**I-Messages to Improve Communication**

This strategy is designed to help you teach your students to communicate more effectively in order to decrease negative behaviors caused by misunderstanding and frustration. Adults often direct students to "use their words." But unfortunately, students do not always know what words we are referring to. Students need to have social skills and the ability to communicate effectively if they are going to be strong problem solvers. Students have to be able to clearly express their feelings, wants and needs in order to properly clear up classroom/ social conflicts. By using I-Messages, teachers lay the foundations for students to learn how to communicate with each other.

I-Messages improve communication because it helps the student to express their wants, needs, and feelings in a respectful manner. Use the I-Message and response cards to help facilitate student conversation.

I-Messages can be added to your "cool down" area in the classroom. The messages can be used and modeled by the teachers and administrators when students are having behavior difficulties in the classroom or when they are referred to an administrator's office. The students should not only use them with each other to resolve conflict, the teachers and staff should also use them to communicate how they feel about the situation after their discussion with the student. This is a critical component of any conflict resolution process.

