



3–5 Years

Social-Emotional: Relationship Skills

WHEN INTRODUCED AND EMPHASIZED: Weeks 1–9

BEHAVIORS TO OBSERVE

- Initiating Play
- Sharing, Taking Turns, and Cooperating with Peers or Adults
- Solving Social Problems
- Being Friendly and Helpful

OBSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES

Initiating Play

What level of understanding does the child demonstrate as he/she:

- uses a puppet to ask another puppet to play (Week 2, Day 3 center activity)?
- invites another child to play (any free play period after Week 2, Day 3)?

Sharing, Taking Turns, Cooperating

In what ways does the child share, take turns, or cooperate as he/she:

- plays with another child or children (any free play period after Week 4, Day 2)? Examples: shares markers; takes turns going down the slide; takes turns kicking a ball back and forth
- puts away classroom materials (any cleanup period after Week 4, Day 2)? Example: helps a child pick up the block area even if he/she did not play there
- helps make the quilt (Week 4, Day 3 group activity)?

Solving Social Problems

What level of understanding of social problem-solving does the child demonstrate as he/she:

- solves a social problem (any transition after Week 5, Day 3)? Example: Another child is bothering the observed child while children are getting ready to go outside. Child says “Please stop” and then ignores the child who is bothering him/her.
- plays while solving the problem of limited toys (Week 6, Day 3 center activity)?



Being Helpful and Friendly

How does the child demonstrate an emerging ability to be helpful and friendly to others as he/she:

- helps another child or classroom adult (any mealtime after Week 7, Day 3)? Example: quickly offers paper towels to help clean up a spill
- tells how someone could be friendly in the short story the child selected from the basket (Week 8, Day 3 group activity)?
- offers a compliment to a child or staff person (any free play period after Week 9, Day 3)? Example: gives a thumbs up to a friend as they build with blocks

FOLLOW-UP LEARNING SUPPORTS

Reinforce

The following activities are designed to support the ongoing development of relationship skills.

Initiating Play

- Post the pictures used in Week 1, Day 3 and Week 2, Day 3 showing ways to initiate play. Take pictures of children initiating play with others and place the pictures near the pictures from Week 1, Day 3 and Week 2, Day 3. Invite children to describe how children in the pictures are initiating play.
- Praise children when they appropriately tell another friend “no” when asked to play. Praise a child for responding appropriately when he/she was told “no.”

Sharing, Taking Turns, Cooperating

- Encourage children to play turn-taking games, such as *Go Fish*.
- Provide a limited number of musical instruments, or other materials, such as table toys or art supplies. Encourage children to share and take turns with the available items.
- Verbally acknowledge children’s appropriate behaviors in initiating cooperation and responding to requests for cooperation.
- Invite a child to draw a picture of himself/herself cooperating with another child.
- Create a sharing and cooperating tree in the classroom. When you observe one or more children sharing and/or cooperating, write what you observed on a paper leaf. Bring these “leaves” with you to a group time where you describe the events and hang them on the tree.



Solving Social Problems

- Encourage a child to help another child solve a social problem by suggesting a solution to his/her problem.
- Draw simple pictures of social problems that frequently occur in your classroom. Provide the drawn pictures, puppets, solution cards (Week 6, Day 2), and Solving a Problem poster (Week 5, Day 3). Encourage children to think of and act out solutions (with puppets) to the typical problems.

Being Helpful and Friendly

- Invite families to look for opportunities to be helpful with their children. Encourage parents to send pictures of their family being helpful. Display these in the classroom.
- Create a classroom helper job of a "Super Helper" who looks for (and demonstrates) ways to be friendly and helpful. A related option is to create a "Super Helper" cape/hat. Invite children to tell how they were helpful and then wear the "Super Helper" cape/hat.
- Place a "Compliments Basket" on a shelf in a prominent part of the classroom. Include in the basket pictures of all children and staff in the room (other staff can be included as well) and the four pictures of giving compliments (Week 9, Day 2). Encourage a child to choose (1) a picture of a person from your room and (2) a picture of giving a compliment. Encourage the child to offer a compliment to the selected person at least once during the day.
- During a transition activity, invite children to give a compliment to the person sitting next to them before moving to the next activity.

Reintroduce

The following activities are designed to support the development of relationship skills among children who find it challenging to demonstrate relationship skills. The activities are also appropriate for all children.

Initiating Play

- Repeat the Week 1, Day 3 group activity. Encourage children to describe what is occurring in each of the three pictures. Help a child to practice asking you (or a classroom adult) to play prior to asking a child to play.
- Repeat the Week 2, Day 3 group activity that focuses on times when our friends do not want to play. Emphasize Practice Session 2 to help children learn how to respond when someone says "no" when asked to play.



Sharing, Taking Turns, Cooperating

- Repeat the Week 3, Day 3 group activity (different ways to share). Help children practice each of the scenarios for cooperating with another child. Encourage children to practice splitting an object to share, taking a turn with a child or adult, and playing with a toy together. It may be helpful to begin the practice work with an adult and gradually incorporate practice work with another child.
- Use the Week 4, Day 2 *Musical Chairs* game to review how it can be fun to share something.
- Mealtime: Discuss sharing food at snack or mealtime. Encourage children to think about how they can be sure that there will be something for everyone.
- Use the Week 4, Day 3 plan of making a classroom quilt to design a similar task, that encourages each child to contribute to something bigger. Examples: read a book about an orchestra such as *Meet the Orchestra* by Ann Hayes, and invite children to play musical instruments together. Explain that each person works to make music together. Provide a heavy bag or box. Invite one child to pick it up or push it. Encourage children to think of an easier way to move the box or bag to another spot in the room. Follow-up prompts if needed: "What if we took turns moving the item?" "What if we worked to move it together?"
- Outdoor Play: Use opportunities during outdoor play to encourage children to initiate or respond to a request to cooperate. Example: invite two children to work together to move a wagon or to pick up the shovels in the sandbox (one child might pick up the shovels while the other holds the container where they belong).

Solving Social Problems

- Use the Week 5, Day 3 activity (solving problems) to remind children how to solve problems and to help a child think of how a different problem could be solved. Describe each picture on the Solving a Problem poster to help children remember how to solve a problem.
- Practice the problem scenarios in Week 6, Day 3. Review the problem solution cards. Help children decide which solution card to use.

Being Helpful and Friendly

- Repeat the Week 7, Day 3 group activity. As you read the book, emphasize how Sarah was helpful. Ask children how they think Sarah will be helpful with the yarn she found in the basket.
- Use the short stories from the Week 8, Day 3 activity plan to help children think of ways they can be friendly in different situations. If time permits, invite children to act out the scenarios to get more practice acting in friendly ways.
- Repeat the Week 9, Day 2 activity (giving compliments). Remind children what the word compliment means. Review the four pictures of giving compliments.



- Use the basket of names from Week 9, Day 3 to encourage children to practice giving and receiving compliments. In discussing the four pictures, provide examples of giving compliments, if appropriate.

EXAMPLES OF PORTFOLIO ENTRIES

Children in our classroom are learning how to get along with others. Recently I observed Dakota's relationship skills in a variety of settings on different days. Dakota initiated play, shared, took turns, cooperated, solved social problems, and was helpful and friendly. He was able to demonstrate these skills in organized activities that I led, as well as other times, such as free play, mealtimes, and transitions.

Children in our classroom are learning how to get along with others. Recently I observed Josue's relationship skills in a variety of settings on different days. Josue's relationship skills are emerging. Sometimes he takes turns independently and sometimes he needs the help of a staff person. He responded inconsistently to cooperation requests to share materials, refusing sometimes and sharing at other times. During cleanup time, Josue started to put the blocks in his cubby so that he would not have to share the blocks with others later in the day. He did not show interest in cooperating with others to clean up the room. He worked with a staff person to act out a scenario of solving a problem with a center activity and solved a social problem during a transition time. In a staff-led activity focusing on being friendly, he verbalized how he could be friendly. In a mealtime situation, he moved away from a spill while another child helped to clean it up. He offered compliments in staff-led activities, as well as free play times. We are providing individualized learning opportunities to help Josue continue to develop relationship skills.

Children in our room are learning how to get along with others. Recently I observed LaQuita's relationship skills in a variety of settings on different days. She put a puppet on her hand for a center activity but did not seem interested in using it to ask someone to play. During an outdoor time, she asked a staff member to help her ask a child to play with her. She took turns, with adult assistance, in a group quilt-making activity and cooperated, with adult assistance, during cleanup. Currently LaQuita's pattern is to cooperate and take turns with others when given adult assistance. We will continue to provide individualized learning opportunities to help LaQuita develop relationship skills. It is promising that LaQuita demonstrates some relationship skills with adult assistance.