Teaching Children How to Get Along: A Teacher’s Guide

Presented by Military & Family Life Counselors
Objectives

Participants will learn:

» How to engage children in cooperative activities
» How to teach skills for getting along
» How to discipline aggressive children
Agenda

» Introduction
» The Importance of Friends
» The Caregiver’s Role
» Types of Uncooperative Behaviors
» Skills for Getting Along
» Problem Solving Skills
» Setting Clear Rules and Consequences
» Aggressive Behavior and Discipline
» Teach Cooperation
» Summary
Introduction

How many times have you heard these statements in the classroom?

» “I had that first!”
» “Stop hitting me!”
» “Give that back!”
» “No I didn’t!” “Yes you did!”
The Importance of Friends

Children with friends:

» Feel they belong
» Are more likely to feel self-confident
» Tend to have positive feelings about themselves
» Are typically less lonely and sad
» Usually do better in school
» Grow up to be more well-adjusted adults
The Caregiver’s Role

The adult’s job is to guide children towards cooperative behavior and model appropriate behavior.

Remember:

» Children are not born knowing how to get along with each other

» Young children must be taught how to share, take turns and not take things away from other children

» All ages must be taught how to resolve disputes peacefully
Types of Uncooperative Behaviors

» Taking things from others
» Refusing to take turns
» Taking over and bossing others around
» Being overly competitive when playing games
» Being overly aggressive: pushing, hitting, kicking
Skills for Getting Along

» Tell children to ask you for help if they have a conflict with another child
» Teach problem solving skills
» Have the children role play appropriate social behaviors
» Give the child a sense of control
» Reinforce positive behavior
Skills for Getting Along cont...

» Model the behavior you want from the child

» Help the children understand that getting along makes things easier

» Let them know other children will be more likely to play with them if they know how to get along with others

» Teach them to identify and appropriately verbalize their feelings

» Help them learn to recognize feelings in others
Problem Solving Skills

» Find out what the conflict is about
» Help the children identify the problem
» Teach them how to calm down
» Discuss alternatives
» Evaluate the alternatives
» Reinforce the positive behavior
Setting Clear Rules and Consequences

Children need structure and clear and consistent rules such as:

» “Hands are not for hitting.”

» “Use your words, not your hands.”

» “Ask before taking things that belong to others.”

» “Call for the teacher/caregiver if someone is hurting you – don’t hit back.”

» “Use your words to fix problems.”
Aggressive Behavior and Discipline

Have a zero tolerance policy for aggressive behaviors
  – Separate the children
  – Communicate the behavior as unacceptable and non-negotiable
  – Have the victim appropriately confront the aggressor
  – Ask the aggressor to apologize
  – Talk about alternatives to the problem behaviors
  – Ask both children to shake hands after the problem is resolved
  – Encourage the children to play together cooperatively, or redirect the children to different activities in the room if necessary
Teach Cooperation

» Help kids get to know each other better
» Create opportunities for cooperative interaction
» Treat all kids with the same level of fairness
» Have kids engage in non-competitive activities
» Provide opportunities for children to be helpful to one another
» Teach them different ways to handle anger
Summary

» Learning to get along is important for social, emotional and academic development

» Children must be taught skills for getting along since they are not born knowing this

» Problem solving skills are important tools for getting along with others

» Clear rules and consequences must be taught so children will know what their expectations are

» Creating opportunities for cooperative interaction helps children learn skills for getting along
Resources

» Military Community Services
» Chaplain and Local Clergy
» Military OneSource (800) 342-9647
» TRICARE www.tricare.osd.mil
» Behavioral Health Services
References


» “Aggression and Cooperation: Helping Young Children Develop Constructive Strategies,” Jan Jewett, Clearinghouse on Early Education and Parenting

» “Helping Children Get Along with Friends,” Robert Hughes, Jr., Ph.D., Department of Human Development and Family Science, The Ohio State University