

## Example Phrases

**These are some simple phrases that we use during our day (modified for the appropriate ages) that could also be useful at home.**

- ★ Can you help me? (older children) Help please (younger children)
- ★ Unavailable / available
- ★ Gentle Hands
- ★ I need space. (older children) Space. (younger children)
- ★ Can I have that, please? (older children) Have, please? (younger children)
- ★ Take deep breathes (older children) Calm body // Blow out candles (then model) (younger children)
- ★ Can you sit beautifully for me? (older children) Sit, please (younger children)
- ★ Can you hold this with careful hands? (older children) Hold carefully, please. (younger children)

**Outside/Playground - typically we use more language here and also rely on appropriate risks (if you throw a ball straight up into the air, it may land on your head) to regulate our friends. You could use these phrases in your own yard or local playground.**

- ★ 'Is that a safe choice?' Help friends make safe choices.
- ★ 'Rocks stay in the rock box, sand stays in the sandbox, both stay close to the ground.'
- ★ 'We walk up the steps, we slide down the slide, eyes facing forward, bottom on the slide.' (there may be activities we do when this is not the case, but we explain how it is a special occasion).
- ★ 'Make a wide circle around the swings.'
- ★ 'Have a turn on the swings then give someone else a turn.'"
- ★ Bodies stay off of other bodies
- ★ Conflict resolution: "John, are you ok? I noticed....", "John, how does that make you feel when Jane...?", "did you give Jane that message?", "What did Jane say?", "let's try that message again...", "How can we help you feel better John?"
- ★ If the friend does not have words, you can talk about what you might do or say. "When I am hurt/sad/angry, I say 'I don't like that, can you please \_\_\_\_\_. I would feel better if you\_\_\_\_\_.'" Or "when I hurt someone, I check on them to see if they are ok and ask them what would help them feel better."

### Phrases for decision making/problem solving

- ★ If a friend is upset about the choices..."Sometimes, we get our first choice, and sometimes our friends have a turn to get their first choice", "We can wait for another time to choose that station/material/etc", "Maybe it will be available tomorrow".
- ★ "What are you focused on \_\_\_?" "I've noticed this basket is empty and that these blocks were inside of it before you started playing... what might we need to do to

have it look like that again?" (younger children: "...I've noticed this basket is empty and that these blocks were inside of it before you started playing, let's see if we can put all the blocks back in the basket.")

- ★ "I see that you tried to dump the sand from your shoes into the garbage, but some of it landed on the floor... let's get a dustpan and broom so that no one slides on the slippery sand."
- ★ "I can see that you are trying hard to make sure those materials look beautiful on the shelf. Thank you \_\_\_\_ for making sure that looks nice for the next friend that uses them."

**Sometimes it is nice to remind friends of what your expectations are during a transition when they may be thinking about many other things all at once. One option for you would be to use a message like this after meals, before getting ready for bed, before getting into the car, etc.**

- ★ "After we finish our dinner, you will take a bath and brush your teeth, and put on your pajamas."
- ★ If you know your child can only follow the next step, then tell them one thing at a time. A guideline is that most children can follow as many steps as they are old, up to 4-5 steps.
- ★ Encourage children to try opening/closing their own containers, if they need help and you end up needing to assist verbally talk through what you are doing. "This lid is kind of tricky today... I am going to open my hand wide around the top and twist, twist, twist..." etc.

**Conversations with Friends in a group setting that needs guidance.**

- "\_\_\_\_\_, does it feel peaceful in here?"
- "How can we help it feel peaceful in here?"
- "Can we agree that we can each contribute to a peaceful classroom (living room, bedroom, etc. playroom)?"
- ★ Doing this lets children know that they can get attention from a parent or another adult by making helpful choices and agreements, not by making distracting choices (yelling, tugging on clothes, throwing materials, etc).
- ★ Wait at least five seconds for a child's response. They need a moment to process what you've said, think of an answer, and communicate that to you.
  - "What is your job right now?"
  - "Are you focusing on your job?"
  - "Are you making a helpful choice?"
  - "How can you make a helpful choice?"
  - "What kind of feet do we use inside?"

- “Are you making a safe choice?”
  - “How can you make a safe choice?”
  - “You can make a safe choice by keeping your bottom in the chair, legs under the table, and all four feet of the chair on the ground.”
- ★ If a child seems angry or upset and is using physical behavior to express feelings, you can say “you seem upset, can you use your words and let me know how I can help you?” If the child does not have words yet, ask more questions to get to the bottom of what they are feeling. “I noticed you seem sad. Are you sad about \_\_\_\_\_? When I feel sad about \_\_\_\_\_, I say ‘I don’t like that, I need space’ or ‘can I use that when you are done?’ and then I feel better”, etc. 18 months and younger are still working on giving verbal messages (other than crying, laughing, tugging) themselves, but you can still use messages to model the words that you want them to understand.
- ★ Work with children on giving helpful and complete messages. When we as adults are working through a problem if we talk our way through it, the children hear that and watch what you are doing, your energy, your movements.