

Heartland Juvenile Services Association 2018 Conference

By:
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RESOURCE HANDBOOK

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BRIAN MENDLER

Biographical Information Follow Brian on twitter

Brian Mendler is a K-12 educator and special education teacher with extensive experience working with challenging students in general ed, self-contained, and inclusion settings. He provides staff development training for K-12 educators and youth service workers throughout the world with the focus on how to be successful with even the most difficult students. Mr. Mendler has recently authored a book titled, *That One Kid*. This book provides practical, in-depth ideas for working with unmotivated and disruptive students. He has authored or co-authored four other books, *The Taming of the Crew*, *Power Struggles*, *Strategies for Successful Classroom Management* and the national best seller *Discipline With Dignity 3rd Edition: New Challenges, New Solutions*.

Brian continues to volunteer with the Big Brothers/Big Sisters and Special Olympics programs.

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Why Students Misbehave:

- **Awareness** (literally unaware they were doing it, Pen Tapper)
- **Seeking Attention** (either gets tons of attention at home or no attention at home)...
- **Look “cool” in front of their friends** (Only misbehaves/disrupts when others are around)
- **Lack of feeling Power/Control** (always being told what to do. Eventually becomes frustrated)
- **Lack of feeling Competence/Belonging** (does not do well academically in school. Either does not belong to any group or belonging is defined through disruptive behavior)

Notes:

Prevention Phrases:

“Some of you in this classroom are going to do and say rude, nasty, inappropriate mean things. I know you are. I just want to let you know right now that I WILL NOT always be stopping my lesson to deal with it. It doesn’t mean I didn’t hear it, because probably I did hear it, and it doesn’t mean I am not going to do anything about it, because probably I will do something about it. I believe in consequences and there will be consequences in this classroom this year. However, to some of you in the moment it might look like I am ignoring a certain behavior. That’s how it might look to some of you. But trust me I am not. It just means I think teaching is more important in that moment. Is there anything you do not understand?”

“There are going to be many times this year that I the teacher drop by your desk to deliver a private message that is only for your ears. For example, I might drop by your desk (pick a student) and say, ‘knock it off.’ Then I might continue teaching and I might drop by your desk (pick a different student) and say, ‘you are doing a great job on your homework and I am really proud of how well you are doing in this class. Keep up the amazing work!’ Some of you might wonder what I said and start asking me, ‘what did he say? What did he say? What did he say?’ Trust me when I tell you, I will drop by your desk just as often as I drop by everyone else’s desk. But remember, I will not be sharing that message with the entire group!”

Power Struggles are Always About the Same Thing:

- The student does not want to look bad in front of the class.
- The adult does not want to look bad in front of the class... So we argue.
- Remember to be a “Second to last word person!”
- Try to keep your kids in class.
- Get back to teaching.
- Stop the behavior.
- Remain calm.
- Allow student to *Save Face*.

Notes:

Eight Steps to Defusing any Student:

1. Become a 2nd to last word person.
2. Recognize the battle is about to happen.
3. Use humor.
4. Use PEP (privacy, eye contact, proximity).
5. Listen (hear what the student is saying, not how they are saying it).
6. Acknowledge (let them know you hear them).
7. Agree (let them know that they are or might be right).
8. Defer (we will discuss this at a later time).

Notes:

More Defusing Strategies

1. “WHOA!”- Say loudly to surprise the child and grab their attention
2. WHAT – Let the child know what is about to happen
3. WHY – Let the child know why they are arguing
4. WHEN – Let the child know when a better time would be to re-visit the conversation
5. WALK – Don’t stick around after you said what needed to be said

Oppositional Defiance Patterns:

Remember the Oppositional Rule: These students love to argue just for the sake of arguing.

- **Set clear limits and understand the pattern.**
- **First, they threaten:** (If you don't let me have 15 minutes on the computer I'm going to flip out, etc...).
- **Second, they try to make us feel bad:** (You aren't letting me on the computer because you hate me!).
- **Third, they beg:** (Come on man, please let me go on there. I promise it will be quick!).

Home-life patterns:

- **Always gets their way at home.** (Generally has not learned skills to be successful in school... i.e.: Sharing, waiting their turn, etc...).
- **Threatens mom/dad into getting whatever they want.** (Parents are often scared of their child or feel bad setting limits).
- **Mom/Dad always believe their child and make excuses for him/her.** (This is the parent that goes out of her way to defend the child no matter what he/she does).

Oppositional Strategies:

- **Tell student ahead of time what is going to happen:** “I am going to allow you 10 minutes on the computer. At the 10 minute mark you are going to say ‘let me get like 2 more minutes.’ When I say ‘no’ you are going to get mad and probably threaten me. You might tell me you are going to beat me up. When that does not work you are probably going to try to make me feel bad by telling me I don’t like you, etc... After that you will probably beg me. So you might want to save all of it and just get off after 10 minutes.” Because the student is truly oppositional proving the teacher correct is the worst thing they can do.
- **Stop Threatening:** Threatening oppositional kids rarely works. Most will say, “I don’t care anyway” or “whatever, you can’t make me,” or “go ahead, give me your dumb consequence.”
- **Start Challenging them:** When we challenge someone we basically tell them we do not believe they can do something. Oppositional kids can’t help wanting to prove you wrong. Instead of encouraging them say this: “you know what... I am quite certain your homework will not be done and handed in on time. I guess we will see won’t we?” Just to prove you wrong they have to do it!



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