

Adjustments for Large Classes and Programs

In very large classes, it can be tough to get every ingredient in without making some minor adjustments. Below are a few approved adjustments you can make in very large classes of 16 to 20 children. It is crucial that both teachers remain focused during the class to stay on point.

General Tactics Applicable to All Classes

- **Do's and Don'ts of Large Classes:**
 - o DON'T allow make-ups in these large classes.
 - o DON'T rush through ingredients. Move quickly, but never rush a student's learning or skill progression.
 - o DON'T show stress in a large class.
 - o DO move extra unnecessary equipment away from the circle or off the floor.
 - o DO start exactly on time. Instead of giving 2-3 minutes of explore time before class, start right on the dot of class time. In a very large class, those 2-3 minutes could be an ingredient you have to skip. Parents will get used to this and should be encouraged to bring the kids a few minutes early to get their playtime in.
 - o DO talk less and focus on the skill being performed.
 - o DO limit lengthy shticks.

Tactics Specifically for Terrific Tots Classes (20 kids in class)

- **Skip Introductions:** Eliminating the introduction (name of each child) from time to time is perfectly OK. In a large Terrific Tots class, this will save a good amount of time.
- **Warm-Up:** Do not stand up for the warm-up. Instead, do some sitting cardio, such as bicycle and quick V-sits.
- **Playtime Rules:** Review playtime rules very quickly and do not ask the children questions. Have them repeat rules, and don't add any shtick. Rules can be done in 5-8 seconds (yes, that fast!). In established classes, it is also appropriate to eliminate the playtime rules altogether and simply make a couple of announcements while the children run off to play. Simply say *"Wow... everyone did AWESOME at their gymnastics stations! I LOVE IT! I think I hear the music starting. Everyone GO PLAY!"* Then proceed to make a couple of rules announcements while music is playing.
- **Skill Stations:**
 - o Be efficient and quick during the explanation of skills. Do not ask many questions of the children. The lead introduces the stations, exit skills, and waiting spots.
 - o After the skill station announcement, the music resumes and plays throughout this portion of class.
 - o A green, a yellow, and a red spot are in a line leading up to where you are performing each skill. Call one child for a turn; then immediately call to the waiting children to advance on their spaces. In large classes, you can call out that a space has opened in your line so children can come over and begin to wait for a turn at your skill.
 - o Always perform the Exit Skills as well. Elicit help from parents.
 - o When a child is done with your Skill Station, remind him/her to complete the skill station with the other teacher when a space is open.
 - o The children will play when there is no space available, but make sure to encourage each one to come try each skill. Students who are enjoying the skills may repeat them multiple times.
- **Rings (no swings):** Remember that, in all Terrific Tots classes, only the rings should be done. There are no swings or Big Deal.

- **Switch Game and Ending:** Depending on the ingredients, it could be quicker to go straight from parent share to ending and do the game last. This could cut down on the transitional time of moving children from one place to another.

Tactics Specifically for Preschool Gymnastics Classes and Above

- **Skip Introductions:** Remember that there are no intros or questions in this program. The teacher should simply introduce him/herself (no shtick) and the second teacher, and then lead right into the warm-up.
- **Warm-Up:**
 - o It's totally OK to cut the warm-up a little short in large classes.
 - o Be cautious when teaching skills that travel around the circle or from line to line. To avoid collisions, always be aware of the spacing of the children and consider teaching more slow and difficult skills, such as inchworm, crab walks, seal walk, and lunges instead of running, power skipping, etc.
- **Weekly Skill:** Try a new location! Consider moving to a location that is out of the way of the sitting mats for gymnastics stations so that the other teacher can quickly and efficiently set up and return to help finish teaching the weekly skill. (For example: Have children stand against the front desk or a wall and perform their skill going forward from there.)
- **Relay:**
 - o Whenever possible, call as many children up at one time as safely doable. (For example: When performing the gym cart relay, each instructor can have 2 or even 3 children performing the rotations at one time. That would mean a total of 4 or 6 students going at once in order to quickly get to all the rounds in the relay. Of course, if spotting is necessary, each teacher should call only one child at a time. Safety first!
 - o Each teacher may also utilize an "on deck" spot to keep things moving quickly and disperse the kids a little.
- **Skill Stations:**
 - o Be efficient during the explanation of skills and assigning of groups. Do not ask the kids many questions or ask them to repeat after you. The lead introduces his/her own station first and then the assistant's station. This allows the assistant to be near the lead's station while lead is introducing it and then move to his/her own and be ready for kids to start heading over.
 - o Keep your intro to your skill station short; and, when possible, call the first child up while you are explaining the rotation.
 - o Place an "on deck" poly spot away from the line, closer to where you are performing the skill. Call one child for a turn; then immediately call a child to be "on deck" or "next." The child who is "on deck" gets called next, and the teacher calls another child to sit/stand on the poly spot.
 - o Utilize the Exit Skills as normal. Even though it's a large class, do NOT eliminate it. The additional movement will actually help keep the children focused.
 - o When you are done with your Skill Station, do not have the children "make pizzas" or "make cookies" to take to the other teacher. This should be done sparingly anyway, and it should be completely eliminated in large classes. Simply say, *"Excellent work on the High Bar everyone! Quick, go see Eric at his station, please!"*
- **Gymnastics Skill Circuit:**
 - o Always perform the gymnastics skill with both teachers spotting skills simultaneously to get through the circuit efficiently.
 - o Only the Lead calls children up to try the skill. After the child has worked with the Lead, they should run around a large cone at the opposite end of the gym, and immediately get a second turn with the Assistant. Ideally, the child will work on perfecting what they've just learned, however, some children will need rudimentary instruction.

- The Lead Teacher may also utilize an “on deck” spot to keep things moving quickly and disperse the children a little.

If necessary, you can utilize all of these tactics in a class. It is also appropriate to do the opposite and rotate which of these adjustments you use each week. That way the children are not always missing names, the question, or playtime rules. Use your best judgment to provide a high-quality program.