When teachers describe the problem, instead of accusing or giving commands, students are more willing to behave responsibly.

When teachers give information, without insult, students are more likely to change their behavior.
DESCRIBE WHAT YOU FEEL (MAKE NO REFERENCE TO THE STUDENT'S CHARACTER)

INSTEAD OF SARCASM

TALK ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS

Do I look like a tree? Quit hanging on me. You're being a pest.

It hurts my back when people hang on me.

INSTEAD OF SHAMING

The substitute told me how rotten you all were to her. You ought to be ashamed of yourselves!

I didn't like hearing that my class gave the substitute a hard time!

INSTEAD OF NAME-CALLING

Can I go to the library? Can I go to the bathroom? You're rude! Can't you see? I'm talking to Tad!

It frustrates me to be interrupted when I'm talking to someone.

When teachers describe their feelings without attack or ridicule, students can listen and respond responsibly.

PUT IT IN WRITING

Students often shut out adult talk, but if they see something in writing, they get the message. The sign below was placed on a dirty rabbit cage.

This note was posted on the assignment box by a teacher who was tired of giving constant verbal reminders.

A teacher sent this note to a student who was late handing in her term paper.
Threats and orders can cause students to feel helpless or defiant. Choice opens doors to new possibilities.

Students dislike listening to lectures or long explanations. A single word or gesture encourages them to think about the problem and figure out what needs to be done.
INSTEAD OF DENYING FEELINGS

No, it isn't. It's very interesting.

This story is dumb.

I hate reading.

Now you're being silly. The words are all easy.

It has too many words!

No, I liked the last story we read. The one about the horse and dog.

You're not even trying. You're just being lazy.

It's too hard.

Sounds as if you prefer books about animals.

When feelings are denied, a student can easily become discouraged.

When negative feelings are identified and accepted, a student feels encouraged to continue to strive.

PUT THE FEELINGS INTO WORDS

There's something about it you don't like.

This story is dumb.

It's boring. Who cares about Betsy Ross?

Oh, the character doesn't interest you.

Yeah... I guess. After I finish this, I'm gonna get another book about dogs.

I'll help you find one the next time we go to the library.
PUNISHMENT

We told you a thousand times, if you play rough, you're going to break something!

I was so ashamed to get a call from school that my son broke another boy's glasses!

It was an accident!

I'm sick of your excuses! You can forget about TV for the next month.

But that's not fair!

And no allowance either. Maybe that will teach you a lesson!

He's mean... I'm bad.

I'm glad it wasn't on purpose. But now Jimmy has no glasses.

And his parents say new ones cost a lot of money.

I'm really sorry.

Maybe you can pay for them out of your savings.

Or maybe you can earn the money I could do yard work or walk our neighbors' dogs.

Jimmy's parents should know what you plan to do and that you're sorry. Would you help me write a letter?

AN ALTERNATIVE TO PUNISHMENT

We had a call from the principal. He said you broke Jimmy's glasses.

We're very upset.

I didn't mean to. I was just kidding around.

An alternative to punishment.

We could work on projects that teach you responsibility.