

Promoting Associative & Cooperative Interactions

Social Learning Interactions in the Classroom

While Parten's stages of play were originally developed to describe very young children's interactions on the playground, similar definitions can be applied to the types of interactions we typically see in preschool classrooms. Children's interactions are determined by individual preference, developmental competence, and opportunities provided by adults. **These different types of interactions require increasing amounts of self-regulation, language skills, and social-emotional competence.**

Associative and Cooperative interactions require higher levels of participation and engagement with peers.



ASSOCIATIVE EXAMPLES:

- Claire and Byron brainstorm an alternate ending for their story
- Max and Keisha work together on a puzzle
- Blake helps Bobby spell his name.



PARALLEL EXAMPLES:

- Sean and Nicole are working individually on similar activities while discussing the Olympics
- The whole class is listening to a book during Circle Time
- Aiden and Stacy are in the Block area building separate structures



COOPERATIVE EXAMPLES:

- Acting out a story or scenario with roles and role speech
- Children and teacher play a game according to its rules (turn-taking, strategy)

Cooperative

Organizing toward a shared goal with clear roles and structure

Associative

Using shared materials to co-construct an idea or experience

Unoccupied

Not attending to any activity

Stages of Play

Parallel

Playing near other children with similar materials

Solitary

Playing alone with unique materials

Onlooker

Observing other activities without participating

SOLITARY EXAMPLES:

- Sara is the only one working on the computer during Choice Time
- Trevor is at the front of the class presenting or playing the role of the "Teacher" during Morning Meeting.



Promoting Associative & Cooperative Interactions

Importance of Social Learning Interactions

Start of
Pre-K

Associative and
Cooperative interactions
require children to...

**BLOCK
BUDDIES**

**PUZZLE
PARTNERS**

Interest
Areas

MONITOR THEIR
OWN BEHAVIOR

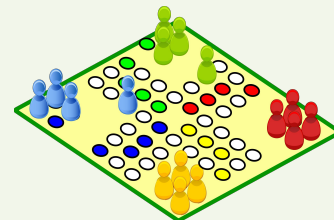


COMMUNICATE AND
WORK WITH PEERS

ADAPT TO OTHERS'
NEEDS AND
EXPECTATIONS

Circle Time

These social skills
serve as the basis for
teamwork and collaboration
in later schooling and



Small Groups

**TURN
& TALK**

**End of Pre-K
(and beyond)**

Children observed more frequently learning through social
interactions made greater gains in:

**RESEARCH
FINDINGS**

Vocabulary

Mathematics

Self
Regulation

They also had better social competence and
fewer problem behaviors in 1st grade!



Promoting Associative & Cooperative Interactions

Strategies for Supporting Associative & Cooperative Interactions

Adults play an important role in creating opportunities for social learning interactions. They set expectations (whether explicitly or implicitly) for the ways in which children can/should interact and learn from each other.

Model the **interpersonal skills** required for social learning interactions

- Teach **respectful** talking and listening skills
- Encourage children to **express how they are feeling** when interactions don't go as planned
- Give **positive feedback** when things are going well
- **Demonstrate** good sportsmanship

I'm NEVER going to win at this game!



I didn't win either, and it doesn't feel very good...but we still had fun! Maybe one of us can be a winner next time.

Set up **spaces & activities** to encourage interaction between children



These new puzzles are tricky! Try working with a Puzzle Partner to put them together. You might try taking turns to find the edge pieces.

- Balance the number of children in each center
- Encourage **partner** work and discussion
- Limit similar materials and encourage **sharing**
- Suggest different **roles for contributing** to an activity

Join in on the fun!

- **Participate** in the first few rounds of a game to make sure everyone understands the rules
- Gracefully **enter** and **exit** children's play
- Use **language facilitation** strategies to help children understand each other
- Help children who have a **hard time engaging** with others feel included

She might not realize you want to play with her. Try asking, "Can I be your assistant?"

