SETTLE TRADITIONS

Students often look forward to traditions. They can be a positive bonding experience. Take some time to figure out how you would like to start your class each morning. Some examples are to use a Tibetan singing bowl, rain stick or another instrument that gives off a soothing sound.

Create a morning pledge with your class, or read a positive, thought-provoking quote and discuss it. Traditions can also be used at the end of a school day. Students can reflect on an activity that had extra meaning to them, or they could keep a journal and write a comment at the end of each day.

CLASS MEETINGS

Class meetings are a wonderful form of communication for your class.

- Select one day each week, morning or afternoon, to meet.
- It’s important that the selected day and time remain consistent from week to week.

This is a time for your class to communicate positive or difficult issues, a time to explore problem-solving techniques or explore topics of interest for the class. It’s a time for members of your class to get to know one another better. These class meetings are often seen by students as encouraging and supportive.¹

The Share & Care staff hope that you incorporate some of these ideas into your classroom. Feel free to use some or all of the suggestions and see what works for you and your class.

We wish you a great start to this academic year.

CREATE A WELCOMING CLASSROOM

Here are some areas for teachers to pay attention to:

LEARN YOUR STUDENTS’ NAMES
Take the time to learn how to pronounce your students’ names. If they are difficult names, listen carefully to how they pronounce them and repeat the names until you’re able to pronounce them correctly.2

DECORATE YOUR CLASSROOM

You can create a sense of comfort, calmness and security by how you decorate your classroom. By adding color, you will be removing the sterile environment that many classrooms and schools exhibit. Color selection plays a large part in how your students will respond.

- **Warmer colors** can make a child feel nervous, while cool colors are more calming.
- **Darker shades** of color tend to make the room appear gloomy and uninviting, while lighter shades bring life to the room.
- When possible, adding plants, pillows and soft chairs can also add an additional degree of comfort.1

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Universal Design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people/students regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.

**ORGANIZED CLASSROOM**
Once you have established an inviting classroom environment, organization is the next step. How you organize the furniture is important. You want to be sure you have enough space between furniture so that you and the students can move through the room easily.1

When possible, arrange your classroom using “universal design.” The goal is to create an environment that encourages cooperative learning, builds a sense of class community and makes the best use of space. You want your students to have a sense of ownership and believe “This is our classroom.”

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an approach to teaching aimed at meeting the needs of every student in a classroom. It can be helpful for all children, including children with learning and attention issues. The UDL approach takes careful planning by teachers.

(Continued)