacher, social conferencing, class meetings, written reflections, parent phone contact or conference, referral to School Counselor, lunch/recess detention, after-school detention, in-school suspension, and out-of-school suspension.