

Plan Ahead To Avoid a MESS

MESS is a proactive technique you can use to engage students in whatever you are doing – playing a game, transitioning from one room to another, classwork, art time, or anytime.



Make it fun

Your energy is contagious! When you make it fun, kids will stay engaged and enjoy the activity—which means they'll be way less likely to act out.



Expectations (set them clearly)

Be clear and positive! Think ahead about what could go wrong and set expectations to prevent it. Your words act like a spotlight—focus on what you want kids to do, not what you don't.



Stay busy

Keeping kids engaged keeps them out of trouble—less downtime means fewer distractions for everyone!



Show how to help

Giving a student a special task makes them feel responsible and involved. When they have a role to focus on, they're more likely to stay engaged and less likely to be disruptive.