

# Plastic Cup Tricks

## 4 Easy Classroom Management Strategies



A set of plastic cups is an amazingly versatile classroom management tool. You'll need several colors for each strategy, but buying the cups is a one-time investment. You only need one of each color per team, so you can buy the cups in bulk and share the expense with several teachers.

### Overview

For each team, you'll need one cup of each color. Green, yellow, and red work well, but you can substitute other colors if these are not available. For a seasonal twist, buy holiday cups to use at special times of the year. Stack the cups upside down in the middle of the team so that only one color is showing. Designate a different Team Captain each day who is the only team member allowed to touch the cups. It's best not to mix and match the strategies below because students may become confused about what the colors represent.

### 1. Noise Management

Suggested Colors: Green, Yellow, Red

Directions: Use green to show the noise level is acceptable, switch to yellow if the group is a little noisy, and place the red cup on top if the team is too loud. If you have to place the red cup is on top, the team must get quiet for one minute before continuing with their activity. (Or you can substitute another consequence of your choice.)

### 2. Ready Signal

Suggested Colors: Yellow and Green

Directions: When starting a cooperative learning activity, have the Team Captains place the yellow cups on top. When the whole team has completed the given task, each Team Captain places the green cup on top as a signal that their team is ready to move on. A quick glance around the room will let you know who is ready and who may need help.

### 3. Team Questions (submitted by Christine Sardinia)

Suggested Colors: Green, Yellow, Red

Directions: When students are working in teams, have them place the green cup on top to show that they are working fine without problems or questions. If they have a question but it's not urgent, they place the yellow cup on top. If they have a question that must be answered before they can continue, they place the red cup. This works well because when you are circulating through the room, you can easily monitor team progress.

### 4. Teacher Availability (submitted by Allyson Estes)

Suggested Colors: Red and Green

Directions: When conferring with one student or working with a small group, place a cup nearby to signal your availability to other students. A red cup on top means that you are not available to answer questions unless it's an absolute emergency. If the top cup is green, students may approach you and ask questions.



Thanks to Christine and Allyson for sharing their plastic cup management strategies!