

The Problem-Solving Playground

Respectful Relationships

To explore different ways to solve everyday social problems respectfully through role-play, group discussion, and cooperative thinking.



Learning Intentions

Students learn to describe a range of social problems clearly.

This helps students identify common playground or classroom issues in simple, clear ways.

Students look to work with others to find respectful solutions.

This encourages collaboration, empathy, and active listening during problem-solving.

Students aim to act out a kind and fair response to a range of scenarios.

This allows students to practise respectful communication and behaviour in a safe, creative setting



Success Criteria

Problem identification:

Students can recognise and describe everyday social challenges in the playground or classroom.

Collaborative thinking:

Students can listen to others' ideas and work together to find respectful solutions.

Respectful action:

Students can role-play solutions using kind words and fair actions.



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Objective:

To explore different ways to solve everyday social problems respectfully through role-play, group discussion, and cooperative thinking.

Players:

Small groups of 4–6 students.

Materials:

- Playground problem cards (e.g. “Two people want the same swing,” “Someone pushes in line,” “A ball goes missing”)(found in the PDF resources tab).
- Optional sentence starter cards (“You could say...”, “Next time, we could...”, “Maybe we can take turns...”)(found in the PDF resource tab).
- Space to act out scenarios

Setup:

Print and cut out problem cards. Prepare sentence starter cards to support students with respectful language. Arrange the class into small groups.

Activity:

1. Choose a Card:

Each group draws a playground problem card. Give groups 5 mins to plan and prepare how they will act out their scene.

2. Act It Out:

Students act out the problem situation. On the teacher’s cue, they freeze mid-scene.

3. Freeze and Solve:

One student or group observes and helps brainstorm a respectful solution using sentence starters like:

- “You could say...”
- “Next time, we could...”
- “Let’s take turns...”

4. Replay the Scene:

Students act out the revised version with a respectful solution.

5. Rotate:

Groups switch cards and repeat the activity with a new scenario.

6. Story book creation:

If your students aren’t keen to act out scenarios, simply have them create a short story using words and pictures to highlight how they can use the sentence starters to help resolve the playground problem in a kind and thoughtful way.



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Reflection Prompt:

- What respectful choices helped solve the problem?
- How did it feel to come up with a fair solution?
- What could you try next time a similar problem happens?

Winning the Game:

There are no winners; success is in the respectful conversations, teamwork, and kind actions shown by all players.

Additional Notes:

This activity works well for Foundation to Year 2 students and can be revisited throughout the year as new playground challenges arise. It strengthens social thinking, empathy, and effective communication in a playful way.



PLAYGROUND PROBLEM CARDS

PRINT AND CUT OUT THE PLAYGROUND PROBLEM CARDS AND SENTENCE STARTER CARDS. GIVE EACH GROUP A PROBLEM CARD TO ACT OUT. WHEN THE SCENE FREEZES, USE THE SENTENCE STARTER CARDS TO BRAINSTORM AND ROLE-PLAY A RESPECTFUL SOLUTION.

TWO PEOPLE WANT THE
SAME SWING.



SOMEONE PUSHES
IN LINE.



A GROUP WON'T LET
OTHERS JOIN THEIR
GAME.



A BALL GETS KICKED ON
THE ROOF.



PLAYGROUND PROBLEM CARDS

A STUDENT GRABS THE
BALL INSTEAD OF
WAITING THEIR TURN.



A FRIEND WANTS TO
PLAY A DIFFERENT
GAME.



A GROUP WON'T AGREE
ON RULES FOR A GAME.



SOMEONE TAKES
ANOTHER STUDENT'S
HAT OR BELONGINGS.



PLAYGROUND PROBLEM CARDS

THE MONKEY BARS ARE
ALWAYS USED BY THE
SAME KIDS.



SOMEONE IS LEFT OUT
DURING A GROUP GAME.



THE SAME STUDENT IS
ALWAYS "IT" FIRST IN A
GAME OF TAG.



SOMEONE SHOUTS AT
OTHERS WHEN THEY
LOSE A GAME.



SENTENCE STARTER CARDS

"WOULD YOU LIKE TO..."



"I THINK WE ALL WANT
TO HAVE FUN SO..."



"WHAT IF WE..."



"HOW CAN WE MAKE
THIS ..."



SENTENCE STARTER CARDS

"LET'S TRY IT THIS
WAY..."



"CAN WE FIND A FAIR
WAY TO DECIDE?"



"HOW ABOUT WE SHARE
THE..."



I KNOW YOU REALLY
WANT A TURN BUT..."



SENTENCE STARTER CARDS

"YOU COULD SAY..."



"NEXT TIME, WE
COULD..."



"MAYBE WE CAN TAKE
TURNS..."



"I UNDERSTAND HOW
YOU ARE FEELING..."

