



Handout 4: Tips for Promoting Positive Peer-to-Peer Relationships

1. Teach students positive social interactions daily during large group activities.

Any group time in class usually provides good opportunities to take a few minutes to teach these skills.

Selected skills are taught by

- Explaining the skill,
- Demonstrating the correct way to use it,
- Demonstrating an incorrect way and letting students figure out what step was missing,
- Letting a student practice a skill with an adult,
- Letting a student practice a skill with another student,
- Providing positive feedback and attention on the use of the skills, and
- Refresh the skill (or provide “boosters”) by repeating the skill in later situations.

A few basic target social skills are

- Getting a friend’s attention,
- Sharing belongings or work tasks,
- Asking peers to share,
- Providing an idea to a peer,
- Saying something nice to a friend, and
- Working things out.

2. Monitor class time for naturally occurring, positive peer social interactions.

Actively move around the classroom, interact with students during activities, and look for students who are using the targeted social skills. Be ready to provide assistance, support, and direction to promote successful peer interactions among students.

Provide cueing as needed by reminding students to

- Work together,
- Share with their friends, and
- Be persistent.

3. Provide additional assistance to students, as needed, to ensure that peer social interactions are successful, for example

- Model the appropriate behavior,
- Give specific verbal cues (e.g., “remember to tap him on the shoulder”),
- Provide physical assistance, and
- Create opportunities for students to talk about how to have friendships.

4. Affirm students who are using targeted social skills with positive feedback and attention. Offer encouragement or support.

Adapted from Bovey, T., & Strain, P. (n.d.). *Promoting positive peer social interactions* (What Works Briefs 8). Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning.

https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/whatworks/WhatWorksBrief_8.pdf

