

Speaker Notes

Teaching Children How to Get Along: A Teacher Guide

Page 1 – Title Slide

None

Page 2 – Objectives

None

Page 3 – Agenda

None

Page 4 – Introduction

- Teaching children how to treat each other is as important as teaching reading and writing.
- Social skills such as cooperation, empathy and self-control are essential to academic and social success.
- NOTE: Ask participants for examples of conflicts they've had in their classrooms. Then ask what they did, what worked and what didn't work.

Page 5 – The Importance of Friends

- NOTE: This slide is taken from "Helping Children Get Along with Friends", Robert Hughes, Jr., PhD, Ohio State University.

Page 6 – The Caregiver's Role

None

Page 7 – Types of Uncooperative Behaviors

- NOTE: Ask participants what other types of uncooperative behaviors they have observed.

Page 8 – Skills for Getting Along

- Tell the children to ask you for help if someone is doing something inappropriate: If the child doesn't know what else to do, it is best they call you over to help. You being there to assist gives them a sense of safety and control.
- Teach problem solving skills: This will be discussed on the next slide.
- Have the children role play appropriate social behaviors: Children need lots of repetition and practice learning new skills. When they are engaged in dramatic play, ask them to pretend that another child has something they want. Once they understand the rules, they will more than likely repeat the rules to each other.
- Give the child a sense of control: If they need to share a toy or take turns on an activity, tell them they can play for a few more minutes and then it will be time to let someone else play. Then offer them alternative toys/activities to choose.
- Reinforce positive behavior: Catch the child being good and look for positive behaviors such as sharing, reminding each other of rules, and taking turns. Praise the child in those moments. This will help reinforce the behavior you are trying to encourage.

Page 9 – Skills for Getting Along (Continued)

- Model the behavior you want from the child: Look for opportunities to demonstrate the behaviors you want from them. For example, ask a child for a toy using the words you've taught them to use.
- Help the children understand that getting along makes things easier: Show them that when they are able to get along they are more likely to get what they want.
- Let them know other children will be more likely to play with them if they know how to get along with others: Children naturally want to be able to play with other children. They need you to help them connect their behavior with other children's attitudes toward them.
- Teach them to identify and appropriately verbalize their feelings: Being able to identify their own feelings helps them recognize those feelings in others, which allows them to feel empathy towards others. Most children can understand what it is like to have their feelings hurt and can empathize with this in others.
- Help them learn to recognize others' feelings: When they can recognize and connect with feelings in others, they may be less likely to engage in hurtful behaviors.

Page 10 – Problem Solving Skills

- Find out what the conflict is about: When children fight, there is usually some purpose (someone has something they want, they perceive someone has been "mean" to them, etc). They are frequently expressing feelings they don't have words for.
- Help the children identify the problem: Ask each child what they think the problem is. Help them put it into words (e.g. "It looks like both of you wanted to play with that toy at the same time").
- Teach them how to calm down: They must be calm enough to talk and think clearly before they can begin to problem solve. They can walk away from the other child until they have calmed down. (See cool down, deep breathing exercise in handouts).
- Discuss alternatives: Ask them, "What do you think you could do so that you would both be happy?" Try to let them come up with the solutions themselves. If neither one of them suggests anything, then give them an idea, but try not to give them the actual solution. Try something like: "I wonder what would happen if you tried taking turns?" This will give them something to think about and then they can come up with a plan.
- Evaluate the alternatives: For example, "Sam could have a turn while Alan plays with something else," or "We could set the timer and then you could trade toys." Then let the children decide which option they think is best. Be sure to emphasize fairness; ask them, "Does this sound fair to you?"
- Catch them being good – reinforce the positive behavior: Check on them to see if the plan is working. Acknowledge their positive behavior.
- Keep in mind that younger children are very impulsive and will often forget the rules during impulsive moments. This will require repetition from you.

Page 11 – Setting Clear Rules and Consequences

- Children need structure and very clear and consistent rules in order to give them a sense of control and safety.
- Once they understand the rules, they will start repeating them to other children if they see them breaking a rule.

Page 12 – Aggressive Behavior and Discipline

- Separate the children: This is usually necessary when there is any kind of aggressive physical contact.
- Communicate the behavior as unacceptable and non-negotiable: This lets them know you will not tolerate aggressive behavior in the classroom.
- Have the victim appropriately confront the aggressor with a statement such as “I don’t like it when you push me, and I don’t want you to do that again.” This give the victim a sense of control and prevents them from falling into a chronic “victim role.”
- Ask the aggressor to apologize: This helps the aggressor take responsibility.
- If both children were aggressive, then they must both take responsibility and apologize and let the other child know they will not do that (the aggressive behavior) again.
- Talk about alternatives to the problem behaviors: “What could you do so that you would both be happy?” If they can’t think of any ideas, then ask questions such as, “Could you decide to take turns playing with the toy?” “Could you ask the teacher to come help?” This will usually get them started thinking about their own ideas.
- Ask both children to shake hands after the problem is resolved: This creates goodwill and suggests a commitment to play more cooperatively.
- Encourage the children to play together cooperatively, or redirect the children to different activities in the room if necessary: If the tensions are high, sometimes it best to redirect the children to different activity centers in the room. This gives them additional time to cool down.

Page 13 – Teach Cooperation

- Before kids can be more cooperative with each other, it helps if they can get to know each other better. One way to do this is to create opportunities for cooperative interaction. (Refer to the packet of handouts on cooperative play.)
- Kids want to be treated fairly, and one of their most frequent complaints is that they think teachers and other caregivers favor other kids over them.
- Although competitive games can be very healthy and character building, too much competition at young ages can contribute to self-esteem issues with children who are perceived by others to be weaker and less skilled. (See “Ice breakers” and “Activities to foster cooperation” in the handouts packet.)

Page 14 – Summary

None

Page 15 – Questions

None

Page 16 – Resources

None

Page 17 – References

None

Page 18 – Thank You

None