

IMPULSE CONTROL LESSON: RESISTING DISTRACTIONS



students will

- Resist distractions to focus on and follow specific instructions

materials

- cue cards for distractors
- Student Practice: What's in My Control

approximate lesson length: 30 minutes

Following directions activities are a way to build critical skills in impulse control, and this activity is a Zoo U twist on the classic game Simon Says. Students will follow "Principal Wild's" instructions to make different movements with their body, such as hopping on one foot or placing hands on their head, only moving when the instruction is preceded by "Principal Wild says..." To challenge their Impulse Control Skills, a few students will act as distractors, trying to engage students in conversation while the instructions are happening. Students will need to focus intently on Principal Wild's instructions and ignore the distractions to know when, and when not, to move.

Pre-Activity Discussion (7 minutes)

Begin by talking with the group about the importance of taking responsibility for your own actions and being in control of their own behavior.

SAY: Sometimes it feels like we don't have any control. Someone was making fun of me so I HAD to say something mean. My classmate was talking so I COULDN'T do my work. Mr friend dared me to steal something off the teacher's desk. He MADE me do it.

Invite discussion with these sample questions:

- Have you ever missed something important in class, like directions, because a classmate was talking to you? If someone is talking to you or distracting you in some other way, and you miss something, is it your fault or theirs?
- If someone is doing something wrong, does that mean we



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can do the same thing back to them? Why or why not?

- If someone is trying to get you to break the rules, do you have a choice of whether you talk to or hang out with them or not?

SAY: As kids at school, there are certainly going to be some things that are not in your control, but something you can always control is your own behavior and reactions to other people.

Activity Directions (13 minutes)



1. Line students up in rows facing "Principal Wild." (The Principal Wild role should be played by an adult the first few times, but could potentially be played by an older student as they get the hang of the game.)
2. Choose one distractor for the start of the game.
3. Instruct the distractor that it's their job to distract the students who are playing while Principal Wild gives instructions. They should do this by talking to students using statements or questions, not just by making random noises. If they are not sure what to say, they can use examples from their cue cards. Distractors should move around talking to different students throughout the game. They cannot touch other students or try to distract with gestures, such as waving their hands in front of faces. They should also talk in an inside voice or whisper, not yelling.
4. Instruct the remaining students that Principal Wild will be giving instructions on how to move. They should only move when he "Principal Wild says..." before the action. For example, "Principal Wild says... touch your nose."
5. If Principal Wild just says "Touch your nose" and a student does it, he or she is out of the game, but then becomes a distractor! Hand the student a distractor cue card, and continue the game. The game will become more difficult as more distractors join.

6. Students (who are not distractors) may not talk during the game. If they respond

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to a statement or question from the distractors, they are out and then become a distractor.

7. The last one or two students to be left following instructions correctly while resisting distractions are the winners!
8. After you've given students the directions, start the Youtube video. Principal Wild will give abbreviated directions again at the beginning of the video. (If you can't or would rather not use the youtube video for the game, you can play the role of Principal Wild yourself using the attached action suggestions.

Post-Discussion (7 minutes)

After completing a game of Principal Wild Says, help students reflect on the activity by discussing some of the following questions:

- Was it difficult to follow Principal Wild's directions when the distractors were talking to you?
- What strategies did you use to focus on the directions and ignore the distractions?
- If you talked to a distractor, did they force you to talk, or did you choose to talk?
- Do you think you've ever been a "distractor" during class? How do you think the other students felt when you were talking while the teacher was talking?

Wrap Up (3 minutes)

SAY: Being able to concentrate in class and follow directions in many situations is a team effort. Everyone in the class needs to help contribute to the learning environment by both working hard to pay attention and follow directions and by not being a distractor to classmates.

SAY: Even if someone is purposely trying to distract you or make you break the rules, your behavior and how you respond is always your choice. A classmate can make it difficult, but they can't force you to not pay attention or not follow directions.

SAY: One of the main things we have control over is how we behave. We can't control how other people are acting, what they say, or often what they think about us. But we can control how we react to others' behavior, how we respond to what others say, and

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how we let others influence our feelings.

Educator Notes

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Are you excited for recess? Recess will be fun. What should we play?
What did you have for lunch? Mac and cheese is the best!
I have a dog. Do you have pets? I don't like cats. Do you?
My favorite color is orange. And I like to eat oranges. How about you?
What's your favorite color?



My favorite class at school is art. I like to paint and draw. What's your favorite class? Do you like reading? What about math? Isn't PE fun?

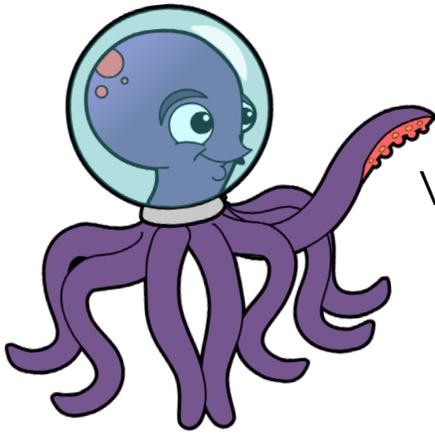
Outer space is cool. I'd like to go in a space shuttle one day. What would you do if you met an alien?

What's your favorite zoo animal? I like hippos. Do you like sharks?

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I have a dog. Do you have pets? I don't like cats. Do you like cats or dogs better?
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JUMP up and down

Wave your arms like an octopus

Stand on one leg

Stomp your feet like a rhino

Touch your toes

Hoot like an owl

Dance!

Laugh like a hyena

Pretend to play the trumpet

Raise your arms up like a baboon

Scuttle back and forth like a crab

Stretch up tall like a giraffe

CLAP like a seal

Tiptoe quiet as a mouse

Hop on one foot

