



Self-Management

ABOUT CENTER FOR THE COLLABORATIVE CLASSROOM

The Caring School Community (CSC) program is a nationally recognized, research-based program for grades K–6 that builds classroom and schoolwide community while developing students' social and emotional (SEL) skills and competencies.

Introducing Class Meetings

By: The Caring School Community

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ABOUT CHECK-IN CLASS MEETINGS

In the Caring School Community program, students participate in several different types of class meetings: Check-in Class Meetings, Planning and Decision-Making Class Meetings, and Problem-Solving Class Meetings.

In the beginning of the year, many class meetings are check-in meetings. Check-in Class Meetings give the students a chance to reflect on their day. Participating in these meetings increases the students' commitment to the classroom community. They have opportunities to celebrate what they have learned, evaluate how they have worked together, or share their thoughts about their day. Check-in meetings usually take 10–15 minutes and often happen near the end of the day. To build a sense of belonging among your students, plan to do a Check-in Class Meeting every day.

Because this meeting is the first class meeting of the year, the emphasis is on establishing the class meeting rules and procedures and helping the students get used to talking in this setting. A model for subsequent daily Check-in Class Meetings, along with ideas for check-in topics, is provided in Week 2 in the Model Daily Check-in lesson.

Lesson Purpose

Students:

- Listen to one another
- Explain their thinking
- Learn and practice class meeting rules and procedures

Materials

- Space for class to sit in a circle
- “Class Meeting Rules” chart, prepared ahead (see “Before the Lesson”)

Before the Lesson

Prepare a chart listing the rules for class meetings. Use or adapt these:

- One person talks at a time.
- Look at the person talking.
- When mentioning problems, say “people” instead of using names.

The Lesson

1 INTRODUCE CLASS MEETINGS AND PRACTICE GATHERING IN A CIRCLE

Explain that this year the students will meet regularly as a class to learn how to work well together so that everyone in the class feels safe and comfortable. Class meetings are a special kind of discussion during which they will sit in a circle and talk about their classroom community. Explain that today they will form a circle to have their first class meeting of the year.

Explain how you would like the students to move to the circle and remind them to move safely and responsibly.

Have the students move to the circle. If necessary, have them return to their desks and practice the procedure again until they are able to move in an orderly way.

Point out ways in which they took responsibility for themselves as they were moving. Explain that it is important for them to move responsibly to the circle every time they have a class meeting.

2 TEACH THE CLASS MEETING RULES

Explain that there are rules you expect the students to follow during class meetings so that everyone will feel safe participating. Show the “Class Meeting Rules” chart and briefly explain each rule.

CLASS MEETING RULES

- One person talks at a time.
- Look at the person talking.
- When mentioning problems say “people” instead of using names.



If at all possible, arrange the students in a circle for class meetings. A circle puts everyone on equal footing, and the students are able to address one another directly. If you do not have enough space to form a circle, have the students arrange their chairs so that most students can see one another.

Prior to the meeting, decide on a procedure the students will use to form a circle for class meetings. Use this procedure every time the students come together for one. Establishing and reviewing this procedure will help class meetings proceed smoothly.

Class Meeting Lessons

As you explain each rule, help the students think about why the rule is important by asking questions such as:

Q What would happen if everyone talked at the same time in a class meeting?

Q Why is it important to look at the person who's talking?

Students might say:

"You wouldn't get to hear what anyone was saying."

"If you look at the person who's talking, it will help you listen."

Explain that today the students will practice the first two rules. Explain that you will check in with them at the end of the meeting to see how they did.

3 **SHARE IN THE CIRCLE AND PRACTICE LOOKING AT THE PERSON TALKING**

Explain that today the students will get to know one another by sharing about their day. Ask:

Q What is one thing you did in school today that you want to tell your family about?

Provide a few moments of wait time for the students to think before you call on anyone to respond. Then, have several volunteers share their ideas with the class.



If the students have difficulty generating ideas, offer some suggestions like those in "Students might say."



Giving the students a few moments of quiet before discussing a question allows them to consider the question and form a response before anyone starts talking. It increases student participation in discussions and encourages longer, more thoughtful answers. Use wait time during all student discussions throughout the day.



Before asking each question, remind the students to look at and listen to the person speaking.

Help the students explain their thinking in more detail by asking questions such as:

- Q Who else liked [making self-portraits] today? What part did you like about it, and why?**
- Q What might you want to tell your family tonight about [making self-portraits]?**

4 REFLECT ON THE ACTIVITY

Share your observations of how the students did talking one at a time and looking at the person who was talking. Ask:

- Q I noticed people listening carefully and looking at the person who was talking during our meeting. Why is it important to listen to the person talking?**

Encourage them to continue to practice these skills, not just during class meetings, but whenever they are talking with someone.

5 ADJOURN THE MEETING

Explain how you would like the students to move from the circle. Adjourn the meeting and have them return to their seats. If necessary, have them practice the procedure until they are able to move in an orderly way.