

# ENGAGE YOUR AUDIENCE

You are in charge of managing your classroom and engaging your audience. Begin every lesson by establishing expectations and guidelines for classroom conduct and communication.

## TIPS TO ENGAGE YOUR AUDIENCE FROM THE START

- 1** Introduce yourself and provide your qualifications while being enthusiastic and making eye contact with participants.
- 2** Start with an icebreaker activity for participants to introduce themselves and get to know each other.
- 3** Review the agenda, goal of SNAP-Ed, and lesson objectives at the beginning so participants understand what they will accomplish during the class.
- 4** Set classroom rules collaboratively so that all participants understand and agree on them.

## PREPARE YOURSELF TO ENGAGE DIFFERENT LEARNERS

Successful nutrition educators can manage a variety of personalities and communication styles so that everyone learns. Knowing how to teach different types of participants will help you engage your class and stay on track. Be sure to use age appropriate responses. See examples below.

### If a participant is...

#### Answering questions before other participants and controlling group activities

- **Do:** Ask everyone to raise their hand before speaking and assign specific tasks to keep that individual productively engaged.
- **Say:** “I appreciate your enthusiasm in participating, but I want to make sure everyone has the opportunity to share.”
- **For kids:** “You know a lot about this topic. Will you help me and raise your hand so everyone can share how much they have learned?”

#### Skeptical about the value or legitimacy of the information or lesson

- **Do:** Acknowledge the concerns of the individuals, and emphasize that change takes time, and that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to nutrition education.
- **Say:** “I recognize your concerns about this topic and we can discuss them one-on-one after class, but for now we will keep moving with the lesson.”



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## Redirecting attention away from the lesson by telling jokes and distracting others

- **Do:** Smile when it is appropriate, but be firm in staying on topic. Assign specific tasks to minimize disruptions.
- **Say:** “I appreciate your humor, but for the sake of time we have to stay on topic.”
- **For kids:** “That’s a good joke but now is the time to be serious. Please help me pass out these worksheets.”

## Highly opinionated and vocal about beliefs that differ from the lesson

- **Do:** Seek to understand why this participant might have differing beliefs. Come prepared with resources that validate the information you are teaching.
- **Say:** “I appreciate how passionate you are about this topic, but for the sake of this lesson we are going to stick to the curriculum I have provided.”

## Making it difficult to stay on topic by going off on tangents

- **Do:** Ask direct questions or prompts related to your topic to redirect the conversation.
- **Say:** “Thank you for sharing your thoughts and bringing up those points. We need to move on to stay on schedule, but see me after class if you want to discuss this topic further.”
- **For kids:** “That’s an interesting point. We can talk about that later.”

## Complaining or unhappy with the lesson

- **Do:** Give individuals a chance to voice their concerns or complaints, but move on if they can’t feasibly be addressed.
- **Say:** “I hear your concerns, but we have to move on to the next activity.”

## Distracting others and making it difficult for participants to focus

- **Do:** Redirect the conversation by having each participant answer a simple question.
- **Say:** “Let’s go around and have each participant share one thing you want to learn today.”
- **For kids:** “Let’s all go around and say our favorite fruit.”

## Showing up to class after the lesson has already started

- **Do:** Be prepared by having a small activity or question ready to keep the focus on the lesson even with distraction.
- **Say:** “While the class is getting settled, I’d like you to write down three questions that you have about the topic today.”

For further information on this topic, review [Managing Your Audience](#) in the [Nutrition Educator Guide](#).

TOOLKIT ACCESS: [DCHealth.DC.Gov/Service/Supplemental-Nutrition-Assistance-Program-Education](https://DCHealth.DC.Gov/Service/Supplemental-Nutrition-Assistance-Program-Education)