

# COMMON PROBLEMS & SOLUTIONS

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The following topics are areas where problems may arise in your daily operations. Please contact the MGE Support Team should you require additional assistance.

## Class Common Problems

### **Not beginning or ending classes on time**

- Train your parents from the start that you begin and end your classes on time. If you don't, they will get in the habit of arriving and picking up late.
- The structured activities in a class should begin about 2 to 3 minutes after the start time of the class. Some gyms opt to begin the structured activities at the exact class starting time. This is also OK.
- Notes:
  - o People are paying for a 50 or 60 minute structured program.
  - o Train your parents, or they will train you.
  - o If you are finding it necessary to skip ingredients, this is where you start to solve that problem.
  - o It is ok to end class 2 or 3 minutes late if you must, especially if you started late. Give them the full program.

### **Class energy (Too high or too low)**

- Atmosphere is a very important part of My Gym.
- You don't want to frighten Tiny Tykes with too much energy nor bore Whiz Kids with too little. Keep the volume and energy appropriate.

### **Small classes (Small class = 5 or fewer children)**

- Admittedly, it is much easier to create energy in a 12-child Gymsters class than in a 3-child class. Your ability to make a 3-child class FEEL like a 12-child class is what makes you an exceptional teacher.
- See the "Teaching Small and Large Classes" document for additional guidelines and tips.
- Notes:
  - o Echo appropriately; add energy to the class when needed, but not over the top.
  - o Do not slow down transitions. Transitions still need to be sharp and quick. Stretch the timing of ingredients instead, not the transitions themselves.
  - o Do more, not less (additional relay/Skill Station rotations, extra game, puppet, etc.).

### **Large classes**

- Although this is a good problem, large classes do pose some challenges. Some issues:
  - o Assistants' responsibilities are much harder because of potential additional discipline.
  - o It can be harder to give all children proper attention.
  - o There is a greater potential for skipping ingredients.
- Suggestions:
  - o Begin structured activities at the exact class start time.
  - o Hustle more and be preemptive.
  - o Do not let the class become out of control.

### **Parents who are talking (during circle time, announcements, game, etc.)**

- This can certainly be one of the most frustrating things for a My Gym teacher. Keep your cool, stay focused on the children, and make proper announcements to try to retake class control.
- Suggestions:
  - Remind parents we are here for the children. Talk to parents through the children.
    - Make an announcement prior to class, or speak to parents directly before class if necessary.
  - Echo behind the parents who are talking so that it is hard for them to talk.
  - Terrific Tot class: Separate parents into different groups.
  - Independent classes: Have all the children turn around to the parents and say, “SHHHHHH” (when appropriate).

*(See “Discipline Tips & Tactics” and “How to Keep Children Focused” for full philosophies and suggestions.)*

### **Shy youngsters**

- Our goal is to have all children thrive in our program. There is certainly nothing “wrong” with a child who is shy, but encouraging him to be more social can be beneficial to his development.
  - Have appropriate energy - You don’t want to overwhelm the child with too much energy.
  - Start with small steps. Encourage the child to touch the piece of equipment; come up with silly tactics if needed.
  - Encourage but never force a child.
  - Befriend the child. Have him be your helper, ask him to sit next to you, or help him make a new friend, etc.
  - Remember to always maintain a noncompetitive atmosphere.
  - Parent participation classes: Recommend that parents do the trick with their children while you walk them through it.

### **Parents who bring sick children to the gym (runny noses, coughing, overly tired, cold, flu, etc.)**

- This is a serious issue and should be handled carefully. For obvious health reasons, sick children are not allowed in the gym. They will get other children, parents, and possibly your staff sick. Allowing sick children to continue in the class will likely cause other members to cancel their enrollments.
- Some preventative measures:
  - Whenever new members sign up, explain the sick policy clearly. They need to know up front that no sick children are allowed in the gym. Also be sure all new members read the “How Your My Gym Membership Works” article or handout for information on the comprehensive policies.
  - Have the “Sick Policy” posted in several places in the gym during winter/cold season (lobby, restrooms, front door, etc.).
  - Make announcements in all classes when cold/flu season is approaching. It is also appropriate to make announcements at other times of the year as needed.
- If the issue arises you must talk to the parent of a sick child and ask that they come another day (make-up) when the child is feeling better.
  - Be sincere in finding out the problem; you may learn it is minor or not contagious.
  - If necessary, nicely ask the parent to please come back for a make-up. You must not compromise the whole class for one sick child.

### **Parent who holds child back - babies the child**

- At the end of the day, it is up to the parent’s discretion how he/she wants to encourage the child. Do not give parenting advice or overstep your bounds.

- Remind the parent that everything we do in My Gym is completely safe. If the parent prefers not to have the child do the trick, that is fine.
- Encourage the parent to do the trick with the child. If the parent tells the child he/she does not want the child to do the trick or that the child will not be able to do it, the child will not want to do it.
- In time, the parent may learn from seeing the other children in the program and allow the child to do more.

#### **Combo classes** (Gym/Tot, Mighty/Whiz, etc.)

- One **negative trend** that picked up tremendous steam during the pandemic was combination classes – aka “combo classes,” the practice of blending 2 and sometimes even 3 different age programs into one. For example: Tiny Tykes/Waddlers, Gym/Tots, etc. Therefore, MGE is strongly advising against the use of combination classes.
- Reasons behind making the changes:
  - Combo classes go against our core philosophies because they are not age appropriate.
  - Combo classes reduce quality and water down both of the programs that have been combined.
  - Combo classes cause confusion for our members. They are not “premium” in any way.
  - Currently, and possibly for the next 12-18 months, My Gyms do not have the volume of children need to run/fill every core program.
- MGE has provided an excellent, tested, and easy way to resolve the issue and still meet the needs of your gym through formally adjusting the age ranges of classes. You can view all classes and age groups in the “Adjusted Age Groups Class Descriptions” file located here: Operations Manual > Programs Core.
- Contact the MGE Support Team at [support@mygym.com](mailto:support@mygym.com) to help you make the adaptations to your class schedule.

#### **Siblings in classes**

- Only children enrolled in the class may participate. There are no siblings allowed on the carpeted area before, during, or after class. Not adhering to this rule can have severe consequences and be detrimental to your program.
- Exceptions:
  - Siblings who are enrolled together in Siblings Classes or age-appropriate class (e.g., a 4 month old could be enrolled with their sibling that is 18 months old in a Waddlers class)
  - If not enrolled: non-walking infants who are in Baby Bjorn-style carriers
  - If not enrolled: non-walking infants in a carrier or stroller positioned in a safe location near the front desk

#### **Spotting difficult skills or spotting overweight children in older classes**

- Make sure staff is completely trained on the skills they will be spotting.
- A new staff member should never lead the hanging Skill Station until properly trained and supervised for many months (unless he or she has a thorough gymnastics coaching background).
- Start new team members on balancing first. Then tumbling/agility. When they are comfortable with those, you can start them on hanging.

- Staff must be trained on which skills are appropriate for certain ages. Remember, My Gym teachers are experts.
- If there is one child for whom you need two teachers to spot a trick, then you must use two teachers to spot that trick for every child.
- Have tricks out before class and during explore time to encourage children to try them.
- If a child is overweight: Try to work with that child individually. Do not attempt to have her do skills that are unsafe, inappropriate, or beyond her strength level. Modify the skills to suit her needs without drawing attention to what you are doing, while still challenging the other children. See "General Spotting Techniques" for additional suggestions.

**The following common problems are covered in detail in either the "*Discipline Tips & Tactics*" or the "*How to Keep Children Focused*" document:**

- Youngsters who will not sit during circle time
- Apathetic or nonparticipating children
- Very active youngsters

### **Common Problems in Drop-Off Programs** (Camps, PNO, etc.)

#### **Safety/Accidents**

- Review and train staff regularly on the various safety and accident protocols and procedures found on the Operations Disc/Manual.

#### **Children wanting parents - crying**

- Comfort the child. Attempt to distract his attention from his concerns.
- Be extra sensitive to the child's needs/perceptions during the parent's absence.
- Call parent if crying persists.
- Discuss tactics to help soothe the child if it should happen again.

### **Administrative Common Problems**

#### **Clients who repeatedly show up for make-ups without scheduling in advance**

- If you have room, let the guest/make-up come in for class. Remind them to call ahead in the future, in case the class is full. If it becomes a recurring issue, have a slightly more stern, yet nice, conversation with the parent.
- Make announcements or send an email reminding parents of the make-up/absence policies and the need to call ahead.

#### **Clients who repeatedly do not call in advance to advise the gym they will be absent**

- This is a fairly common occurrence and not a very serious infraction. Simply schedule the make-up and nicely advise the customer he/she must call ahead to notify you of an absence. This rule is in place so you will be able to allow another member to use that space for a make-up.

#### **Client who cannot do make-ups any other day** (or this is the only class offered for age group)

- If the parent has difficulty scheduling make-ups
  - o Suggest that a nanny, grandparent, spouse, etc. bring the child on another day for her make-up.
  - o Suggest that a sibling use the make-up.

## **Enrollment**

### **Trialists opting out of auto-enrollment during promotional period**

- Below are the main reasons customers do not stay enrolled after the promotional period has ended, in order of most common to least.
- To remedy the issue, start with addressing these potential problems in your gym:
  - o Class quality is subpar. The elements of a great class were not present. Proper connections were not made. My Gym persona was not strong enough.
  - o Poor conversations about the enrollment process (causing distrust with the customer)
  - o Lack of proper follow-up
  - o Financial issues: Sometimes you may encounter a trialist who may never have intended to sign up. Although this does happen, there are still plenty of customers that stay enrolled. This should NOT be a major cause of a poor conversion ratio.
    - Even those who never had any intention of signing up can be auto-enrolled after they attend your irresistible program.

### **Enrolled members cancelling out quickly**

- Same as above - Other reasons:
  - o Poor registration procedures (e.g., Overbilling, make-ups not tracked properly, etc.)
  - o Cleanliness issues
  - o Safety issues

## **Staffing/Managing Your Gym**

### **High turnover of staff**

- Some turnover is inevitable. We have found, however, that high turnover during a sustained period of time is usually a sign of mismanagement. Other reasons could be a lack of proper training, reviews, incentives, or motivation. Of course, there may be other reasons for staff turnover from time to time; but, if the issue is prolonged, an assessment of your management skills and style should be performed.

### **Staff lacking coachability**

- We have found that this issue can usually be traced back to the early days of employment of that staff member as well as a lack of follow-through from the manager/owner.
- Lack of coachability should not be tolerated. Team member should be reviewed, and a quick turnaround is to be expected for employment to continue.

### **Unmotivated staff**

- Make it fun! Isn't this why we got into this in the first place?
- Put incentives in place. Find out what motivates your staff, and DO IT! (Take a survey if necessary.)
- Plan team outings and functions.
- Have "To-Do List" out so there is always something to do.
- Include your entire staff in the goals for the gym. Create teamwork, attainment of goals, and, therefore, accomplishment!

### **Lackluster meetings**

- Play games and have contests regularly.
- Divide up parts of meetings among staff members and have them lead the review.
- Delegate and be open to critiques.

#### **Problem team members**

- Sometimes we do not spell out what we expect clearly enough. Let staff know your expectations, and give ample time to see improvement.
- Conduct meetings and evaluations. Then, have a follow-up evaluation to see if a situation has improved.
- If an improvement is not made, seek other individuals who meet your standards.

#### **Staff repeatedly arriving late**

- Make sure each staff member has an updated staff phone list and a copy of the weekly schedule.
- Staff members should call if they are going to be more than 5 minutes late.
- Try a positive approach. Have an “on-time competition” and reward timeliness, etc.

#### **Excessively wanting to switch shifts**

- Staff should cover their own shifts, and changes should be approved through the supervisor. If this is being done excessively, discuss the issue with the staff member.

#### **Being overstaffed**

- Share team members. Maybe a gym near you is looking for help.
- Use staff for marketing or mobile.
- If you are overstaffed, sometimes it is just necessary to cut back hours or lay off team members. When doing so, keep in mind that you will likely want to rehire them soon.

#### **Commonly Asked Questions**

Prepare your staff ahead of time to answer these difficult questions. Be confident in your training and expertise. You are the My Gym expert.

- QUESTION FROM PARENT: Is this safe for my child?
- ANSWER:
  - o *Yes, completely safe. A large focus of our training and meetings is placed on safety. We use lots of mats and padding, and we have an excellent student-to-teacher ratio.*
  - o *For younger classes you may add: You will also hear us make announcements about safety during the class. It is very important that you stay close to your child and watch him/her throughout the entire class.*
- QUESTION FROM PARENT: Are your teachers CPR certified?
- ANSWER: *There is at least one CPR certified teacher on the floor at all times.*
- QUESTION FROM PARENT: What are the qualifications of the staff?
- ANSWER:
  - o *Everyone hired goes through a very rigorous hiring process. References are thoroughly checked, and a background check is also performed. Once hired, all staff members go through a training program for 3-4 months.*

- An owner or director who has gone through Formal Training in Los Angeles may also add: *I have gone through an intensive 3-week training program at My Gym's corporate training centers in California.*
- QUESTION FROM PARENT: How are your teachers certified?
- ANSWER: *State law does not require that we be certified.* (Continue with answer above for the question about qualifications of the staff.)
- QUESTION FROM PARENT: Are your teachers certified to teach gymnastics?
- ANSWER: *Since we are not a competitive gymnastics facility, we are not required to be certified.* (Continue with answer above for the question about qualifications of the staff.)
- QUESTION FROM PARENT: What is your cleaning policy?
- ANSWER:
  - *We have a strict policy regarding cleanliness. We wipe down all of the equipment with a nontoxic disinfectant at least once a day...and usually several times each day. Any equipment that receives heavy use or gets dirty throughout the day is either cleaned immediately or taken off of the floor and cleaned later.*
  - *If a child places a toy in his mouth, it is removed as soon as he sets it down and then cleaned after class. We are very watchful of this, and you can help by handing us a toy that your baby has placed in his (or her) mouth.*
  - *We clean and disinfect our ball pit and balls every other week.*

This list encompasses many common problems, but by no means is it a comprehensive list of all potential problems. By following all MGE/My Gym systems, protocols, and guidelines, you can ensure that you will have a staff that is highly capable of handling nearly all situations. If a situation arises where you need assistance, please contact the Support Team for help.