

Overview

Karrie considers her routines to be the heart of her classroom. From the way she structures the beginning of the day to her use of classroom management charts, Karrie's rules and routines set a solid foundation for a classroom in which children can learn and play.

The classroom management charts featured in Karrie's classroom:

- Help Karrie manage her classroom.
- Order her class's daily routine.
- Create a language-rich classroom environment in which children interact with print in meaningful ways.

In this activity, you will choose a new routine to develop and implement in your classroom, either a new first-thing-in-the-morning routine or one of the classroom management charts highlighted below (i.e., Helper Chart, Class Rules, or Daily Schedule Chart).

NOTE: Even if your classroom management practice already includes all of the routines and charts discussed in this activity, please take the time to read through the instructions and How-To Sheets below. You might find ideas and suggestions in these activities that will help you enhance your current routines and systems.

Objectives

- To introduce a new routine to your classroom or enhance a routine you're already using.
- To establish routines in a reflective and purposeful way.

Materials

- Depending on what you choose to work on in your classroom, the materials you will need will vary.
- How-To Sheets 1-3, containing instructions and ideas for developing a Helper Chart, Class Rules, and a Daily Schedule Chart

Instructions

1. Choose a Project
 - Read through the projects included in this activity, and select the one that you think will contribute the most to your classroom.

2. Put the Plan into Action

- Follow the directions provided in the accompanying How-To Sheets. The materials you will need will vary depending on which project you choose.
- Remember that it is important to set routines that are useful, relevant, and meaningful (and to avoid creating rules and routines for their own sake). Make sure that any routine, chart, or new idea you introduce into your classroom is appropriate for and specific to your classroom.

3. Prepare to Share

- Reflect on your experiences with this exercise and have your thoughts and notes ready to share with other teachers taking this course in *Share Ideas*.

Design Charts and Routines

How-To Sheet 1: Helper Chart

Children enjoy helping out; it gives them the opportunity to engage in and take responsibility for their classroom. But remember as you brainstorm jobs for your Helper Chart: It is only useful for every child to have a job if every child has a *meaningful* job.

Materials

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Poster board
- Velcro® (or paper and staples to make pockets)

Instructions

1. Gather the materials listed above. Work with the children to create a list of ways that they might help in the classroom. You might say, “I need some help getting things done in the classroom. Let’s think together about some jobs that you could do to help me.”
 - Have the children brainstorm jobs.
 - Write down their suggestions.
2. After class, make the Helper Chart:
 - Come up with a system for rotating jobs so that each child will have a chance to do each job.
 - The rotation system should not be based on behavior or performance.
 - If possible, every child should always have a job.
 - List each job with a picture icon.
 - Make a laminated name card for each child (with a picture).
 - Helpers will place their name card next to their job title. (The name card can be adhered using Velcro® or by making little pockets out of paper.)
3. Introduce the Helper Chart to the children, and teach them how to use it!

Design Charts and Routines How-To Sheet 2: Class Rules

In this activity, you will create meaningful rules that support learning and build a classroom environment that is trusting and respectful. Remember that the ultimate goal of all class rules is to teach children to manage their own behavior, to learn to set and follow their own rules.

Materials

- Chart paper
- Markers

Instructions

1. Explain the purpose and meaning of rules to children. Point out, in terms they can understand, that rules help the classroom run smoothly and ensure that everyone is treated with warmth and respect. Then say, “Tell me some rules that you think will make our classroom better.”
2. The children brainstorm responses, and you take notes.
 - If children are brainstorming rules in the negative (e.g., Don’t Run, Don’t Yell, etc.), guide them through the process of translating the rules into positive language (e.g., We Walk, We Use Inside Voices, etc.).
3. Limit the final list of class rules to four or five statements—too many rules can be overwhelming!
4. Write out the rules on a poster board. Make sure to use pictures or icons next to each rule so that preliterate children can recognize and remember the rules on their own.

Design Charts and Routines

How-To Sheet 3: Daily Schedule Chart

With a consistent daily schedule posted in the classroom, children know what to expect and have a visual plan to refer to throughout the day.

Materials

- Poster board (or Pocket Chart)
- Markers

Instructions

1. List each activity and the time it begins.
 - Make sure to use pictures or icons next to each activity so that preliterate children can recognize and remember them on their own. These icons could be photographs of the children doing each activity.
2. Introduce the chart during circle time. Throughout the day, as activities change, draw attention to the chart and ask the children, “What do we do next?”