

Creating a Rubric with Children



A rubric that children create themselves can be a powerful tool in terms of helping children understand the expectations for a task. It can also give them the power to assess their own work and to know when they have done a good job.

Before beginning to work with your students on the rubric, determine the criteria and goals for the assignment. For example, if they are going to give a presentation, the goals might be:

1. Use a strong voice
2. Look at the audience
3. Show their book or other piece of work

Start the discussion with ideas about presentations. Ask questions such as “what does it take to make a good presentation?” and “why do we need to have a good presentation?” Finding a purpose for giving information to the audience is the goal! Have children brainstorm a list of ideas. Once these ideas are listed have children vote on the top three.

Use those top three criteria to continue the discussion. At this point it can be helpful to model the criteria that have been chosen, demonstrating how to do a good job. Using the three goals listed above, pretend to present a book. First, use a very whispery voice, and ask: “Can you hear me?” Then, use a stronger voice but put the book right in front of your face so they can’t see you. Ask – “does that make a good presentation?” Next, model a presentation in which you keep the book to yourself and don’t show any of the pictures. After you have shown the children what it looks like when you are NOT doing a good job of presenting to my audience, it’s easier to model the “best” presentation and have them see, hear and sense why it’s good and what particular methods make it good!

When you put the rubric together children can see the structure of it (see below). It is important to give them ownership of the words and possibly pictures that go with it. If you have some favorite expressions that you have used in your classroom during the year to mean “best work”, use them in the rubric to help to make it their own. When children have set up their own criteria for best work, it makes it easier for them to practice and understand what is being evaluated. This rubric can be used for peer evaluation purposes, too. Practice sessions could be set up where children help each other with the three main goals.

Giving Presentations Rubric

Best! Or (knocks our socks off!)	Good	Not so good
Speaker has a strong voice	Front row can hear	Nobody can hear!
Speaker is looking at the audience with their eyes	Eyes look every once in awhile	Eyes look only at the book
Speaker shows the audience their pictures	Speaker shows one or two pictures	Speaker forgets to show the pictures!

It is also a learning experience for children to create the words that are most meaningful to them for “best” such as “knock my socks off!” or “wow!” rather than just “good” or “not so good”. With very

young children pictures are also useful – such as a very happy face and a face with a bored look or eyes looking away.screen

Rubrics can be used for many different kinds of activities during the unit – field trip etiquette, having a guest speaker, writing a research report, setting up a science question, etc. They are a useful tool to help children understand and take ownership of the goals of learning.