

## BEHAVIOR · ALL GRADES

# The 2x10 Strategy

Build relationship in 10 days

## Where this comes from

The 2x10 strategy was popularised by Raymond Wlodkowski's research and amplified more recently by Allen Mendler in 'Discipline With Dignity.' The premise is simple: spend 2 minutes a day, for 10 consecutive school days, talking with your most challenging child about ANYTHING EXCEPT school. The research behind it suggests that consistent, low-stakes one-to-one connection — particularly when not contingent on behavior — substantially improves relationships with children who have spent years experiencing teacher attention as either negative or transactional. It's not a magic trick. It's a deliberate, slow project of trust-building.

## How it works

<b>Pick ONE child</b> The child who's hardest right now. The one whose name is on your lips most days. Don't try to do this with 5 children at once.	<b>2 minutes, every day</b> Find a moment — start of day, end of day, during transitions. Two minutes. Set a phone timer if it helps.
<b>Talk about THEIR life</b> Not school. Not behavior. Not work. Their dog, their game, their sister, their weekend. Their interests.	<b>10 consecutive school days</b> Not 10 random days. Consecutive. If you miss one, restart the count. The consistency is the medicine.

## What to talk about

Good topics	Avoid
Their pets	Their behavior today
What they did at the weekend	What they didn't finish



Good topics	Avoid
A film/show/game they like	How they're falling behind
Their favourite food	What you need from them
A trip they've been on	Other children's complaints
Something funny that happened	Their family problems (unless they bring up)
A skill they have outside school	How to be a better student
A friend (or pet)	What 'should' have happened

### Tracker — 10 days

Pick a child: \_\_\_\_\_ Day 1 (date: \_\_\_\_\_) Topic: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Day 2 (date: \_\_\_\_\_) Topic: \_\_\_\_\_ Day 3 (date: \_\_\_\_\_) Topic: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Day 4 (date: \_\_\_\_\_) Topic: \_\_\_\_\_ Day 5  
 (date: \_\_\_\_\_) Topic: \_\_\_\_\_ Day 6 (date: \_\_\_\_\_) Topic: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Day 7 (date: \_\_\_\_\_) Topic: \_\_\_\_\_ Day 8  
 (date: \_\_\_\_\_) Topic: \_\_\_\_\_ Day 9 (date: \_\_\_\_\_) Topic: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Day 10 (date: \_\_\_\_\_) Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

### What to expect

DAYS 1–3: The child may be confused, suspicious, or monosyllabic. They may wonder what they've done wrong. Push through. Don't give up. DAYS 4–6: Often a shift. The child starts to expect the chat. They might come to you. Conversations get longer. DAYS 7–10: The relationship has tangibly changed. Behavior often improves alongside, though that's not the



GOAL — it's a side effect. AFTER DAY 10: Keep going. Maybe not 2 minutes every day, but the rhythm of low-stakes connection should continue. The relationship is the medicine.

## Common mistakes

1. CONNECTING ONLY WHEN THINGS GO WRONG. The whole point is non-contingent attention. If the only time you sit with this child is to discuss behavior, the strategy fails.
2. SLIPPING IN BEHAVIOR FEEDBACK. 'And by the way, your work was great today.' Resist. The 2 minutes are sacred. Save behavior conversations for other times.
3. EXPECTING A QUICK FIX. 10 days won't undo 4 years of difficult school experiences. It WILL start a different trajectory.
4. GIVING UP AT DAY 4. The shift often happens between day 4 and day 6. Don't quit before then.

