Kimochis®

building a school-to-home connection

## HOMELINKS WEEK 3

# Meet Huggtopus

This week, the Kimochis® Character named Huggtopus joined our classroom to teach your child about the feelings **silly, frustrated, excited, and proud**. Huggtopus (or Huggs) is our Kimochis® Character who is strong and affectionate, but she sometimes gets a little carried away with her big, friendly personality. She might hug too tightly or play too roughly, which upsets her friends. This can be confusing and frustrating to Huggs because she doesn't know why her friends say, "Don't bother me." With Huggtopus, your child is learning to read social cues, such as facial expressions, body language, and sounds from peers. Huggtopus also teaches children how to celebrate our differences. Huggs is a six-legged octopus and is proud that she is so unique!

Children who have a temperament like Huggs's can have a hard time waiting to talk to an adult. This week, we taught your child to pay attention to the **"Not now" signal.** (Put your pointer finger by your ear between you and your child. Do not make eye contact). This is a nonverbal means for adults to tell children in a friendly, effective way, "I want to listen, but this is not a good time." Another strategy is to choose a costume item—such as a hat, lei, tiara, necklace, or apron—to put on as a visual symbol when you need personal space and some uninterrupted time. Tell your child that when Mommy or Daddy is wearing the "Not now" costume, it serves as a reminder that interrupting would not be polite at that time.

**See reverse for ways your entire family can learn from this week's lesson!**

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## Common Language

**"Not now" signal:** A nonverbal strategy to show children that they are interrupting. Put your pointer finger by your ear between you and your child. Do not make eye contact. Look and respond when you are ready to talk.

## Coach the "Not Now" Signal During Daily Activities

- Practice using the "Not now" signal with your child. Ask your child to pretend to be a parent talking on the phone. Interrupt so you can model how to respond to the "Not now" signal. (Take a step back, cover your mouth, and wait until the "parent" is off the phone to say, *"Sorry I interrupted."*) Reverse roles so your child can respond to you giving this same signal.
- Before you begin a conversation on the phone, give your child an idea of how long you'll need. Help your child find something to do during that time. Set a timer so expectations are clear. Remind your child that if he/she forgets, you will not make eye contact and will use the "Not now" signal.
- Acknowledge when you sense or can see your child noticing that you are busy and not interrupting you. For example, *"Thanks for your patience. You could see I was busy. What did you want to tell Mommy/Daddy?"*

## Family Fun: Playful Ways to Practice

- **LET'S GET EXCITED.** Make a list of family activities that would create excited feelings. Call it the "Let's Get Excited List." Invite family members to think of activities that would make them feel excited, like having a picnic in the backyard, hanging out together, calling an old family friend.
- **SURPRISE PARTY.** Surprises create excited feelings. Get creative and silly! Do some unexpected things in your daily routine to create positive feelings and excitement. For example:
  - Plan a birthday party for your child's favorite stuffed animal, complete with invitations and cake!
  - Have a "backward dinner" and serve dessert first.
  - Get everyone in the car. Say, *"You never know where our car will go."* Then drive to a special park, an ice cream store, Grandma's house—somewhere that will make your child feel excited.
- **FRUSTRATED FURRY FRIENDS.** Talk about what each family member does to help manage frustration. Your child can choose a stuffed animal they can hold when they feel frustrated.

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