

# My Number One Goal On The First Day Of School

July 20, 2019 by Michael Linsin - <https://www.smartclassroommanagement.com>

I'm often asked about the first day of school, so I've written [many articles on the topic](#).

Most are about establishing routines and implementing an effective classroom management plan—which are important, to be sure.

But they're not my number one goal on the first day of school.

They shouldn't be yours either.

Several years ago, in an interview with Jennifer Gonzalez of The Cult of Pedagogy, I mentioned my chief goal and it surprised some people.

It is this:



**My #1 goal  
on the first day of school...  
is that my students  
LOVE being in my class.**

The reason, simply put, is that it makes anything and everything to do with effective teaching and classroom management easier.

You see, when you take [a captive audience of students](#), nervous and keen on turning over a new leaf, and make them both relieved and excited to be in your class, then you have powerful, game-changing leverage from the get-go.

You kick-start their intrinsic motivation to listen and learn.

You trigger the Law of Reciprocity, which causes them to want to repay you for creating a classroom they're happy to be part of.

More importantly, it's the single most effective thing you can do to make your rules and consequences *matter* to them.

Furthermore, every student in your class will share with their parents how excited they are to have you as their teacher, which instantly puts families on your side, in your corner, and supporting you.

So how do you do it? How do you create a first-day experience that causes your students to love being in your class?

The truth is, it isn't so difficult. In fact, it's quite simple:

- Smile.
- Be nice.
- Be honest.
- Be open.
- Be clear.
- Be authentic.

*Embrace* the joy of teaching—the passion, the excitement, the stunningly satisfying relationships with students. Lay out every expectation and responsibility that entails being part of your class in a transparent, highly detailed way.

Emphasize that your classroom management plan is for *them*, not you, and it's sole purpose is to protect their right to learn and enjoy school without being bothered, bullied, or interrupted. Then make a promise to follow it to the letter.

Teach at least one routine—like entering the classroom or lining up for lunch—with the same energy and commitment you would the xy-graph, the scientific method, or the very fundamentals of grammar.

In other words, teach the heck out of it.

Make your first lessons of the school year dynamic and participatory. Use humor, clarity, and purpose and then shift responsibility for proving they understand over to them.

Let them experience success right off the bat, and let them know it. Provide feedback through your direct and [worthy praise](#).

Show them that learning in your classroom will always be center stage.

Children as young as five recognize great teaching when they see it, and they're changed by it. Their appreciation of you and of how fortunate they are to be in your class will not go unnoticed or unreturned.

From this first impression on, they'll *want* to listen, behave, and please you.

Giving a preview, a microcosm of what it's like to be in your class, on the first day of school will give you an immediate shock of influence, respect, and rapport that takes even the most experienced teachers weeks to achieve.

It puts you on a path far ahead of the rest.

Hiking boldly toward the most rewarding and memorable school year your students will ever have.