

Building respectful relationships with students

Teachers intentionally build and sustain respectful relationships with students in the classroom. Teachers who form respectful relationships with students are able to work collaboratively with children and manage power dynamics in ways that increase student participation, engagement, and achievement. Respectful teacher-student relationships are characterized by trust, care, joy, and appreciation of students' cultures and communities. Teachers develop their relationships in all aspects of their teaching, including small conversations with individuals, notes to students, nonverbal signals, and how they respond to and acknowledge students during lessons.

Advancing justice through building respectful relationships with students

The quality of the relationships that students have with their teachers affects their success and flourishing. Teachers' relationships with students can help students feel valued and supported, can positively shape students' academic identities, and help engage them in learning. A teacher who has strong relationships with students will be better positioned to leverage that knowledge in favor of curriculum and learning activities that are relevant to students' lives and draw on their experiences. However, because teacher-student relationships can also be harmful and oppressive, and can reproduce patterns of racism, care with developing positive relationships is foundational to everything teachers do.

Decomposition of building respectful relationships with students

Establish rapport	Build mutual trust	Monitor and maintain relationships with students	Examine and manage self in relationship with students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to learn about and connect with every student as a human being • Provide opportunities for students to learn about and connect with you • Use work on content to both convey appreciation/regard for and connect with students • Find small moments to connect with children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate trustworthiness • Treat students as trustworthy • Support students to engage in productive struggle with content and to persevere • Invite and take seriously students' questions, challenges, criticisms, disagreements without taking it personally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish routines for connecting with students on a regular basis (e.g. greeting students at the door) • Build communication systems (e.g., interactive journaling, regularly scheduled check-ins, surveys) in order to gather individual student thinking and feedback • Develop systems to track the quality and quantity of interactions with individual students • Recognize and actively mediate conflict—take ownership when mistakes are made, and adapt behavior based on the needs of the relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend to who you are outside of the classroom • Attend to who you are as a professional inside the classroom • Examine your personality, interrogate your biases, and identify blind spots in terms of how they might impact relationships with individual students • Attend to how you express yourself

Visual representation of building respectful relationships with students

