



Optimistic Thinking

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.

Positive Interactions

By: The Caring School Community

Positive Interactions

ABOUT PROBLEM SOLVING ON THE PLAYGROUND

Over the next four class meetings, the students will discuss their playground interactions. In Positive Playground Interactions, they talk about what it means to apply the values of responsibility, respect, caring, fairness, and helpfulness on the playground. In Playground Challenges, they brainstorm solutions for problems that do not jeopardize their safety, such as not taking turns, excluding others, and not following game rules. In Playground Bullying and Fighting, they discuss conflicts that can jeopardize their emotional and physical safety and require adult intervention. Playground Check-in is a check-in meeting on how the students are interacting on the playground.

Lesson Purpose

Students:

- Learn and practice “Think, Pair, Share”
- Discuss applying the values of responsibility, respect, caring, fairness, and helpfulness on the playground

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Before the Lesson

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

Materials

- Scratch paper and a pencil for teacher notes

BEGINNING-OF-YEAR LESSON

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

The Lesson

1 GATHER FOR A CLASS MEETING AND INTRODUCE "THINK, PAIR, SHARE"

Have the students gather in a circle with partners sitting together. Explain that in today's class meeting they will talk about how they want to treat one another on the playground.

Explain that when partners talk about the playground today, they will use a procedure called "Think, Pair, Share," which is like "Turn to Your Partner" with additional time to think quietly before they share their thinking with their partner. Explain that you will ask a question and the students will think quietly for a moment. Then, 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.



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.



If the students have trouble giving examples, prompt them with some of your own observations.

The purpose of this meeting is to acknowledge positive things already happening on the playground and to look ahead to how the students want to treat each other in the future. The students will discuss playground problems in the next two playground class meetings. Guide the discussion away from problems in this meeting.

2 USE "THINK, PAIR, SHARE" TO DISCUSS WHAT'S GOING WELL ON THE PLAYGROUND

Remind the students that you asked them to notice how they treated one another on the playground. Ask:

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

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 the students' attention back to you. Have several volunteers share their thinking with the class.

As the students share, point out ways in which they were responsible, respectful, fair, helpful, or caring. (For example, "When Billy fell, Wilson walked him to the office. That was a caring thing to do." "When Jasmine didn't know how to play four-square and Carl showed her how to play instead of teasing her, he was being respectful.")

3 DISCUSS ACTING ON VALUES ON THE PLAYGROUND

Remind the students that in the classroom they are living by classroom norms and acting on the values of responsibility, respect, caring, fairness, and helpfulness. Explain that acting on these values on the playground will help build a schoolwide community. Ask:

Q What are some ways that you can be fair or caring on the playground?

Q When you are on the playground, what are some ways that you can be respectful or helpful?

Use “Think, Pair, Share” to have the students discuss these questions. Have them think quietly for a few moments, then 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. Jot their ideas on a sheet of scratch paper and save it to use in the next playground class meeting.

Students might say:

“We can check to see if other kids want to play basketball with us.”

“Instead of hogging the monkey bars, I can take turns.”

“Don’t cut in line at the drinking fountain.”

“Teach each other how to play games.”

“Don’t laugh at someone if they get hit by the ball. Instead talk to them and see if they are OK.”

Encourage the students to respond directly to one another by asking questions such as:

Q What question do you want to ask [Harry] about his idea?

Q How is what [Jason] suggested [fair]?

Q Who has an idea that is [similar to/different from] [Rosa’s]? Tell us about it.

Think, Pair, Share

 **Think, Pair, Share**

Use “Think, Pair, Share” to have the students think about and discuss:

Q What is one way that you can take responsibility for yourself on the playground?

Students might say:

“Put the balls away at the end of recess.”

“I can line up when the bell rings.”

“Instead of yelling at someone if I get mad at them, I can walk away.”

“If I throw the ball and it hits someone, I can apologize and make sure the kid isn’t hurt.”

Remind the students that today they talked about what’s going well on the playground and shared ideas about ways to be fair, helpful, caring, respectful, and responsible. Encourage them to try to use some of their ideas on the playground in the next couple of days. They will meet later in the week to check on how things are going.

4**REFLECT AND ADJOURN THE MEETING**

Ask and briefly discuss:

Q How did having time to think before you shared with your partner help you talk about your ideas?

Students might say:

“It gave me time to get some more ideas.”

“I had more to say to my partner.”

“I had time to figure out what to say.”

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



If the students are having trouble generating ideas, prompt them with suggestions like those in “Students might say.”