

# Handy Handouts®

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

## Pardon My Interruption...

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“Don’t interrupt!” How many times have we heard that from our parents or said it to our children? An *interruption* is anything that causes us to stop what we are doing. Interruptions are often considered rude, and as a result, we usually teach children that it is bad manners to interrupt others. However, there may be times when an interruption is necessary. Take the following school situation for example—The teacher is teaching the class about the solar system. A student in the back of the room is having difficulty hearing the teacher. Should the student be quiet and miss the lesson? Or should he/she *politely* interrupt to let the teacher know that he/she is having difficulty hearing?



### How to Interrupt Politely

Although the words “polite” and “interrupt” may seem like opposites, these words (and behaviors) go hand in hand! Therefore, it is important to teach children appropriate ways to disrupt a conversation or activity *before* they ask a question or make a comment. The tips below are helpful ways to teach children the “rules” of interrupting.



- **Know when an interruption is necessary** – If your comment or question can wait for another time, then wait. Only interrupt if you feel it is important to share your thought or ask your question at that very moment.



- **Make eye contact with the person you want to speak to** – If you make eye contact with the person you want to speak to, he/she may recognize that you have something to say and may invite you to speak.



- **Wait for a break in the conversation** – If it is not an emergency, wait until the speaker pauses to allow others to speak.



- **Raise your hand** – Raising your hand lets the other person know that you have something to say.



- **Wait to be recognized** – Raising your hand does not give you permission to blurt out your question or comment. Wait until the speaker acknowledges you before sharing your thoughts or ideas.



- **Keep your comments short and to the point** – Remember that when you have interrupted someone, and are given the chance to share, be sure to say your message clearly and stay on topic.

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