

Teaching Pragmatic Social Skills - 9 Tips

1. Have the students do a cooperative activity such as moving a heavy table (each student takes one end - if one lets go the other student will realize his/her behavior effects others), carrying the milk carton, or playing cooperative games such as: pig pile, group dance, red rover-red rover, dodge ball, tag, Simon says, Simon says with action verbs (run, jump, fall, etc.), musical chairs, jump rope, ring toss, relay races, wagons, teeter-totter, or have kids push each other on the swings or merry-go-round.
2. Build a marble ramp and only give the kids one marble - this encourages sharing, compromise, and negotiation skills
3. Play imitation games such as, "Let everyone clap hands like Sam - clap, clap. Let everyone tap toes like John - tap, tap..." Go around the room and one-by-one have each student pick an action and the group imitates the action.
4. Have one student be in charge of the schedule board - this student can let his/her peers know when the activities are finished and what comes next.
5. Passing objects - intentionally set up activities that require one student to pass out or pass around objects (such as pencils, paper, notebooks, snack, etc.) Students can practice saying hello to their friends and using their names, "Hi Jim, here's your milk."
6. Have students share a space like a table, computer, easel, or beanbag chair. If one child is hogging the chair, have the other child practice saying, "Get up, please!" If the one student wants a turn, this is a good opportunity to practice sharing language such as, "In 5 minutes then will it be my turn?" or "May I have a turn, please?"
7. When the student asks an adult a question, redirect the question to the group or have the student ask one particular peer.
8. Play high interest games such as: Don't break the ice, bowling, ring toss, basketball, ker plunk, hungry hungry hippo, Mr. Mouth, connect four, or take turns rolling a car down the slide.
9. Narrate - tell the child what to say, but have the child say it him/herself. For example, if the child interrupts other children while playing, take the student, go over to the play area and whisper in the child's ear, "Can I play?" (Requesting the student say this message out loud).