



This Teacher Gets Top Grades for Classroom Cleanliness



“These simple disinfecting and prevention practices made a big impact. My classroom was the only kindergarten class that did not suffer an illness or an outbreak.”

— Angela Marie Lopez, M.Ed.

As an elementary school teacher, I'm no stranger to dealing with every kind of classroom mess, from spilled glitter and snack-time crumbs to my students' runny noses. But I've learned that when you're dealing with kids, they share germs just as easily as they share toys and school supplies. I want to keep my students healthy, which is why I teach simple illness prevention and good hygiene practices to supplement the efforts of my district's custodial staff.

The Challenge: Curbing Student Absences

Desert Vista Elementary School is part of the Apache Junction Unified School District in Arizona, and is the largest elementary campus in the district. In a big school like ours, germs tend to spread quickly through classrooms due to the close contact the students have with one another — especially during cold and flu season.

When I previously taught one of our school's four kindergarten classes, I was made aware that the other classes were having

outbreaks of illnesses including influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and strep throat. These conditions are spread easily from student to student through direct and indirect contact and through contact with contaminated surfaces. Influenza in particular can spread quickly, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that on average 20,000 children aged five and younger are hospitalized each year because of influenza-related health complications.

The Solution: Take an Extra Step to Disinfect, and Teach Preventative Measures

Our custodial staff vacuum, empty trash and also wipe down desks and surfaces with a cleaner-disinfectant product. Yet with outbreaks occurring in the building, I was concerned that the regular daily and weekly cleaning protocols may not be enough to prevent my students from catching and spreading germs. My goal was to find a way to prevent illness-related absences and instill healthy hygiene practices in my students without creating additional burdens on school resources.

I've used Clorox Commercial Solutions® Clorox® Disinfecting Wipes for years to wipe down all of the countertop surfaces in the kindergarten classroom at the end of each day. The Clorox® Disinfecting Wipes are used

before and after snack time, and to clean up after big projects. I love that the wipes come in a 700-count bulk canister to tackle big messes and are registered to kill 99.9 percent of germs prevalent in schools, like cold and flu viruses, MRSA, *S. aureus* (staph), *E. coli*, *Streptococcus*, *Salmonella* and the organism that can cause whooping cough.

In addition to disinfecting, I reinforced with my students the importance of illness prevention practices such as coughing and sneezing into their elbows, properly blowing their noses, and washing their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer.

These simple disinfecting and prevention practices made a big impact. My classroom was the only kindergarten class that did not suffer an illness outbreak. My prevention practices worked so well that I continue to implement them in my second-grade classes.

We teachers wear many hats, and my suggestion to other teachers is if your school is facing similar outbreak challenges, the solution may be to take a closer look at your cleaning process and illness prevention efforts to determine what practices and products you can incorporate to encourage a healthier student environment.



For more information on Clorox Commercial Solutions® Clorox® Disinfecting Wipes, visit www.CloroxProfessional.com.

About the Author:

Angela Marie Lopez, M.Ed., is a second-grade teacher at Desert Vista Elementary in Apache Junction, AZ. Lopez has been a teacher there for four years; she previously taught third grade and kindergarten. Clorox Professional Products Company supplied Lopez with a sample of Clorox Commercial Solutions® Clorox® Disinfecting Wipes.

Use products as directed.