Kimochis®

building a school-to-home connection

HOMELINKS WEEK 16

Left Out: Joining In

This week, we talked about feeling **left out** and the Kimochis® *kotowaza* that accompanies this emotion: **"Make room for everyone."** This Japanese saying inspires children to push themselves to get included and to seek to include everyone in play. Children between the ages of 3 and 4 are becoming more interested in socializing and will engage in "associative play" with little organization and no rules. An older child may be the leader, and younger children will seldom question this authority. Between the ages of 4 and 5, children begin to engage in "cooperative play," which is organized around group goals with simple rules. It can be difficult for children to enter this play as there can be constant changes in play partners. Working on inclusion skills is important. Research has shown that children who stop to observe play and are confident when making a bid for entry are more likely to be accepted into play.

These are the steps your child learned that can help him/her get included in play:

- Choose a person who looks friendly or who you know and stand where they can see you.
- Call this child's name.
- Give a Communication Tap and wait for eye contact.
- Smile and ask, *"Can I play?"*
- Respond with a friendly-sounding *"Thank you"* and a smile.

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

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Coach Inclusion During Daily Activities

- Guide your child to a group of children who will be most likely to accept him/her. Join the group yourself as a model and then move away as the children include your child.
- Encouraging your child to do something concrete may help him/her gain entry. For example, if peers are having a tea party, your child could bring a cup and ask for tea.
- Acknowledge when your child is inclusive and friendly. *"I admire how you always say yes when people ask you if they can play with you."*

Family Fun: Playful Ways to Practice

- **WHEN I WAS LITTLE.** Recall times when you were young and felt left out. Say, "When I was little, I felt left out when …" Share what you did to make it better and who was kind and included you.
- **GETTING TO KNOW YOU.** Playdates are a good way for your child to enjoy one peer at a time. Playdates can be difficult to schedule, but try to invite each child in your child's classroom for a playdate. Keep it to an hour. Young children can only handle the excitement and interaction for a short time. You want the playdate to be a positive experience for both children.
- **HEY, WHAT ABOUT ME?** Tell your child that sometimes kids are having so much fun that they might not see or hear others who want to play too. One way to join in is to say in a friendly way, *"Hey, what about me? Can I play too?"* Practice with family members. Say it in a friendly way and an unfriendly way. Discuss how voices and faces can make a difference. Make this a family activity by having two family members play together somewhere in the house. Others go on a hunt for them, one at a time. When they find them, they practice getting included by saying, *"Hey, what about me? Can I play too?"*

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