

Professional training in NVR & NA

New Authority in schools

The Sit In - Instructions

One of the possible tools that allow teachers to demonstrate powerful presence is the sit in. The sit in is a demonstration of silence presence and a firm stance, which purpose is to convey to the child your determined decision not to accept a certain repeating behavior. The sit in is a simple act, however, it requires a great dill of organization and is time consuming; one must apply discretion while using the sit in and preferably coordinate beforehand with the parents.

Turning to parents:

At the same day a behavior that requires a “sit in” as a reaction has occurred, the teacher will telephone the parents and introduce the process that he/she are about to do. You can say something like: “Lately, as you know _____ (the “sit in” should be done in response for behaviors that have repeated themselves and the parents are aware of them), apparently the child is continuing with his behavior (describe what happened that day). In order to clarify to your child that such a behavior is not acceptable in our school, I plan to remain with the child, half an hour after the school has ended and to discuss this with him. I wanted to invite you to join me in this meeting; your presence has a tremendous meaning in my opinion. The purpose of your presence is to create a unified message to the child.”

In case the parents are willing to participate: You need to remind the parents the appropriate behavior during the “sit in” (you can send them the enclosed pages as well). You can emphasize that their role is to sit and be silent (it is preferable you speak of the difficulties in remaining silent, as well as its importance during the process). The parents are welcomed to speak with the child about the behavior that happened that day, and notify that a clarification meeting will be held tomorrow. In addition, you must ask the parents not to threaten their child with the “sit in”. Threats, greatly weakens the message we wish to convey.

In case the parents are not willing to participate: you should tell them you would consider conducting the “sit in” with another staff member present, in accordance with the school policy. In case of a significant resistance to perform the “sit in”, you must notify the management and decide of an appropriate policy.

How to perform a “sit in”?

The “sit in” is performed by the teacher and at least one other adult; the child is invited to the classroom or another room at a time convenient to you.

It is highly important that you will not have a time limit, that there will be no other issues to attend and that you will not use your cell phone. You will sit down (on a chair or even on the floor), preferably in a way that will prevent the child from leaving, for instance, the parent or

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another adult will sit at the foot of the door. Once you are seated, say to the child: "Yesterday _____ (here you specifically describe the unaccepted behavior). We are not willing to accept violent/insolent behavior in our school, so we are here to find a way to resolve this problem. We will sit here and wait for you to offer a suggestion how to stop this behavior". After that, sit quietly and wait for suggestions from the child. If the child answers with accusations, demands or threats do not be provoked to an argument! Simply tell him you cannot accept his offer and remain quietly seated. You must avoid any attempt to persuade, accuse, preach, threaten or argue. Wait patiently and quietly and do not let him drag you into a verbal or physical fight. If the child made a positive suggestion, the "sit in" will end on a positive note by you saying you believe this offer deserves a chance. Do not threaten that if he does not keep his promise you will do another "sit in". In case the child made no offer, remain in the room for 20 minutes and then leave whilst saying: "we haven't found any solution yet; we will finish at this stage". The "sit in" has ended.

The rational behind the "sit in":

It is important to emphasize that the Sit-In is not an act of punishment, but a message. There are no "winning" or "losing" and it is not wise to use such terms. The teacher wishes to convey a message and not to "win"- the goal is not to make the child behave nicely during the Sit-In. We will mention that often children change their behavior without even raising one suggestion in the room. A decision concerning an additional Sit-In should be taken in accordance with the intensity of the undesired behavior after the sit in. If you sense a decrease in the problematic behavior, there is no need to initiate another Sit-In. However, if the undesired behavior persists, you should perform the sit in again. Usually, several Sit-Ins are required in order to get the message through and to identify a change.

The teacher's initiation, the surprise to the child, the length of time spent in the room and the decisive silence are the factors delivering the message- we are determined to stop this behavior. Initiation, silence and decisiveness symbolize the teachers' presence. The Sit-In success will be measured by the change of behavior after the Sit-In, and not in the course of it.

Important things to keep in mind:

A. The teacher should plan in advance when the sit in will take place. It is important not to settle when tempers flare, but at a quiet time and after properly planning and coordinating. Sit-In is, indeed, a surprise to the child, but his teacher must plan it carefully.

B. Specifically define the undesired behavior. Instead of pouring general messages, such as "you behaved badly yesterday" state, for instance, "yesterday you had a fight in the playground and told your teacher that..."

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C. After the sit in, the child should be treated as always. There is no reminder of what happened, not even with a hint. The threat to settle again, just like apology and explanations, weaken the message you wish to deliver! Sit-In is delivered through the act itself and not by threats or explanations. You may, if you want to, conduct small gestures such as including the child in solving an exercise; commend him on good behavior and so on. Again, it is important that these gestures will be done without implying they have something to do with the Sit-In.

Possible behaviors during the Sit-In, and the proper responses:

- Denying the behavior: in this situation do not answer immediately, but wait in silence. If the child repeats his denial you may say “We are waiting for a suggestion on how to stop this behavior”
- the child raises demands and conditions- the child may try and stop Sit-In by raising demands, such as "I will do what you ask in the condition that you..." in this case you should answer patiently that you cannot accept this offer and resume silence. In case he offers the parents will buy himself and he will behave nicely, the parents should decline (speak with the parents about his possibility beforehand).
- Ignoring- this is a way for the child to state he is not affected by your acts. He may try not to respond, walk around the room or even pretend to be asleep. In each of these cases, you must stay in the room in silence.
- Provocative attempts on behalf of the child- if the child swears, yells, insults etc., you must remain silent;` it is important not to let him drag you into a confrontation, and to abstain from preaching or threatening him. In general, it is wise to remember that unexpected acts on the child behalf may answered during the next Sit-In.
- *Remember- there is no need to escalate or take drastic measures during the sit in.*
- the child may be violent- in any case where there is a chance that the child will respond violently, the sit in should not be done without coordinating with the parents. If the child acts violently during the “sit in” and the parents are unable to restrain him, you must stop the “sit in”.
- The child makes a positive proposition- in that case you must leave the room and cease the sit in. Since you can go back to the Sit-In if the child does not change his problematic behavior, there is no need to fear he is "fooling you around".