

# 7 WAYS TO PROMOTE HELPFUL BEHAVIOUR

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"Do you want to eat your granola bar or your apple first?"



## Provide Choices

When possible, give campers a choice between 2 things that are okay for them to do.



## Say it Directly

Always tell kids what they need to do, instead of what not to do. If a kid is climbing on their chair, instead of saying no climbing, try...

"Sit down in the chairs. Feet on the floor."



"Pack up. It's lunch-time."



## Limit Demands

Only tell someone to do something when it is essential, if not offer choice (ex. going to lunch or for safety). And keep it simple, short demands are key.



## Set a Routine & Show It - In Pictures!

Let campers know what to expect and give visual signals when activities ending. Have an extension for everyone instead of unscheduled free time.

## BONUS: use "first, then"

"First we clean up, then we line up."



## BONUS: Make it a game!



"Who can pick up the most from the floor?"



## What's in it for them?

It's hard to do things we don't want to. Get to know campers' likes and include it in activities whenever possible (ex. music, playful movement, or breaks).

## Do It Beforehand

Be on the look out for positive behaviour, even small ones! Catch them doing well and praise it right away. Avoid bribing or threats when challenging behaviour happens.

"Great try! You're working really hard!"



"This feels hard because it is hard! And I can do hard things."



## Model/Show & Reflect

Kids learn how to respond to their feelings by watching others, so you set the tone by showing them how to act when something is hard.

**YOU set the tone of the room.**

**GOAL: prioritize safety, dignity, and creating a positive connection**

# WHAT TO DO WHEN CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR HAPPENS



## 1 See Behaviour as Communication

Ask yourself, what is the behaviour trying to say? What need or want do they have right now? If it's safe to do so try to provide what they need (ex. if the class is loud offering headphones, or if it is bright turning off lights).

## 2 Put It Into Words

Give kids the words to say what they are feeling and what they need. This isn't asking a question or getting them to answer, simply acknowledging what you see, ex. "I see that you don't want to do this" or "I see that you are really hungry".



## 3 Validate Feelings

When kids show challenging behaviour they are having a hard time, things feel overwhelming. It is helpful to validate that, for example saying "I know it's hard to do things we don't want to do" This is not a time to lecture, shame, or negotiate with kids.



## 4 Wait for the Reset

Model staying calm, and avoid making any additional demands. It's okay to give campers time to ride out and feel these feelings, as long as it is safe to do so. Breathe and be present with them until they are calm again. Allow them time to themselves or for a break if needed.

**Note: Kids only learn when they feel calm & happy.**

## 5 Offer Encouragement

Stay kind but firm. Remind the camper of their strengths by saying things like "I'm here to support you" or "I've seen you do hard things before". You want to provide a positive and supportive relationship for the camper, especially when they are struggling.



## BONUS: Be Ready to Move On

Follow their lead and give alternates if they are calm and open.

**GOAL: aim for cooperation NOT control**  
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