

10 Tips for Working With Challenging Students

Try this for ten days with a few of the students who challenge you most! It may be a struggle but stick with it as both of you will benefit! Pay close attention to positive changes you see in your student, in your relationship with that student and decreases in behavior. Share your results with colleagues and celebrate your wins!

-  Greet them by name every single day. A high-five or a smile can be powerful, too!
-  Ask them something about their interests, after school activities or family, and then LISTEN. To show you are truly engaged, ask at least one follow up question! Then, LISTEN again.
-  Have lunch with them! They can even bring a friend. Be sure to interact with them. Humor can be effective here too.
-  Play a game with them! Tic-Tac-Toe and Paper-Rock-Scissors are quick, even if you play the best two out of three!
-  Catch them doing things right and provide specific feedback on the prosocial behavior you witnessed tied to a value. Example: "Excellent work bringing the library book back. It shows me that you value responsibility."
-  Sometimes the last one is hard to spot if we feel particularly challenged, so instead compliment them on anything you notice. Example: "I see you have a pretty yellow shirt on today." Or "Nice haircut!" Students just want to be seen.
-  Share a funny video, meme or picture you found.
-  Ask them about their favorite music, TV shows or movies. Then, do some quick research and surprise them with new knowledge on the topic the following day!
-  Tell them about yourself. Be vulnerable. They want to know you are human.
-  Ask them for help! Many students like to have special jobs in the classroom, and students often have skills and talents to share!