**Social behaviors used between friends**

**and sample teaching strategies**

# 1. Emotional regulation

| **Control impulses** | **Label and validate** your own emotions. Then model how to cope by saying, “I feel angry, I’m going to walk away,” or “I feel frustrated, I’m going to take a break,” or “I feel scared, I’m going to take a deep breath to calm down” or “Oh, I’m so excited, I’m going to clap!” |
| --- | --- |
| **Delay gratification** | **Interpret** events by explaining that first you will do this and then you will … |
| **Manage distress** | **Reframe** by saying, “Oh well, I can make another block tower” after the tower you just made falls. |

**2. Social knowledge and understanding**

| **Language** | **Prompt** toddlers to use words in their interactions by telling them a word or two to use when interacting. For example, “say, ‘Trade?’” or, “say, ‘Let’s play!’” |
| --- | --- |
| **Take others’ perspectives** | **Interpret** by saying, “Look at Angie’s face, she’s red and her teeth are clenched. She must be angry! Remember when you were angry when Sadie took your toy without asking? That’s how Angie feels.” Or, when a child is absent, ask other children what they think the absent child might prefer. Or, when  a child is leaving the school, ask others what they think the child might like from them to help remember this time in their school. |
| **Reach common ground** | **Model** by saying, “We could pretend we are at Pizza Hut or McDonalds. Have you been to Pizza Hut?” Or you could ask, “Which do you like better, Pizza Hut or McDonalds?” Or, connect similar interests between two children by saying, “Hannah, Gracie likes to sing too.” |
| **Experience** | **Re-enact** a shared event that all the children have experienced, such as going to the zoo, and assign roles to different children. |

**3. Social skills**

| **Enter ongoing play** | **Prompt** a third child to join other children playing mommy and baby by saying the baby looks hungry or asking the child to be the big brother. |
| --- | --- |
| **Imitate** | **Comment** on ongoing play by saying, “Look, she’s stirring the food in the pot. You could stir the food in this pot.” |
| **Ask for help** | **Model** by saying, “This is hard to do, can you help me?” |
| **Help others** | **Prompt** a child to say, “That looks heavy; can I help you carry it?” to another child carrying a heavy object. |
| **Compliment** | **Solicit** a child’s ideas regarding how to make someone else feel special. Ask, “What kinds of things can people say to you to make you feel special?” |
| **Show affection** | **Model** by saying, “I missed you!” and hugging the child. |
| **Organize** | **Model** by saying, “Let’s pretend you’re Arthur and I’m D.W. and we have a new puppy. I’ll feed the puppy and you can give her a bath.” |
| **Construct** | **Give two brief choices to choose from**, such as, “You could be the horn on the truck or fix that flat tire.” |
| **Negotiate** | **Solicit ideas** from children regarding how they could sequence their two separate play ideas into one scenario (e.g., “We can pretend we are mommy and baby going to the library.”). |
| **Take turns** | **Prompt** by saying, “Show her your ball and ask her, ‘Will you trade balls?’ She said no? Oh well, let’s throw your ball into the basketball hoop.” |
| **Express self** | **Model** by saying, “My favorite color is purple and your favorite is blue! We like different colors!” |
| **Persist** | **Prompt** by saying, “Ask again, maybe he didn’t hear you.” |
| **Pretend** | **Prompt** by saying, “This is a space rocket ship. You both are astronauts flying to the moon! Put on your space suits, close the rocket ship door, turn on the engine, blast off, fly through space, land the rocket ship on the moon, walk around on the moon and fly back to earth.” |
| **Gather information** | **Model** by asking, “What are you pretending to be?” or “Is your baby hungry?” |
| **Cooperate** | **Solicit** a child’s ideas by asking how two children can use a tube and marble to play a game. Or **prompt** by saying, “If you hold this end of the tube up and drop the marble, then she can try to catch the marble when it rolls through the tube.” |

**Assessment of social behavior**

| **1. Emotional regulation** | **Uses this skill**  **(circle yes or no)** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Controls impulses** | **yes no** |  |
| Uses quiet voice tone and keeps hands and feet to self when excited, angry, etc. |  |  |
| **Delays gratification** | **yes no** |  |
| Understands that what is desired will happen later and engages in another activity while waiting for a turn, preferred activity, event or person. |  |  |
| **Manages distress** | **yes no** |  |
| Recognizes and describes own emotions to others and knows what to do when experiencing a strong emotion. |  |  |
| **2. Social knowledge and understanding** | **Uses this skill**  **(circle yes or no)** | **Comments** |
| **Takes others’ perspectives** | **yes no** |  |
| Accurately predicts others’ reactions, anticipates others’ preferences, understands the feelings of others and understands the feelings experienced by others. |  |  |
| **Reaches common ground** | **yes no** |  |
| Synchronizes own behavior with others’ by reaching an agreement on a play topic, exchanging information about the topic  and exploring similarities and differences. |  |  |
| **Experience** | **yes no** |  |
| Re-enacts experiences in play. |  |  |

| **3. Social skills** | **Uses this skill**  **(circle yes or no)** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Enters ongoing play** | **yes no** |  |
| Observes and determines the direction of ongoing play and makes unobtrusive and relevant contributions to the ongoing play or discussion. |  |  |
| **Imitates** | **yes no** |  |
| Imitates what a peer or adult  is doing. |  |  |
| **Asks** | **yes no** |  |
| Asks for a turn or for help. |  |  |
| **Helps** | **yes no** |  |
| Offers help. |  |  |
| **Compliments** | **yes no** |  |
| Gives compliments to other children. |  |  |
| **Shows affection** | **yes no** |  |
| Shows physical affection to other children. |  |  |
| **Organizes** | **yes no** |  |
| Offers topics and roles for children to do together. |  |  |
| **Constructs** | **yes no** |  |
| Uses toys for their intended functions. |  |  |
| **Takes turns** | **yes no** |  |
| Asks to trade toys, offers a toy to trade, accepts “later” or “no” from a peer when asking to take turns with a toy, takes turns with a toy, takes turns identifying play topics, take turns selecting activities, etc. |  |  |
| **Expresses self** | **yes no** |  |
| Identifies and describes own preferences and intentions to other children. |  |  |
| **Persists** | **yes no** |  |
| Keeps persisting at getting a friend to play. |  |  |
| **Gathers information** | **yes no** |  |
| Asks other children questions about their play. |  |  |
| **Cooperates** | **yes no** |  |
| Relies on another for assistance when making a toy work or completing a project. |  |  |

**References**

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