



## **Tips For The Substitute & My Sub Folder**

### **My Sub Folder:**

- ❖ I bought a cute one from a teacher's store that actually says Substitute Folder on it.
- ❖ I use one of those sticky clips that you can push on the ceiling and dangle stuff from and pressed it against my bookshelf so that my folder is in plain sight resting on the ledge of my desk up against my bookshelf, but out of my way.
- ❖ My detailed syllabus of the day is on my desk on a clipboard.
- ❖ The children's name tags are in a basket on my desk for her/him to put on the children as they take attendance.
- ❖ I have an adorable cupcake box that one of my student's gave me. It is filled with small lollipops, and sits next to my rocking chair. The children know that if they have a substitute teacher they need to remind them that the sub may give them each a lollipop if they are caught being good. It is that teacher's discretion if they can suck on it during the afternoon's story time or take it home. I leave a note about this in my sub plans, but the children enjoy telling about the box. 😊
- ❖ Everything that my substitute will need for the day is laid out either on my desk or in the area that they will need it.
- ❖ My room is organized in such a way that even if I'm ill and not quite able to have things as perfect as I'd like them, a sub will still be able to find them, especially with the assistance of the children who are always eager to help.

### **Inside my sub folder I have:**

- A lesson plan that I have specifically written out for a substitute. It explains in detail each routine and the time it takes place. I have left

blanks for me to fill in the specifics for the day. That way if I'm ill, I only have to jot down a few brief things instead of long explanations of the entire day.

- This is my "Master" sub lesson plan. I can then run off as many copies as I need and just fill in the blanks. It takes just a few minutes. ☺
- 2 extra fun lessons already run off as a "Time Filler".
- There is also a note that explains several games that my students are used to playing, the directions and where supplies can be found.
- A list of my behavior management techniques and what my students are used to: i.e, lights off, "Ten hut! Line up!" "1-2-3 eyes on me." Clapping out a pattern, "1-2-3, 3-2-1 SHHHH! Quiet walking has begun!" etc.
- A "heads up" highlighted list of my students and color code of what it all means. i.e., if I highlighted several children in yellow they are good helpers, children who are highlighted in another color may cry, children who may cause a problem are another color, children who go to speech, have allergies or a medical problem are yet another color etc.
- I have a laminated daily time table of when things happen.
- I have a laminated bus list and explanation of that routine.
- I have a laminated fire & tornado drill route/plan
- I have stationery of "This is how my day went:" for them to fill out with a space for helpful as well as problem children for the sub to jot down.
- If I'm really ill and could not prepare a lesson, I have an alternate lesson in my subfolder that involves working on the next pages of my student's Keepsake Folders.
- I have several pages of student's names on labels.
- A book of stickers for them to use anyway they want.

I was a substitute for an entire year before I got my job. I thought it would be a great way to "get my foot in the door" and land a job. In most cases that's true. In mine it was not. I had never subbed at Kent City. What subbing did for me was prepare me for thinking on my feet in a split second and giving me a feel for what grade level I wanted to teach. I subbed almost everyday and had so many W2's it was crazy, but I really enjoyed it. Subbing will give you valuable experience that will help you when interviewing.

### **Here are my substitute tips:**

- Because I was often called at 5 in the morning I always had an **“outfit” ready** to go so I didn’t have to think about what I was going to wear.
- Ask for **specific directions** on the phone. I get lost easily and you can’t afford to be late.
- **Show up early** so you have a chance to look over the lesson and acquaint yourself with the room. Secretaries are especially appreciative of this as they are usually the ones who greet you, show you the room and unlock the door. They are also in charge of a zillion other things and need to be back at their desk. You want to be sure to check in with them at the end of the day and let them know you had a great day and ask if you can leave your **business card** with them at the end of the day. Secretaries are usually the ones who make up a “favorite” sub list and you want to be on it, so you need to make a good impression.
- And...
- If you don’t have business cards MAKE some. You can easily design them on your computer with some cute teacher clipart. Be sure to include name, address, land line, cell phone and e-mail address and that you are a substitute teacher. If you have certain grades that you like subbing for, put that on as well.
  - I had a **substitute bag stocked with stuff**. My bag had **pictures of my family**. Students were always interested in these photos and it was a nice time filler.
  - My bag was filled with these essentials:
    - A baggy filled with multi-colored **punched out flowers**, 30 **green pipe cleaners**, a **black pen**, and an **empty water bottle** with a **bow** tied around it and a **Thinking Of You or Get Well card**.
    - I called this my “Bouquet for your teacher” behavior modification vase. Any student caught being good got to write their name on a punched out flower and sign the card. They poked the green pipe cleaner in the center of the flower and bent it and then put it in the water bottle. Believe me, everyone wanted to be a part of that bouquet. This was an inexpensive and fun way to create good behavior from the start and since the students loved their teacher they liked that they were making a present for them.

- I brought a little **bell** and told children when I rang it I needed their attention. I also informed them that when I turned the lights off they needed to “Freeze!” We’d practice that once or twice in a goofy manner.
- **Stickers**
- Construction paper **bookmarks**. I simply cut out strips of a variety of colored construction paper. I’d have my students write their name on the top and I’d tape it to the corner of their desk. Each time I’d catch them being good they got a sticker. Or if we played a game or they gave a correct answer they received a sticker. At the end of the day the one with the most stickers got a candy bar and everyone got a cool bookmark to take home. This was inexpensive behavior management that worked for a variety of grade levels.
- A sheet of **address labels**. Not all teachers were on the ball and had name tags. I didn’t like looking at a seating chart, so when I took attendance I’d jot down a student’s name in black marker so I could read it from a distance and asked if they’d please wear it because I thought they were special and it was important to me to call them by their name. I let older students jazz them up with markers or stickers while I was doing attendance.
- A **notebook**. I Jotted down ideas from hallways, classrooms etc. about what I wanted to incorporate in my “someday” classroom. I often took my digital camera as well.
- Don’t forget your lunch and a bottle of water! You don’t always have time to leave the building and not all schools have a cafeteria or hot lunch program. Even if they do you might not like what they’re serving.
- I would bring the **book** *Miss Nelson is Missing* for older students and several “way cool” **Pop Up books** for younger students. There was ALWAYS time for a quick story. 1-Minute Mysteries are also great for older students. They are 1 to 2 pages long. You read it and they have to solve it.
- I carried several **goofy things to toss**. Something that felt good texturally like a squishy ball with spikes or one that changed colors or made a nice noise. When I would ask a question I would toss this. Or when I wanted to give someone a chance to talk or share I’d toss it. For little ones who were using the bathroom or transitioning and standing around waiting in the

hallway, I'd have them wait in line and I'd toss this thing back and forth to keep order.

- Candy is such a great thing to have as a “super-duper-shutter-upper” behavior modification technique. I know there are many pro's and con's to this, but when you are a substitute teacher you sometimes have to resort to Skittles and M&M's so carry several packs. There's nothing like having a pack in your pocket and saying: “I like how Susie is sitting. She deserves a Skittle.” Wahla everyone is instantly sitting like Susie!
- I carried 2 huge foam dice. They were great for an instant “magic trick” as a math extension for any grade and a nice time filler. You give one dice to a student and explain to them to choose a number and show it to the class but do NOT show it to you or say the number out loud. They face the dice with that number showing to their classmates and put the dice on top of their head so that you cannot see their number, but you can see the back of the dice with another number. You are standing with your back turned to the child. They say OK so you can turn around. You are still staying behind that child. You look at the dice and fiddle with your dice and say “You are looking at this number.” And show them the number that they are looking at with your dice. How do you know that number? Simple addition. You can see a number on the back of their dice on top of their head. That number plus the number they are looking at will always = 7. ☺ You can tell them the secret at the end of the day so they can do the “magic trick” at home. Or offer a candy bar prize for anyone who can figure it out! ☺
- I carried a folder filled with word searches, mazes, word finds and hidden pictures. They were geared towards a variety of age levels so that 1 set worked for multi-grades. Students really enjoyed the hidden pictures. To make it more “game-like” I turned the sheets into “speed” games by giving them 1-minute to complete. The person who found the most etc. got a Skittle or sticker or whatever.
- Another game older students enjoyed was Spell Down. I'd take their spelling list and have them make a line. I'd give them a word and the 1<sup>st</sup> person would say the 1<sup>st</sup> letter, the 2<sup>nd</sup> the next letter 'til the entire word was spelled, then the last person would restate the word. If a person got the letter wrong they had to sit

down, and the next person had to say the letter. You really have to pay attention! Finally there is only one person standing.

- **4-Corners Spider-Fly** is also a favorite. I would bring a **laminated circle, triangle, rectangle and a square** with me and put them up in each of the 4 corners of the classroom. I'd pick a "spider" and cover their eyes. We'd count to 10 and the other students (flies) would have to fly to a corner (shaped web). The spider would choose a shaped web and those flies would be out. Anyone who was not inside a web when we were done counting was also out. Pretty soon there is only one fly left and they are the winner. You choose a different "spider" from the caught "flies" who are sitting on the floor watching the rest fly around.
- And that was my "Substitute bag of tricks bag." Make yours to fit your personality and grade level.

#### **Etc. Tips...**

- Do not stay in the room to eat your lunch. Make yourself go to the teacher's lounge and get to know the other teachers. They are potential callers!
- Ask if you can put up a business card or flyer on the teacher's lounge bulletin board. One of the nicest ones I saw was a photo of the person, a short enthusiastic bio of the person and then tear-off phone numbers in a row slit on the bottom.
- At the end of the day leave a detailed note of things you did and did not get accomplished.
- Make sure the room is straightened up and that you've left their desk neat and put all materials back where you found them. Correct all papers that were handed in and paper clip the piles. Put them in alphabetical order.
- Write a thank you note and leave a business card. I made up little thank you notes and tucked my business card inside. If the teacher was sick I wished them a speedy recovery. No matter what kind of day I'd had I always told them it was great and listed the helpful children.