

Tuesday, November 2, 2010 Social Thinking and Play Group with Jim, John and Henry

Hi Guys!

This newsletter is to remind you of all the good work you did in group yesterday. It's important to remember the ideas from group! It's most important to try practicing those ideas when you are not even in group at Kathleen's.

First, we did our group check in. Everyone felt a little different...everyone was in the same setting (Kathleen's play room) but each of us had different feelings.

Idea #1 Different people have different feelings...even when they are doing the same thing. Someone might feel very good about what the group is doing, someone- just okay and another person might feel grumpy or sad.

Idea #2 Feelings Change Jim came to group feeling grumpy but later in the group he was feeling happy. This is a good idea to remember when a sad or mad feeling is very big. The feeling will change.

We listened to what everyone did on Halloween. Can you remember what your friends dressed up like? If you remember (Parents- Jim- a pony, John- a knight, Henry- a paleontologist) tell your parents. If you were going to play pretend with one of your friends, what do you think they might like to play? Next time we meet think about going on a dinosaur hunt. Who would like to pretend that?

Idea #3 Listen to what your friends talk about- what they like to do...friends take turns playing and talking about their favorite things. (Parents- this is part of developing the idea of character, perspective taking, early inferencing as in -he dressed up like a knight, maybe he'll want to play knights and kings.)

Idea #4 Keep your brain and your body in the group

We made play doh brains and bodies to represent each of us in the group and took turns demonstrating what it looks like and what it does to the group if someone's brain or body leaves the group. (Parents this is a lesson adapted from Michelle Garcia Winner's (MGW)work. Read about her work developing social cognition at www.socialthinking.com) We also talked about that sometimes it is smart to leave the group and take a break, but that you need to check with an adult to see if this is an okay time to do that.

Idea #5 What do you notice and know about this setting? How does that change how you (or another character- as in a book) behave and talk?

We went over our setting song, which is sung to the tune of "This Land is Your Land". It goes like this:

CAN WE SEE...IT point to eyes

CAN WE HEAR ...IT point to ears
CAN WE TOUCH...IT wiggle fingers
CAN WE SMELL... IT? wiggle or touch nose
CAN WE TASTE ...IT? point to mouth
THEN WHAT...IS IT?

OUR SENSES WILL HELP US DESCRIBE...IT! (This song comes from Maryellen Rooney Moreau's newest book on social skill development using the Story Grammar Marker It's All About the Story!)

(Parents- 'Setting' is the Star symbol and social thinking requires us to take into account the variables that are in each different setting...it's complicated for sure! Setting actually includes all the regular or ho-hum information in a situation up to where there is a kick off or problem. Is it okay for a 7 year old to tell a 2 year old not to touch a delicate object? Yes it is. Is it okay for an adult to tell a 7 year old not to touch a delicate object? Yes it is. Is it okay for a 7 year old to tell a peer not to touch a delicate object that belongs to someone else? It's usually not okay! Rules are not hard and fast, they change from setting to setting and that is what makes social thinking so complex...the only thing that makes it possible to figure it all out is watching people's emotional reactions to our behaviors...and sometimes thinking about if we would want someone to do /say that same thing to us. So, what I'm trying to get across here, is that *observing the context or setting of a particular situation is very important to developing social thinking and skills*. Eventually, it will lead into MGW's expected/unexpected behavior work.

We read the book, Mousekin's Golden House by Edna Miller. It is full of the **sensory detail** found outside at this time of the year. Tell your mom and dad something Mousekin saw, heard, felt, smelled or tasted? If you see milkweed pods bring some to the next group. What did Mousekin do with the milkweed pods? Watch your jack-o-lantern. Is it's face starting to change and close up?

Idea #6 We Can Make It Better

Everyone and I mean everyone- like me, mom and dad, the other kids at school, your sister, your teacher, Bob and Maria, even the president...everybody makes mistakes. Social thinking mistakes happen to everybody, everyday, many times. (Parents, it is great if when you make these mistakes yourself that you simply point them out to your child and most importantly point out how you repaired the situation. You can even create fake social faux pas and make the repair...then very explicitly explain it to your child.)

We read and then acted out the We Can Make It Better story of "Bob and Maria Visit the Pumpkin Patch". (by Elizabeth Delsandro) Henry was quick to point out the mistakes Bob was making and all three boys figured out how to make it better.

(Parents- These are some really big and important ideas...we will continue to reinforce and expand these concepts. The newsletter can be read to your child or it can be just for your information. Pick just one or two ideas to have your child focus on till we meet

again. Feel free to share the newsletter with relatives and adults who work with your child.)

Henry, you did a very good job keeping your brain and body in the group and it was just your first time! Do you think the other boys will like to pretend play dinosaurs? I think they might, we will have to ask them.

John and Jim, you were very flexible thinkers in this group! You switched from playing knight and princess to emergency vehicles faster than I could blink! Wow! Flexible thinking is social thinking, nice jobs you guys!

Your Social Thinking Teacher,
Kathleen

PS Remember look for milkweed pods and bring some in. Could John and Jim bring in their SGM notebooks from the summer camps?

Thanks,
Kathleen