

PALS

Social Skills Program

Playing and learning to socialise

Parent Information

Session 10

This week's skill:

Calming Down and Speaking Up



Assertive responses involve children expressing their needs and feelings in a constructive way when they are hurt, annoyed or angry. Managing angry feelings by taking three deep breaths to calm down before using an assertive response is helpful.

Assertive responses are preferred to aggressive responses, such as shouting, hitting or snatching, and to passive responses which may include crying or avoiding people and situations.

Assertive responses can include saying 'no' to unwanted touch, saying 'stop' to annoying or hurtful situations, like teasing, or saying 'no' to engaging in some peer activities, such as breaking the rules. Assertive responses can solve and prevent conflict, for example asking in a 'brave' voice to share rather than snatching a toy.

What your child learnt this week

Your child was encouraged to use the following steps to respond when hurt, annoyed or angry:

- Take three slow, deep breaths to calm down.
- Use a 'brave' voice – that is an assertive voice and manner – to express his or her needs and feelings.
- Ask an adult for help when the above steps have not been helpful.

Children need help to use a 'brave' or assertive voice, rather than an aggressive one.



Supporting this skill at home

- Be alert for expressions and indications of anger and hurt, and identify these for your child.
'Peter you look very angry. You're frowning and your hands have turned into fists.'
- Praise any appropriate assertive statements.
'James, great job asking Andrew to stop pushing you. You looked at him, used a brave voice and asked him to stop. Well done.'
'Chris, last time you felt angry with Megan, you pushed her but this time you took three breaths and asked her to stop instead. You did a great job of calming down and using your brave voice.'
'Nicola, you walked away when Martin was annoying you. Good girl.'
- If necessary provide appropriate feedback.
'Louise, it was terrific that you asked Peter to stop taking your blocks. Next time you can use your brave voice so that he can hear you better.'
- Help your child to solve problems independently, for example if your child pushes another:
Parent: David, I can see you're angry and that's okay but it's not okay to push people. What's the problem?
David: Lisa's annoying me.
Parent: What is she doing that's annoying?
David: She's yelling too much.
Parent: What would be a good way to get her to be quieter instead of pushing her?
- Model assertive responses where appropriate. This may include speaking assertively when someone pushes in front of you in a queue or managing angry feelings by taking deep breaths and calming down.

Final session

This is the last session in the PALS Social Skills Program. We hope that these sessions have been helpful to you and your child, and encourage you to keep supporting your child to develop these skills further. It may be helpful to keep these information sheets for future reference. Your support and encouragement will help your child to develop the skills he or she needs for good relationships and success at school.

Thank you for allowing your child to participate in this program and we wish you and your child well for the future.

Thank you