

## **Big Ideas in De-escalation Strategies**

The key to preventing escalation of any misbehavior is to predict it and prevent it with simple strategies. However, even when prevention is in place there will be times when students will misbehave and require a response from an adult.

The following big ideas are important to remember to both prevent and respond to all types of problem behavior:

### **Teach the specific desired behavior prior to the problem.**

Without exception, acceptable behaviors must be considered well in advance of problems and must be taught to students in a direct manner with modeling, discussion, and guided practice. When this has occurred, the probability of problem behaviors decreases dramatically.

### **Communicate consequences and have a bottom line.**

Students must be told ahead of time what the consequence will be for a particular behavior. Without this, every consequence will appear to the student to be arbitrary and personal. The consequences should be tied to a classroom system that is used consistently, including a **bottom line consequence**, a larger consequence if the student doesn't respond to the first consequence. Avoid having any consequence include removal from the classroom—many students will prefer and push for this outcome.

### **Watch for predictors and redirect.**

Experienced educators and school staff will notice certain times, circumstances, or conditions when misbehavior is predictable. But even those who are unfamiliar with a group of students can think ahead to how the furniture should be arranged, what the seating arrangement should be, and where adults should be located to prevent the most likely problems.

### **Provide clear choices.**

Present the student with an option and then detach. Don't hover over students and demand a decision. In general, there is a better chance of compliance and a lesser chance of escalation if the option is presented in a calm manner followed quickly by detachment to allow the student to make a decision. Either they will or will not comply. And if they don't, then impose the bottom line consequence and detach from the student.

### **Have a crisis plan and teach it to students.**

While these are the best strategies in terms of predicting success, there still may be times when students escalate into more intensive and dangerous behavior. In these cases, a pre-planned crisis plan must be implemented to maintain maximum safety for all concerned.