



# 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 Challenges

By: The Caring School Community

# Playground Challenges

## Lesson Purpose

### Students:

- Discuss potential problems on the playground
- Learn and practice “Think, Pair, Share”
- Contribute ideas that are different from other people’s ideas
- Use prompts to add to one another’s thinking

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## The Lesson

### 1 GATHER IN A CIRCLE

Have the students gather in a circle with partners sitting together. Remind them that in previous class meetings they thought of ways they could be fair, helpful, responsible, and caring in the classroom and on the playground. Explain that in today’s class meeting they will discuss problems on the playground and how they might try to solve those problems themselves before they turn to an adult for help.

Review the class meeting rules with the students. Remind them that when they mention problems on the playground they should

## Materials

- “Class Meeting Rules” chart

# BEGINNING-OF-YEAR LESSON



Use “Think, Pair, Share” throughout the day when you ask the students to respond to complex questions. This cooperative structure is especially powerful during discussions about math, reading, social studies, and science. Cooperative structures such as “Think, Pair, Share” will increase student participation and individual student accountability.

## 2 INTRODUCE “THINK, PAIR, SHARE”

Explain that when the students talk about the playground today, partners will use a procedure called “Think, Pair, Share.” Tell them that it is like “Turn to Your Partner,” except that they will think quietly to themselves for a moment before they share their thinking with their partner. Explain that the students will hear a question and think quietly to themselves for a moment. When you say “Turn to your partner,” they will turn to their partner and begin talking. On your signal, they will end their partner conversation and turn their attention back to you.

## 3 DISCUSS PLAYGROUND CHALLENGES

Begin the discussion about the playground by acknowledging that it’s not always easy to treat others in fair, helpful, caring, and responsible ways on the playground. Use “Think, Pair, Share” to discuss:

**Q What are some problems that can happen when you play together on the playground?**

Have the students think quietly for a moment. Say “Turn to your partner” and have partners discuss the question. After a few moments, signal to bring their attention back to you. Have a few volunteers share their thinking with the class.

**Students might say:**

“The older kids won’t let us play with them.”

“I agree, and sometimes some of them are mean to us.”

“Some kids don’t follow the rules in four-square.”

“People don’t share the jump ropes.”

Ask questions like these to encourage the students to think about the effect of their behavior on others:

**Q How would you feel if some of your classmates wouldn’t let you play with them?**

**Q Why is it a problem if people don’t follow the game rules?**

# Class Meeting Lessons



Call attention to any problems the students mention that require adult intervention. Explain that they should go to an adult right away for problems such as bullying and fighting. Explain that anytime the students do not feel safe, or they see a situation that seems unsafe for another student, they should ask an adult for help. Remind them that the adults in the school are committed to helping make the playground and school safe for everyone.

**If none of the students' examples includes unsafe situations, help them think about when they might need to go to an adult for help. Ask and discuss:**

**Q What could happen on the playground that would make you feel unsafe?**

**Q Have you ever felt that another student might hurt you on the playground? Tell us about it.**

## **4 GENERATE AND DISCUSS POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

Help the students generate and discuss possible solutions to problems on the playground that they can try to solve without adult help. Use “Think, Pair, Share” to discuss:

**Q I hear you saying that some people [are hogging the monkey bars]. What would be a [fair] thing to do instead?**

Have the students think quietly about the question for a moment. Say “Turn to your partner” and have partners discuss the question.

After a few moments, signal to bring their attention back to you. Have several volunteers share their thinking with the class.

As the students share, encourage them to contribute ideas that are different from other people's ideas and to use the prompts “I agree with \_\_\_\_\_ because...” and “I disagree with \_\_\_\_\_ because...”

### **Students might say:**

“I think we should take turns and let everyone have a turn.”

“I agree with what [Jack] said because it's fair when everyone gets a turn.”

“I agree, and if some people don't get to use the monkey bars, that's not fair.”

Continue to use “Think, Pair, Share” to discuss:

**Q I've noticed that some people [aren't lining up when it's time to come in from recess]. What would be a more [responsible]**

refer to “people” instead of using someone’s name.

As the students suggest solutions, ask questions like these to encourage them to respond to one another and extend the conversation:

**Q** How would you feel if [you didn’t know how to play a game and someone helped you instead of teasing you]?

**Q** What questions do you have for [Leon] about his idea?

**Q** Do you agree or disagree with what [Benito] said? Tell us about your thinking.

## **5** **ADJOURN THE MEETING**

Explain that you would like the students to keep thinking about how to be fair, helpful, responsible, and caring to others in the classroom and on the playground.

Emphasize again that the students should ask an adult for help if someone is bullying them, if they see students bullying others, or if they feel as though someone might hurt them.

Remind the students that they will have many opportunities to check in throughout the year to see how things are going.

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