



# CHAMPS / DSC Weekly Tips: The “4 Toos” of Correction

## The “4 Toos” of Correction

## Tips for Teachers and Coaches

The intent of positive classroom management is to act proactively through structuring our environments and activities and teaching expectations in ways that encourage the behaviors we want so we can reduce our time correcting the behaviors we do not want. Ideally, this would lead to no misbehavior, but in reality, inappropriate behavior is always going to be present to some degree. Many of the behaviors we see in school are appropriate in other settings, so it can be difficult for a child to always be cognizant of the expectations in each context. Because of these inevitable missteps, it is critical that we have effective ways to correct inappropriate behaviors so the student is more likely to change their behavior the next time they are in a similar situation.

When correcting behavior, we can often fall into a few traps that make our corrections less effective. I call these the “4 Toos” of correction. The “4 Toos” are Too Harsh, Too Late, Too Long, and From Too Far Away.

| Common Error             | Description   | Alternative  |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Too Harsh</b>         | Corrections that are too harsh in tone and language model disrespectful communication and risks damaging the relationship with the child to the point that it can be difficult to fix. Corrections that are harsh in their intensity can seem unfair to the child and can affect future motivation. | Correction should model calmness and emotional regulation. Have pre-planned mild consequence you can give out any time to prevent overreaction.                                    |
| <b>Too Late</b>          | Correction should be provided as close in time to the event as possible. This creates a stronger impression on the child because the connection between the behavior and the correction is more direct.   | Provide a response as soon as possible after the behavior.   |
| <b>Too long</b>          | Correction should be as brief as possible. Long discussions bring too much immediate attention to the situation, leave the rest of the class waiting, and can cause the student to be defensive. You may also be frustrated or angry. Avoid getting drawn into discussions or nattering cycles.     | Use one liners to provide correction. If a behavior’s severity or frequency requires a longer discussion, have the student come back to discuss it later for a planned discussion. |
| <b>From too far away</b> | Correction should occur in close proximity to the student. This takes advantage of the effects of proximity control, it shows the student that this matters to you, and it allows you to give the correction a sense of privacy.  | Get closer to the student before you give the correction. Set up your classroom to allow you to easily get to all students quickly.  |