



De-Escalation Scripts for Teachers

Calm, respectful language
for challenging moments

This guide offers simple, respectful language to help support students during challenging moments. The examples below are meant to encourage calm, connection, and problem-solving while helping prevent escalation.

- » Keep your voice calm and steady
- » Use fewer words, not more
- » Honor AAC and all forms of communications
- » Support first, correct later
- » Offer simple choices
- » Reflect after, not during

**Key Teacher
Reminders**



Situation

Student can't follow a direction right now.

Don't Say: "Don't talk to me like that!"

Try Instead: "I see you're upset. Let's take a minute. We can talk when you're ready."

Why it Works:

Supports Regulation



Situation

Student yells or slams materials.

Don't Say: "That's it! You're in trouble!"

Try Instead: "That looks like a big feeling. Let's find a quieter way to handle it."

Why it Works:

Focuses on emotions



Situation

Student debates or pushes back.

Don't Say: "Stop arguing!"

Try Instead: "I want to hear you. Let's talk one at a time"

Why it Works:

Builds respect and communication



Situation

Student avoids work.

Don't Say: "Just try harder!"

Try Instead: "This feels hard right now. Let's break it up into smaller steps"

Why it Works:

Reduces overwhelm



Situation

Student shuts down.

Don't Say: "Come back right now!"

Try Instead: "I'll stay nearby. Take your time. I'm here when you're ready."

Why it Works:

Creates safety and trust



Situation

Student speaks in anger.

Don't Say: "Watch your mouth!"

Try Instead: "I hear you're frustrated. Let's find calmer words together."

Why it Works:

Teaches emotional expression



Situation

Student questions a rule.

Don't Say: "I'm the teacher!"

Try Instead: "We both want things to go well. Let's figure this out together."

Why it Works:

Builds collaboration



Situation

Student struggles with transitions.

Don't Say: "Hurry Up!"

Try Instead: "Transitions can be hard. Let's take it step by step."

Why it Works:

Supports predictability



Situation

Student feels misunderstood.

Don't Say: "Stop making excuses!"

Try Instead: "Let's think about what you can do next."

Why it Works:

Encourages self-reflection



Situation

Student needs to leave the space.

Don't Say: "Go ahead and walk out!"

Try Instead: "I want you to be safe. Let's take a break and figure out the next step together."

Why it Works:

Honors flight response and maintains connection

Reflection & Planning Forward Notes

Supporting student growth after challenging moments.

After everyone is calm, take a few moments to reflect on the experience and identify strategies that may support future success.

Student

Date

Class/Location

What Happened?

Student Reflection

What was happening for you?

What was your body trying to tell you?

What helped you feel better?

What could help next time?

What did you learn about yourself?

Were any of the following used?

Reduce Direct Demands

Offer Choice

Lower the Stakes

Prioritize Safety over Compliance