

Using Classroom Activities & Routines as Opportunities to Support Peer Interaction

HANDOUT

(5)



Plan or Design Activities that Support Peer Interactions.

Examine daily routines and activities to identify jobs or tasks that adults are doing that children could do such as assisting with snack, gathering book bags with a peer, and distributing art materials.

If needed, add steps to activities that would support peer interactions (e.g., pairing students to “dance with a partner” during a music activity, playing follow the leader through an obstacle course, inviting a friend to play during center time).



Support Peer Interactions During Naturally Occurring Routines.

Arrivals — Ask a child to greet friends and ask them a question.

Transition times — Ask a child to invite another child to go to an activity.

Circle and story times — Ask a child to pass out and collect materials.

Snack time — Ask a child to pass out plates, cups, napkins, and snacks/juice.



Provide Cues and Assistance to Support Positive Peer Interactions, as Needed.

Some children will require more assistance than others. Adults should be present and ready to provide assistance as needed (e.g., help a child invite a peer to do an activity with him/her; prompt a child who is collecting props to “Tell Tricia to ‘Put it in.’”). Provide only enough assistance for the child to be successful; make sure you do not complete the task for them.



Reinforce Social Interactions as They Occur.

It is important that children know that we value peer interaction. Even if social interactions are a planned part of the day, it is important to praise and reinforce children for engaging in these interactions.