

## What Can One Teacher Do?

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Tricia and Kim have 27 years of combined teaching experience and have developed the 10 Tips to Create Positive School Environments just for you. Consider these ideas as you head into the 2014-15 school year!

- 1. Develop Knowledge and Awareness**
  - examine your own attitudes and beliefs about building positive social environments within your classrooms or teaching location (music room, dance studio, gym, art studio etc.) and consider your own biases
  - know the needs of your students by communicating with families, previous teachers, read any pertinent documents (reports, IPP'S, transition plans, etc.) before start up
- 2. Examine the Language you Use**
  - Use student first language (ie. student with autism rather than "autistic student")
  - Remember that we strongly influence our students, the language we use influences our students whether we see it or not
- 3. Advocate Directly for all of your students**
  - speak up for your students
  - display visuals that support school connectedness, leadership, positive social environments
  - develop inclusive learning plans for students
  - differentiate your lessons so all students feel success
  - promote risk taking
  - use competencies & its' language in your lesson design
  - help them become involved in the school
- 4. Dedicate time at staff meetings**
  - opportunity to 'PLAY' as a staff
  - sharing time to discuss students, daily physical activity ideas, a great resource or tweet etc.
- 5. Watch for Change in staff and students**
  - physical, social, emotional and mental changes
- 6. Look out for and Support Colleagues**
  - promote staff wellness (wellness challenges, weekly emails with ideas to help and support balance for all staff)
- 7. Teach Lessons on Positive Mental Health Throughout the School Year**
  - participate in mental health week activities
  - connect lessons to the whole child
- 8. External Resources Available**
  - Connect to partnerships and services that support positive social environments
- 9. Remember Everyone Has a Story**
  - before making assumptions or judgments, talk to the student to find out their 'Story'
  - listen non-judgmentally
- 10. Promote School Connectedness**
  - greet students everyday
  - have a safe space for students to go
  - link students to a teacher or peer mentor
  - offer a variety of activities
  - offer students choices
  - create an inclusive learning environment
  - ensure a welcoming environment
  - celebrate their successes; even if that means attending school once a week
  - student voice
  - play

**REMEMBER RELATIONSHIPS, RELATIONSHIPS, RELATIONSHIPS**