



The First Day/s in an Al Pi Darko School

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This Booklet accompanies a seven-part series of the same title in DVD/Video format. The video version covers this topic in more detail. This outline serves as the notes to the presentations. Enjoy!

This document is a list of guidelines. They are not rules. It is intended for teachers in an APD¹ school. The list applies to the first day/s and weeks of school. Many of these suggestions will need reinforcement many times in the early weeks or even months till the children are completely self-governing in each area. So, no hurry, no pressure, go at the pace of the children, and YOUR pace!

This list is also the general outline for the seven Training DVDs² of the same title. **Please note**, this list is more in note format than fully fleshed out. The seven DVDs are much more explanatory.

1. **Greet Parents and children** with a SMILE and warm welcome.
2. Parents reluctant to release their child, assure them this will be a great year.
3. Take time to **introduce yourself** to your class and talk about who you are.
4. If you have a **difficult name**, pronounce it several times and invite them to repeat it.
5. Give an opportunity for **each child to introduce himself**, and briefly (2-3 minutes max), talk about his name, siblings, what his parents do, any summer adventure or outstanding memory from this summer.
6. **Show children morning protocol:**
 - Where to put:
 - A. Coats
 - B. Shoes
 - C. Knapsack
 - D. Books
7. **Discuss classroom protocol:**
 - A. **Snack time**, when, where the snack table is and how we snack.
 - B. **Recess** - How to line up, leave to and return from recess.
 - C. **Lunch-time routine.**
 - D. **Transition to afternoon.**
 - E. **Dismissal time.**

1 APD is an abbreviation for Al Pi Darko.

2 The seven DVDs obviously cover all these points in much more depth and scope, we recommend the teacher watches the DVDs to benefit fully from how to set up their students for success in an APD class.

8. **Attendance:** Any missing children, call to wish them a refua/or 'we miss you.' Or have the class write a card/letter and everyone sign it.
9. **Tour classroom** (either walking tour or sit and they watch you). Explain what is where and why. Sequence of the shelves. Point to specific location of materials.
10. **Set up a Classroom Employment Agency/Job Chart:** Jobs for:
 - 10.1 **Administrator:** Bulletin Board, supervise condition of shelves and materials. communicate with the office for photo copies, messages, etc. Make notes for the teacher.
 - 10.2 **Phone receptionist** - student responsible to answer class phone. Role model answering the phone.
 - 10.3 **Hachnassas Orchim Manager:** Role model offering guests a drink & snack.
 - 10.4 **Mirror/Window Cleaner** (role model use of Windex. Be careful, safety first, only give them windows and mirrors in arms reach)
 - 10.5 **Sanitation Manager** (empty trash cans, replace bags, sweep floor)
 - 10.6 **Caterer:** Snacks, drinks, put out and clean up. Let Administrator know when low on supplies.
 - 10.7 **Botanist:** (waters plants and plant care)
 - 10.8 **Zoologist:** Takes care of any pets.
 - 10.9 **Polish Expert:** Any silver in room.
 - 10.10 **Class Scribe:** A student who writes notes for the teacher at the teacher's request, for example, new vocabulary words to be added to a class dictionary and reviewed every week in one of the 'Routine & Ritual' sessions.
 - 10.11 **Class Librarian:** In charge of keeping books in order, in the right place, removing books which need repair or damage, maintaining name list of borrowed and returned books.

Rotate the jobs every 1-2 weeks. Either students volunteer which helps you identify who gravitates to which responsibility, or make a Goral/Lottery.

11A.

Make a **Class Contract**, everyone sign. Tell them we will review the contract every few weeks and they will have a chance to decide any additional rules. Have the students come up with all the rules needed for the running of the class. Trust they know what needs to be a rule. After writing all their suggestions, have them categorize them under three headings:

1. Respect For oneself.
2. Respect for People (Teachers, peers).

3. Respect for the environment (materials, shelves, furniture, books).³ If they do not come up with rules which you want in your class, simply ask “Should we have a rule for...?” For example: No throwing, no screaming, no running in the class, no name calling, only walk around people’s materials and not across, etc.

11B.

Make a **Teacher-Class Contract**.

- Chazal encourage teachers to treat students with equal Kavod.⁴ To that end, we suggest you make a contract to demonstrate your confidence in your function to protect the children.
- Examples could be, not to embarrass a child, scream at a student, make a student feel stupid, never calls names or insult. If you have the courage to set yourself the standard of Chazal to celebrate effort even more than the right answers, this will gain you much credibility in the eyes of the students.
- You may want to include: I will encourage you to discover the answers yourselves, I will celebrate your mistakes because mistakes are usually followed by self-correction and not returning to that mistake again.⁵

12.

Rules of Recess: Establish guidelines, all in question and invitation format.

e.g. What rules should we have so no child feels left out? Is it okay for a child who played his best to be criticized because he missed the net, the goal?

Here are examples of rules for recess:

- A. ZERO complaining.
- B. ZERO criticism of another player’s performance.
- C. Any negative remark means that child sits on the side for 2 minutes (2 minutes is a loooong time to wait watching everyone else continue playing).

Examples of criticism/complaining (that will forfeit 2 minutes of recess)

- A. “You never pass the ball,”
- B. “Bad shot,”
- C. “I don’t want ploni on our team, he always makes us lose.”
- D. Even to say “better luck next time” can be a subtle put down.

3 The contract will include how to answer questions (3 options, knowing the answer, having a reason behind an answer and lastly guessing which is not permitted in class as it becomes a substitute for thinking. The contract should also include consequences for violations, again, let the children come up with suggestions and you guide them. Include in the small print of the contract a rule for not embarrassing others when a mistake is made in class, either a wrong answer or breaking a jug of water, following teacher directives the first time, examples of practicing kindness in the classroom.

4 Avot 4:12 רבי אלקנה בן שמוע אומר, יהי כבוד תלמידך חביב עליך כשעלך

5 For more detail, see the DVD on Middos, Building Block #9.

The ONLY words permitted in response to another team player missing a shot is “Well done” or “good try.” BUT ZERO CRITICISM. This makes recess much safer for kids to give their best without expectations of being berated by peers.

We thoroughly encourage teachers to NOT STAND on the side of the game but to **play with the boys in recess**. You will get to know them so much better and they will get to know you! You will learn much more about your own Middos, you will learn much more about their personalities.

Please see the DVDs for Building Block #10 Recess for much more in depth discussion on the hashkafa and practicality of turning recess into an intrinsic part of the children’s chinuch.

13.

Introduce Curriculum: Show them the books they will be using, subjects they will be learning.

14A.

Introduce the Ten Building Blocks of Chinuch. By briefly explaining each building block, you are helping them understand how the curriculum is designed for their success. Watch the DVD of the Overview of 10 Building Blocks for more information.

14B.

Seating Arrangement. Depending on the configuration of the classroom, try to have the children seated in a half circle shape or like the letter **n** so that they are all facing each other and you are facing all of them in the middle.

15.

Describe the **Thinking Corner / Teshuva Chair**.

This chair is when a child needs to take time out from class to think for himself. Either because he needs a few minutes alone to think about what he wants to do next in work cycle, or relax his mind. The same chair can be designated as a ‘Teshuva Chair’ when a child is asked by the teacher to think about an action or unkind word or misbehavior they just did and after thinking about it on the Teshuva Chair, come back to the Rebbe/Morah with their conclusion (admitting their mistake and what they commit for the future and any apology to a particular teacher or student that is needed).

16.

Role model the Mitzvah of Tochacha to resolve personality clashes in the classroom (See DVD on Building Block #9, Middos for more details and examples). Effectively role modeling Tochacha for the children will prove to be of huge benefit for the teachers and students. It will bring stability to the different personalities in the class, help forge a community culture

of friendship and mutual respect, effectively root out bullying, and free up the minds of the children to be part of a learning environment where rivalry, fights, jealousy, anger, hatred, unhealthy competition do not sabotage the love for learning and building a strong class of caring students.

DVD Disc #6 Starts Here.

17.

Routine and Ritual:

Daily Routine and Ritual inject children with confidence in the teachers and the curriculum because they experience how you are building their skills and knowledge base. Function is a product of structure. The more structured, the more efficient will be the function. Daily Routine & Ritual starts the day with structure, and structure is what always precedes function. Every teacher craves for their class to run at optimum efficiency in learning and discipline. Routine and Ritual sets the daily tone for the children to know exactly what comes next. They see how the accumulation of their skills and knowledge builds their self-discipline and enables them to progress through the curriculum. So here goes:

1. Coat & knapsack in place.
2. Quick work out.
3. Tefila.⁶
4. Class meetings.
5. The 4 Banners.⁷
6. Fast Review 303 Vocabulary words.⁸
7. 613 Mitzvos review.⁹
8. Memory system review.¹⁰
9. Trop review.
10. Halacha Yomi.¹¹

18.

Transition into Morning Work Cycle. Rebbe/Morah checks with students their day planner/Achrayus Sheets.

6 See DVD on Living Tefila, Building Block #7.

7 See DVD on Lashon Hatorah, Building Block #1.

8 See DVD on Lashon Hatorah, Building Block #1.

9 See DVD Training Videos on Taryag Mitzvos, Building Block #2.

10 See DVD Training Videos on Memory, Building Block #6.

11 See DVD on Halacha Yomi, Building Block #8

19.

Bathroom Rules: Explain the Mitzvah of not holding in when needing to relieve oneself.¹² Role model washing hands with soap, use of paper towels, leaving Neigel Vasser full after washing, leaving bathroom with clean seat.

20.

Use Adult vocabulary all the time.

The best way for children to build their vocabulary is for them to hear it spoken around them. Teachers in APD are encouraged to use adult vocabulary starting in first grade and pay attention to whenever you say a word that may indeed be new to the class. Take the time to ask the class what the new word means and offer its definition and spot check around the class for students to repeat the word and its definition. Then have the Class Scribe write that word on the class list of words for weekly review during one of the Routine & Ritual sessions.

DVD Disc #7 Starts Here.

21.

Role Model for children how to:

1. Walk in the classroom (walking feet, not running feet).
2. Talk softly in the classroom (indoor voices)
3. Hands close to the body (not swinging arms).
4. Ask Rebbe/Morah for attention during work cycle.
5. How to ask a question during class time.
6. Respond to a request from a Rebbe or Morah, or any adult.
7. Ask permission from a friend for help, or watch them working with a specific material.
8. When to say 'please' & 'thank you.'
9. To tuck in a chair.
10. Remove a chair from the table.
11. Transport a chair in the classroom.
12. Roll & unroll a mat.
13. To walk around a mat.
14. To remove a work from a shelf.
15. To return a work to a shelf.
16. Derech Eretz during a group lesson.
17. Line up for recess/dismissal.
18. To do the clean-up routine five minutes before line up.
19. Role Model for the students how you will invite a child to an individual lesson.
20. Role model how you will give a mini-lesson to the entire class or a group.

¹² Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim, 3:17 המשהה נקביו עובר משום בל תשקצו

21. Role model how YOU WILL ACT when a student makes a mistake and explain briefly why you will rarely, if ever, correct them.
22. Role model the options if a student is not working.¹³
23. To use their day planner/Achrayus sheet.

¹³ For example, ask the student if he needs help finding work. If they respond with a “no!” Ask if they have a reason for not finding work right now. If he looks tired, ask if he needs time out in the library or ‘thinking corner.’ Or ask if they had a full breakfast this morning, or a good night’s sleep? Usually children will follow your caring lead and find a work or reveal a reason for their resistance, then you can address their more specific reason for not finding work right now.