

Make Your Day Review

Please use this review with your class as often as you feel it is necessary during the school year. Some suggestions for appropriate times are at the beginning of the school year, after long breaks such as winter and spring, or when a new student comes to your classroom.

For the teacher: How did we get here?

Some students have a misconception about MYD. They have not experienced other citizenship programs, so they do not know the benefits for themselves. It is helpful to discuss this with the children.

Kindergarten students accept MYD. Sixth grade students are either experts at it and very easy to work with or on the fringe of feeling too grown-up for it. It is important that we dialogue with the students, allow them time to express their concerns and address them. The more students are part of the system such as providing input, being on the MYD student committee, honored as mentors for the younger students, the easier it will be to use Make Your Day.

Review the school rule – No one has the right to interfere with the learning, safety or well-being of others.

It is good to remind the students of what each of these words means. Generate again rules that are needed by the students and teacher to create a safe learning environment. Make sure that these all fit within the school rule. End this discussion by expressing that this is your rule (the teacher) and then ask each student individually, “Is this your rule?” If a student says, “No,” stop and have a discussion to find out what that student needs included in the understanding of the school rules. When students agree to the rule, it allows the focus of a step 4 conference to remain on the behavior.

Discuss interfering behaviors. Remind them that this interference involves not just the classroom, but the playground, walking in the hallways, walking to and from school, and riding the buses.

Review points

The criteria for earning points are to doing what’s expected the best one can and by following the school rule.

State clear expectations at the beginning of every class period and/or change of activity. “For those who wish to earn full points this period, please participate in a round robin discussion in your cooperative learning group.” (Or whatever your requirements are for the period)

A class period can be anywhere from 15 minutes to 50 minutes. Not much longer than 50 minutes, though, because we and the students will have a hard time remember if we need to take responsibility for not doing what was expected for that period.

Steps vs. points – Steps are used for interfering.

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Teachers and students start at “0” and are earning points all period while doing what’s expected. (Points are never lost.)

If a student is not demonstrating the expected behavior, but not interfering, then the student is earning “0” points while s/he is continuing in that behavior. Example: If a student is wearing a hat in the building, and it is known that students are not to wear hats in the building, and then the student is earning “0” points while the hat is on, or the desk is not cleared, or the book is not open, etc. During points, I say “0,” the student says “42,” we average at 21.

So go ahead and set the parameters and expectations for the classroom often. Remind your student that they are earning points from the minute they walk out their door in the morning. Then, set the expectations for each period of the day. Most children do want to please and do what is expected.

Concerns – A concern must meet two criteria.

1. No concern must be made unless it directly interfered with the student.
2. It must be made to help the other student (not hurt someone or tattle).

Here is where I pull out Earl’s old coin trick and show how most people are not lying, they just see things differently.

The teacher is the final judge on whether a concern is genuine. If you feel it is tattling, warn the child once. If it happens again, explain that they will not do concerns for a time period while they watch how concerns are done properly.

Average the highest and lowest point values. Always round down to the lower number.

Review steps – Show the students what is expected for each step. They love to demonstrate! Ask them, “What is the proper way to sit if I wish to leave Step 1 and return to the activity?” Show them the correct posture. This is a good time to assume they know nothing and to be very clear in all expectations.

Remember these points about steps

To maintain neutrality and child dignity, go quietly to the child or call the child to you. The more often you use Step 1, the fewer Step 4s you will have.

Body Language – On Step 1 and Step 2, try not to make eye contact, this goes back to neutrality. We speak a lot with our faces. It is just a statement you are making to the child because you are giving them what they’ve asked for...boundaries...Step 1.

Not making eye contact also keeps you from turning your back on your classroom. They deserve your attention, not the child who chose Step 1.

Be careful not to touch them when you are giving them permission to leave steps. Some students want that contact and will act out to get it.

The child should be on steps as little time as possible. (1 to 3 minutes)

Be attentive to verbiage – Remember you want to state exactly what was done.

You say, “Step 1, talking out.” (You don’t have to say things like “again!!!”)

Say, “What choice did you make to get you to Step 1?” (Not, “Why were you sent to Step 1?”)

Make Your Day is very language specific.

Contracting – May be verbal or written.

If it seems that a student is repeating steps within a period, “I need to let you know that if you choose to go back to Step 1 again, you will remain there the rest of this period.”

“Whenever we do points, you always say 43, talking, and it doesn’t seem to be working. Which would help you more, more time on steps or earning fewer points?”

A child is choosing steps – We do not put the child on steps, we are simply following through with the student’s request.

It is not a **therapy session**. You have a class to teach. Find time later to chat with the child.

Maintain continuity – don’t let one child do something and have it seem cute, then when another does it, Steps are implemented. That takes validity from MYD and students are no longer choosing steps for themselves, it becomes the teacher’s choice.

Recourse - Remind students on the way to Step 1 that is not the time for recourse. Tell students that they will have an opportunity for recourse but it is once you have come back to talk with them on Steps. Knowing this, if they decide to talk on the way to Step 1, they have now chosen Step 2 for talking on the way to Step 1. In a minute or two, when I return to that child, I will listen to his/her perception of what happened. I may still disagree or I may realize that I was wrong. If I’m wrong, I simply need to say, “I apologize, you may go back to the activity.”

A child **IS** earning points while on steps. It is what got her/him to Steps for which sh/he did not earn points.

Shadowing – If another child talks to one on steps or makes contact, laughs, etc., they are shadowing and asking to go to that same step. They must come back down through the steps just as if they had chosen steps for another interfering behavior.

Closure of Steps – Say, “What choice did you make to get to Step 2? Do you need more time? (No.) You may return to Step 1.”

If a child forgets the reason – you restate it. Say, “You chose Step 1/2/3 by talking out. Your time starts over.”

Skipping Steps – Only when shadowing or automatic Step 4s or 5s.

Students may opt out – They are simply saying, “I need some time away.” They are still earning full points. (Don’t forget, they can also still hear the lesson from Step 1!)

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Step 2 – Standing (model this).

Step 3 – Stand and focus on the school rule (model this).

Step 4 – Students who have chosen Step 4 should only be out of the classroom as brief a time as possible, not to exceed the remainder of the current day. If a student returns to school the next day without a conference and with no parent, the student is sent to the office and the administrator handles it. (Note: most teachers still choose to be involved in the Step 4 conference even when administrative intervention is needed.)

Remind the students that a Step 4 does not mean that they have failed. It is actually quite positive because they could have chosen Step 5 and left school altogether! It just means that the child and you agree that there are some behaviors that need to be changed.

Step 4 Conference – short and to the point. It is done out in the hallway (maintaining visual contact with your classroom) or in an empty classroom, the office, etc. It goes something like this:

“Thank you for coming. Has Johnny told you why he chose this Step 4 conference?” (Talk together to make sure you both have your facts straight and are “on the same page” when you call in the child.” I will now call in Johnny. “Johnny, tell us why you called this conference.” Johnny speaks. We ask for clarification until all the facts are out. I ask, “Johnny, what could you do differently next time so this doesn’t happen again?” Johnny replies. “Mom/Dad, do you feel that Johnny is ready to go back to class?” They can say “No” and take their child home. Or they can say “Yes” and the child returns to the classroom.

Remember, the parent makes the decision about the child’s return.

Don’t forget to fill out the Step 4 paperwork and to bring Johnny back down through the Steps when he returns to the room. He will start on Step 3 (unless it was an automatic Step 4) and work back down to Step 1, then back to his seat.

In a Step 4 conference, remember to consider the following:

Read **parent body language**. The secretaries may give you insight as the parent’s frame of mind. Use this to your advantage.

Set the agenda with the parents. Be sure you’re both “on the same page.”

Be conscious of making eye contact.

De-escalate a parent. Be aware that a parent may be angry. Talk her/him through the process and tell him/her what to expect.

Remember, you never have to endure **verbal abuse**. We are **professionals**, just like their family doctor or lawyer.

Focus on the fact that **the child chose Step 4**, you did not put him/her there. Never be judgmental.

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If a child is misbehaving on Step 3, you say, “You have now chosen Step 4. You may go to the office and call your parents for a Step 4 conference or you may choose Step 5, which is going home today.”

Teachers cannot say, “You have now chosen Step 5, **only a principal can suspend.** You may say, “**You now QUALIFY for a Step 5.**”

Good luck to you all. Please feel free to call on me to ask any questions at any time. Have a wonderful school year!

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