

**TITLE | BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

CATEGORY | Garden Educator Training

SUB-CATEGORY | Learning &amp; Teaching Outdoors

OVERVIEW | This document outlines a training for garden educators that allows them to practice various classroom management techniques learned in previous trainings, such as **Building a Foundation for Effective Classroom Management, Restorative Practices and Trauma Informed Practices**.

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**Training Rationale:**

Trainings such as Building a Foundation for Effective Classroom Management, Restorative Practices and Trauma Informed Practices provided Education Outside garden educators with a variety of techniques to use when addressing disruptive student behavior. We found it necessary to provide additional time during training for garden educators to practice implementing these various techniques by acting out scenarios that might arise, or had previously arisen, in the outdoor classroom.

**Suggested Time of Year:**

September/October. We recommend leading this training in a series with the aforementioned related trainings, allowing instructors to build on the knowledge gained in each. Please see the *Training Calendar Scope and Sequence*, available in the Table of Contents, for a recommended scope and sequence for these trainings.

**Suggested Workshop Length:**

2 hrs

**Training Objective:**

Educators will practice responding to disruptive student behavior through a variety of scenarios.

**Training Overview:**

This training focuses on how to respond to disruptive behavior during class when prevention strategies have not worked. First, the facilitator acts out a few skits to illustrate different scenarios that might arise in an outdoor classroom and how a garden educator might respond positively. This portion of the training requires 1-3 volunteers from the audience or staff to act as the student(s). Acceptable teacher responses in these skits can vary, as illustrated in the **Behavior Management Response Sheet**. Between each skit, have participants debrief their observations in pairs and discuss other possible responses. The following list includes outlines of five skits:

**- Scenario 1: Student complains that they're hot.**

*Response: Empathize with the student. When a student complains, they are communicating a message to you and want to know you heard it, even if they you can't do anything about it.*

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"I wish we had a swimming pool for you to jump in right now! I wish I had an ice cold smoothie for everyone to drink, and a huge tree with lots of shade."

**- Scenario 2: Student throws a fit when the teacher asks him to put the extra shovel away.**

*Response: Name the impact, state your care, and give the student a choice between two options that work for you.*

*"Alec, when you are using two shovels it makes me worried that you're going to hurt yourself. I don't want you to hurt yourself! You have two choices: you can put one away, or take a 'cool off' in the peace corner. Which would you prefer?"*

**- Scenario 3: Student has been consistently disruptive during class.**

*Response: Give extra attention. All students need love, even the ones that seem like they don't care about your class. This helps build the relationship, which addresses behavior issues down the line.*

*"Alec, I was hoping you could stay after class and help me take care of the plants for a few minutes. I love having your help and I think the plants would love it too. Let's look at this plant. If you rub the leaves, you'll notice they smell like lemons!"*

**- Scenario 4: Student starts acting violent during class.**

*Response: Call for help and explain what's happening to other students. Do not restrain the student acting out.*

*"Alec is having a hard time, so we're going to give him some space. I'm going to go take everyone back inside and Ms. Smith is going to stay with him here in the outdoor classroom so he can cool down."*

**- Scenario 5: Student continues to throw violent fits during class.**

*Response: Remove the student from class temporarily. Name the behavior and impact to the student and propose a solution to the classroom teacher and school administration.*

*[To classroom teacher] "Alec has been having a hard time in garden class. I'm not prepared to give him what he needs, and it's significantly detracting from the experience for everyone else. I would like to have him sit out the next few classes and spend these with the social worker. I can have him come out for his own personal class before everyone else comes out so he still feels included. I will come and get him 15 minutes before everyone else comes out. Can you have the social worker retrieve him from the garden 5 minutes before the rest of the class comes out?"*

*[To Alec] "Alec I love having you in class. I've noticed it's been hard for you to follow rules, so for the next few weeks you will have personal garden classes on your own where we will practice how to be safe in the Outdoor Classroom. I'm very excited to have you in the garden and to take care of the plants with you."*

**Activity Ideas:**

After acting out the five example skits above, have participants form small groups and practice scenarios of their own. Each participant should have a chance to act as the instructor in the skit, while the other participants act as students. After each skit, the group should debrief how the instructor responded with the following guiding questions: "What worked and what didn't?" "What would be optimal?" "What tools from the **Building a Foundation for Effective Classroom Management** or **Restorative Practices** trainings were used, and are there other tools that could be implemented?" The instructor can then act out the skit again, this time with a different response. Provide copies of the **Behavior Management Response Sheet** seen at the bottom of this document for reference during this activity.

Use the following four scenarios:

**- Scenario 1:** A student approaches you during an activity, points at another student and says, "She called me stupid." How do you respond?

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- **Scenario 2:** It's the beginning of class. Your students are seated, but there's a lot of side chatter and you're having a difficult time getting their attention. What do you do?
  - **Scenario 3:** During an activity, a student starts tipping over benches during class and crying/yelling at the top of their lungs. How do you respond?
  - **Scenario 4:** Your last class with this group was chaotic. No one was following directions, several students cried the whole time, and one student was getting into all of your materials and dumping them out. The class is coming out for the next lesson. How would you address them when they arrive in the outdoor classroom?

### Assessing Understanding:

- Exit Ticket: Ask instructors to describe how they responded in their skit scenarios in their small groups. What patterns did they notice in their responses? Did they use any techniques from the **Building a Foundation for Effective Classroom Management** or **Restorative Practices** trainings? What felt successful?
- *Education Outside's Best Practices for Teaching*, available in the Table of Contents, includes sections on behavior management and relationships. We suggest using the best practices rubric as a tool during lesson observations to assess whether or not the instructor is using effective tools for behavior management when interacting with students.

**BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT RESPONSE SHEET:**  
**WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO**

LEVEL 1 DISRUPTIONS: "Common Conflicts"		
TYPE of DISRUPTION	EXAMPLE	RESPONSE
<b>ONE STUDENT:</b>  <b>Complaining</b>	<i>I'm cold/ I don't want to be her partner</i>	<b>EMPATHIZE</b> - When students complain, they are sending you a message that they want you to acknowledge. - "I'm cold!" Response: Create a wish with them. "You sound cold! I wish I had a blanket to wrap you up in and a cup of hot cocoa for you to drink!" - "She won't be my partner:" Response: "That sounds like it doesn't feel good! Let's find someone who would be a better partner for you."
<b>SEVERAL STUDENTS:</b>  <b>Interpersonal conflicts</b>	<i>They hit me/ I don't want to be their partner</i>	<b>STUDENTS RESOLVE</b> - Remind them to try to solve it on their own; often they just wanted to tell an adult and will move on after doing so - Ask them, "Did you tell her how that made you feel?" - Encourage them to Ro Sham Bo to resolve small disputes - Paint a peace path on your yard, and teach them how to use it to help them resolve conflicts on their own. A peace path would include the following statements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I feel _____ when you _____</li> <li>● I hear that you feel _____ when I _____</li> <li>● Next time I'd like you to _____</li> <li>● Next time I agree to _____</li> <li>● (Hug, handshake or high five)</li> </ul>
<b>WHOLE CLASS:</b>  <b>Not Listening</b>	<i>Can't get students' attention</i>	<b>TRY SOMETHING ELSE</b> - Stay calm; students mimic your energy and tone of voice - Sometimes students just need to get some wiggles out before they're able to pay attention. See if you can find a short task that will meet their needs and then they can be ready to re-engage. - Have them "start over" and "practice" routines, like entering the garden or doing their garden jobs until they get it right. - If you find yourself saying the same thing over and over, stop saying it and try something else, or do something unexpected (sing, stand on a chair, whisper). - Positive reinforcement! Notice the students who are exhibiting the behavior you want, call them out by name. "I love that David is raising his hand." You can do this even for tasks students haven't done yet, "Simone, I love it when you wait for me to call on you. Can you try that again?" - Make sure that your lesson contains an inherently interesting component. Though this may seem obvious, when you have a prop/picture/activity that catches their eye, it's much easier to sustain attention. - Name the behavior and the impact. "When you don't listen to the directions, it takes us a lot longer to get through the activity and you all miss out on time to do garden jobs. I want you to get to do garden jobs, but in order to get there, I need you to listen to my directions and help your neighbors stay on task as well."

**LEVEL 2 DISRUPTIONS: “Escalated Conflicts”**

TYPE OF DISRUPTION	EXAMPLE	RESPONSE
<p><b>ONE - SEVERAL STUDENTS:</b></p> <p><b>Disruptions</b></p>	<p><i>Students who are unsafe, who have behavioral meltdowns, who are disrespectful</i></p>	<p><b>GIVE LOVE and ATTENTION and STAY CALM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If a student is doing something unsafe, explain why you don't like the behavior in a calm voice. “When you sit at the top of that wall, it makes me scared that you're going to fall and hurt yourself. I would be so sad if you hurt yourself. I would prefer it if you stood next to me so I know you're safe.”</li> <li>- Neutral attention, “I see you're drawing a yellow flower.” Positive attention can be triggering for some students; neutral observations give attention and love without triggering trauma.</li> <li>-When students are openly disrespectful to your face, you can respond by saying, "I care about you too much to argue." Or, "Bummer," in the most sad and sincere way. This gives the student the message that you care about them without giving them anything to react against.</li> <li>-Continue to work to build the relationship. Send high fliers simple notes, “I missed having you in garden class today! from Teacher ____.” Another option is to keep them after class for a few minutes to do a simple activity together. Make eye contact with them and smile, "Good morning, it's good to see you!" Give them positive attention whenever possible.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ONE - SEVERAL STUDENTS:</b></p> <p><b>Distractions</b></p>	<p><i>Multiple students who can't follow directions, or are triggered</i></p>	<p><b>MEET STUDENTS WHERE THEY'RE AT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build a “peace corner” in your garden where disruptive students can go to cool off. (See <i>DEI: Creating Inclusive Outdoor Classrooms</i> linked in the Table of Contents for more information.)</li> <li>-Scaffold to accommodate kids who are easily triggered. For example, if a student throws a fit when you ask them to pass a bowl during a cooking lesson, maybe get two bowls and let them continue holding one.</li> <li>-Reduce complexity of task/set students up for success. Sometimes students act out because they cannot complete the task, and get frustrated.</li> <li>-Co-regulation: pair several very calm students (and ideally those with social clout) with the one triggered student.</li> <li>- Following directions takes cognitive work: Have soothing activities that are inherently interesting for students who can't handle complex tasks that day (e.g. seed sorting, digging, nature art).</li> <li>-Give them a choice between two options that work well for you. “Would you like to give the ball to me or put it away yourself?”</li> </ul>
<p><b>WHOLE CLASS</b></p> <p><b>Not listening + Chaos</b></p>	<p><i>Whole class isn't listening, too many fires at once</i></p>	<p><b>BUILD SAFETY AND PREDICTABILITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Prep consequences. “If X happens, we're going to do Y.” (If people start talking too much, we're going to take garden breaths.)</li> <li>-Know when to engage and when not to; sometimes ignoring a minor disruption is the best approach to conserve your energy and keep the class moving.</li> <li>-Practice basic skills. Play the game <i>Match Me</i>, which consists of asking students to do what you're doing without using words (A variation of Simon Says). Learn one tool/skill at a time.</li> <li>-In chaotic settings, explain what you're going to do, not what you want them to do. Instead of saying, “Everyone go to the pollinator garden,” you announce, “I'm going to go to the pollinator garden.” This helps students retain a sense of autonomy, and makes it seem like whatever you're doing is exciting and interesting.</li> </ul>

**LEVEL 3 DISRUPTIONS: "When you need help"**

<b>TYPE of DISRUPTION</b>	<i>EXAMPLE</i>	RESPONSE
<p><b>ONE - SEVERAL STUDENTS</b></p> <p><b>Consistent disruption</b></p>	<p><i>Consistent unsafe behaviors</i></p>	<p><b>GET SUPPORT FOR YOUR HIGH FLIERS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Though it never feels good, you can try telling teachers that consistently disruptive students don't get to participate in garden class for several weeks. This way class is successful for everyone else. If you have the capacity you can:</li> <li>-Hold make-up garden classes with disruptive students before everyone comes out. If you're busy, another time could also work. This only needs to be 5-10 minutes to be special. You can practice routines with them and give them lots of focused attention.</li> <li>-Have disruptive students go and hang out with another adult in the school that they have a relationship with, e.g. principal, social worker, afterschool staff during your normal class time.</li> <li>-Be careful with messaging about why the student is missing garden class. You can frame it as a "personal garden lesson." It is not a punishment; you are helping these students be successful.</li> <li>-Continue to build a positive relationship with the disruptive student(s) on the side by sending them notes, making eye contact, giving them attention.</li> <li>-If the practice lessons go well, you can re-introduce the disruptive students back into your regular class.</li> </ul>
<p><b>IN THE MOMENT</b></p> <p><b>Violence</b></p>	<p><i>Kid is throwing rocks in class</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SEPARATE STUDENTS TO ENSURE SAFETY</li> <li>-Explain what's happening to other students, "We're going to leave the room so _____ can have some space."</li> <li>-Get support from your school. Have phone numbers of who to call if you have serious issues coming up with students (secretary, behavior support, etc.). If your school has walkie-talkies, get one and use it. You can also send a pair of students you trust to the office to find a specific adult or alert the principal's office.</li> </ul>
<p><b>PREVENTION and REPAIR</b></p> <p><b>Violence</b></p>	<p><i>A recent fight in class; what you'd do before next lesson</i></p>	<p><b>MAKE A PLAN</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Make a plan with the teachers of your difficult classes. "This class has been difficult. What else can I do when things get chaotic? If you don't have an idea, what can I do to support you?"</li> <li>-Talk to the teacher about how to talk about high-flier to other kids. For example, if _____ is having a meltdown, they might suggest you say to the rest of the class, "I don't think _____ wants to participate today but we're going to take a brain break so we can stay on track."</li> <li>-After difficult episodes, prepare kids for a contingency plan the next time you meet for class, "Last week we had a hard lesson. This week if it's hard again, we're going to _____." (take a brain break, etc.)</li> <li>-Join classes' community circles at the beginning and end of the day whenever possible, especially for your most disruptive classes. (For more on community circles, see the <i>Restorative Practices</i> training overview.)</li> </ul>