

Students who don't perceive safety (over perceive danger)

Our brains are hard wired to keep us safe and are *continually* monitoring the environment for safety (out of our awareness). Children who did not have secure attachments and/or have experienced a significant threat (trauma) devote much more of their brain energy toward ensuring safety. They tend to overreact to stimuli (which are misperceived as threats) and struggle to self regulate, modulate their attention, and/or be able to complete academic tasks.

You might see:

You might try:

<p>Inability to focus Deep withdrawal Very wary, suspicious, not trusting Apparently random body movements (getting out of seat) and blurting out Lack of impulse control Inability to sit still Repetitive behaviors Appear anxious (twirls hair, sucks thumb) Clingy/Needy Lack of boundaries (hugging strangers) Over-reaction to peer movements Extremely acute awareness of any negative body language Misinterpretation of events, where the child feels that their actions caused the problem Explosive behavior that does not have clear cause Trouble with transitions Trouble with any change in schedule Pains, body complaints, nurse visits Aggressive (physical/emotional/verbal) Avoidant behavior (not coming/ refusing to participate or go places)</p>	<p>Taking time to teach routines Posting schedules Practice transitions. Pay attention to which parts of transitions are hard for the student and work together to create solutions. (Non verbal signals, advance warning etc.) Lead classroom respectfully (Kind and Firm) Establish clear agreements about classroom behavior with your students. Teach the students how to follow them by regularly checking in with them about how they are doing and asking them to silently make improvements. ("How are we doing on our agreement to have quiet during reading? Thumbs up/sideways/down. Take a breath and notice if there is one thing you can quietly do to make it better. Please do it. Thank you") Warning the student of potential "surprises" including fire drills, guests, substitutes, schedule changes, new seating arrangements. Connecting with the student each day in a similar fashion. Small connection rituals (hand shake/high five) Give the student control where possible. (I'm changing the seating chart, do you have a place in the classroom that feels best for you?) Whole class activities involving patterns of motion. (Regular motion/rhythm/music helps re-establish helpful connections in the lower brain.) Keep your mood relatively stable. If you are having a bad day explain why to the students (or they may think you are mad at them)</p>
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Things to avoid:

Consider the context:

<p>Inconsistency, irregular behavior Allowing bullying, name calling Requiring students to present from the front/ read aloud to all. Punishments or threats Angry outbursts in class Surprises (even "good" ones) Not keeping promises or appointments Not following through</p>	<p>What do you know about this student's family? What do you know about this student's history at school? What do you know about his/her culture? (Unspoken rules about eye contact, personal space, gender roles, role of the individual vs. group)</p>
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