

6G: Tips for Teachers

Children and Youth In Care } TIPS *for* Teachers

Each student has unique strengths, needs, and dreams. Children and youth in care need teachers to set the bar high for them and have the same expectations as they have of other students, with the understanding that discreet supports and services may be needed to give a child or youth in care the same opportunities to learn and achieve success. They benefit from being acknowledged for their strengths, given help when it is needed and

treated in the same manner as other students. They also appreciate discreet support and accommodations to help them through difficulties.

With the adults in their lives demonstrating understanding, realistic expectations and compassion for them, children/youth in care can experience increased success in school and life.



LISTEN, SUPPORT AND CARE

Make an extra effort to build a trusting and supportive relationship with children/youth in care. For instance, you can inquire regularly about their interests, passions and talk to them in confidence about their challenges and needs.

Demonstrate that all students, including those in care, have rights, are worthy of love, dignity, and respect, and have a voice in decisions affecting them.

Recognize and acknowledge the strengths, skills, abilities and progress of all students, including those in care.

Help children/youth in care set realistic, achievable goals, without underestimating their abilities.

Help connect children/youth in care to activities that interest them.

Celebrate successes and give positive feedback to children/youth in care and their caregivers in areas such as attendance, behaviour or achievement.

Encourage and support children/youth in care to develop positive relationships with peers and strong connections to their school and community.

Encourage children/youth in care to take leadership roles in the classroom and to have an active role in steering their own learning, based on their personal interests.



SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Children/youth in care, of all ages, benefit from being treated like everyone else and not being labelled. Ask them discreetly how they are feeling or if require any supports.

Allow children/youth in care to be present at school even if they are unable to fully participate in class due to difficulties at home.

Be aware of signs of trauma and connect the child or youth in care with the school counsellor and other supports, while reporting any signs of worrisome behaviour.

Help children/youth in care during transition times and offer additional supports if needed. For instance, consider organizing a “buddy” for a new student.

Connecting the students with extracurricular activities, ensuring students and caregivers are aware of funding options available to support students’ participation.

When new children/youth in care are registered, gather as much information as possible about past academic achievement, student interests and strengths, enrolled courses, assessments and any significant mental health needs or supports or services needed to help with planning.

Encourage and support children/youth in care to become involved in extra-curricular activities.

Ensure children/youth in care can participate in school field trips and extra-curricular activities by contacting the caseworker or caregiver regarding questions about obtaining required fees or consents.

Help children/youth in care connect to their culture and community, including with their community elders if appropriate.

WHAT STUDENTS ARE SAYING

“Adults should be aware of how valuable and necessary their support is to youth, and should recognize the difference that they can make in a young person’s life.”

“I had a teacher who changed my life. He was the most supportive person I met... He was very compassionate and caring... I grew as a person... the school was a second home.”

“Lots of us are pretty angry for one reason or another. [Teachers] should just be more understanding.”

“When I am dealing with too much my brain just goes into overload and I shut down. There should be more opportunities to work at our own pace.”

“Sometimes it’s hard when you don’t have parents to help you with your homework... or be at a nice graduation day.”

