

To support teachers' efforts in this regard, in the Innocent Classroom we have developed a list (see Figure 2.1) that reduces many behaviors, urges, and actions to their most basic impulse, or good. This guide can help drive and make specific your strategies with a student to help them begin to trust you as someone who cares.

FIGURE 2.1

How Unengaged Goods Are Manifested in the Classroom

The Good	How It's Manifested
Free	Is it possible that this child never feels like they get to make any decisions? Are they constantly being told what to do—by everybody? For this child, cumulatively, it is a triggering state of being.
Sense of belonging	Might this child feel isolated, not just from other people but also from the classroom or school environment?
Connected	Different from a sense of belonging, the good of feeling connected is predominantly about people. Is this child disconnected from their classmates?
Safe	Might this child be in a constant state of threat? Even in the "safe" environment of your class, do they still seem threatened or "unsafe"?
Cared for	Do you know of a person in this child's life who is thinking about them? Might this child be searching for someone to pay attention to them? Most educators claim that they care for their students, but do you think the child perceives your actions as signs of authentic caring?
Normal	Some children are never free of labels. More students than ever are given individualized education programs (IEPs) or greeted by new teachers who already know about their family issues, learning disabilities, and past experiences with authority or other teachers. Might this child have been bullied or always been the subject of ridicule? There are many reasons a child might feel that they are anything but normal in the context of a classroom. They may not understand that there really is no normal. Given all that, does this child need someone to help them feel free of labels?
Smart	Some children are never told they are smart, which may lead them to expect to fail or to feel frustrated with the people around them. Is this child desperate to feel that someone thinks they are smart?

The Good	How It's Manifested
Seen and heard	Children may manifest this unexpressed good in contrasting ways: some always seem to be performing, whereas others hardly speak. Some children who desire to be seen and heard exist almost invisibly; their voice is never considered. They may intentionally hide, or they may show up in a disruptive way.
Successful	Some children need to feel like they can accomplish tasks effectively. Might this child believe that no matter what they do, it never works out well? They might hesitate to demonstrate what they know or complete tasks if they don't believe they will be successful. Some students are driven to seek a feeling of success despite their own limitations. This good can generate a variety of behaviors, such as talking over other students or demonstrating cynicism about school.
Accepted	Does this child believe that who they are isn't welcomed by the people around them?
Respected	Might this child feel as though no one truly admires them for who they are or acknowledges them for what they do? Do they feel resentment toward those who seem to receive higher regard from teachers and classmates?
Untroubled	For some children, it may seem as though life offers an unending series of challenges, one after another. Is this child seeking refuge and respite from daily trauma?
Hopeful	Might this child lack any belief in a positive future? Do they live with a sense of doom and foreboding?
Validated	Many children suffer from a lack of validation from the people they most look up to. Does this child work hard to get your attention? Or have they stopped even trying to accomplish tasks after having been denied validation for so long?
Survival	Is there a sense of desperation in this child? Perhaps school and schoolwork seem superfluous in their life. For some of our children, the basic needs of survival dominate their consciousness as they try to overcome trauma and harmful circumstances. They may not know where they will end up after school or who will be there for them. This child may need you to understand their challenges and believe in their ability to overcome them.
Stable	Might this child feel shaken by a constantly changing reality outside school? Their unpredictable circumstances may prevent them from believing that stability has value. Perhaps not surprisingly, children with this good often bring confusion and chaos in their wake; stable and ordered engagement in the classroom is actually uncomfortable for them.