

# Creating an Encouraging Classroom

## A Classroom Champions Educator Guide

A positive classroom culture helps students feel safe, motivated, and supported. But depending on the age and maturity of your students, creating and keeping an encouraging culture in your classroom can be tricky.

While negativity can sometimes spread quickly, you have the power to shape an environment where encouragement is the norm! One strategic way to get your class to embrace positive encouragement is to make it cool!

Use this guide to help your students practice giving and receiving encouragement in a way that feels natural and meaningful.



## Strategies for Building a Culture of Encouragement

### 1 “Gamify” the encouragement

Find ways to make kindness and encouragement a game. For example, you can tell your class that you are looking for three people who are encouraging to someone else. If you catch three people by the end of the day being encouraging, then those students will earn a reward, like 5 minutes of extra recess, a sticker, etc.

### 2 Promote positive leaders

Every classroom has natural leaders. Identify students who naturally encourage others and give them a special role in spreading positivity. You might create a “Kindness Captain” of the week or invite them to share encouraging words during morning meetings.

### 3 Celebrate encouraging behavior

When students demonstrate uplifting behavior, make sure to highlight it! Give shout-outs, write notes of praise, or let the class recognize their peers. The more you celebrate encouragement, the more students will want to participate

## Practice Scenario: Encouraging a Classmate

One way to build a culture of encouragement in your classroom is to practice it together! You can create your own scenarios or start with this one:



**Scenario:** You just learned a tough new concept in math class. During independent practice, you look over to your classmate's desk and see they look frustrated. They are erasing the paper so much that they put a hole in the paper. Then their pencil breaks. You want to offer them some positive encouragement but aren't sure what to say. You don't want to make them feel embarrassed and you don't want to say something "cringe."



**Discussion Question:** What are some things you could say to give positive encouragement to your classmate?

## Conversation Starters: Practicing Encouragement

- Does it feel uncomfortable to give positive encouragement to your classmates?

- Why or why not?

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- Think of some situations when you can give a classmate some positive encouragement

- What might you say?

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- Share a time when someone gave you positive encouragement.

- How did it make you feel?

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