



Giving Reprimands

Definition & Rationale:

Reprimands are verbal comments or gestures by teachers or other school personnel to indicate disapproval of student behavior. Reprimands are normal and necessary in a school setting, but how reprimands are given is important.

Concise and explicit reprimands inform the student of the inappropriate behavior and tells the student how to behave in the future. Research indicates that explicit and concise reprimands are effective at decreasing undesirable behaviors.

Characteristics of Explicit Reprimands:

- **Brief and informative**
 - Simple statement of behavior infraction and desired behavior
- **Given in a normal speaking tone**
 - Reprimand should lack emotion and be given in a normal tone and volume
- **Violated rule is stated**
 - Remind the student of the rule to be followed
- **Desired behavior is indicated**
 - Specific command given for desired behavior
- **Rule-following behavior is rewarded**
 - When the student complies, provide attention and praise to the desired behavior

Examples of Reprimands:

- "Lexi, please have a seat" (when Lexi gets out of her seat)
- "I am talking, eyes on me" (when a group of children is talking over the teacher)
- Finger to lips when students are talking at silent times

Next Steps:

- Reflect on the way you give reprimands to students
- Practice giving explicit reprimands that meet the criteria listed above

Literature References:

Reinke, W. M., Herman, K. C., & Stormont, M. (2012). Classroom-level positive behavior supports in schools implementing SW-PBIS: Identifying areas for enhancement. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 15*, 39-50.

Reinke, W. M., Stormont, M., Herman, K. C., Wachsmuth, S., & Newcomer, L. (2015). The brief classroom interaction observation-revised: An observation system to inform and increase teacher use of universal classroom management practices. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 17*, 159-169.

Reprimand Worksheet

Reprimands can be useful to inform students of inappropriate behavior. We know that concise and explicit reprimands are more effective at reducing problem behavior and increasing desired behavior than harsh reprimands.

Explicit reprimands are brief and informative, delivered in a normal speaking tone, state the violated rule, and provide the alternative behavior. Typically, the alternative, preferred behavior is then also rewarded.

1. Think of a time in your life when you received corrective feedback that meets most of the criteria of an explicit reprimand. Now, think of a time in your life when you received harsh corrective feedback. Complete the table below.

	Explicit Reprimand	Harsh Reprimand
What was the feedback?		
How did it feel?		
What did you do next, after the reprimand?		

Was your relationship with the person who gave you the feedback affected?		
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2. Read the following vignette and answer the questions below.

It is time to line up for lunch. You have already called everyone to the line. However, Bobby is in the block area instead of in the line. You say, "Bobby -- it's time to line up!" Bobby remains in the block area. You are feeling frustrated, and you say "Bobby! You know better than this. Get in line right now!"

What was the harsh reprimand in the vignette?	
What was an explicit reprimand you could have used instead (see the best-practice elements list from page 1)?	
Why might it have been hard for you to provide a reward (praise, positive attention) to Bobby once he engaged in the preferred behavior (lined up)?	
How might the harsh reprimand have impacted Bobby?	

<p>How might the harsh reprimand have impacted the classroom as a whole?</p>	
<p>How might the harsh reprimand have impacted you?</p>	

3. Brainstorm three coping skills to use when it's just that kind of day, and you find yourself leaning toward the harsh reprimands rather than the explicit reprimands.

<p>Coping Skill #1:</p>		
<p>Coping Skill #2:</p>		
<p>Coping Skill #3:</p>		