



Social Awareness

ABOUT CENTER FOR THE COLLABORATIVE CLASSROOM

The Caring School Community (CSC) program is a nationally recognized, research-based program for grades K–6 that builds classroom and schoolwide community while developing students' social and emotional (SEL) skills and competencies.

Playground Check-in

By: The Caring School Community

Playground Check-in

ABOUT PLAYGROUND CHECK-INS

In today’s class meeting, the students discuss their playground interactions. They talk about what’s going well on the playground and discuss ways they can be fair and helpful to one another. In a subsequent Check-in Class Meeting (see Playground Challenges in Week 5) the students talk about potential playground problems and solutions. Distinction is made between problems that do not jeopardize their physical and emotional safety (such as not taking turns, excluding others, and not following game rules) and conflicts that can jeopardize their emotional and physical safety and require adult intervention (such as bullying, teasing, and fighting).

Lesson Purpose

Students:

- Listen to one another
- Speak clearly
- Learn and use discussion prompts to add to one another’s thinking
- Discuss applying the values of fairness and helpfulness on the playground

Before the Lesson

When you are not on yard duty, walk around the playground and quietly observe the students’ interactions. Note how students are taking responsibility or acting in caring, fair, or helpful ways (for example, taking turns, following established rules for games, including others, or solving problems by talking about them). Also note interactions that are problematic, such as teasing, bullying, hitting, name-calling, or excluding others. This information will help you lead this discussion and future meetings about student interactions on the playground.

Materials

- “Class Meeting Rules” chart

BEGINNING-OF-YEAR LESSON

Prior to today's class meeting, ask the students to notice ways they treat one another on the playground. Explain that they will be responsible for reporting their observations at the class meeting.

The Lesson

1 GATHER IN A CIRCLE AND DISCUSS THE PLAYGROUND

Review your expectations for how the students will move to the circle. Have them gather for a class meeting with partners sitting together. Explain that in today's class meeting, they will talk about how things are going and how they want to treat one another on the playground. Quickly review the "Class Meeting Rules" chart and remind the students to listen carefully when others speak and to speak so everyone can hear them.

Ask the students to think about being out on the playground at recess and ask:

Q What do you like to do on the playground at recess?

Have several volunteers share with the group. As the students share, ask follow-up questions, such as:

Q Who else likes [to play four square]? What do you like about it?

Q What do others like to do at recess?

Remind the students that you asked them to notice ways they treat one another on the playground. Use "Turn to Your Partner" to discuss:

Q What are some ways that people treated you nicely or that you treated others nicely on the playground today?

Have several volunteers share their thinking with the class. As the students share, point out ways in which students were fair and helpful to one another. (For example, "When Billy and Jasmine wanted to go across the monkey bars at the same time, Billy let Jasmine go first because she had been waiting longer. That was a very fair thing to do.")



The purpose of this meeting is to acknowledge positive things that are already happening on the playground and to look ahead to how the students want to treat each other in the future. Since students will discuss problems on the playground in *Playground Challenges, Week 5*, guide the discussion away from playground problems in this meeting.

Class Meeting Lessons

2 LEARN AND USE DISCUSSION PROMPTS

Explain that during this discussion, you would like the students to use the prompts “I agree with ____ because...” and “I disagree with ____ because...” to help them listen and add to what their classmates say. Write the prompts where everyone can see them. Begin the discussion by asking:

- Q** If [you and another student both want to be on the bars at the same time], what can you do to be fair?
- Q** If [another student in the class doesn't know how to jump rope], what can you do to be helpful?

Have several students respond. Encourage the students to use the prompts and to respond to their classmates' thinking by asking follow-up questions, such as:

- Q** Do you agree or disagree with what [Michael] said? Tell us about your thinking.
- Q** What question do you want to ask [Harry] about his ideas?
- Q** How is what [Jennie] suggested [helpful]?

Remind the students that today they talked about what is going well on the playground and shared ideas about ways to be fair and helpful. Encourage them to try to use some of their ideas on the playground in the next couple of days. Explain that you will check in with them in a few days to see how things are going.



Use these discussion prompts during class meetings and other discussions throughout the day. As the students practice the prompts over time, they will come to use them naturally. Discussion prompts increase participation, listening, and student-to-student dialog.

For Kindergarten

You may want to start with just “I agree with ____ because...” or wait to introduce the prompts until later in the year.



If the students have difficulty generating responses to one another's thinking, use “Turn to Your Partner” to have them discuss why they agree or disagree with a student's suggestion.

 Turn to Your Partner 

3 REFLECT ON THE MEETING

Using “Turn to Your Partner,” discuss:

Q What can you do if you are not able to hear someone speaking?

After a moment, signal to bring students’ attention back to you. Have several volunteers share their thinking.

Students might say:

“I could ask the person to repeat what they said.”

“I agree with [Sylvia] because if the person repeats what they said, I will probably be able to hear them.”

“I disagree with [Sylvia and Ruben]. I think we should ask them to talk more loudly, because if they just repeat it I still might not be able to hear them.”

Explain that you expect the students to speak so everyone can hear them. If they are not able to hear when others speak, you expect them to politely ask whoever is speaking to speak more loudly. Explain that in future meetings you will encourage them to take responsibility for speaking clearly and asking others to please speak more loudly.

4 ADJOURN THE MEETING

Adjourn the meeting and have the students return to their seats.