

The Development of Social Emotional Skills is an Integral Component of School Success *submitted by Dr. Robin Hooper*

Confronting our feelings and giving them appropriate expression always takes strength, not weakness. It takes strength to acknowledge our anger, and sometimes more strength yet to curb the aggressive urges anger may bring and to channel them into nonviolent outlets. It takes strength to face our sadness and to grieve and to let our grief and our anger flow in tears when they need to. It takes strength to talk about our feelings and to reach out for help and comfort when we need it.

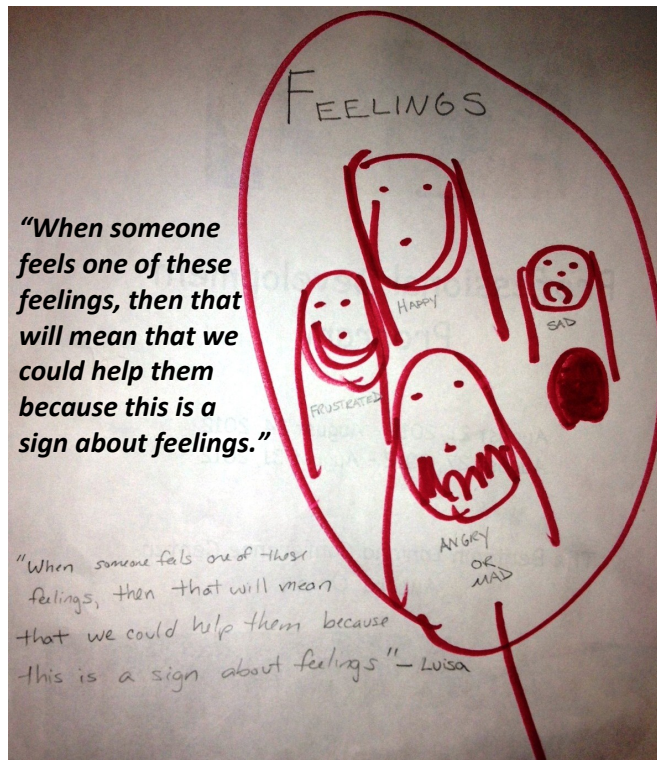
- Fred Rogers



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Social emotional skill development has long been recognized in the field of early childhood as a critical component of prekindergarten educational programs. This important area of development is addressed in the New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core Standards adopted by the Board of Regents in 2011. Areas of social emotional development addressed in the NYS prekindergarten standards include the ability to recognize and manage emotions, engage in respectful interactions with adults and peers and how to resolve problems.

Social emotional learning is an important aspect of development that was found by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (2001) to be where the “greatest benefits of preschool experience occur.” Nobel Laureate James Heckman notes that investing in social-emotional skill development during and prior to kindergarten is a cost-effective approach to increasing the quality and productivity of our nation’s workforce. In today’s workplace and as we move forward in the global economy the ability to work effectively in groups becomes increasingly important. When we provide children with the skills needed to interact with others socially and to maintain emotional health we provide them with the tools they need to be successful in their futures and to contribute to the overall health of our nation and our world. The High Scope Preschool Curriculum provides our teachers with the tools they need to make this a reality for our students.



Children Can Do It!
Child’s drawing and dictation taken by teaching assistant, Sarah Rajotte, from UPK class at St. Paul Day Care

The child who did this, posted it on the classroom door. When she observes a problem in the classroom, she identifies the children’s feelings, “You look really frustrated” and brings them to the picture. “See, this is frustrated. Well, now we need to solve the problem.” She then proceeds to help them solve the problem. When she can’t identify the feeling, she might ask, “Do you have a feeling?”
 CCLS: Domain 3: Social and Emotional Development; Self Regulation a, b

A Problem Solving Story *submitted by Margaret Spencer, RPPP @ # 36 School*

Child: "Hey, he just hit me."

Those words seep under my skin and my first thought is, "Here we go again." It is the third time today that he has reacted like this when someone bumped into him. The words form in my mind, "*He did not hit you he just bumped into you, and you're fine.*" Apparently, the last time I said these words the problem was not solved because here he is doing the same thing again and worse, now he is crying inconsolably.

When there is conflict over a toy or a turn on the computer the six steps to conflict resolution lend themselves readily. This particular problem, however, seems different and I wonder if I can successfully help this child. There is no hurtful action to stop, no object being fought over. On a superficial level this child just seems determined to blame others and get them in trouble. I have to admit to myself that I am agitated. Recognizing this I know that I must acknowledge my own feelings before approaching this child. So what do I feel besides agitation? I feel angry and impatient, I know that, but at a deeper level I am aware that I feel hesitant to tackle this problem because I also feel vulnerable and insecure. To tackle this problem means that I may not know what to say, how to guide the situation, what support the child needs and whether to involve the other child in the process. To do nothing or to handle it with dismissive words, however, are not helpful. I have already tried these tactics and they've not yielded long lasting results.

I'm going in... (Step 1-approach calmly, doing my best here and it helps that I have acknowledged my own feelings).

Child: "Wahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh"

Me: "Wow you are really upset, we can really hear your crying." (Step2-acknowledge feelings)

Child: "WAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHH. My life is ruined." (I kid you not).

Me: "So you are so sad you think your life is ruined." (Step 2)

Child: (Sniffle, shudder). "Yes and I'm mad"

Me: "So are you sad and mad too." (Holding steady at Step 2).

Child: "Mmhmmm."

Me: "Tell me about your mad and sad feelings? What's wrong?" (Step 3-gathering information).

Child: (Pointing) "He hit me, now I'm mad." (More crying...)

Me: "He hit you?" (Breathe, breathe...)

Child: "Yes he did!"

Me: "OK, I hear you're saying he hit you and now you are mad." (Yes! I got to Step 4-restate the problem).

Child: "Mmmhmmm."

Me: "I noticed that he bumped into you but I didn't see him hit you. I wonder if he meant to hit you. Do you think he wanted to hit you or did he bump you by accident?" (Back to gathering information).

Child: "He really, really hit me."

Me: "So you think he really hit you. Let's call him over and see what he says." I call the other child over.

Me: "K thinks that you hit him and now he's feeling really mad and sad. Do you know what happened?" (Restating problem and gathering information)

Child 2: Shakes head, "Nuh uhhhh."

Me: "I noticed you bumped into him. Did you want to hit him?" (Gathering information)

Child 2: "I no hit him."

Child 1: "Well he did bump me."

Me: "He just bumped you?" (Can I scream now?? Just keep breathing. Calm, calm...)

Child 1: "He didn't say sorry."

Me: "So you want him to say sorry because he bumped into you? I wonder if you could tell him that. "

Child 1: "You say sorry. You bumped me."

Child 2: "I no hit you."

Child 1: "You bumped me."

Child 2: "Sorry. You my friend. Wanna play cars?"

Child 1: Big smile, "We're friends now!"

This is one of those things in life that is simple but not so easy: you walk into the problem and let go of control of the outcome. It may seem that Child 1 wrested an apology from Child 2. I had to acknowledge that's what I thought but for Child 2 it was very simple. For Child 1, what became evident was his need for support with interacting with other children and making friends. This was a beginning.

Six Steps in Conflict Mediation

by Betsy Evans

1. Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions.
2. Acknowledge children's feelings.
3. Gather information.
4. Restate the problem.
5. Ask the children for ideas for solutions and choose one together.
6. Be prepared to give follow-up support.

Conquering Conflict in the Classroom *submitted by Erica Rzepka, ABC Hart St.*



CCLS: Domain 3: Social and Emotional Development; Relationships with others, 3. Demonstrates and continues to develop a positive relationship with significant adults, a, b

children are not ready to share. When children are not forced to share they will usually give up their toy sooner because they feel empowered. Thus helping to resolve conflict easier and sooner in the classroom.

When conflict does occur in the classroom High Scope's 6 steps have proved to be very successful. They are most successful when you have the consistency to follow through with them at all times. In the end students will learn these steps and be able to implement them without adult support. That is what we call success, independent children who know how to solve problems.

Conflict in the classroom is completely unavoidable and will not be going away. Walk into any 4 year old classroom around the country and you will see the same type of conflict happening. Conflict does not discriminate. Given that conflict is not going away we have to find ways to deal with it in our classroom.

The first approach to conquering conflict in the classroom is respect, and looking at yourself through the children's eyes. Imagine yourself sipping your coffee and reading a magazine at the local book store, when another adult comes over and says "I need that magazine!" Would you let them grab it from your hand and walk away? As adults we would not imagine letting that happen to us. In the same way, young



CCLS: Domain 3: Social and Emotional Development; Relationships with others, 4. Develops positive relationships with peers.

Using a Timer for Problem Solving

submitted by Katie Rich, YMCA Carlson Metro Center

The HighScope curriculum encourages children and teachers to resolve social conflicts with a six step approach. As children become more confident with problem solving, they can then go through the process without the teacher's assistance.

In the Tigerfish room at the YMCA, I made a timer out of two water bottles, a 'tornado in a bottle' connector, and sand. At first the timer was fun to decorate with stickers, flip over, and watch as the sand traveled from side to side.

During work time, I taught the children how to use the timer as an aid to problem solving. When taking turns, it is important for children to communicate how long their turn will last. In the Tigerfish room, the children enjoy saying 'four turns' meaning four flips of the timer and then they will share the toy. They like the number four since they are all four years old.

At this point in the year the children still need the help of a teacher when using the timer. Some children wait the four turns to share toys, while others ignore the toy and simply play with the timer. I am confident that with consistent use, the children will be able to use the timer on their own to take turns.



CCLS: Domain 3: Social and Emotional Development; Relationships with others, 5. Demonstrates pro-social problem solving skills in social interactions.



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Professional Development on AVATAR

- **Adult-Child Interactions within the HighScope Curriculum.** Establishing a supportive climate using the Program Quality Assessment (PQA) as a guide. This course is appropriate for teachers with experience in HighScope through the advanced level. 4 sessions: January 14, 28, February 11 and March 4, 2013, from 1:00—3:00 or 4:00-6:00, for a total of 8 hours.
- **Introduction to HighScope Conflict Resolution.** Beginner to Intermediate: We will explore the importance of conflict resolution in the preschool classroom. We will look at the role of the teaching staff and how to implement the six steps of Betsy Evan's Problem Solving Model. 2 sessions: January 17 and 31, from 1:00—3:00 or 4:00—6:00, for a total of 4 hours.
- **Book Study: "I Know What Comes Next: Preschool Transition with Tears or Turmoil."** Teachers will discuss the book and the application of concepts. Teachers will try out strategies from the book and share their impact with other participants. This session is appropriate for beginner through intermediate level teachers. 3 sessions: February 5, 26 and March 5, from 1:00—3:00, for a total of 6 hours.
- **Book Study: "You Can't Come to My Birthday Party: Conflict Resolution with Young Children."** Teachers will discuss the book and its application. Teachers will try out strategies and share their impact with the other participants. This session is appropriate for teachers at the intermediate level. 4 sessions: March 7, 21, 28 and April 11, 2013, from 1:00—3:00 or 4:00—6:00, for a total of 8 hours.
- **Book Study: "You Can't Come to My Birthday Party: Conflict Resolution with Young Children." - Advanced Level.** Teachers will discuss the book and its application. Discussion will focus on teacher's current interactions, challenges, and strategies using the HighScope Curriculum's approach to problem solving. 4 sessions: January 10, 24, February 7 and 28, from 1:00—3:00 or 4:00—6:00, for a total of 8 hours.
- **Getting to the Core (curriculum) From a Movement Perspective.** Participants will be able to meet state standards while at the same time meet children's developmental needs. 3 sessions, lab with participant involvement: April 18, 25 and May 2, from 4:00—6:00, for a total of 6 hours.

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