



GROUP NOTE – 4/26/2013

COACHING/OBSERVATIONS

Here are the highlights from this past week's Peter Pan groups!

You are always welcome to share with or forward to this information to your child's school or other helpers and use with your child and family to follow up during the week.

- This week our social success stories included:
 - I noticed instances of kids using flexible thinking skills without prompting this week. Two friends were having difficulty putting something together exactly the way they wanted it, so they decided to simply re-design it rather than becoming frustrated. Three friends did an excellent job working around the fact that a game that I had purchased used was missing some pieces and found a way to play without them.
 - A child who has had a lot of difficulty sharing was successful at sharing on his own this week. He received a big thumb up and I let him know that I noticed and that he did an awesome job.
 - A very shy friend who had difficulty being able to speak to anyone began to come out of his shell this week. He was able to approach not only me for something he wanted, but approached another child to play with him. I had previewed with him the week before that it would be okay for him to ask for what he wanted when he came back this week and that it would help me know what he wanted to do as Miss Donna has a hard time reading minds ☺.
 - I watched someone's self-confidence take a nice leap when (after a fairly long match) was able to beat Mr. Aaron at dodge ball and everyone cheered for her.
 - One of new friends quoted something to me from the book I wrote...that gave me a smile ☺.

- Many kids are still working on remembering names. This is a tough skill for a lot of kids. I approached a couple of them who were playing together and asked if they knew who they were playing with. I told them I knew for sure that their mom or dad would be asking "who" they played with today and it be awesome for them to be able to tell them. I also coach children on using each other's name as much as possible to help lock it in, in ways such as, "Hey Billy, look at what I just made" or "Sarah, I want to tell you something." This also helps all of know who is talking to who so that we don't get confused.

- Unexpected and inappropriate uses of humor continue to arise and we continue to work on these. One of the older boys joked about “drinking and driving” while playing Mario Kart and I heard Mr. Aaron coach him that those kind of jokes may really hurt someone who may have been impacted by something like that. I told another child who was being overly and over-the-top silly that I noticed that he was trying to speak to impress (rather than dress to impress) but it was falling flat for him.
- In work on conversation skills, I encouraged friends not to interrupt other friends with their own thoughts and topics. I prompted kids to stay on topic, wait for a pause in the conversation, and how to use a topic switching statement, “I know this isn’t what we were talking about, but I wanted to tell you...”
- I did some work this week on helping kids “think with their eyes” and look at bodies for social clues about what someone might be thinking. When I was trying to set something up, one of the kids jumped right in and was disruptive to what I was doing. I made him stop and look at me to see if he could get a read. He could tell I was a little annoyed and frustrated and we talked about the saying, “too many cooks spoil the soup.”
- Following up from last week on kids that are “rule police” and have a need to make sure everyone is doing what they are supposed to do (at a social cost to themselves), I talked to some of them about their “Circle of Concern” which is attached for you.
- It can get pretty noisy when we are playing recess games and I work with kids who are sensitive to that (Miss Donna is too) – so we decide whether or not it’s happy noise that we can tolerate, or we take ourselves to one of the quieter rooms to do something else instead.
- On our theme of “maturity” with the older kids, I mentioned that learning to control your impulses was a sign of maturity. This includes things like needing to throw something across the table or the room, poking someone with a pencil or toy, blurting out things to shock people and get their attention as well what I call “stirring the pot” or “poking the ogre” to get other people upset and agitated for your own amusement.
- I noticed a group of kids starting to become not-so-nice to another child who was having difficulty playing a game. Granted, the struggling child wasn’t being easy to play with. I intervened, stopped the game and told them I was noticing some difficulties beginning to arise. I said it was not okay to be mean to or exclude someone and that here, we learn to work things out. We worked ourselves down to the actual problem which was the child struggling was confused by some of the rules and becoming angry and upset. We took a few minutes to clarify the rules and wrote

them on the whiteboard so everyone knew what they were. The game then continued in a much more positive way.

- One friend experienced the consequence for what we call “trash talk” when playing games with others, pumping yourself up, saying how good you are and that you are better than everyone, teasing and laughing at other players who are not doing so well, etc. This friend found Mr. Aaron telling him that he wasn’t enjoying playing the game with him anymore, that he was quitting the game specifically because of the trash talk and that he would try it again with him another time, but not for the rest of the time that week.
- I coached a couple of our new friends on how to join in a group. The best way to do that is not to say, “can I play with you?” but rather, “I’d like to play with you, what are you doing?”
- I spoke to a couple of friends about recess this week (please always feel free to let me know if there is a situation outside of Peter Pan that I can bring up and help coach – kids are not usually willing or able to do that on their own so I don’t get a picture of what is happening for them and appreciate parent input!)
 - One friend has trouble playing games that involve running around and pretend “battles.” Quite often (and I tell kids this) these games rapidly disintegrate and rarely end well. However, this is also the way that a lot of boys play and interact. A key piece is coaching a child to remember to get an adult if the playing turns from fun to someone getting frustrated and potentially becoming aggressive. Kids will try to handle this themselves by returning the aggression, and often it’s the retaliator who is the one who gets caught in and in trouble. If your child is one of those that loves good guys/bad guys and enjoys these kinds of games of battle or needs to get some form of physical outlet for exercise and doesn’t enjoy typical team sports, www.guardup.com has a super programs that many of the Peter Pan friends have enjoyed.
 - Another friend was telling me that no one would play with him at recess. I coached him on making sure that he was not asking “can I play with you?” because kids will say no, but to say “I’d like to play with you, what are you doing?” I suggested that he add the “what are you doing” because I noticed that sometimes he had trouble joining a group and not trying to take over the game and change the rules of what kids were already playing. I asked him to try this approach and let me know how it goes next week.
- I coached a few kids on physical things that are socially unexpected and sent a couple to the restrooms to check their faces for crumbs, etc. and

mentioned to another (in a fun, but nice way) that the “visible boogers” needed to be handled with a tissue and would get him teased at school if he wasn’t careful to make sure he used a tissue.

- Conversation wise, I mentioned to a couple of kids that talking to a moving target was pretty difficult for me or someone else, and that it was important that they try to stay in one place with their shoulders turned toward the person they are speaking to. I also coached kids on learning to wait and listen for directions when we were playing a game. I was asked how to play, tried to explain, but could tell the players were not ready to listen. I quietly stated that as soon as I saw that they were ready to listen, I would explain how to play. In groups of kids, I also coach them that it’s important that one person be the “explainer” of the rules, otherwise it just becomes a series of disruptions and it takes longer to be able to actually play the game (as well as confusing for people trying to understand the rules).
- Our hamster friend Tinkerbelle (she is a Chinese Dwarf Hamster for the kids who were wondering) returned from a vacation at Mr. Aaron’s house this week. Tink helps us learn to be gentle. She also helps us see what anxious feels and looks like when we aren’t handling her in a way that makes her feel safe. We also used Tinkerbelle’s exercise wheel as an example for a child who was caught in a worry cycle about his mom being a little late and that he was brain was stuck on a wheel that wasn’t getting him anywhere and helped him with some strategies to relax and re-assure himself that he would be picked up, but maybe just a couple of minutes later than he expected to be.

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