

1 The Responsive Classroom approach is grounded in beliefs.

Discipline leads to learning.

- “Discipline” derives from the Latin word “disciplina,” meaning learning.
- When students’ needs for belonging, significance, and fun are met, their energy is more available for learning.

Discipline can be taught.

- Students need direct instruction in prosocial behaviors and opportunities to practice, just like they do in any content area.
- Chip Wood, a Center for Responsive Schools founder, illustrated this concept by sharing: If kids want to be better at the violin, what do we tell them they need to do? Practice. If kids want to learn math facts, what do we tell them they need to do? Practice. However, regarding discipline and behavior, we usually say, Be good, or Behave.
- Responsive Classroom discipline practices help move away from controlling discipline strategies to ones that teach and help build self-control.

Creating a positive community and having engaging academic learning are integral parts of teaching discipline.

2 The Responsive Classroom approach to teaching discipline is proactive.

It begins by building a sense of belonging, significance, and positive connection.

- Teachers and leaders set a positive tone and build positive relationships with students and each other.

The school community sets students up for success by providing direct instruction and guided practice in pro-social skills.

- Proactive strategies include Interactive Modeling, Morning Meeting, Responsive Advisory Meeting, positive teacher language, creating and investing in rules, energizers, brain breaks, interactive learning structures, and more.

To teach discipline, teachers use management strategies that build intrinsic motivation instead of using extrinsic factors and tools.



3 The Responsive Classroom approach to teaching discipline is also reactive.

To reduce the number of problem behaviors and outbursts overall, teachers create a safe and predictable environment, establish a positive community, and address off-task behavior and misbehavior early.

Teachers and leaders help students get back on track with reactive strategies.

- The goal is to quickly stop the misbehavior, restore a safe learning environment, and guide students to learn and grow in their abilities to use positive behavior skills.

Misbehavior will happen in schools, and it encompasses a myriad of behaviors teachers must know how to respond to:

- **Off-task behaviors**—such as quietly blending in, doing nothing, playing with items, or daydreaming—are not always disruptive. If left unchecked, these behaviors could lead to disruptive misbehaviors like blurting out, talking back, getting out of the seat, or becoming defiant. The Responsive Classroom approach addresses off-task behavior with:
 - Proximity
 - Visual cues
 - Reminding language
- **Misbehaviors** are disruptive to learning and do not follow the agreed-upon classroom community rules. There is a known rule, and the student either unconsciously or consciously breaks the rule. The Responsive Classroom approach addresses off-task behavior with:
 - Redirecting language
 - Logical consequences
- **Problem behaviors** reoccur, stop the student's learning, and disrupt the learning of others. They may harm the student's relationships with peers, and they usually stem from long-standing unmet needs or toxic stress. The Responsive Classroom approach addresses problem behavior with:
 - Problem-solving conferences
 - Class meetings
 - Student-to-student conflict resolution
 - Individual written agreements

Our Discipline Framework

- **Emotional outbursts** may indicate that a student has needs outside their control. Responsive Classroom educators respond to outbursts by:
 - Ensuring everyone's safety
 - Preserving the student's dignity
 - Avoiding conversation until the student is calm
 - Following up by establishing a time to check in and suggest strategies to try
- **Toxic stress responses** can occur when a student experiences strong, frequent, and/or prolonged adversity without adult support. The Responsive Classroom approach helps students experiencing toxic stress by:
 - Providing an emotionally safe school and classroom
 - Modeling respect, empathy, and self-control
 - Teaching behavioral, social, and emotional self-control skills
 - Incorporating playfulness into learning
 - Communicating hope

