Review

Creating positive teacher-student relationships depends on many factors, including

(1) age of the child;

(2) school and culture;

(3) showing care by communicating positively; being playful, interesting, and fun; and touch;

(4) exercising authority; and

(5) communicating high expectations.

Summary

Here, we saw how building positive teacher-student relationships can become the defining emphasis of an approach to behavior and classroom management. Here, too, we saw that despite there being differences in the way the teacher-student relationship is defined, there is general agreement that positive teacher-student relationships have to do with showing care, exercising authority, and communicating high expectations.

However, it is one thing to emphasize the need to build positive teacher-student relationships through showing care, exercising authority, and communicating high expectations and quite another to specify how, exactly, this should be done. In this chapter, we have tried to show that doing all three is a complicated process requiring not only a good many methods but also teachers who have the right attitude and style. There are, it seems, no formulas for developing positive teacher-student relationships because relationships demand something from us as persons.

That said, and as this chapter illustrates, there are plenty of examples of teachers building positive relationships with their students that we can take as guides. And, as the evidence suggests, doing so makes good sense because there is much to be said for good teacher-student relationships being featured in any approach. Without such relationships, it is hard to conceive of a teacher being successful in managing behavior and classrooms.

However, the teacher-student relationship is not the only kind of relationship that matters. Peer relations matter, as do the combined relationships in a classroom and school that create classroom and school communities. Therefore, in Chapter 4, we turn to a second focus of relationship building; namely, a focus on building classroom and school communities.