

Pet Peeves

“In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:4-6).

• How can you partner with kids?

• How can you stay focused on the fact that kids are growing?

▼ Training Session

We all have pet peeves. And teachers have them in the classroom. What’s yours?

Gum smacking? Uncontrolled wiggling? Incessant tapping?

Not all pet peeves require our attention. Some may be distracting to kids. Others are just plain annoying—to you. Decide which is which.

There’s a fine line between when to write an action off as your own pet peeve and when it needs your attention. If you’re the only one in the room who seems to notice, you can probably write it off. If it’s distracting others, call attention to it.

Keep in mind: Calling attention to an action can heighten the distraction—and take away from the lesson. Weigh your options. If you tell a child to stop twirling his shoelaces and pay attention, will it benefit the whole class? Or will it simply cause everyone else to look at his shoelaces? Most likely if you take the time to point it out, it’s a bigger deal than it ever was before. Just let it go.

Maybe you notice a girl staring at a fly on the wall during your discussion. Is she paying attention to the fly or to the discussion? Asking her will probably make everyone else notice the fly. Instead, ask the girl a direct question related to the discussion. Then no one else will notice the fly, and you’ll know if she’s on the same page as you.

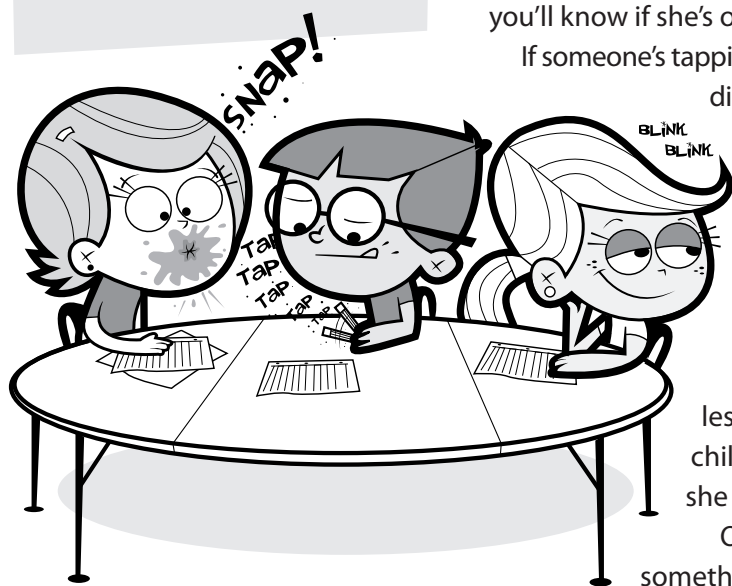
If someone’s tapping on the table, check to see if other students are distracted. If so, whisper a request to that child, “Can you try tapping on your legs, instead?” If no one seems to notice the behavior, don’t turn it into a problem.

Let’s do an about-face now. While teachers have pet peeves, so do kids. It’s hard to admit, but we do things kids don’t like, too. Some kids just don’t respond well to certain personalities.

If a child checks out during a specific time in your lesson, inventory your own behaviors. What’s causing that child to lose focus? Maybe you’re doing something he or she doesn’t like.

Or maybe some children react negatively when you say something to them individually. Talk to those kids—find out what you said. Then say it differently next time.

Many behavior problems can be chalked up to simple annoyances. Work on discerning between pet peeves and willful defiance. When you do, you’ll find ways to connect with every student.





Take this training deeper as you think over these questions:

- How do you handle annoying behavior? What can you do better?
- What's the difference between annoyances and willful defiance?
- What kinds of questions can you ask yourself in the moment to help you discern between a pet peeve and a distraction?

▼ Journal

Lord, give me insight as I love the kids of my class...

You're the one they'll remember for years to come. May they remember you for the time, love, warmth, and attention you gave to them...even when they were hard to teach. You're investing in lives. Invest wisely.

▼ Application

Next time you teach, write down each behavior that annoys you. After you've presented your lesson, look over the list. Which behaviors can be written off as pet peeves and ignored? Which need to be addressed?