

Strategies & Tools for Tough Kids

(Compiled by Cindy Cook & Molly Fike)

- Remain as **calm** as possible (to calm down, take a deep breath in for 4 – hold for 4 – out for 4 counts) keep voice tone normal (even quieter), etc.
- Check your **body language** (don't hover over the student, get eye to eye, arms relaxed, not crossed in front of you, relaxed face, etc.)
- Have **routines** established for **everything** you do in your classroom & practice, practice, practice those routines.
- Explain – Demonstrate – Practice** what you expect.
- Break down the task. Give only **1 direction** at a time.
- Use **colors**, highlighters, pointers, index cards, and lots of **visuals**.
- Use a **timer** to help with completing tasks and/or contracts.
- Use **window panes** to help the students keep track of what they do 1st, 2nd, etc.
- Assign **buddies** to work together in class.
- Get an older **child** to be a **mentor**/contact student.
- Get an **adult** to be a **mentor**/contact person to the student.
- Focus on the **positive**. Give lots of specific praise & positive encouragement to the rest of the class, too, especially if you have a student on a contract or token board.
- Try a **reward/token board or positive contract** to help focus on the desired behavior – give the child a token every time you “catch” them doing what they are supposed to be doing – or give a sticker at short timed intervals if using a contract.
- Use a **prompter board** to visually remind the child and to help you be consistent with consequences.
- Allow **get-up-and-move time** throughout the day (play wiggle-freeze games, “Simon says”, or the copy game).
- Give the active student an envelope to take to a prearranged teacher for some **extra moving time** during the day.
- Try to use **active teaching strategies** rather than lecturing (sitting & listening).
- Teach **sign language** signals for directions.
- Give the active young student a “**magic carpet**” that he may sit, stand or kneel on during group time and use as an alternative work spot during seat time.
- Teach **anger** and **emotion control strategies** to help students learn to cope better (focus anger down not out, breathing & counting techniques, etc.)

It takes a team effort.....It takes time.....It starts with “baby steps” of improvement