

Popsicle Stick Idea

This Popsicle Stick Idea is a great way to encourage fair and active participation in your classes. You can use this highly effective management idea for just about assigning any task to individual classes or making fair class teams. In her contribution, Jill explains how she uses this concept with her classes of elementary students. I'm sure that this idea could also be adapted for many higher grades as well.

I have taken an idea that I learned from the “Music Express Magazine” and have expanded upon it. I teach small elementary school children in-groups of 20 or more. I keep them focused by having them select Popsicle sticks each having a color and a number, as they enter the classroom.

They look at the stick they have selected and must remember the number on the stick and the color of it as well.

I have students collect the sticks in a cup. I use the sticks to call students up to demonstrate activities.

I discard each stick after they have been used. This ensures that the same children are not being called repeatedly. It also involves some students who are apprehensive to participate on their own to take part.

I play games and put the children on teams based on either the number or the color on their stick.

I have made six special sticks with the letters A-F that are rainbow colored. These are used to make team captains or group leaders.

The children never know before they come in to the room what stick they might pull. Every week the children ask if they will be pulling sticks. Once in a while I don't and that keeps them wanting it. It really works well.

You can make up any other ways to use the sticks. Your students will love it!

Jill Grois

I love Jill's adaptation of this idea. Kids love the unknown and by using this process they feel actively involved in determining the events in their class for each lesson. It's also a great way to make sure that every child's contribution is valued and is equal. It's always so easy to focus just on the loudest kids, but in this strategy by discarding the sticks everyone in the class has equal contribution.