

Social Scenarios Activity

Use what you have learned in this lesson to identify ways to support staff members as they promote social emotional development. Read the scenarios that follow and write how you would respond. When you are finished, compare your answers to the suggested responses.

Jakob

Jakob is a very bright 2-year-old boy who likes everything related to *Thomas the Tank Engine*. He also likes reading books and going to the park with his parents and his dog, Murray. Jakob has cerebral palsy that affects all areas of his development. He attends your program and mostly plays by himself.

Spend some time observing in Jakob's classroom. Learn more about his interests, strengths and needs. Talk to his family about their goals for him. Work with the staff member to incorporate Jakob's love of Thomas the Tank Engine into class activities or peer interactions. If other children like trains, encourage them to play together. Help staff members adapt the materials as needed to help Jakob (i.e., permanently connect a few trains so they are easier to grasp and don't fall apart, build a seat that Jakob can use while playing at the train table).

Brian

Brian is a 4-year-old preschooler. He has two older brothers who often take his toys from him at home and rarely let him play with his favorite superhero figures. When he is at school, he has a hard time sharing toys and materials with peers. He often takes blocks or animals to a separate area of the room and gets frustrated when other children want to play with him or the materials.

You might try writing a scripted story for Brian about playing with friends and toys at school. You can include language to help Brian know how to say "No" politely if he wants to play alone, and to help him recognize situations when it's important to share. You can also encourage staff members to set specific times (perhaps during arrival) when Jakob can play alone with his favorite toys. Then, build in other structured times when he is learning to play with others. Adults can stay close to make sure play goes smoothly and to model social skills.

Daniel

Daniel is a 6-year-old first grader who just started attending the school-age program. He has been having trouble making friends and has been crying and avoiding peers. Every day at departure, a staff member tells his parents how many times he cried or refused to play with a child or engage in an activity.

Talk to the staff member about the importance of positive relationships with Daniel and his family. The staff member should be intentional about sharing positive aspects of the day. Encourage the staff member to begin building a stronger relationship with Daniel. Staff should talk with him each day about his interests and

experiences. The staff might also begin a “welcome buddy” program that matches children with peers from their school or neighborhood so he can begin making friends.

Margo

Margo is an 8-year-old girl. She just got to the summer program and realized her best friend, Megan, is not coming today. They had been looking forward to playing together on the trip to the pool. Margo sits at the breakfast table and sulks. She says she doesn’t want to go to the pool or do anything else today.

Encourage staff to sit and talk with Margo. Label her emotions, “Margo, I can tell you are disappointed Megan isn’t here today.” Help her come up with solutions to the problem: “Margo, I know you were looking forward to swimming. What else would make it feel fun? Let’s talk to some other kids about the pool.”