

Points for Grumpy

[View a Student Chart for 'Points for Grumpy'](#)

This response-cost strategy is appropriate for younger students who are verbally defiant and non-compliant with the teacher. (See the related Hints for Using... column for tips on how to tailor this intervention idea for older students.)

Materials:

- Two coffee cans with lids
- Point tokens (e.g., poker chips, pennies, etc.)

Preparation:

Obtain two coffee cans with plastic lids. Cut a slot into the lids of both coffee cans. Decorate one can with the name of the target student. (You may want to invite the student to decorate his or her coffee can with drawings or other artwork to personalize it.) Label the other coffee can "Grumpy." (You can embellish the "Grumpy" can with pictures of frowning faces or other symbols of irritation.)

Steps in Implementing This Intervention

Step 1: Create a menu of rewards for the student. For each reward, decide how many good behavior points the student must earn to get the reward.

Step 2: Tell the student that he or she can earn points for readily and politely following adult requests. Introduce the "Points for Grumpy Program":

- At the start of each monitoring period, you will put 10 "good behavior" tokens (poker chips or pennies) into your pocket.
- Each time that you have to approach or address the student because he or she is verbally defiant or non-compliant, you will take one of the "good behavior" points and drop it into "Grumpy's" coffee can.
- At the end of the period, you will give the student any tokens that remain in your pocket and let the student drop these tokens into his or her coffee can. The student will be able to 'cash in' these tokens or points rewards according to the reward system that you have set up.

Step 3: Tell the student what your behavioral expectations for ready and polite compliance. The child will lose a point if you have to approach him or her for:

- Talking back to you.
- Using a disrespectful gesture or facial expression (e.g., eye-rolling)
- Muttering
- Failing to comply within 60 seconds of your making a request

Inform the child that if he or she complains about your taking a point, you will deduct additional good behavior points.

Step 4: Start the program. Use the [attached chart](#) to record any good behavior points that the child earns each day.

Troubleshooting: How to Deal With Common Problems in Using 'Points for Grumpy'

Q: How should I respond if the student becomes angry and confrontational when I take away a 'good behavior point' for misbehavior?

Students will frequently test the limits of a behavioral program when it is first introduced. If a child becomes belligerent or uncooperative with you deduct a point, you should remain calm and avoid addressing the student in a confrontational manner. If the student continues to be disrespectful and violates the behavioral expectations that you have set up, deduct additional 'good behavior' points. Keep in mind also that this intervention does not replace your existing disciplinary code. You may decide to impose other appropriate consequences (e.g., phone call to parent) if the child's behavior does not correct itself within a reasonable amount of time.

Teachers should also be aware that a small number of students are not able to adapt to response-cost programs because they become very upset whenever points, tokens, or privileges are taken away from them. If you suspect that a student is temperamentally ill-suited to a program like "Points for Grumpy", you

Jim's Hints for Using...

Points for Grumpy

As the student shows that he or she is able to meet your behavioral goals and keep most or all of the 'good behavior' points, gradually drop the maximum number of points allocated each day.

You can adapt this program for use with older students. Use points instead of tokens. Also, in place of an imaginary figure ("Grumpy"), you can randomly pick other students in the class each day. Inform the target student that, for each instance in which you must approach that student for non-compliance or disrespectful behavior, you will award one of his or her points to the randomly chosen classmate who will be able to 'cash in' these points for rewards.

should probably not use it with that child.

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