Kimochis®

building a school-to-home connection

HOMELINKS WEEK 21

Silly

This week, your child learned about feeling **silly** and the Kimochis® *kotowaza*—or Japanese proverb—that accompanies this emotion: **"Know when to be silly and when to be serious."** This *kotowaza* helps children understand that there are times when it is appropriate to be silly and times when we need to be serious. This applies to all places in which young children will find themselves (school, home, or in the community). Young children enjoy expressing their sense of humor by making up silly words and imaginative tales. They love making people laugh and will do things wrong on purpose just to be silly. However, they need to develop the emotional control to know when to stop. By age 4–5, children are getting better at inhibiting their impulses to be silly as a way to conform to social norms. Helping children to understand the kotowaza will help them learn to monitor and inhibit their impulses to be silly when it is time to be more focused and serious.

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

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Common Language

"Know when to be silly and when to be serious": A way to help children differentiate between times to be silly and times to be serious

Settle down: Make wide eyes, hold your hands palm down, and move them gently downward as a nonverbal way to calm you child

Coach Silly Feelings During Daily Activities

- Tell your child that if he/she gets too silly and needs to be more serious, you will make eye contact and use the hand gesture described above while calmly saying, *"Settle down."* When your child follows this direction, smile and give a thumbs-up sign.
- Acknowledge your child's ability to be silly without getting overly silly. Also, reinforce your child when he/she is able to settle down all on his/her own.
- Model how you calm yourself after having lots of silly fun: *"Ahhhh, I need to settle down a bit, as I am getting way too silly."*

Family Fun: Playful Ways to Practice

- **SILLY SATURDAY.** Put some play back in Saturday! Save half the day (or least a few hours) to simply play and be together as a family. Tell your child that you are not going to answer the phone or let anything interrupt your "Family Silly Saturday." Each week, a different family member gets to choose one thing they think would be fun to do. The rest of the family agrees to participate and have some silly feelings!
- **SILLY SUPPER.** You can host a "Silly Supper" in multiple ways: Have family members assign each part of the meal a silly name: "What should we call green beans? … 'Purple worms'? Okay!" Have everyone come to the table dressed in silly clothes (shirt on backward, shoes that don't match), speak in silly voices, and/or give themselves silly names to use throughout the meal. Turn on silly music. The possibilities are endless!
- **SILLY AND SERIOUS.** In the car or at dinnertime, tell your child that you will be speaking in a silly voice and a serious voice. When your child hears you use a silly voice, they say, *"Mom/Dad, you are so silly."* Then it is your child's turn to be the one who gets to be silly or serious. Parents then say, *"Kevin, you are so serious."*

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