

NEW KIDS IN CLASS

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For many preschoolers, gymnastics class is often one of their first experiences away from their parents in a structured environment. For this reason, possessing class management skills is a must for the teacher. Here are a few great tips to keep the preschool room running smoothly.

First, having a standard greeting place and attendance procedure works great for both parents and kids. Parents are relieved when they know where to take their child before class starts and are reassured that the teacher knows their child is there; while kids appreciate the consistent structure.

Another skill that preschoolers may struggle with is walking in a line with their classmates. The sooner the issue is addressed, the easier the process will become. When standing in the front of the line, the instructor could say "One, two, three... eyes on me." The kids would then respond "One, two... eyes on you." This helps them focus and respond to instructions on what will come next. Furthermore, directing them to "walk where you walk" also helps the wanderers stay in line. Give the preschoolers



something to do with their hands while walking, such as putting them on their hips, on their head, clapping, or anything that does not bother another student.

Additionally, giving children ownership of something helps them feel part of the group. For instance, each student can be assigned their own carpet square or shape to take along with them for the first few classes. When the class gets to the next station, have them set it down and sit on it. Now, they know where they are to be if it's not yet their turn.

Transitions are difficult to make with young ones, too. Like almost everyone, preschoolers want to know where they are going next. It is helpful if the instructor follows a routine like this: "After we tumble, we will go to beam. Then, we will do trampoline at the end." Let the students know the plan for the class from the beginning, allowing them to stay focused on the task at

hand. It can also be helpful to let them know that after one more turn it's going to be time to line up to go to a new place.

Remember sometimes even the best plans don't work. Instructors should be flexible and ready to alter if needed. Don't try to do too much the first couple of weeks, and remember to praise the students when they know where they belong and how to line up to move around the room safely. ✕