

Helpful Hint: by Kate Konrad

If you're anything like me, you have a difficult time REALLY getting to know each of your students individually. There are 425 of them and I see each one for a total of only 34 hours a year! But as teachers, we know that creating relationships with students is vital to their success in school. When kids feel known and cared about, they want to work harder. But how can we get to know each kiddo without sacrificing our valuable class time?

Create a note board/box/station!

Designate some space in your classroom and provide small sheets of paper or sticky notes and pens so students can drop you a note anytime. Maybe even post some ideas of what they can write to you about. Questions about something happening in music class? Personal question? Personal achievement?

Some things to keep in mind:

1. Be sure to READ the notes they leave you; they tell you because it's important to them, so take the time for them. If you see them before or after school or at lunch/recess duty, follow up so they know you read it, and that it's important to you, too!
2. Keep notes private. Provide a space where students can put their notes and know they won't be read by other students.
3. Set up your expectations clearly ahead of time. When is it okay for students to leave notes? Do they need to put their name on it? What kinds of things are appropriate/inappropriate to write? What will happen if they use the note box irresponsibly?
4. If a student shares a personal achievement, ask their permission and then post it so all students can celebrate with them.
5. Need some ideas? Browse Pinterest—there are countless creative ways to include this in your classroom!

You'll love seeing how quickly you are able to build even deeper relationships with your kiddos!