



## How to Avoid Getting in Trouble

A fact sheet about suspension written by youth for youth.

Written by Sam Katz; Edited by Stephanie Birmingham and Jenny Wagner Neugart.

Waisman Center, University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, University of Wisconsin - Madison

The following lists many tips to help you keep your cool in difficult situations and be able to avoid suspension, which is sometimes a form of punishment for students.

### Some advice from youth for youth to avoid getting in trouble...

- Know the rules – saying that you didn't know what the rules were won't get you out of trouble.
- Follow the teacher's directions when he/she gives them.
- Know the situations that tend to get you in trouble, and think of strategies to avoid them before they happen. For example, if you have a hard time sitting still for more than an hour, ask your teacher if you can quietly get up and get a drink when you need a break.
- Introduce yourself to teachers and your principal when you're at your best – not when you're in trouble.
- If you are asked to leave the classroom, it is best to be respectful and leave quietly.
- If you don't understand something, don't hesitate to ask questions, as long as you do it in a respectful way.

### Who and what can help you stay out of trouble...

- **YOUR TEACHERS** – “Teach” your teachers what works best for you. It may help to tape record or write a note that explains your disability. Be patient – it will take time for you to get to know your teachers and for them to get to know you.
- **SCHOOL STAFF** – Talk to your guidance counselor, special education teacher, the school psychologist, your case manager, or a favorite teacher you trust when things get rough.
- **COOLING OFF PLACE** – Have a place to go in school where you feel safe and comfortable. Arrange the location with the school before you need to use it.
- **YOU** – Be willing to provide ideas for solving problems and listen to everyone else's.
- **BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION PLAN (BMP)** – This is a plan that lists your needs and abilities regarding your disability. It is a convenient guideline for your teachers to follow and be able to learn more about your disability and how it affects you.

### Your right to privacy...

Information about your disability and accommodations is private. If you find yourself in a situation where a teacher is asking you for information regarding your disability and you don't feel comfortable talking about it at that time or in that place, tell your teacher you would like to talk about it later when you will have more privacy.

### A final note of advice...

As with any student, you must follow the school rules. Make sure you are aware of the rules and policies. Remember, if you hurt someone or do not follow the rules, the school can suspend you or punish you in some other way.

### For more information...

Discipline, Suspension, and Expulsion of Students with Disabilities

[www.pacer.org/legislation/idea/disciplineHighlights.htm](http://www.pacer.org/legislation/idea/disciplineHighlights.htm)