

The first week of school is filled with emotions, milestones and challenges. Though this time is busy and can be nerve-racking for both teachers and students, there are many small things you can do to welcome students and prepare for a year of success. (Not necessarily listed in order of importance.)



10. [Write a class motto](#) to post for the rest of the year. Allowing students to talk openly about what they want from school and their classroom can open up a dialogue about what they expect and what may worry them. Having this open discussion will help build a classroom relationship and begin to build an inclusive environment.
9. Students should be allowed to help create the expectations, rules and a class motto. When students have a hand in creating rules and expectations they are more likely to feel responsible for sticking with what they have offered and agreed to.
8. The principal is a busy person with lots to do the first week of school. But having him or her stop in just to say hi will allow students to meet him or her at a neutral time and start to build rapport. If possible maybe even try taking a quick walk down to the office so students know where it is and can meet all the office staff (make sure you schedule this ahead of time). Though some students may meet the principal later under negative circumstances, it will help if they have had a positive interaction with them before this happens.
7. Let students know how they will be rewarded for their good behavior. Having a motivation system in the classroom is a great way to reward students for good behavior and remind them of expectations when misbehavior happens. Many teachers use a [simple "stop light" system](#) in their classroom, students start at green and if misbehavior occurs they are moved to yellow and then red. When using systems like this always have a way for students to move back up within the same day. For example, if a child moves to yellow for talking during a lesson allow him or her to move back to green if they later remember to raise their hand rather than blurting out.
6. Set expectations by communicating rules and procedures for the classroom. When students know what to expect they will feel safe and comfortable in your classroom. When communicating rules remember to teach students what THEY SHOULD do, rather than what THEY SHOULDN'T do. Stating expectations in a positive way helps promote a positive learning culture. Get tips and strategies for setting expectations in our [free, on-demand webinar](#).
5. Having strong [relationships with parents/adults](#) can greatly increase classroom success. Make a positive call home or send a newsletter introducing yourself and the expectations you have for your classroom. Parents will appreciate you reaching out and will be more open to future communication if there are problems or concerns.
4. Strong relationships [between students](#) can help prevent a lot of conflict in the classroom. Allow students time to meet one another and start to form bonds. These strong relationships can prevent group behavior problems, improve classroom culture and may even help prevent bullying.

3. Not only is it important to take an interest in each student and get to know what makes him or her unique, it is important to let students know who you are. Share family pictures with them, talk to them about what you did over the summer or maybe share with them why you love being a math teacher. Small things help students learn about you and who you are. Relationships with students build respect and trust, making misbehavior in your class less likely and correction easier when issues do arise.
2. Talk with each student individually. Your conversation doesn't need to be long, it may even happen when the student is leaving or entering your room. But taking the time to talk to each student one-on-one is vital to begin building a strong, healthy relationship. [Use these 9 ideas to get to know your students.](#)
1. Start the year off on the right foot with lots of [praise](#). Compliment Jack's new shoes, thank Elliot for raising his hand...it doesn't have to be huge but starting your relationships with students by praising them will lead to more behaviors that merit praise! Kids like to hear good things about themselves. If they know you will praise them for good behavior they will likely continue such behavior. Just remember the need for praise doesn't end after the first week, praise should be given consistently to continue to see its benefits.

We hope these tips help your school year get off to a great start. Remember if you can [predict it, you can plan for it](#). Set your classroom up for success by utilizing the first days of school to create a classroom environment where everyone knows what to expect and knows they are respected.