



Friends Work Out Problems

Sometimes friends want to play together but have different ideas and minor conflict arises. Remind them that if they problem solve together and remember that they just want to play together, their play can continue.

Learning Goals Children are working on:

- Problem solving skills
- Verbal communication skills
- Expressing feelings and ideas

Materials:

- This activity could be used “in the moment” when there is disagreement during play, or you could select a toy and create discussion during group time.

Directions:

- “In the moment...”
 - You approach the children who are disagreeing. Ask them to identify the problem. If they need help, you might need to give them the words, such as, ‘It looks like you two want to play together but you don’t agree on something right now. Let’s see if we can solve the problem so you can continue to play together. What could we do?’
- At group time, tell a brief story about a time when two friends were playing and had a disagreement. For example, show the favorite doll from the dress-up corner and talk about how sometimes children get into arguments about using it.
- Ask children to think of ways to solve the problem:
 - Take turns for a certain amount of time.
 - Use the doll in pretend play idea where they could each feed or dress the doll, or...
- When children have disagreements, we help them best by encouraging them to settle their own differences by using problem solving skills, expressed in words—rather than fist or teeth. And, of course, there are times when adults must step in and firmly insist on safety for all.

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