

Substitute Teacher

7th edition

Handbook



Proven behavior
management skills and
teaching strategies

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ISBN: 978-0-9821657-8-2 • Substitute Teacher Handbook • 7th Edition

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What It's All About

Preface



Substitute teaching is an important educational component in our schools. It is a rare teacher who never needs a substitute for either personal or professional reasons. Research has shown that in the United States a student spends over one full year with a substitute teacher before graduating from high school. Principals, teachers, parents, and students value good substitute teachers who have a significant and positive impact on the quality of education while the permanent teacher is away.

You can become an expert in substitute teaching even though you may not be a certified teacher. Successful teachers are those who have either consciously, or subconsciously, developed the skills that make them effective in the classroom. In other words, by learning certain skills, techniques, and methods, you can be a successful teacher.

Considerable time has been devoted to researching, documenting, and field-testing the ideas and strategies presented. Most of the theory behind these skills and strategies has been intentionally left out. The content has been compressed to specific do's and don'ts for successful teaching. Applying and improving these skills and strategies are key to your enjoyment and satisfaction with substitute teaching.

Research conducted by the Substitute Teaching Institute has identified the following:

- *The number one request by substitute teachers is that they learn skills to successfully manage classroom/behavior situations.*
- *The number one trait of a successful substitute teacher is the use of a **SubPack** or resource kit.*
- *The number one request by permanent teachers and school personnel is that substitute teachers be prepared and professional.*
- *The number one request by students is that substitute teachers present stimulating lessons and exciting fill-in activities.*

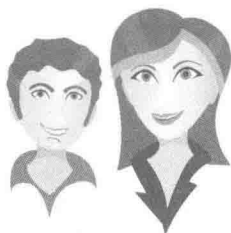
For information on
substitute skills
visit: www.stedi.org

Useful Icons

The icons (pictures) throughout the book are used to give visual recognition to tips, activities, and chapters. These icons will enable you to quickly locate each section and better understand what you are reading.

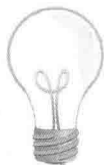
One Professional to Another

This icon presents key points in the section you are reading. By reviewing each box, you can quickly identify topics covered in the chapter.



Substitute Teacher Handbook

- Classroom Management
- Teaching Strategies
- The Professional Substitute Teacher
- Special Education
- Other Things You Should Know
- Fill-In Activities



Remember

The remember sections point out important items or ideas you need to retain and take into consideration as you acquire new skills.

Handbook Overview

Preface

The preface is an introduction to this handbook, its purpose, and contents.

Chapter One: Classroom Management

Learning takes place as teachers systematically and skillfully manage the learning environment. This chapter contains the four principles of human behavior and the five key skills necessary for success in the classroom. Included in the chapter are ideas for starting the day, maintaining a risk free environment, and suggestions for managing challenging scenarios.

Chapter Two:

Teaching Strategies, Skills, and Suggestions

Chapter two contains methods for presenting the permanent teacher's lesson plans. Suggestions are given for how to approach unfamiliar topics and how to involve students in active learning. There are also ideas for low cost/no cost rewards and motivators, and suggestions for building a resource kit or *SubPack* with teaching aids.

- Brainstorming
- Concept Mapping
- K-W-L
- Questions for Higher Level Thinking
- Cooperative Learning
- Using Audio Visual Materials Effectively

Chapter Three:

The Professional Substitute Teacher

Permanent teachers and district personnel unanimously request that substitute teachers be professional. Chapter three outlines aspects of being a professional substitute teacher that begin well before the bell rings.

- At Home
- Prior to Entering the Classroom
- In the Classroom Before School
- Throughout the Day
- At the End of the Day

Chapter Four:

Special Education

The special education setting is varied and can be very rewarding. The substitute teacher in special education classrooms can experience success by understanding and implementing the skills outlined in chapter four.

- Having an Attitude of Respect
- Working with Paraeducators
- Being Familiar with Special Education Laws and Terms
- Instructional Consistency
- Adapting Lessons and Activities
- Knowing Students and Meeting All Their Needs

Chapter Five: Other Things You Should Know

Other things you should know about include:

- Safe Schools Policy
- First Aid and Safety
- Legal Aspects of the Job
- Child Abuse Reporting
- Sexual Harassment
- Evacuation and Other Out-of-Classroom Activities

The information in this chapter should only be used to supplement local school district policies and procedures.

Chapter Six: Fill-In Activities

This chapter provides many lesson and activity ideas for your *SubPack* that provide hours of meaningful learning. A detailed *Reference Guide for Activities* listing individual activities is found on pages 104-106. Chapter six has been divided into three sections according to the type of activity:

Five-Minute Fillers

Whole-class critical thinking activities for those extra five minutes that occur throughout the day.

Early Finishers

Independent activities for students who finish assignments early.

Short Activities

Teacher-directed activities and lessons. This section is organized by subject and includes lessons that can be taught in an hour or less.

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| • Art | • Language Arts |
| • Critical Thinking | • Math |
| • Foreign Language | • Music |
| • Geography | • Science |
| • Government / History | • Speech / Drama |



Special Needs

Special Needs Adaptation

This icon highlights suggested adaptations for Short Activities that address the unique learning requirements of students with special needs.

Accelerated Adaptation

This icon suggests modifications to accommodate the needs of advanced learners.



Accelerated

Contributing Authors

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Mr. Smith founded the Substitute Teaching Institute (STI) at Utah State University (USU) in 1995 to research best practices in substitute teaching management. STI spun off from USU in 2008 as the Substitute Teaching Division, STEDI.org which continues the mission of “Revolutionizing the Role of Substitute Teaching into an Opportunity of Educational Excellence,” with Mr. Smith as its Director.

Cynthia Murdock

Ms. Murdock served as the curriculum development director at STI/USU. Her teacher-leader ability, along with experience as a substitute and permanent teacher provided a plethora of ideas and materials for teaching. She has written and edited the SubExchange newsletter, several Substitute Teacher Handbooks, and has also been a professional development instructor.

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Special thanks to: Diane Iverson, Barbara Haines, Blaine Sorenson, Robert L. Morgan, and Jessica Smith.
Graphics and formatting by Donny Merrill



Remember

The information in this handbook is not intended to replace the rules and regulations of the district. Use only those suggestions and activities from this handbook that do not conflict with the district’s policies and established practices.

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Classroom Management



Classroom and behavior management skills are essential for success in the classroom. Chapter One explains four principles of human behavior, five management skills, and various strategies to help you effectively manage student behavior. The behavior management skills and strategies outlined are also effective in at-risk and special needs classes. Developed by Dr. Glenn Latham, the skills presented are statistically proven to prevent 94 percent of inappropriate student behavior and provide strategies to handle the remaining 6 percent.

As you come to understand and implement the skills and strategies presented, you will increase your ability to:

- Effectively get and keep students on task
- Maintain a risk-free environment
- Communicate expectations
- Respond non-coercively to negative student behavior

Take notice that learning this material is not easy, at least at first. It takes time and practice like learning any new skill. Does knowing the state motor vehicle rules of the road mean you can drive a car safely? No, it takes effort and training. Just like with driving, classroom management will not come naturally or be easy at first, but it can become second nature and it is worth the effort.

"Every learner who enters our classroom should leave a better and more able person. When the learning environment is managed properly, this is more a possibility than it is a simple ideal."

– Dr. Glenn Latham,
Professor of education
and a behavior analyst

Register for free at
STEDI.org to gain
access to online
resources for substitute
teachers.

Four Principles of Human Behavior

Principles are truths not bound by age, time, location or situation. Once familiar with these specific principles, you will see them illustrated all around you – between parents and children, among adults, in retail stores, in schools, in churches, on playgrounds, and at family events. It is impossible to write a book that covers each classroom scenario an educator may encounter. However, when an educator knows and applies principles, the likelihood of appropriate student behavior will increase.

Principle One:

Behavior is largely a product of its immediate environment.

Students behave or misbehave due to what is happening in the classroom more than the influence of outside factors. If the teacher changes the environment in the classroom, the behavior of the students will change.

Too often in public education, teachers blame a student's inappropriate behavior on inalterable variables. The first principle of human behavior states that it doesn't matter if a student comes from a bad home life or was diagnosed with a behavioral disorder. If a student is acting out, there is something in the classroom environment that is influencing his behavior. You as the teacher control that environment.

Example:

Outside the Classroom: If a car (student) travels along the same bumpy road everyday and results in needed repairs, then no matter how much money or time is spent fixing the car, unless the road is fixed (teacher skills), the car (student) will always need repairs.

Inside the Classroom: The same students can behave perfectly for one teacher and completely disrespect another teacher.

Principle Two:

Behavior is strengthened or weakened by its consequences.

We do what we do, because we get what we get when we do it.

When students are persistently disruptive or not paying attention, examine what the immediate consequence is. Teacher attention is a powerful motivator for most students. If a teacher pays more attention to students who are misbehaving than students who behave properly, inappropriate behavior will likely continue, and even increase.

Example:

Outside the Classroom: At the grocery store a child doesn't get the candy he wants and throws a temper tantrum. His mom gives him the candy to make him be quiet. The child has now learned a valuable lesson: he knows if he doesn't get what he wants; he can throw a tantrum and get it.

In the Classroom: A student yells out the answer to a question and the teacher acknowledges his answer, the next time a student wants to answer a question, he will most likely yell out the answer again. However, if a student yells out the answer and the teacher doesn't acknowledge it and calls on a student who is raising her hand, the first student will know he needs to raise his hand in order to get the teacher's attention.

Principle Three:**Behavior ultimately responds better to positive than to negative consequences.**

People respond better to positive encouragement than negative processes.

By genuinely reinforcing appropriate behavior many undesirable behaviors will become extinct and appropriate behaviors will increase. Think of the tasks you do every day; if someone thanks you for what you do or compliments you on how well you did it, it's more likely you'll continue similar behavior.

Example:

Outside the Classroom: In athletics there is a phenomenon called: home field advantage. When an athletic team is playing in their own stadium, court, or field and in front of their own fans, they have an increased likelihood of winning the game.

In the Classroom: A teacher was trying to line up her students. She kept asking Caden to get in line. He wouldn't go. After asking three times, she changed her tactic. She thanked Sophia and Mark for getting in line quickly. After watching the exchange Caden jumped in line almost immediately. After 30 seconds, she then thanked Caden for standing quietly in line.

Principle Four:**Whether a behavior has been punished or reinforced is known only by the course of that behavior in the future.**

If an appropriate behavior is repeated, it too has been reinforced. If a negative behavior is repeated, it too has been reinforced. If a negative behavior has discontinued, it has been properly disciplined.

The only way to tell if a response to a behavior is punishing or reinforcing is to watch what happens to the behavior in the future. What is a punishment to one person may reinforce and perpetuate a behavior in another person.

Example:

Outside the Classroom: Robyn walked into the bathroom to find her husband cleaning it. She immediately gave her husband a huge hug and thanked him for making the bathroom look so good. The next Saturday the bathroom was cleaned again.

In the Classroom: Two students are talking in the back of the classroom and not working on their assignments. The teacher moves closer to the students. One student stops talking and begins working. The other student keeps talking. The teacher realizes that proximity wasn't a punishment to the second student and tries another strategy. The teacher quietly says to the student, "What do I expect you to be doing now?" The student replies that she doesn't understand the assignment. The teacher then assists the student, as the rest of the class continues working.

These four principles of human behavior are essential for success in the classroom. It will take practice to gain a full understanding of these principles. For educators, this is a call to action. As we get better at controlling our own behavior, student behavior will improve.

Five Skills for Effective Behavior Management

The following skills for managing student behavior are based on the four principles of human behavior previously discussed. Understanding and effectively implementing these skills will help prevent unnecessary classroom management problems and prepare you to handle challenging situations that may occur.

Skill One: The ability to get and keep students on task.

Skill Two: The ability to maintain a high rate of positive teacher-to-student interaction and risk-free student response opportunities.

Skill Three: The ability to teach expectations.

Skill Four: The ability to respond non-coercively.

Skill Five: The ability to avoid being trapped.

Skill One:

The ability to get and keep students on task.

Students cannot learn if they are not actively engaged in learning activities. To be actively engaged in assigned activities is commonly referred to as being on task. When students are on task, they will learn more and create fewer classroom management problems. Getting and keeping students on task can usually be accomplished by using two simple strategies:

1. Begin instruction or activities immediately.
2. Manage student behavior by walking around.

Starting the Day

- Greet students at the door
- Direct students to a starter activity
- Take roll based on the seating chart while students are working
- Introduce yourself as the teacher
- Proceed with the written lesson plan

Begin Instruction or Activities Immediately

Some permanent teachers may leave instructions for a starter activity for students to complete at the beginning of class. If such an activity is not outlined in the lesson plan, prepare an activity that students can work on as soon as they walk into the classroom. Many effective substitute teachers start the day by having students make name tags, help construct a seating chart, if one was not left, write in a student journal, engage in silent reading, or participate in one of the Five-Minute Filler activities found in Chapter Six.

Starter activities serve two purposes in the classroom: first, they get students actively engaged in a learning activity, thereby decreasing the opportunity for inappropriate behavior. Second, they provide the time for you, as the substitute teacher, to take roll and get materials ready so you have a smooth transition to the next activity.

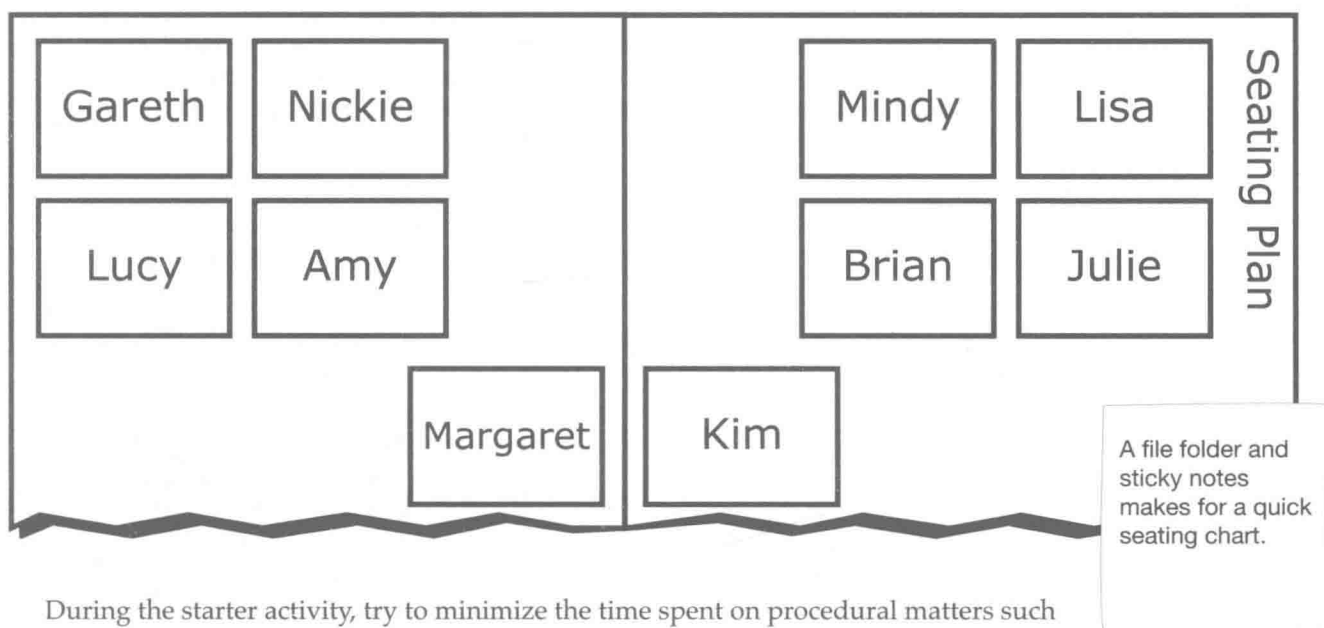
The shorter the time between the beginning of class and when students are actively involved in a productive activity the better. This eliminates down time/wasted time when opportunities for students to engage in inappropriate behavior increases.

Nametags

Nametags may be worn or kept on students' desks throughout the day. Using commercial name tags, adhesive file folder labels, or strips of masking tape are all effective possibilities. Name tags are a tremendous help when facilitating class discussions and managing student behavior.

Seating Chart

A seating chart is a valuable tool you can use throughout the day to take roll and assist you in calling students by name. Sometimes you may not be able to locate a seating chart, or the seating chart left by the permanent teacher may not be current. If this is the case, quickly make a seating chart using small Post-It Notes® and a file folder from your **SubPack**. Distribute Post-It Notes® to students and have them write their name on it. After students have done this, arrange the names on the file folder in the same configuration as the desks in the classroom. The few minutes it takes to establish an accurate seating chart at the beginning of class is well worth the benefits it provides.



During the starter activity, try to minimize the time spent on procedural matters such as taking roll and lunch count. Dragging these activities out simply provides time for students to get bored and start behaving inappropriately. After students have had time to complete their starter activity, outline for students the schedule of activities for the day.

Now is the time to quickly review expectations, explain consequences of student behavior, and introduce any incentives or early finisher activities you will be using. Share any information left by the permanent teacher regarding what they should accomplish during the day, and then get students involved in the next learning activity as quickly as possible.

The sooner you get students on task, the easier it is to keep them actively engaged in constructive activities. Do not allow yourself to be led off task by student protests and long, useless discussions.

If students complain, respond with empathy, understanding, and firmness. Don't, however, compromise your expectations or waste instructional time being overly sympathetic.

Students Getting the Teacher Off Task

Teacher: "Please take out your reading books and read silently at your desk for the next 20 minutes."

Students: "Reading is boring. We never read before lunch time."

Teacher: "You know, when I was your age, I thought reading was boring too. Sometimes I used to just sit at my desk, hold my book open, and pretend to read. Have any of you ever done anything like that?"

Teacher Getting Students On Task

Teacher: *"Please take out your reading books and read silently at your desk for the next 20 minutes."*

Students: *"Reading is boring. We never read before lunch time."*

Teacher: *"I understand that silent reading may not be your favorite activity and this may not be the way Mrs. Jones does it, however, today we are going to read silently, at our desks, for the next 20 minutes. Please take out your reading books and begin."*

Manage by Walking Around

The easiest and most effective strategy for keeping students on task is for the teacher to walk around the classroom in a random pattern. By moving about the room, you can observe the progress of students, acknowledge and reinforce appropriate behavior, and manage off-task behavior with proximity.

There is a direct relationship between how close a teacher is to students and how well students behave. Wear comfortable shoes and plan to be on your feet all day monitoring, assisting, providing positive reinforcement, and using proximity, or nearness to students, to keep students on task.

Do not underestimate the power of the proximity strategy; you will be amazed at how many negative behavior problems will be taken care of just by placing yourself nearer to a student. In most cases, talking to the poorly behaving student will not be required. However, what is required is continually reinforcing on-task behavior with verbal praise.

By walking around the classroom, instead of reading a book at the permanent teacher's desk, you are showing the students that it is important to be on task, not just telling them. The teacher should be the most on-task person in the classroom.

Other On-Task Strategies

In some circumstances additional strategies are needed to get and keep students on task. Sometimes an event outside the classroom, such as an assembly, fire drill, or rousing game of soccer at recess, makes it difficult to get and keep students on task. On other occasions the entire class may be off task or out of control for no apparent reason at all.

Most times the permanent teacher may have techniques, such as silent signals or prompt/response procedures that can be implemented to get the attention of, or refocus, the class. If such techniques have been outlined in the lesson plans or explained by a student, don't hesitate to implement them. If this is unsuccessful, or you don't know what the permanent teacher usually does, the following strategies will get the attention of the entire class.

STRATEGY ► Refocusing the Class: Captivate and Redirect

Often the best way to deal with major disruptions such as assemblies or a fire drill is to minimize the event by capturing and redirecting students' attention. For example, complete an activity that requires mental concentration, such as a Five-Minute Filler or Critical Thinking Activity from this handbook. Involving students in an exciting and mentally challenging learning activity will help them settle back down into the routine of the day.

STRATEGY ► Whisper

Your first instinct in a situation where the entire class is noisy and off task may be to raise your voice above the noise level of the room and demand attention. However, this can incur some unwelcome side effects, such as the students hearing you speak loudly and assuming it is all right for them to raise their voices as well. A productive strategy is to whisper.