



THE INCLUSIVE LINK

Issue 02/ April 2010

WORKING TOGETHER TOWARD INCLUSION

For inclusion to work in schools, teachers play an important role. Teacher training and classroom support are commonly identified as preconditions of inclusion practices. But, ultimately it is the teacher's attitude that determines whether a child is accepted in the classroom.

When general teachers are not trained either in special or inclusive education, professional support can help boost their willingness to accept a child with special needs. Schools, which do not employ professionals such as special education teachers and therapists, can seek itinerant support from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that provide such services.

For several years now, NGOs such as Asia Community Service and BOLD Association for Children with Special Needs in Penang, Methodist Care Centre in Sibul and Malaysian Care in Kuala Lumpur have worked together with preschools by supporting teachers who have children with learning disabilities in their classrooms.

Some of the supports these NGOs can offer you:

- Share information on disabilities issues and resources/teaching aides for children with special needs
- Suggest inclusion strategies and help you find strategies most suitable for you or your students
- Screen students with suspected developmental delays or learning difficulties
- Help you work with families
- Offer teachers' training
- Co-run inclusive activities/ events



If your school is keen on the above supports, you can contact any of these listed NGOs:

- ❖ Asia Community Service and BOLD Penang (Tel: 04-6585396)
- ❖ Methodist Care Centre, Sibul (Tel: 084-219914)
- ❖ Malaysian Care, Kuala Lumpur (Tel: 03-90582102)



Did you know?

May 28th is WORLD PLAY DAY! The International Toy Library Association has set aside this day for the celebration of WORLD PLAY DAY throughout the world. The objective is to emphasize the importance of play in all our lives, particularly in the lives of children. Through play, children learn to talk, make friends and acquire basic skills for formal education. They also get exercise and develop physically through play. Let's all celebrate WORLD PLAY DAY this year by involving ourselves in joyful and playful activities with our children, family and friends!

SOCIAL SKILLS DIFFICULTIES

Social skills refer to our ability to communicate and interact with others. These skills are important in children's development. In preschool, children make big steps in learning social skills, i.e. making friends.

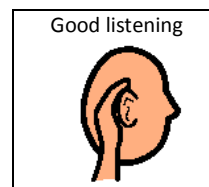
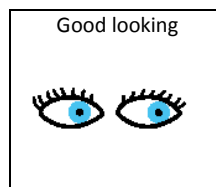
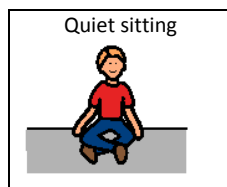
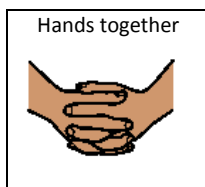


Children with social skills difficulties may have difficulty:

- taking turns in conversations, games or classroom activities
- understanding non-verbal communication cues such as facial expressions, body language etc.
- understanding rules for appropriate social behavior
- maintaining eye contact with others
- understanding or expressing emotions
- making friends and/or joining in activities with peers
- keeping to the topic of conversation (i.e. they may just talk about what they like only)

Strategies to help children with social skills difficulties

- Ensure child knows the rules of good social interaction or games i.e. Circle Time Rules



- Give lots of praise when the child shows good social skills and name the specific social skill i.e. "Good sharing Eddy"



- Use visual cues cards to reinforce good social skills

- Model appropriate social behavior; tell/ show "what to do" instead of "what *not* to do" (i.e. "Shake hands" instead of "No hitting")



- Teach good social interaction through examples using role play and social stories

- Use activities the child likes (i.e. ball games) to encourage social interaction

- Encourage the concept of *waiting* and *turn taking* by playing turn taking games



- For children who are restless, give them something they like to hold while they are waiting for their turn i.e. a feely/squeezy toy, a favorite toy car



(Compiled with reference to the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, & Sue Larkey)

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