GOOD SPORT: Practice being a good sport

Age Range: 3–5

Skills/Subjects
- Dramatic Play & Creative Movement
- Life Skills
- Social & Emotional Development

Materials
- beanbag, doll

Directions
Play catch to help children practice being good sports.

1. Set the scene: Have children imagine that they are on an ARTHUR sports team. The team is in the outfield. Here comes the ball, heading straight to Arthur. Oh, no! Arthur missed the ball . . . again. The game is over, and the team has lost. Ask your children: What would you say to Arthur to make him feel better?

2. Role-play: Designate a doll to be "Arthur." Give children a chance to make Arthur feel better, such as telling him that making a mistake is no big deal or that the important thing about a game is to have fun. Remind children that being angry at your teammates makes it less fun for everyone.

3. Play a game: Play the "Good Sport Game" with your children. In this game, players toss a beanbag to each other. Say: Do you think you will be able to catch without missing forever? Eventually, someone will drop the beanbag. When that happens, remember what you told Arthur. Compliment good sport behavior that you observe.

Talk About It
Talk to your children about winning and losing. Ask: How does it feel to win? How does it feel to lose? If you have won a game, can you imagine how the losing side must feel? Talk about some things you can say to others when you win: "You played a really good game!" or "That was a close match, but maybe you’ll win next time." Talk about some things you can say to others when you lose: "Congratulations, you’re a really good player!" or "Amazing Play! Let’s play again sometime." Explain that it’s not whether you win or lose, it’s how you play the game.