

# Defensive

Diane is a kindergarten teacher in her first year of teaching. I observed Diane teach a reading lesson. I told her ahead of time that her lesson should be simple and that I didn't expect her to use the seven-step plan.

When I first walked into the room at the expected time, the room was screaming with noise. The aide was sitting at a table doing nothing. Diane was at the board trying to teach beginning sounds. I couldn't hear anything. All the commotion in the room disturbed my concentration terribly. Unable to take anymore, I left the room quickly. Ten minutes later, I tried to confer with Diane.

I tried to think of some positive things to say to Diane before lowering the boom. I told her how nice her bulletin board looked and how quietly one little boy sat at the back table practicing writing his name. Afterward, I asked Diane about the noise and about her aide not participating in any way.

Right away Diane became defensive. She told me the more noise in the room, the better for her because she felt the children were expressing verbally what they had learned. As far as the aide was concerned, I had observed at a time when it was her break. I told Diane that in order for the children to concentrate and be successful at a task, the room needed to be a lot quieter and that she needed to work on control.

Diane started to cry. She said I didn't understand her because I had no experience at the primary level.

I tried to be as positive as possible by telling Diane that I understood how she felt and that I'd be happy to assist in any way. She sobbed even harder and said she felt it would be best not to go on with our conference. I felt very confused about our conference. I also felt like a sixth grader pushing a kindergartner around. Under these circumstances, I too felt it best not to go on.