

STRICTLY POSITIVE

a Resource Guide
on Positive Disciplinary Practices



MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION

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TIPS TO PROMOTE POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

**HIGHLIGHT/POINT OUT THE POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR
DISPLAYED BY THE CHILD**

**INTERACT AND ENGAGE RESPECTFULLY WITH
THE STUDENTS AT ALL TIMES**

**COMMUNICATE YOUR EXPECTATIONS CLEARLY USING SIMPLE
LANGUAGE AND EXPRESSIONS THE STUDENTS UNDERSTAND**

**USE HUMOUR OR DISTRACTION TO STEER THE STUDENTS
INTO A MORE POSITIVE UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONSE**

GET STUDENTS IN A COOPERATIVE MODE FIRST

**GIVE OPTIONS, AND ENCOURAGE PERSONAL
AND GROUP DECISION MAKING**

ALLOW FOR NATURAL CONSEQUENCES, BUT SAFE ONES

**DO NOT TAKE THE STUDENTS' DEFIANCE AND
OR MISBEHAVIOUR PERSONALLY**

**RECOGNISE THE STUDENTS FOR THEIR EFFORT
AND NOT NECESSARILY FOR CORRECTNESS
(GETTING IT RIGHT AND ACTING RIGHT)**

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I. MESSAGES



HONOURABLE ANDREW HOLNESS,
MINISTER OF EDUCATION

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION

The Ministry of Education is charged with the awesome responsibility of contributing to the development of disciplined, productive and socially responsible citizens.

In order for the education system to fully deliver this outcome, we must make sure all facets of the system, including our disciplinary practices, are consistent in how they prepare students to take their place in the world. I am of the belief that our children indeed live what they learn and in many instances we are teaching anti-social behaviours and violence by our use of corporal punishment to correct maladaptive behaviours in students. In 2008, I invited all Jamaicans, especially educators, to join with me in denouncing the use of corporal punishment as a means of correcting behaviour. As we move to eliminate this practice from our schools, it will be supported by legislation and will form a part of the Safe Schools Policy. While we move to legislate, the Ministry of Education is seeking to educate teachers, parents, students and the entire community through a public education campaign, training sessions and the provision of educational material.

I am very aware that some educators are already engaged in using alternative methods of discipline to promote positive behaviours in our students. I am urging greater use of positive and guided actions to get our children to function optimally. I am confident that this journey will continue and we will see further examples of excellence as we do our part to make our education system and the educational experience we give to our children a first class one.

The Ministry of Education is committed to creating an education system that uses positive discipline to mold students who are academically sound, technically competent, and are of sound moral and ethical character. I know we can get to this goal if we choose to nurture our children and provide them with the opportunities to grow and excel.

I thank you!



MESSAGE FROM
THE JAMAICA TEACHERS'
ASSOCIATION

The Jamaica Teachers' Association joins all well-thinking Jamaicans who have expressed deep concern at the escalating levels of indiscipline in our society, and as a result our schools. This we recognize is negatively impacting on the morale of the teaching and learning experience, ultimately compromising the educational outcomes that we expect of our children. We are also aware that many of our traditional interventions have failed to yield the desired behavioural outcomes.

We commend this initiative that seeks to make a difference in a constantly changing atmosphere of what is perceived as acceptable conduct. This inclusive approach that is dubbed as "strictly positive" and approximates an understanding of the cultural mores of today's youth is one that will constantly need rethinking and reshaping in order to remain relevant and effective. We, therefore, endorse a well-coordinated child-centred approach that clearly communicates the importance of taking responsibility for each other's welfare. It is imperative that we create such an atmosphere that this becomes a reality. We are confident that this will be an integral feature of this programme, hence its expected lasting effect.

It is with this in mind that the JTA is supportive of the initiatives by both UNICEF and the Ministry of Education in assisting to guide the process of much needed behaviour change in our students. We encourage our teachers to be creative in their use of new approaches to capturing the imagination of our children as we move to influence their value systems. We also invite all other stakeholders to join in this venture as together we will make the difference that Jamaica needs.

All the very best from the Jamaica Teachers' Association.

Nadine A. Molloy, JP
Immediate Past President



MESSAGE FROM THE UNICEF
JAMAICA REPRESENTATIVE

UNICEF is delighted to partner with the Ministry of Education on the Child Friendly Schools Initiative. One of the measures of a child friendly school is the use of positive disciplinary practices which guide students toward acceptable behaviours and life skills. Used effectively, positive discipline has major benefits for the academic, social and psychological development of our students and, ultimately, will ensure that these students grow to be responsible citizens.

Managing discipline is a core function of teaching and learning. Through a positive disciplinary approach, teachers view 'misbehaviours' as opportunities to further aid the development of the child. Disciplinary methods should not be used to hurt but rather to impart valuable life-long skills and lessons.

As signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Jamaica is obligated to protect children from all forms of abuse, regardless of the setting or the purpose for which it is used. By Article 28 (2) of the CRC, Jamaica commits to "take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity."

UNICEF is proud to support the Ministry of Education in equipping schools to better use positive discipline, and looks forward to continued partnership in making Jamaican schools child friendly.

Robert Fuderich
Representative

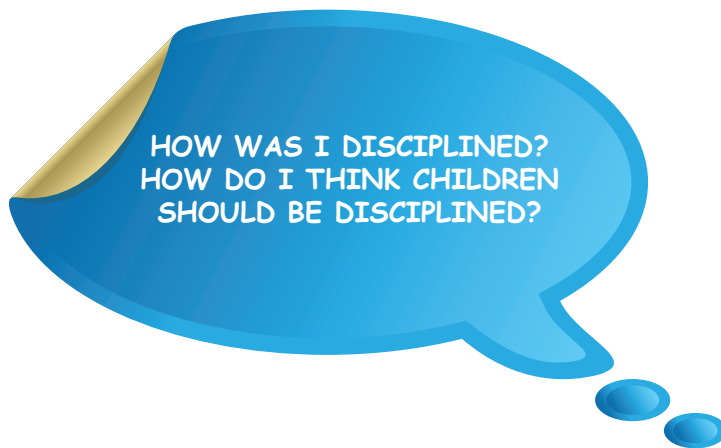
II. PREFACE

The Ministry of Education has taken a policy position to end the use of corporal punishment of all forms in schools. In support of this decision, and given the culturally embedded nature of corporal punishment in our society and schools, the Ministry is supporting the abolition of corporal punishment by providing information and training to guide school personnel on alternatives to corporal punishment.

It is against this background that this resource guide to support positive discipline in Jamaica's schools is being produced. Its purpose is to provide easy access to information for school personnel, especially teachers, and Ministry of Education officials to support them in using alternatives to corporal punishment. The document should therefore serve as a guide to help create and maintain environments that support positive discipline in schools.

Throughout the document, the reader will be provoked to reflect on current practices with a view to engaging in practices that are more aligned to promoting positive discipline. Activities are included to help concretize concepts and provide material for teaching purposes. The document tries to ensure that issues of loss, grief, trauma and gender related matters are carefully articulated as often times they are factors to consider as we move towards embracing a positive approach to discipline.

Bearing in mind that attitudes towards corporal punishment are firmly grounded in the mores of our society, the Ministry of Education will take a holistic approach to the issue. We will align the training of school personnel (teachers, deans of discipline and guidance counselors), with a public educational campaign and provide materials for parents on positive methods of discipline. It is hoped that this holistic approach to the change process will contribute to consistency in the use of alternative methods of discipline at both school and home.



III. DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

DISCIPLINE

- Discipline is a process that enables children to become social, productive and responsible adults.
- Discipline is maintained by a set of rules that governs behaviour and conduct with the aim of developing character.

PUNISHMENT

Imposing external controls by force on students to change their behaviours. Punishment has some immediate satisfaction for the punisher, but this is offset by long term disadvantages for the child. It entails physical and emotional ill-treatment that harms the child's health, development and or dignity.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

- Inflicting pain or discomfort intentionally and or using physical force to stop or change behaviour.
- Examples of corporal punishment in schools are: flogging, beating, hitting, spanking, kicking, caning, pinching, squeezing (hand or other body parts), and “conking” (using knuckles to hit on the head). Corporal punishment also includes forcing children to: kneel for extended periods, stand/kneel in the sun, and deprivation of basic needs (such as meals and access to bathrooms).

VIOLENT PSYCHOLOGICAL PUNISHMENT

- The use of guilt, humiliation, the withdrawal of love or emotional manipulation to control children.
- It includes labelling, name calling, cursing, indifference, and constant reminder of past misbehaviours or indiscretion.

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

Positive discipline is an approach to discipline in which all efforts at managing behaviours contribute positively to the child's development.

- Positive discipline uses mis-behaviour as teaching and learning opportunities.
- It involves adults setting positive examples in their actions and eliminating negative communication (such as shrugs or commands) and replacing it with positive/engaging communication (such as “how could you do it differently?”).



WHICH DEFINITION BEST
DESCRIBES THE PRACTICES AT
MY SCHOOL?

Learn More:

Visit: www.nasponline.org/aboutnasp/pospapereorpunish.aspx

Read: The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). (2006, July) Position Statement on Corporal Punishment in Schools

1. CORPORAL PUNISHMENT and the DEVELOPING CHILD

The developmental stages of school-aged children are trust versus mistrust, autonomy or doubt, initiative, industry versus inferiority, identity versus role confusion.³

Stages of Development	Effects of Corporal Punishment	Teacher / Caregivers Role
By school age, the child should have developed basic trust.	Corporal punishment erodes a child's basic trust, stimulates mistrust, anger, and resentment.	Help the students to see the caregiver as someone they can trust
By school age the child should also have developed a feeling of autonomy (this increases with age).	Corporal punishment slows the development of autonomy and produces some degree of shame and doubt.	Accept growth and development and learn to delegate some control to the students.
By school age most children have achieved some degree of initiative.	Corporal punishment is demeaning, inhibits initiative, and stimulates the development of shame, guilt, anger and the wish to retaliate.	Allow the children to develop independently while modeling optimal behavioral standards.
The school-age child must learn to develop industry versus inferiority or the ability to learn, work and accomplish.	Corporal punishment interferes by producing in the child feelings of inferiority, helplessness, and inability to accomplish. The adult is viewed as intruder rather than learning facilitator.	Accept some degree of rejection and loss of control yet manage to be there when needed without intruding unnecessarily.
The school-age child explores roles and relationships and struggles to develop his or her own identity, that is, who he or she is in relation to others.	Corporal punishment causes the child to see himself or herself in relation to the person punishing him or her. The punisher loses some flexibility in interrelating with the individual child.	Help student adjust to changing classroom rules, relationships, and interactions through lived experience.



³ Cited in Harder, A. F. (2002). *The Developmental Stages of Eric Erikson*. Retrieved February 1, 2009, from Learning Place Online at www.learningplaceonline.com/stages/organize/Erikson.htm

1.1. HOW DOES THE WORLD VIEW CORPORAL PUNISHMENT?

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) categorises physical and psychological punishment as violence which breaches the fundamental rights of a child. In 2001, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights concluded that, “No form of violence, including physical, sexual or psychological, can ever be justified as being in the best interests of the child,” and declared corporal punishment of a child to be a human rights violation.

Globally, over 100 nations have banned the practice, and the list continues to grow. Most recently, India, the Czech Republic, and Sierra Leone have banned corporal punishment in schools.

The research on the effect of corporal punishment further highlights its negative effects. A review⁴ of 88 scientific and medical studies on corporal punishment from around the world concludes that corporal punishment is associated with ten undesirable behaviours including increased childhood aggression, **child delinquency, child anti-social behaviour, adult aggression, adult criminal and anti-social behaviour and risk of hitting one’s child or spouse, decreased moral internalisation, child and adult mental health problems.**

Generally, corporal punishment is viewed as an abuse of power. It suggests that “might makes right,” and actually encourages a child to do the same. Shaming, humiliating and beating a child are at the very least, counterproductive.

1.2. THE JAMAICAN CONTEXT

In Jamaica, the use of corporal punishment as a form of discipline has been touted as one based on biblical reference (‘Spare the rod and spoil the child’), and is firmly rooted in a society in which Christian principles are held in high regard. This inevitably makes change to positive discipline a difficult proposition. However, corporal punishment’s nature and potentially negative effects - adult mental health problems, delinquency and adult criminal behaviour - have intensified calls to eliminate it in the Jamaican context.⁵

According to a 2006 survey, only 28% of parents used non-violent methods of disciplining children as opposed to 71% that used physical (spanking, beating, pinching, etc.) or psychological (stern look, scolding and shouting) punishment.⁶

⁴ Boyson, R. (2002). *Equal protection for children: An overview of the experiences of countries that accord children full legal protection from physical punishment*. Retrieved February 2, 2009, From National Center for Children in Poverty. Web site: www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/publications/Downloads/equalprotectionforchildren_wdf48095.pdf

⁵ UNICEF (2010), *Child Disciplinary Practices at Home: Evidence From a Range of Low and Middle-Income Countries*. UNICEF. New York.

⁶ Planning Institute of Jamaica, (2006). *Survey on Parenting Practices*. Retrieved November 12, 2008, From Revised Country Programme Document at UNICEF. Web site: www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/06-PL48-Jamaica_Rev1.pdf

This reliance on punishment is thought to be reflected in the high rate of crime and violence currently plaguing the society. However, Jamaica has made steady progress in eliminating corporal punishment:

2008:

The Ministry of Education directive bans corporal punishment in all schools.

2005:

The Early Childhood Act bans corporal punishment in early childhood institutions.

2004:

The Child Care and Protection Act bans corporal punishment in residential child care facilities.

2001:

Jamaica ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Sections of the religious community also prohibit corporal punishment in schools. The Archdiocesan Education Board of the Archdiocese of Kingston, banned corporal punishment in all Jamaican Catholic Schools. The Archdiocese's policy reiterates that "corporal punishment impairs the development of children toward their optimum potential as socially responsible adults, and may adversely affect their self-image and school achievement and that it may contribute to disruptive violent behaviour."

Consistent with the research on corporal punishment and the way it is viewed globally, corporal punishment has come to be regarded as a form of discipline to be avoided in our schools.



Learn More:

Visit: www.endcorporalpunishment.org/pages/pdfs/charts/Chart-Global and www.positivediscipline.com/What_is_Positive_Discipline.html

Do: Organise project through which students explore disciplinary practices in their communities and around the world. Plan a conference where students present and parents and the community participate.

1.3 CHOOSE DISCIPLINE

PUNISHMENT HURTS

REACTIVE AND DEMANDS COMPLIANCE.

FOCUSES ON THE PAST.

TEACHES WHAT NOT TO DO.

IGNORES FEELINGS AND DIGNITY OF THE PERSON.

LOWERS SELF-ESTEEM. LEAVES STUDENTS FEELING BAD ABOUT THEMSELVES.

TEACHES OUTSIDE CONTROL BY OFFERING NO EXPLANATION.

RETARDS GROWTH IN THE FIVE AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT (PHYSICAL, INTELLECTUAL, SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND MORAL).

TEACHER AND STUDENT FEEL DISCONNECTED FROM EACH OTHER AND THE RELATIONSHIP.

INSPIRES ANGER, RESENTMENT, REBELLION, REVENGE, AND STUDENT DISENGAGEMENT.

INCREASES POWER STRUGGLES, BECAUSE ONLY THE NEEDS OF THE PUNISHER ARE MET.

FOCUSES ON HURTING OR DEPRIVING THE CHILD.

DISCIPLINE IS DEVELOPMENTAL

PROACTIVE AND PRESENTS CHOICES.

FOCUSES ON THE FUTURE.

TEACHES WHAT TO DO.

PRESERVES MUTUAL RESPECT OF FEELINGS AND DIGNITY.

RAISES SELF-ESTEEM. LEAVES STUDENTS FEELING GOOD ABOUT THEMSELVES.

TEACHES SELF-CONTROL BY EXPLAINING REASON.

PROMOTES GROWTH IN THE FIVE AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT.

TEACHER AND STUDENT FEEL GOOD ABOUT EACH OTHER AND THE RELATIONSHIP.

MOTIVATES AND ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO DO BETTER NEXT TIME.

DECREASES POWER STRUGGLES, SINCE THE NEEDS OF TEACHER AND STUDENT ARE MET.

FOCUS ON RESTITUTION AND NATURAL OUTCOME OF EVENTS.

2. TOWARDS CHILD - FRIENDLY SCHOOLS

The ultimate goal of the Ministry of Education is to produce a child-friendly environment in all our schools. Such an environment is violence free and provides children with a quality education; one that enables all children to achieve their full potential. It requires an environment that is enabling to the child and as such the child should not be frightened by the threat of punishment, humiliation, bullying or violence of any kind.

All members of the community are endowed with rights and responsibilities that will seek to ensure that there is full participation towards the goal of achieving a child friendly school. The table below reflects some key rights and responsibilities for stakeholders.

STAKEHOLDER	RIGHTS	RESPONSIBILITIES
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To education of the highest quality - To a safe and enabling environment - To be treated with respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To respect the rights of others - To respect all applicable laws - To demonstrate honesty and integrity - To attend school on time and ready to learn
School Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To be able to carry out their professional responsibilities - To safety at school - To be treated with respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To respect the rights of others - To respect all applicable laws - To demonstrate honesty and integrity - To ensure all actions are in the best interest of the child
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To participate in school activities and decision making processes - To be treated with respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To respect the rights of others - To respect all applicable laws - To demonstrate honesty and integrity - To prepare students for and ensure students attend school - To foster the development of positive values and attitudes in children
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To participate in school processes - To be treated with respect - To support school initiatives and reinforce character building efforts - To contribute to the protection and development of children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To support school initiatives and reinforce character building efforts - To contribute to the protection and development of children

Learn More:

Visit: www.unicef.org/childfriendlyschools

In a child-friendly school, the focus is on the complete school environment required for teachers to help students reach their full potential. This manual is based on the five key features of a discipline-oriented school environment. These are:

1. Confident Teachers and Students
2. Effective Communication
3. Child-centered Teaching Practices
4. Safe Environment that Stimulates Learning
5. Effective Management of Student Behaviours

In the sections which follow, each of these concepts is discussed with a view to helping schools and school personnel use positive discipline in a systematic way. It provides basic descriptions of concepts and suggests ways to deal with some of the major behavioural challenges facing schools.

2.1. CONFIDENT TEACHERS & STUDENTS

Confidence comes from the knowledge and respect of self and others. Generally, high levels of confidence are healthy as this engenders creativity and innovation; debate, dialogue and compromise; and healthy relationships. In order to be confident, an understanding of self-concept and self-esteem⁷ is essential.

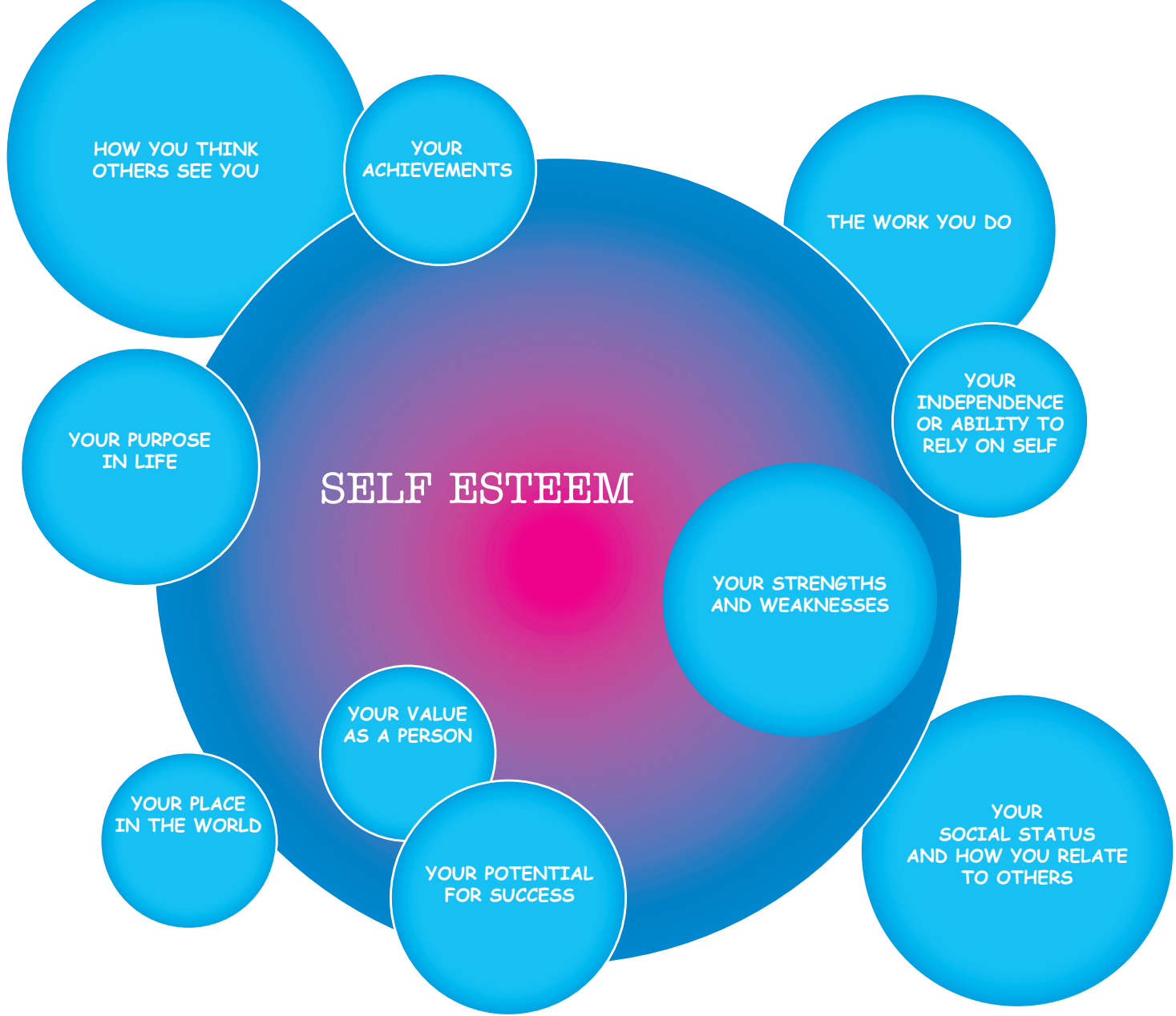
2.1.1. SELF-CONCEPT

The term self-concept refers to how we see ourselves. It is learned and developed through experiences. One's self concept is very important, as it affects self-esteem and self-confidence. Individuals have within themselves an unending ability to develop a positive and realistic self-concept.

Self concept includes the following:

- a) What you think that you look like physically
- b) How your personality comes across
- c) What kind of person you think you are
- d) What you believe others think about you
- e) What you have been told about yourself
- f) How much you like yourself
- g) How much you think others like you

⁷ This section draws on material from: 1) Huitt, W. (2004). *Self-concept and self-esteem*. Educational Psychology Interactive. Valdosta, GA: Valdosta State University. Retrieved Feb 8, 2009, from <http://chiron.valdosta.edu/~whuitt/col/regsys/self.html>, and 2) Purkey, W. (1988). *An Overview of Self-Concept Theory for Counselors*. Retrieved February 3, 2009, from ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Personnel Services, Ann Arbor, Mich. (An ERIC/CAPS Digest: ED304630). Web site: <http://chiron.valdosta.edu/~whuitt/files/selfconc.html>



2.1.2. SELF ESTEEM

Self-esteem is the emotional aspect of self, and generally refers to how we feel about, or how we value ourselves (our self-worth) differing from reason and logic. It is needed to affirm self-worth and gain confidence in interacting with others. Feeling good about one's self is an important part of the energy one projects. Persons with high self-esteem tend to be secure, confident, interact well with others and foster meaningful relationships, and view themselves positively.

Self-esteem is based on how persons rate their personal abilities and self-worth. Those with low self-esteem are often **shy, anxious, and depressed**. They are **negative** about their abilities.

Because perceptions people hold about themselves are orchestrated with all the other perceptions, self-esteem **tends to resist change**.

2.1.3. BUILDING YOUR SELF ESTEEM

Boost your self-esteem by:

- Taking very good care of yourself
- Taking time to do things you enjoy
- Doing things that make use of your own special talents and abilities
- Dressing in clothes that make you feel good about yourself
- Spending time with people who make you feel good about yourself
- Making your living space a place that honours the person you are
- Displaying items that you find attractive or that remind you of special achievements or of special times or people in your life
- Taking advantage of opportunities to learn something new or improve your skills
- Doing something nice for another person
- Working towards changing negative thoughts about yourself to positive ones

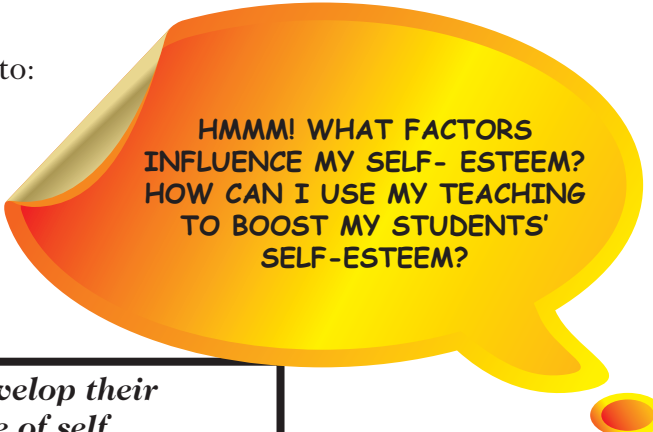
2.1.4. CHILDREN'S SELF-ESTEEM

For children, self-esteem relates to how they are accepted and valued by adults and their peers. The children who are confident that their parents or caregivers love them and have the capacity to keep them safe are more likely to develop healthy self-esteem.

Jamaican students must be encouraged to value themselves, and to recognise their potential for success. Otherwise, they may be influenced by negative role models or channel their energies into anti-social activities.

Encouraging children to value themselves involves helping them to:

- *Recognize their strengths*
- *Identify and strive towards a particular purpose in life*
- *Model the achievements of others*
- *Work towards particular goals*



HMMM! WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCE MY SELF-ESTEEM? HOW CAN I USE MY TEACHING TO BOOST MY STUDENTS' SELF-ESTEEM?

HOW CAN THE TEACHER HELP?

Here are some powerful techniques that can help children develop their own identity and improve the development of a positive sense of self.

- *Engage in journaling and reflective writing*
- *Use play as a learning tool*
- *Encourage creative expression - drama, poetry, art, music.*

Other ideas are included in your school's Health and Family Life Education curriculum.

Teachers must be aware of how what they say and what they do in class affects student's self-esteem and consequently their behaviour, attitude, confidence and ultimately their level of success in that class. A teacher should be aware of positive methods to boost the self esteem of his or her students. Encouragement and understanding are keys to achieving this. Teachers need to develop healthy self-esteem in order to help their students.

Learn More:

- Visit: www.moreselfesteem.com
- Read: Raising an Emotionally Healthy Child (from the Ministry of Health)
- Review the HFLE curriculum's contents on self-esteem.

2.2. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Communication may be defined as a two-way process in which meaning is conveyed in an attempt to create shared understanding. Having good communication skills is a very important aspect of preventing and managing conflict.

It involves the imparting of information from a sender to a receiver through a defined medium. The process requires that the parties involved share an area of commonality.

Some forms of communication are:

- Verbal which includes oral (speaking, or singing) and written communications.
- Non-verbal communication transmits meaning through body language, touch, and eye-contact.

If communication is successful, it results in transfer of meaning. If this transfer of meaning is not achieved as intended, then true communication has not taken place.

2.2.1. COMMUNICATION STYLES AND POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

There are three basic communication styles. They are: i) Aggressive; ii) Passive, and iii) Assertive. Each affects relationships and practices differently.

i. Aggressive Style: This type of communication chooses to attack first and win at all costs; wants to be right and have the last word. It says: “I am in charge” or “my way or the highway”

The effect of this style is provocation, counter aggression, alienation from others, resistance, defiance, covering up, and compliance with resentment.

The aggressive style might be effective when a decision is to be made quickly as in emergencies.

ii. Passive Style: This style of communication is non-confrontational, and prefers to be silent. It is apologetic, and self-conscious. It seems to say: “Anything you want.”

Passive communication might be appropriate when:

- Emotions are running high and it makes sense to take a break in order to calm down and regain perspective
- When your power is less than the other person's
- When the other person's position is impossible to change

iii. Assertive Style: This type of communication shares feelings without hurting others; it expresses self-confidence and engages others in finding solutions. This style says, ‘I have rights and so do others and asks ‘What alternatives do we have?’

Positive discipline requires an assertive communication style because there is need for the teacher to engage the student on the norms and limits that should guide their behaviour. It asks questions that will lead the student to talk and to reveal specific facts and emotions, perceptions and needs, interests and concerns that help in building relationships and resolving disputes.

Effective communication practices improve interpersonal interactions by reducing conflict and misunderstanding.



2.2.2. ACTIVE LISTENING?

Listening is a critical component of good communication, regardless of communication style. Listening is the process of sensing, interpreting, evaluating and reacting to what is being said.

ARE YOU LISTENING?

To actively listen: ⁹

- Acknowledge the other person's / child's feelings (show empathy)*
- Focus on the topic*
- Paraphrase to ensure that you understand what has been said*
- Pay attention to non-verbal language*
- Respect confidentiality*
- Allow for periods of silence*
- Do not provide advice, diagnose, valuations, criticisms or appeasing remarks*

Active listening is essential to the creation of a climate of trust and confidence which needs to be cultivated between the adult and the child.



**HOW CAN I IMPROVE MY
COMMUNICATION SKILLS?**

2.3. CHILD-CENTERED TEACHING PRACTICES

Teachers who effectively cultivate positive relationships with students are more likely to earn their respect and positively impact the behaviour of the students. While generally, a healthy teacher/student relationship is important, it becomes even more critical during teaching; class room management and teaching practices are directly correlated with student behaviour.

This section focuses on teacher **power and authority in the classroom** and the implications for teacher practice. It then discusses how teachers can use their authority and **child-centered pedagogy** to instil and maintain discipline.

2.3.1. POWER AND AUTHORITY IN SCHOOLS ¹⁰

Power refers to the capacity to influence the behaviour of others so that they act as desired. Power is a natural feature of any group or organisation.

In a school situation, how power is applied is of extreme importance and has significant impact on the behaviour demonstrated by students and teachers alike. The top-down teaching model has been identified as the reason for many struggles in schools worldwide. It suggests that this is a model of teaching and interacting with our students that needs to be adjusted.

The differences in power relationships within the classroom not only occur between teacher and the student, but may also occur among students.

AUTHORITY

While power strictly refers to “the ability to achieve specific objectives,” authority refers to, “a legitimate claim and right to exercise that power.”



¹⁰ Mind Tools Limited. (2008). French and Raven's Five Forms of Power (1959); Understanding Where Power Comes From in the Workplace. Retrieved February 12, 2009, from www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_56.htm

Here we focus on teacher authority – teachers’ right to use their power to support student development.

2.3.2. TEACHER AUTHORITY

Teacher authority enables teachers to facilitate the teaching and learning process with the assurance that their instructions will be obeyed. Without this, they would have little efficacy. Here are **five types of authority**¹¹ and how they are used in schools.

Referent Authority Teachers use their personality to develop positive relationships with the student; teachers know students individually and invest emotionally in students. Students work harder for teachers they like.

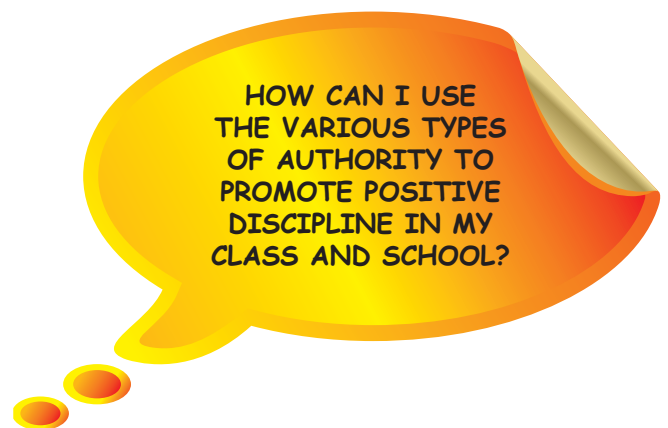
Expert Authority Teachers perceived as being knowledgeable and well prepared. They are better able to manage the class – students feel valued. Used exclusively, could lead to teacher centered teaching.

Reward Authority Teachers use rewards - grades, prizes, and special privileges - to positively influence student behaviour. Student feel valued and competent. May Create “addicts” of rewards as work gets done primarily for rewards.

Position Authority The teacher has authority by virtue of his or her position. While it may exist by default, it is affected by the teacher’s disposition.

Coercive Authority Coercive authority uses disincentives - shame, punishment, guilt, humiliation, personal attacks, and withdrawal of affection - to discourage behaviour. Relying exclusively on coercive authority undermines student motivation.

To be fully effective, the teacher must incorporate at least some amount of each of these five types of authority. However, each teacher must thoughtfully consider the use of each of them within his/her goals and personality. Each form will produce different effects on the classroom and with students. Effectiveness in many cases relates more to how the form of power is employed rather than the specific form of power that is being used.



Learn more:

Visit: www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_56.htm

¹¹ California State University, Los Angeles. *Attractive (Referent) Authority*. Retrieved February 15, 2009, from www.calstatela.edu/faculty/jshindl/cm/AppendixG-TeacherAuthorityPower.htm

2.3.3. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Teacher authority is most vividly evidenced in how they manage their classrooms. Think about teacher authority as set out in the diagram below.

Factors to consider in thinking about classroom management and teaching practices.



2.3.4 TEACHING AS FACILITATING DISCIPLINE

The student who is enjoying a class will not disrupt it. As teacher, you have the authority to shape a learning experience that will be memorable and rewarding for students.

Using child centered approaches is one way to achieve more student engagement. It entails making the child the center of your teaching both in how you teach and the organization of your classroom. Importantly, this approach ensures students get to contribute and shape their learning. Here are a few child-focused tips to consider:

Prepare lesson plans:

Be prepared, students know when you are not.

Create a stimulating learning environment:

Make the room appealing – better yet, let the students help to make the room appealing.

Pay attention to lighting, colours and condition of furnishings.

Apply varied instructional practices:

Vary practices – avoid too much routine.

Students prefer excitement and variation and are more likely to remain engaged where this is provided.

Acknowledge the diversity of the class and plan for it:

Try to know each student and devise strategies to support their learning. Ensure your methods, materials and illustrations reflect the students.

Exploratory/discovery learning:

Create opportunities for students to explore their physical space and new ideas.

Let them guide aspects of their learning.

Embrace technology: Incorporate:

Modern technology into your teaching. Utilize web-based resources as well as connect with students and teachers from other schools. The students might be able to teach you a few things while you are at it.

Gender-sensitive approaches:

Boys and girls might respond differently to your strategies. Luckily, good teaching – active, energetic, evenly paced, fun – works for boys and girls.

Teach responsibility to self, others and environment:

Help students understand the interconnections among all things. This will help increase their respect for life and each other.

Make the community your classroom:

Take students into the community and community members into the school. From history and geography to literature and social studies there are resources in the community that the school can tap.

Learn more:

Review: Child-centered and gender sensitive teaching manual
(available from the Jamaica Teaching Council)

Visit: See videos and hear about practices at work in real schools at <http://www.edutopia.org>.
or <http://www.unicef.org/teachers/>

Do: Plan sessions to talk about teaching strategies with colleagues. Invite other practitioners and experts to share ideas with your team.

2.4. SAFE ENVIRONMENT THAT STIMULATES LEARNING

A safe environment is critical for learning. All schools should strive to become spaces that cater to the needs of all children in an environment that will encourage them to want to learn. Our schools must operate in environments that communicate care and not fear. Our school environments must become places where students thrive, where they feel nurtured and are likely to be nurturing in return.

In this section, we consider specific aspects of the school's environment that are critical to promoting positive discipline. Focus will be given to:

- *The Management of Resources*
- *The Management and Resolution of Conflict*

2.4.1. MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES

In effective learning environments, provisions are made for the use and organization of space, the use of materials and equipment as well as the activities that will safeguard emotional stability and good health.

The school is the owner of many resources which include physical spaces, materials for teaching and learning in the academic and co-curricular realm, time as well as human resources. It is important that these resources be harnessed in ways that proactively instil discipline and manage mis-behaviour when it occurs. Here are some examples of school resources and how they can be managed to improve discipline in schools.

- **Spaces:** School spaces that are clean welcoming and monitored by school personnel and students. Let students decorate and maintain some spaces.
- **Human resources:** Caring school personnel who are uncompromising in enforcing the rules of the school as they are quick to show love. They build strong relationships with students, and fulfill their responsibilities.
- **Time:** School personnel and students are punctual; students do not have time to waste or get distracted.
- **Co-Curricular activities:** Every student participates in at least one co-curricular activity which provides opportunities for bonding with adults and peers.
- **School policies:** Clear disciplinary policies are developed collaboratively. They are effectively communicated, and fairly, consistently and speedily applied.
- **School processes:** Processes are democratic and engage the school community (students, parents, community and school personnel) in school governance and other activities.

2.4.2. MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT

It is important to understand the nature of conflicts and how they arise, in order to fully understand the concepts of positive discipline. Conflict is a part of our daily life.

The term conflict describes interpersonal tension and antagonism between two or more parties. Conflicts may emerge when people act without thinking, fail to communicate with each other or have an underlying aggressiveness to others. Anyone may at some time be involved in one or more conflicts.

Conflict management generally adopt one of six conflict management styles. Each style has pros and cons as described in the table below.

STYLE	DESCRIPTION	USED WHEN...	IF IMPROPERLY USED, RESULTS IN...
Collaboration	Work together to meet everyone's interest – win-win	There is time; parties desire a long-term solution	- Unsatisfactory long-term solution
Compromise	Parties willing to satisfy some of their interests – willing to meet halfway	There is limited time and an obvious possible solution	- Misunderstanding - Viewed as "soft" / "push over"
Accommodation	Place interests of others above self – allow others to have their way	The other person's needs are greater than your own	- Enables behaviour, possible resentment - Lack of resolution
Denial	Delay, withdrawal, or suppression of attention from probable sources of conflict	- Conflict is perceived as minor - Of little personal significance	Conflict remains unresolved - escalation possible
Avoidance	Tendency to stay clear of issues contributing to the conflict	- There is a danger to safety - Inability to manage an issue	- Escalation of conflict and reprisals - Misunderstanding
Competition	Individual puts his/her interest above all others	Decisive action required to protect basic rights; a principle is much more important than the relationship	- Power play; probably loss of long-term relationship - Abuse - Arrogance

Source: Adapted from <http://payson.tulane.edu/Students/rlawton/ConflictPros%26Cons.html> Retrieved July 14, 2011.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

In the resolution of conflicts, to give and receive forgiveness is a necessary part of the process. When we attempt to solve a conflict the objective is to meet the needs of everyone involved; not just those of the adults or those of the child. The goal is to strengthen relationships and to identify and target the resources that will enhance the growth of each person. Without forgiveness - of self and others – there is no resolution.

Conflict resolution should be a voluntary process that:

- Reflects the school's values
- Is modeled and followed by teachers, administrators, and staff

It will fail if perceived as a process for students only.

APPROACHES TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION

There are certain conflict resolution principles that may be applied to increase the possibility of success. These include:

- Avoid defend-attack interaction. This is always non-productive!
- Seek more information: Ask a lot of questions!
- Make sure that you understand what is being said. Check understanding and summarize.
- Try to understand the other person's perspective: communication is more than just listening; try to see it their way!
- Forgive!!

TOOLS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Among the tools that may be used to resolve conflict are:

- a) Negotiation
- b) Mediation
- c) Counselling

..... or any combination of the above.

NEGOTIATION:

The objective is to reach an agreement to remove those factors or situations that would block continued collaboration among the parties. In negotiation, the source of the conflict might not be totally removed.

When you are negotiating it is important to always keep in mind the idea that both parties are seeking a Win/Win situation. No one wants to feel like they are giving away something for nothing. In fact, most conflicts arise because one party feels like the other party is taking advantage of them. When negotiation fails, then the role of the mediator becomes necessary.

MEDIATION

Mediation is a structured conflict resolution method, guided by a third neutral party called a mediator, who facilitates communication towards resolution of a conflict.

Mediators facilitate the process by:

- a) Seeking to understand each participant
- b) Increasing and evaluating the interest of the participants in solving the conflict
- c) Setting rules for improved communication
- d) Helping participants by facilitating a joint session
- e) Equalizing the power of the participants
- f) Helping them plan for future interaction

The process relies heavily on the commitment of the persons involved in the conflict to resolving it but *the mediator never imposes a resolution on the parties*. Participants are kept talking and moving through the points of contention towards a resolution.

STEPS IN THE MEDIATION PROCESS:

To resolve a conflict through mediation, bring the conflicted parties together in a private and neutral location, and:

Step 1. Introductions:

- Introduce self and participants

Step 2. Explore the issues:

- Gather information - identify key issues without making accusations
- Focus on the issues, not who did what. Do not accuse or find fault
- Each party states their position and how it has affected them; others listen respectfully and without interruption
- Each party repeats or describes the other's position to the listener's satisfaction

Step 3. Generate Possible Solutions:

- Parties try to view the issue from other points of view
- Parties brain storm to find the middle ground
- Each side volunteers what it can do to resolve the conflict

Step 4. Choose Solutions:

- A formal agreement is drawn with agreed actions for both parties;
- A procedure is identified should disagreement arise
- Progress is monitored and achievements celebrated





COUNSELLING

Being an understanding listener is often effective in relieving frustration and enabling the frustrated individual to become more amenable to enter into a mindset in which he or she is ready to consider solutions to the problem being faced. Sometimes, being a good counsellor requires simply that - being a good listener. This is often referred to as non- directive counselling, or “listening with understanding”.

Other more direct and more diagnostic methods of counselling may also be used, but the great strength of the non-directive approach to counselling is that it is at once simple and effective while at the same time avoids the counsellors involvement in diagnosing and interpreting emotional problems which would require training in Psychology.

Learn more:

<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/mediation/>
Review:HFLE Curriculum’s sections on dealing with conflict
Do: Work with your colleagues to plan a training session on conflict resolution

2.5. EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF BEHAVIOURS

Children behave inappropriately for varied reasons. It is important that school personnel and other caregivers understand the factors motivating behaviours. Some of the common contributing factors are:

FRUSTRATION: a child is impaired in some way and is frustrated because the source of the difficulty is not diagnosed. Commonly unidentified conditions include problems hearing or seeing, dyslexia, autism, post-traumatic stress disorder or learning disabilities.

POOR OR NO ROLE MODEL: without proper role model(s), students might not have had the opportunity to learn acceptable behaviours.

ABUSE AND NEGLECT: children lacking appropriate care and support express their anger by acting out.

UNDUE INFLUENCE: the child has fallen in with the wrong crowd.

LOW SELF-ESTEEM: children behave inappropriately to get peer approval.

LOW LEVELS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: low performers are more likely to be disruptive; they are less engaged, find school stressful, and act out in frustration.

INSTABILITY IN HOME ENVIRONMENT: instability in the home physical space and relationships can traumatise children and lead to disruptive behaviours.

ABSENCE OF UNCONDITIONAL LOVE: children need to know and have a relationship with at least one person who loves them unconditionally.

2.5.1. MANAGING COMMON BEHAVIOURAL CHALLENGES

AGGRESSIVENESS/ANGER: Aggressive behaviours are common in our schools. In managing aggressiveness, we must know how to face it and be ready to provide the constructive and positive reply rather than avoiding or dodging it. While there is no magical solution for aggression, the following do's and don'ts have proven to be effective in calming situations and contributing to resolution of conflicts.

BULLYING: The act of intimidating a weaker person to make them do something against their will. This may be done in person or via modern technology (called cyber bullying). The bully may use tactics of constant criticism, nit-picking, exclusion, isolation, teasing; with verbal, psychological, emotional and (especially with children) physical violence. Cyber bullying involves sending/posting demeaning messages and photographs of the victim.

GANGS: Group of persons who deliberately use violence to achieve their goals. Not every group that does activities or even does things that are considered disruptive, is a gang. The use of violence distinguishes gangs from social/peer groups.

EXTORTION: Obtaining money or other goods/services from someone by using force or threat. Extortion can be a one-off activity but it usually continues over time.

Learn more:

Visit: <http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/>

Read: Safety and Security Manual, Ministry of Education

What to do regarding bullying, gangs, and extortion

- Make it clear to the school that the behaviour will not be tolerated.
- Provide support, supervision, and mentoring, to help children involved to understand that violence is not acceptable.
- Encourage the children and help to build self esteem.
- Monitor and reward appropriate behaviour and improvements.
- Give clear sanctions for acts of bullying, gang membership and extortion. Remember, some children are also victims; provide support to victims.
- Share your concerns with other teachers, guidance counsellor, principal and parents so that you can work together to help address the problem.
- Should the behaviour continue, then an escalating response is appropriate, including referral to a mental health professional.

2.5.1. MANAGING COMMON BEHAVIOURAL CHALLENGES

YOU SHOULD:

✓	LISTEN ATTENTIVELY
✓	BE OPEN
✓	OWN UP TO WRONG
✓	DISCUSS PRIVATELY
✓	SPEAK CALMLY
✓	RESERVE JUDGEMENT
✓	EMPATHISE
✓	REQUEST CHANGE OF BEHAVIOUR

YOU SHOULD NOT:

✗	REJECT THE CHILD'S ANGER
✗	REFUSE TO LISTEN
✗	DEFEND YOUR ACTIONS
✗	EMBARRASS THE CHILD
✗	REMAIN STANDING
✗	RAISE YOUR TONE OF VOICE
✗	HIDE YOUR FEELINGS

2.5.2. COMMON BEHAVIOURS, TRADITIONAL PUNISHMENTS AND ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

BEHAVIOUR	PUNISHMENT	POSITIVE DISCIPLINE
Not doing homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand for the duration of class • Send student out of class • Student wears dunce hat • Beating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete homework before leaving school • Assign make-up work • Peer support provided • Discuss with parent and student
Coming to school late	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locked out at gate • Beating • Placed in sun • Clean up school compound 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign punctuality commitment • Write about punctuality • Exciting morning activity • Make up missed activities after school
Making noise in class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put out of class, beating • Kneel in front of class • Verbal abuse • Labelling / name calling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set class rules re: talking • Change seat arrangement • Active student participation • Ensure teaching strategies are engaging
Fighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kneeling in the sun • Shaking / roughing up • Verbal abuse/name calling • Suspension • Beating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer mediation, • In-school suspension • Community service • Child takes restorative actions • Establish behaviour contracts
Skipping school/ classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beating, • Cleaning school yard • Labelling / verbal abuse, • Suspension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with child and parent • Give child responsibilities at school • Ensure activities are engaging • Establish behavior contracts
Sleeping in class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Startle student • Send them out of the class • Student stands / kneels during class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active student participation • Explore causes with students and parents • Take class outside • Ask child to go for walk/to bathroom
Damaging school property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspension • Beating • Isolation for long periods • Denial of basic needs (lunch, bathroom) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage child in researching cost of damage • Student contributes to repairs • Student does repairs • Community service

BEHAVIOUR	PUNISHMENT	POSITIVE DISCIPLINE
Sexual activity (Kissing, fondling Intercourse, etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspension • Beating • Name calling • Expulsion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling • Peer mediation • In-school suspension • Pull out programme
Stealing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beating • Labelling / verbal abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community service • Confess in class • Return stolen goods
Foul/abusive Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspension • Calling police 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written reflection • Call in parents • Activities to improve self esteem • Co-curricular activities promoting language skills development
Possession and or use of drugs /alcohol*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beating • Sent out of class • Mouth taped or disinfected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call in parents • Counselling • Discuss dangers of drugs and alcohol • Referral to detox programme • Behaviour contract
Gangs / extortion weapon possession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspension • Call police • Expulsion • Beating • Labelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call in parents • Group mentorship and counselling • In-school suspension

* Possession of drugs and offensive weapons must be reported to the police.



Learn More:

www.jimwrightonline.com/php/interventionista/interventionista_intv_list.php?prob_type=defiance__non_compliance
Do: Talk with colleagues from other schools. What are they doing to improve disciplinary practices?

3. STRATEGIES FOR A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

A whole school approach requires that addressing issues related to discipline are not separated from other school processes. Hence, disciplinary practices are integrated into the total operation of the school and are part of a larger behaviour management strategy. These strategies should be agreed by the school and should have clear rules, that are fairly and consistently applied. The strategies should cover three areas:

- Prevention which actively promotes, teaches, models and supports positive behaviour.
- Correction applies positive corrective consequences to undesired behaviour.
- Restoration which engages all parties in a process of restoring relationships.

Here are some strategies that work individually or combined with others.

1. BUILD AWARENESS OF POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

- Provide training workshops for staff and parents on positive discipline.
- Use form time to explore the notion of positive discipline with students.

2. DEVELOP WRITTEN POSITION / POLICY ON BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

- Revise the school rules and ensure everyone knows them.
- Sign the Zero Tolerance Policy which denounces all forms of violence in the schools and its environs.

3. DECLARE AN END TO CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AT YOUR SCHOOL

- Some schools hold funerals, some send written notes, others simply say it publicly every chance they get – it doesn't matter how, "just do it." Create a system for holding members of the school-community responsible for keeping the commitment.

4. DEVELOP AND INTRODUCE INCENTIVE PROGRAMMES THAT HIGHLIGHT AND REWARD STUDENTS WHO ARE DISPLAYING DESIRED BEHAVIOURS

Try the following:

- The Reward System. Intended as a supplement for other methods of discipline, the reward system focuses on ignoring any 'non-harmful' misbehaviors and going out of your way to praise positive behaviour.
- The Point System. In this system, students earn points for good behaviour and lose points for bad behavior. In some models, students and classrooms accumulate "points" that can be traded in for rewards.
- The Merit, Demerit and Detention System
 - Merits given for desired behaviours can be structured so that merits lead to points that can be traded in for other rewards.
 - Demerits lead to loss of merits or points.
 - Can be structured so that they lead to loss of other privileges.
 - Detentions should be supervised and used productively.
 - Detentions are lower on the hierarchy of disciplinary practices.
 - Multiple detentions lead to demerits and loss of privileges.
 - Detentions should be supervised and used productively.

SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT: ST. PETER CLAVER PRIMARY

Key Strategies in use:

- Abandoned ability streaming of students
- Gave awards for positive behaviour
- Listened to parents and students to address their concerns
- Engaged parents in capacity building sessions and school governance
- Encouraged a variety of school clubs
- Distinguishable uniform to affirm school pride

What can you learn from St. Peter Claver?

Learn more:

Visit: www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_56.htm

- Co-curricular probation: Introduce a system of probation from co-curricular activities, sports and or social events at school for students who fail to comply with the desired behavioural standards of the school.
- Initiate Home-School Contracts
- Conduct parent-teacher consultation
- Initiate a Parent Support Group
- Engage community members as mentors, teachers' assistants, counsellors etc.

5. COUNSELLING AND STUDENT SUPPORT

- Provide individual and group counselling opportunities for students
- Develop a system of referral to other governmental agencies and organizations
- Provide grief/bereavement and trauma counselling for children – ensure a system exists for identifying those who have had traumatic experiences.

6. IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION PROGRAMME

- Create a space in the school where suspended students attend school and do rehabilitative activities related to the behaviour that lead to suspension.

7. TEACHER SUPERVISION

- Ensure that a substitute roster of teachers is in place so that classes are always covered
- Ensure all teachers are punctual for their classes
- Implement a system of patrols for areas of the compound where inappropriate activities occur most frequently

8. TEACHING PRACTICES

- Review and update teaching practices at your school. Are they child-centered? Are students engaged?
- Develop a system for student participation in learning
- See the Jamaica Teaching Council's manual on child-centered and gender-sensitive approaches

9. LEARN MORE ABOUT CHILD DEVELOPMENT

- Knowing about the various developmental stages will better prepare you to work with children.
- Try the interactive courseware on managing behaviours (from HEART/NTA and UNICEF) or visit www.learningplaceonline.com/stages/organize/Erikson.htm

Keep at it. As with learning anything new, strategies that promote alternative methods of discipline can be difficult to master but practice makes better.

- Find “support networks” to help you out. Engage with other schools and implement programmes that are yielding success – ask your Quality Education Circle (QEC).
- Resist the urge to return to using corporal punishment even if you find you have difficulty initially. Instead, look at what is not working and why and then consider another option that could be used to remedy the situation.
- Lots of material available online: Go to Project NoSpank (www.nospank.net) and the Center for Effective Discipline (www.stophitting.com).

SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT: HOLLAND HIGH SCHOOL

Key strategies in use:

- Merit/demerit system
- Individual counseling
- Daily inspirational reading
- Parent support group
- Behaviour modification form
- In-house suspension
- Class and student of the week
- Teacher substitute roster

What can your school learn from Holland?

3.1. CASES FROM OUR SCHOOLS

Here are four incidents that happened in Jamaican school and the responses recommended by Deans of Discipline at their 2011 workshop. After reading them, try to answer the following questions:

What are some strengths and weaknesses of this response?
What would you have done differently?

1: TIFFA ACTS OUT

Tiffa is a 15 year old student with no prior history of misconduct. She starts exhibiting negative behaviours such as back talking, wearing the wrong uniform and acting aggressively. Teachers just saw her as rude and vulgar. She was referred to the Dean of Discipline after stabbing a student.

Intervention:

Response from the Dean is firm but passive and non-confrontational.

Dean of Discipline facilitated active listening resulting in the student being able to speak openly in comfortable and confidential space.

Student confesses to a history of sexual molestation from a relative who has caused her to become defensive, angry and boisterous.

Dean able to apply appropriate sanctions based on the school rules while affording student the opportunity to benefit from an appropriate therapeutic treatment plan

Matter was reported to the Office of the Children's Registry.

2: GETTING TO KNOW MICHAEL

A 15 year-old boy is aggressive, disruptive and a truant. He is often not properly attired for school, performs poorly in all subject areas and is described by peers as a bully. He often hits other students whom he claims are doing wrong. He also steals from others.

Interventions:

- Student was removed from environments in which he was likely to act out.
- Student was given time outs to reflect on his actions while being observed by the Dean of Discipline.
- After discussions with the student, the Dean recognizes underlying issues and made a series of home visits.
- Student was given responsibilities which sufficiently challenged him and afforded him the ability to be recognized for his efforts.
- The Dean engages student in ongoing behaviour modification process.

3: TIM IS OUT OF DETENTION

Tim, a grade 10 boy, 'skips' most classes but never misses his technical and vocational classes. He abuses ganja and alcohol and is involved in extortion activities. He is also described as the leader of a clique. Most teachers avoid him and he spends a lot of time in the detention room.

Interventions:

- Detention utilized differently: student was asked to serve detention hour in the technical vocational area under the supervision of a teacher.
- Technical Vocational Teacher assigned as a mentor for student.
- School shared the concerns re his anti-social behaviours with child's parents who became more vigilant in monitoring progress at school.
- Student was introduced to a Police Youth club in the community and was given leadership responsibilities.
- Counselling sessions planned with the School's Guidance Counsellor to help student cope with the drug use problem. School implemented diversion programmes (establishing a drumming core, cadet and band) to minimize the prevalence of gangs and cliques.

4: WHEN CARING HURTS

Students in a class decide that a member of the class has an hygiene issue. They put resources together to purchase a kit to present to the student. One student volunteered to present the kit. The student who was given the kit responded by slapping the presenter in the face as he felt he was being insulted by the gesture. Another student who intervened was slapped as well.

Interventions:

- Teacher intervenes to stop conflict.
- Get both parties to come up with solution – ask questions.
- Seize the opportunity to teach conflict resolution.
- Initiate activities to rebuild relationship – student should come up with ideas to solve issues.

Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 19 protects children from all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse:

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.
2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

Article 28(2), protection from violent discipline at school.

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.



For further information contact:
The Ministry of Education
2-4 National Heroes Circle
Kingston
876-967-0146 or 876-924-9309
www.moey.gov.jm



MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION

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