



Refreshing Recess Program

Week #2 Lesson Plan: Let's make friends and have fun together

Theme: Friendship! How to be a good friend, make new friends, and include others!

Recess is a special time during the school day for students to make new friends. Close friendships contribute to happiness and feelings of mental well-being. Friends are people we can share our successes and joys with. Support from friends can also act as important buffers during everyday challenges or more significant crises in life. Children/youth are less likely to become a victim of bullying if they have at least one friend.



Recess can also be a difficult time for some children who struggle socially to make friends. Who's at risk? Introverts might find it difficult to join a group. Students with disabilities, such as autism, may have difficulty having conversations or regulating emotions. It's important for recess supervisors to tune-into students who might have a difficult time making friends and encourage other students to actively include them.

Week 2 focuses on friendship building activities to promote making friends, including others, and solidifying positive relationships. Educational materials are shared with recess supervisors, teachers, principals, students and parents to raise awareness about the importance of friendships. Adult-led group activities are useful in helping children play cooperatively together. For example, children can participate in a friendship scavenger hunt or other structured activity.

Goals:

1. Students learn qualities of a good friend, how to make and be a friend, and how to include others;
2. Supervisors learn about friendship, how to foster friendships and conversation starter tips. Raising awareness of the importance of friendships for enhancing students' mental and emotional well-being is the overall goal.

Supporting materials (downloadable) Every Moment Counts materials:

[Friendship Development for Supervisors/Teachers](#)

[Fostering Friendships – Strategies for Supervisors](#)

[Peer Mediated Strategies \(for OT, teachers, supervisors re: students with disabilities\)](#)

[Making Friends for students](#)

[Conversation Starters for students](#)

Materials from other sources/authors:

Refer to two of Attwood's observation checklists located on his website (www.tonyattwood.com.au)

Also read about '**Understanding and Teaching Friendship Skills**'. Checklists: [Friendship Observation Schedule](#) and [Indices of Friendship Observation Schedule](#)



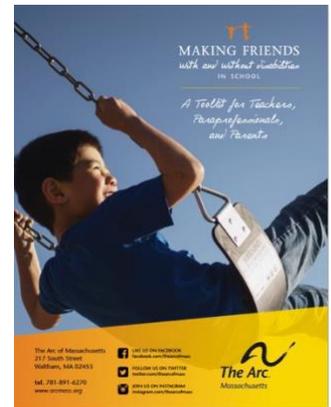
Action steps for occupational therapist (OT) and other staff leading the program.

➔ BEFORE the 2nd session:

- 1) **Program Facilitator (OT, health educator, etc.):** Read supporting materials related to fostering friendships during recess. Think of creative ways to teach students about being a good friend.
 - a) All of the handouts for supervisors/teachers and students (listed above)
 - b) Read information on Tony Attwood's website about Understanding and Teaching Friendship Skills
 - c) Sunshine Parenting (Audrey Monke). [Talking with kids about friendship](#). Sign up for her '10 Friendship Skills e-book' and 'Social Skills Checklist' on her website (www.sunshine-parenting.com)
 - d) The ARC of Massachusetts. (2017). [Making friends with and without disabilities in school: A toolkit for teachers, paraprofessionals, and parents](#). Excellent (free) toolkit for fostering inclusion and friendships.

- 2) **Recess supervisors (teachers, principals) → Talking Points**
 - a) Give them the *Friendship Development* and *Fostering Friendships* handouts to read before the recess session
 - b) Discuss the content with supervisors if time permits. Even 2-3 minutes can be helpful in encouraging them to tune into students' interactions and friendships. Does every student have someone to play with? Which students tend to be loners and need some support in making friends?
 - c) Encourage teachers to make books on friendship available for students to read. Have class discussions on friendship.

- 3) **Students:** Give students the *Making Friends* and *Conversation Starters* handouts. Suggest that teachers give this out in class and discuss it briefly. Have students take the handout home to share with their parents.



➔ DURING Day of the Session. The program facilitator(s) are present during recess to introduce the weekly theme and facilitate the group activity.

- 1) Announce the theme of the week to the students. Explain that one way to enjoy recess is by talking with existing friends and making new friends. Highlight some qualities of a good friend and simple ways for meeting someone new – refer them to the *Making Friends* and *Conversation Starters* handout.
- 2) **Introduce the activity for the week → Friendship Scavenger Hunt!** (See next page) This is a great activity for students to mingle and get to know each other.
- 3) Model activities and interaction, problem-solve obstacles that may come up, and offer support to recess supervisors during recess time
- 4) **Demonstrate positive interaction with students.** Smile, call them by name, show an interest.
- 5) **Touch base with the recess supervisors at the end of the session.** How do you think it went? What did you observe? Do you have any suggestions? Introduce the theme for week 3 – Teamwork!



Tier 2 & 3 Strategies. Occupational Therapist:

- Tune into students who may be struggling to participate and enjoy recess activities and/or interaction with peers. *Look out for the loners*; he/she may struggle with knowing how to enter a group, or may have experienced bullying.
- Note those who might be demonstrating issues related to sensory processing (e.g. sensory-seeking movement or proprioceptive input resulting in excessive running or pushing; hypersensitivity to noise may result in self-isolating), motor control, and/or social participation (e.g. friendship issues).
- Begin to consider accommodations and supports needed to help students at-risk of or experiencing challenges during recess. For students with or without disabilities and/or mental health issues who struggle to enjoy activities or interactions during recess, provide adaptations or accommodations (e.g. peer buddy, smaller group, individual consultation regarding how to interact in a group, etc.). Refer to the *Peer Mediated Strategies* handout.

**Congratulations on completing Week #2 of the Refreshing Recess Program!
Move on to Week #3!**

Developed by Rebecca Mohler, MA, OTR/L, Shannon Kerns, MOT, OTR/L & Susan Bazyk, PhD, OTR/L for *Every Moment Counts* (2014). Revised in 2021. www.everymomentcounts.org



Check out the *Refreshing Recess Expansion* materials for more friendship activities.

Developed by Lauren Zastrow, OTD, OTR/L for *Every Moment Counts* (2020)

Download the [Friendship Scavenger Hunt](#) she developed by clicking the image to the right. Or, use the simple scavenger hunt on the next page.

Friendship Scavenger Hunt

Question	Classmate
Is your favorite color pink?	
Do you have a pet dog?	
Do you have a brother?	
Do you like to play on the swings?	
Do you like pizza?	
Is your favorite color green?	
Do you have a pet cat?	
Do you have a sister?	
Do you go to camp in the summer?	
Do you like cheeseburgers?	
Do you like to read?	
Have you been to Disneyland?	
Have you been to the beach?	
Do you play Soccer?	
Do you like riding bikes?	





Suggested Week 2 Activity

Friendship Scavenger Hunt

Setting: Indoor or Outdoor Recess

Equipment needed: List of questions

Rules/Directions:

Introduce yourself to a classmate and choose one item from the list to ask that person about.

If the classmate can respond YES to your question, write that classmate’s name in the space next to the question.

If they respond NO, move on to a different classmate.

You may ask each classmate ONE question before moving on to another person, but you may return later to ask that person a second question.

Friendship Scavenger Hunt Questions:

Question	Classmate
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Do you have a pet cat?	
Do you have a sister?	
Do you go to camp in the summer?	
Do you like cheeseburgers?	

To modify/adapt activity: Modify questions to fit the developmental level of the students (i.e., make easier or more difficult questions). Could have students think of questions to ask prior to implementing activity; maybe suggest teacher have students come up with questions as a class.

Check out resources on inclusion: The ARC of Massachusetts. (2017). [Making friends with and without disabilities in school: A toolkit for teachers, paraprofessionals, and parents.](#) Excellent (free) toolkit for fostering inclusion and friendships

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