

BODY AWARENESS AND VISUAL STRATEGIES

In this section, we will introduce the concepts of:

Unit 1: Personal Space

Unit 2: Trading

Unit 3: Body Talk



Introduction

Section I of this workbook includes three units focusing on the foundational skills required for social interactions. The skills in this section are taught using concrete visual strategies that provide an understanding of how body awareness affects these interactions. Begin this section by observing how the child manages his or her body in social situations. It is important to respect the child's preferences for closeness or distance from others while maintaining proximity during interaction.

Unit 1 presents skills for managing and understanding acceptable personal-space allowances for different relationships. In this unit, we rely on strategies and activities that help children see and feel where their bodies are in relation to others.

Unit 2 introduces the idea of trading. In this unit, visual and cognitive strategies are presented to assist in identifying the boundaries of personal space, as well as the rules for trading toys with peers. A child's ability to successfully trade toys and belongings is related to understanding personal space. Knowing where one's personal space begins and ends helps a child identify toys that are being used by others and negotiate using them together.

Unit 3 demonstrates how to show interest and attention toward another person during a social interaction through body position. Concrete visual strategies and considerations for teaching this skill are included.

If the child continues to struggle with the concepts presented in these units, it may be appropriate to seek the support of an occupational therapist or speech-and-language pathologist for more individualized support and intervention.

THE CONCEPT

What is personal space?

Personal space is the invisible space around our bodies that is an extension of our physical selves. The size of this invisible space can vary from person to person, from day to day, and among different cultures. It expands or shrinks depending on factors that include cultural differences, emotional states, relationships, and types of activities (Hall & Hall, 1990). North American children and adults usually maintain a distance of about two to four feet (Thayer, 1986). Typically, we enjoy allowing family and friends to enter our close personal space, such as when we put an arm around them or sit in close proximity to them. We rarely want strangers or casual acquaintances too physically close, for it can feel very intrusive.

Why is personal space important?

We use personal space to convey interest in an interaction, to reflect a level of intimacy in a conversation or relationship, and to maintain a

POOR AWARENESS OF PERSONAL SPACE CAUSES ISOLATION AND ALIENATION AND INTERFERES WITH COMMUNICATION.

comfortable interaction with others. Being aware of the personal space of others around us as well as our own personal space can increase a sense of comfort for everyone involved. This sense of

space becomes evident during activities in which we are doing something such as standing, sitting, moving or placing possessions. When personal space is recognized and respected, there is less worry about feelings of intrusion and a greater ease in focusing and participating in the activity at hand.

Poor awareness of personal space

Some people have difficulty judging a comfortable distance to place their bodies in proximity to others. Although there are various reasons why children have this difficulty, we will highlight possible explanations for two extremes: children

who are constantly in someone else's space and children who try to remain separate and distant from others. Some children will show both behaviors depending on the situation.

Children who invade others' space may have these difficulties:

- Inattentiveness
- Limited awareness of their body positions
- Difficulty judging how far or how close to stand to another person
- Difficulty comprehending nonverbal or verbal cues
- Lack of awareness of someone else's position
- Poor ability to predict where and how others are moving
- Poor imitation
- Poor timing and sequencing of their actions and interactions

Children who try to remain separate and distant from others may have these problems:

- Anxiety, fear, or low self-esteem
- Poor ability to communicate their feelings
- Heightened sensitivity to sensation, including touch, sound, smell, or movement
- Poor imitation and planning skills
- Poor depth perception

Social consequences of poor awareness of personal space

Individuals who do not position themselves appropriately during interactions are often misunderstood. If they stand or sit too far away, they may be isolated from others; if they are too close they may alienate others. Either way, it causes others to avoid interactions with them.

Invading someone's space can make that person feel uncomfortable or awkward. It is viewed as rude and inappropriate. For example, individuals with poor awareness of personal space may cut in line because they are not aware that others are already ahead of them. Other children may

UNIT 1: PERSONAL SPACE

not want to sit next to them because they lean on them or interfere with their playthings.

On the other hand, being too far away from an intended interaction can make individuals seem disinterested or shy. They may have trouble getting attention from someone with whom they want to interact, or attract attention from individuals in whom they are not interested or wish to avoid.

See Appendix A for more information on the development of personal space.

TEACHING THE CONCEPT OF PERSONAL SPACE

We use a variety of visual and kinesthetic strategies to help children see and feel the concept of personal space. The DVD illustrates strategies to provide children concrete information about personal space. We give the children appropriate language to communicate when they are uncomfortable or unsure of personal-space rules. Additionally, therapists demonstrate ways to use this skill in a dynamic-play setting by taping lines to the table, which provide visual boundaries, while the children play with modeling clay and tools.

Start by helping the child *understand the concept of personal space:*

- Personal space is the invisible space around your body that belongs to you.
- A good way to find your personal space is to look at the distance from your elbow to the end of your fingers when your elbow is bent at your side and your hands point forward. We call this robot arms.
- Another way to find personal space is to think about elbow room. If we do the chicken dance and our elbows bump, we are too close.

Once the child understands the concept of personal space, present some *rules about personal space:*

- No one should go into your personal space without asking permission.
- You should not go into anyone else's personal space without asking if it is okay.
- If your personal space overlaps with someone else's, first ask if the other person is comfortable and if so, negotiate how to move or share the space. If not, then either you or the other person needs to move.
- When you move, be careful not to move into somebody else's personal space. If you do so by accident, say "excuse me," or "pardon me." If you accidentally hurt or offend someone, say, "I'm sorry."

QUICK TIPS

- ◆ Use visual markers to define personal space that makes the "invisible space" more tangible.
- ◆ Including concrete images and activities to introduce the concept of personal space will help a child visualize this abstract concept. For example, mark off personal space on desks or at the dinner table using taped lines or placemats.
- ◆ Use carpet squares or pillows for seating during circle time or when watching television.

INTRODUCTORY LESSON

Use this instructional session to reinforce the concept and rules of personal space.

MATERIALS

- Masking tape
- Pillows or carpet squares
- Tabletop toys and games

SETUP

- Have the children sit in a circle with each child on a pillow or carpet square.
- Show the children Unit 1: Personal Space on the accompanying DVD.
- Briefly review personal space concepts and rules.

ACTIVITY

- Transition to a play activity with peers. These activities could include coloring, making a snack, using play-doh, or playing other motivating games.
- Tape off each child's personal space on a tabletop or use placemats. Let the children know that this is their personal space.
- Divide supplies to encourage children to share. For example, if you have four children playing, give two children play-doh and two children cookie cutters. This allows you the opportunity to reiterate personal space, as many children will enter others' spaces to get to the toys they want to play with. This facilitation strategy also sets the stage for sharing toys



UNIT 1: PERSONAL SPACE



FACILITATOR CHECKLIST: PERSONAL SPACE

Consider these questions when observing the child's awareness of personal space:

- ◆ Is the child in close enough proximity to participate in the game?
- ◆ Does the child participate in conversations by standing neither too close nor too far from others?
- ◆ Is the child aware when he or she disturbs others by touching them when sitting or standing in line?
- ◆ Does the child need reminders not to hug or show affection towards strangers or adults who are not friends?
- ◆ Is the child aware of the ownership and boundaries related to others?



PERSONAL SPACE: PRACTICE ACTIVITY

PROXIMITY CIRCLES

MATERIALS

- Chalk/marker
- Pavement/paper
- Photographs of family members, friends, and/or other people who work with the child, such as teachers or therapists

SETUP

- Draw concentric circles around the child. Example: Draw three circles: one small circle in which the child will stand, another medium-sized circle that surrounds the small circle, and a large circle that contains the medium and small circles.
- Give the child pictures of family, friends and other significant people such as therapists or teachers.

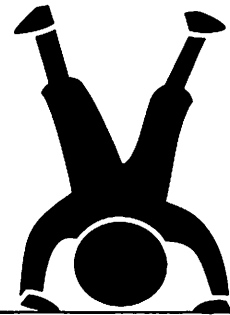
ACTIVITY

- Discuss the proximity of each circle to the children and talk about who can stand at the varying levels of closeness.
- Ask children to arrange the pictures in order of how well they know each person and how comfortable they feel being close to each person.
- Have the children place the pictures of the people to whom they feel closest in the circle nearest themselves.
- Continue placing the remaining pictures in the circles at the appropriate distances.
- Encourage the children to discuss their reasons for placing each person where they did.
- If the children incorrectly identify a person's placement, discuss where the individual is best placed and why.

UNIT 1: PERSONAL SPACE

PERSONAL SPACE: PRACTICE ACTIVITY

INNER TUBES



MATERIALS

- Inner tube that fits around a child's body

SETUP

- Gather two or three children or family members.

ACTIVITY

- Explain that personal space is invisible and that we can use inner tubes to visualize the space that belongs to us.
- Ask the children to line up and take turns navigating through the group while wearing the inner tube and without bumping into each other.
- Discuss what happens when you bump into someone and how it might feel.
- Role play getting into others' spaces and what you can say.
- Review possible statements to use if someone gets into your space (e.g., "Can you step back a little?").
- Videotape children playing and identify when a child becomes a space invader.



PERSONAL SPACE: PRACTICE ACTIVITY

ROBOT ARMS

MATERIALS

- Robot picture cards
(See Appendix B)

SETUP

- Gather two or three peers or adults

ACTIVITY

- Discuss that acceptable distance between people is about the length from your elbow to your fingertip. A good way to measure this is by using robot arms to check.
- Children line up for snack or recess using their robot arms to distance themselves from each other.
- Use the cue "robot arms" to help children identify when they are sitting too close to each other.
- When in the community, you can bring a small picture of a robot to casually pass to children needing reminders to check their personal space.

UNIT 1: PERSONAL SPACE

PERSONAL SPACE: PRACTICE ACTIVITY

MARKING SPACES



MATERIALS

- Pillows or carpet squares, one for each participant

SETUP

- Have the children sit on pillows or carpet squares when playing or sitting on the floor.

ACTIVITY

- Play a game such as Hot Potato in which children pass a toy or object until the music stops.
- Remind the children that the pillow or square marks their personal space and that no one can enter someone else's personal space without asking and that they cannot go into another's space without asking.
- Use the pillows and squares in other small-group play activities to help reinforce the concept of personal space.

REAL- WORLD STRATEGIES

TAKING IT HOME AND TO THE COMMUNITY Awareness of personal space in daily life

You can practice managing personal space by supporting the child out in the community. Transforming objects into personal-space markers that are available in the community limits the amount of attention you attract and offers functional strategies that children may use. For example, restaurants offer a variety of opportunities to practice the concept of personal space, such as observing where people line up to make a reservation, discussing where and how close to stand in a crowded waiting area, using robot arms to determine how close to stand to someone while waiting in line to order food, and using food trays or place mats to define personal spaces on a table. You can also give each member of the group a portion of the meal (e.g. ketchup or drinks) to encourage asking appropriately to enter someone's personal space. Having to endure crowded conditions is sometimes unavoidable when attending special events or shopping at the mall. When spending an extended time at family gatherings, it might be necessary to plan for some time away from the larger crowd.

Other suggestions to incorporate strategies learned about personal space when away from home include:

- Encourage the use of robot arms or elbow room in crowded areas such as elevators or waiting rooms.
- A child who may be uncomfortable with close proximity may try standing in a corner of an elevator or room to allow more control over his or her personal space.
- On escalators, reassure the child that it is okay to have at least one step between them and a stranger.
- Limit the amount of time spent in crowded settings if it is distressing to your child.
- Find less crowded locations that may serve as a retreat if the child is overwhelmed. Identify these locations to the child ahead of time and encourage the child to take some break times before there is a problem. If the child is unable to identify that a break is needed, gently accompany him or her to the retreat location with a, cozy pillow, favorite book, or quiet activity.

THE CONCEPT

What is trading?

Trading is getting something by giving something. When a toy is traded, the child can expect to give and to receive. The toy received must be equal in value to what is given. In this way, a child can continue to participate in the activity with little or no conflict.

We all trade throughout our lives. As children, we trade baseball cards, secrets, and toys. As adolescents, we trade phone numbers, music, and e-mail. When we are adults, we trade recipes, ideas, and books.

Trading is not sharing, although it is frequently misunderstood as sharing. We are often admonished as children to share our belongings. However, sharing is sometimes difficult to do since it implies letting someone else use your possessions rather than equally exchanging possessions. Learning to trade will prepare children for acquiring the ability to share.

Why is trading important?

Trading provides children with a way to interact with each other and with toys and play materials in a constructive manner. Especially for young children, there is not much inherent motivation to give up something they enjoy, even when adults tell them they will receive something in return. Sometimes children try to trade but receive nothing adequate in return, leaving them frustrated and disappointed. Children need to learn how to give and receive in a fair and honest way.

CHILDREN HAVE TO LEARN HOW TO GIVE AND RECEIVE IN A FAIR AND HONEST WAY.

Difficulty with trading

Children may have difficulty with trading for a variety of reasons. Common underlying problems that interfere with a child's ability to trade or develop interest in trading include:

- A tendency to hoard toys or possessions
- Lack or inequity of resources (e.g. children who do not have many toys or possessions)
- Inability to determine the appropriate value of objects
- Lack of interest in age-appropriate objects or activities
- Difficulty comprehending time
- Poor ability to communicate interest
- Poor control of emotions such as desire, envy and dejection
- Lack of awareness that a toy can be returned after it is traded (i.e., some children take and hold toys because they think they may never get them back)
- Impulsivity
- Poor motor planning related to timing and sequencing actions and interactions

Social consequences of limited trading skills

Children who have difficulty developing and using social skills frequently have trouble with negotiation and conflict resolution. They may take a toy they perceive as available because the child playing with it set it down momentarily to pick up something else. Some children tend to be impulsive, taking something they want regardless of who has it. Often they lack awareness of others and therefore do not consider ownership prior to taking a desired toy or item. Other children may feel it is hopeless to try to get what they want and that they'll never be able to gain the desired objects.

See Appendix A for more information on development of trading skills.

UNIT 2: TRADING

TEACHING THE CONCEPT OF TRADING

The accompanying DVD demonstrates the concept of trading by drawing visual lines or boundaries on a table covered with paper. We indicate a neutral area, called the trade line, for exchanging toys or objects. By indicating where a trade occurs, we decrease the possibility of the child reaching for toys in other people's spaces and being viewed as a child who grabs or takes toys from others.

Start with helping the child *understand the concept of trading*:

- Explain that trading is getting something by giving something.
- Help children understand that toys can be used by other people, but will be returned. This helps the children feel confident that they can give up one item to receive another.
- If children have learned the concept of personal space, it is easy to explain that trading occurs simultaneously at the place where one person's personal space ends and the other's begins. Trading is like high-five: You meet half way.
- The key to trading is teaching the child to choose something equally as attractive or interesting. If a child wants to trade for a truck, he must find another object of interest. He cannot pick up an empty potato-chip bag and attempt to trade it.
- Explain that trades need to occur within a determined amount of time.

Once the child understands the concept of trading, present *some rules about trading*:

- Trading happens simultaneously at the place where one child's personal space ends and the other's begins.
- Objects within each child's personal space cannot be taken.
- Both children must agree to the trade or indicate when they will trade.
- Communication is required for trading. (e.g., "I will give you this crayon for the scissors.")
- Face your body toward the person when requesting a trade and look at them. (This concept will be explained more fully in Unit 3: Body Talk.)

QUICK TIPS

- ◆ It is important that the object traded is meaningful to the child, but not an object of attachment (e.g. their favorite blanket).
- ◆ Provide a visual chart for the rules to trading.
- ◆ More is not necessarily better. Limit the amount of toys to two or three per child.
- ◆ Give the children time to spontaneously trade.
- ◆ If needed, use cue cards (e.g. a picture of a familiar word or symbol) to remind the children to trade.



FACILITATOR CHECKLIST: TRADING

Consider the following questions as you observe the child participating in activities involving trading.

- ◆ Does the child understand the appropriate time for trading?
- ◆ Can the child identify an appropriate item to trade?
- ◆ Is the child close enough for a trade to occur?
- ◆ Does the child complete the trade in the determined amount of time?
- ◆ Does the child need more practice?
- ◆ Will it help to provide physical or verbal prompts?
- ◆ Will the child benefit from written cues?
- ◆ Are there opportunities for the child to practice throughout the day? (Where, when, and with whom?)

UNIT 2: TRADING

INTRODUCTORY LESSON

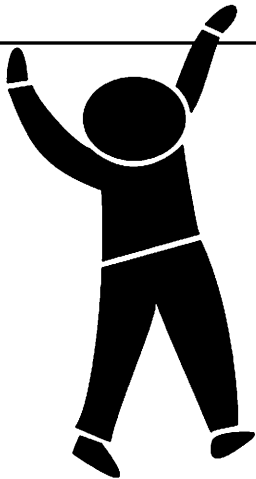
Use this instructional session to reinforce the concept and rules of trading.

MATERIALS

- Chalk, pen, or masking tape
- Markers
- Paper

SETUP

- View Unit 2: Trading on the accompanying DVD related to trading.
- Briefly review the concepts and rules for trading materials.
- Make a line (chalk, pen, masking tape) of equal distance between you and the child.



(continue with activity on next page)

ACTIVITY

- Point to the strip of masking tape and tell the child, "This is where we will trade. This is the trade line." Ask the child to point to the trade line.
- Tell the child, "We are going to trade. This is when you give me something to get something from me."
- Put out two pieces of paper and give the child a marker.
- Choose the child's favorite color of marker for yourself and color with it for a few seconds.
- Ask the child, "Would you like to use this color?" When the child responds "yes," instruct him or her to trade at the trade line.
- Make sure you and the child are facing each other. Hold out the desired colored marker at the trade line until the child offers his marker at the trade line. It is important to have both items traded at the same time. The therapist responds, "That was trading. We both gave and received an object at the same time."
- As you continue to color, make the activity more challenging by adding the question, "Do you want to trade?" and encouraging the child to use the question before trading.
- When children do not want to trade, encourage them to communicate when they will trade. Children apprehensive to trading may be encouraged to use statements such as, "Not right now but in five minutes," "After I am done coloring this picture," or "After one more try."
- Identify personal space to provide trading boundaries.
- Set a minimum number of trade times per activity. (e.g., "Everyone needs to trade at least two times.")
- The facilitator makes sure that trading occurs. Trading needs to be positive for it to occur again. Fully participate as if you are one of the children. You can have fun, too!

UNIT 2: TRADING

TRADING: PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

PLAY-DOH ACTIVITY



MATERIALS

- Placemats, butcher paper, or masking tape
- Play-doh, one color for each child
- Play-doh tools, enough to have an equal number for each child

SETUP

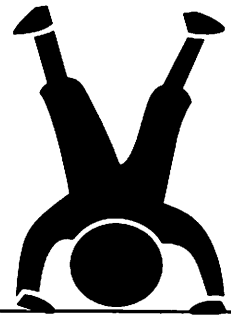
- Outline each child's personal space.
- Identify personal space for each participant by having a placemat, piece of butcher paper, or masking-tape-outlined rectangles
- Provide an equal number of similar toys for each child. Place a can of play-doh and two or three play-doh tools in each child's personal space.

ACTIVITY

- Briefly review the rules of trading in terms the children will understand. Use demonstration by role playing the trading of play-doh tools to help with understanding.
- Model and encourage. Use statements such as, "You look ready to trade," "Ask him if he will trade with you," or "Find a friend to trade with you."
- If the children are not coming up with their own ideas of things to make with the play-doh, suggest making simple objects such as a pizza or snake. Comment on which tools one child may want to trade with another child in order to make a design.

TRADING: PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

TOY VEHICLE COOPERATIVE PLAY



MATERIALS

- Toy Vehicles
- Markers
- Strips of butcher paper, each approximately four-feet long; one for every two participants
- Place mats, paper, or masking tape

SETUP

- Draw roads on the butcher paper.
- Pair children for each strip of butcher paper.
- Create personal-space areas using boundaries for each child on the strip of butcher paper using place mats, paper, or masking-tape rectangles.
- Put an equal number of vehicles in each personal-space area.

ACTIVITY

- Review the rules of trading.
- Tell the children that you would like them to trade three times while playing.
- Create a story or idea that will motivate cooperative play, e.g., "These cars are all going on an adventure. One of them runs out of gas, one gets a flat tire, and one gets lost. You have to help one another with your other vehicles."
- Assign each child to a personal-space area using the boundaries.
- Tell them, "These are your toys to play with. If you see something you would like to trade for, remember to follow the rules for trading."

UNIT 2: TRADING

TAKING IT HOME AND TO THE COMMUNITY

Generalizing trading skills in daily life

The child will need help identifying when to trade and when trading is occurring amongst others, especially when it is a newly learned skill. It is helpful to find situations in the daily life of the child when trading occurs naturally. Opportunities occur in a variety of community settings. For example, a form of trading occurs when money is exchanged for

- food at a fast-food restaurant
- groceries
- gasoline
- a car wash
- a toy

Emphasize that you would not be getting that item or service if you did not have something to give. You can say, "Look, I am trading money for _____. I would not be able to get something without giving something, just like trading."

Make it into a game, asking the child to watch and tell you when the next trade happens. Play detective and tell the child, "I am going into a store right now. You be the detective and watch me. Tell me when you see me trade something to get something."

A park is a great place to be a detective and to watch other children and adults trade. They may trade sand toys, sports equipment, or snacks. At the movies, trade some popcorn for some candy or pretzels. At the library, find a fun and age-appropriate book. Read it and then offer to trade with the child. The community is a great place to generalize the skill of trading. Encourage children to find situations when they can trade with others.



REAL-
WORLD
STRATEGIES

THE CONCEPT

What is body talk?

Body talk is a term used to define what your body looks like and communicates when you are talking to someone. “Body language” is another term used to describe this idea (Gajewski, Hirn & Mayo 1993). Conversation or communication does not simply happen through using words. The position in which you place your body, your tone of voice, the amount of eye contact and gestures you use, and the expressions on your face all provide your listener with subtle, nonverbal clues about how you feel and what you are intending to say.

Why is body talk important?

Nonverbal cues enhance a person’s understanding of the intention of communication (Baker, J.E.,

NONVERBAL CUES ENHANCE A PERSON’S UNDERSTANDING OF THE INTENTION OF COMMUNICATION.

2003). Gestures, tone of voice, posture, and facial expressions convey interest in an interaction and help engage others in conversation.

In infancy, babies begin learning to interpret others’ gestures and mimic them to express their own feelings and thoughts. When children have the need and desire to communicate, it helps if they can position their bodies so they appear to be ready to talk or listen. These skills are refined throughout early childhood.

Problems with understanding and using body talk

Many children challenged by social interactions misinterpret someone else’s body language or have difficulty making the appropriate nonverbal gestures. Other children and adults can, in turn, misinterpret how they are feeling or what they are thinking due to the lack of appropriate cues. Children who have difficulty positioning their body for interaction may struggle with:

- Body awareness (proprioceptive processing)—information received from the muscles and joints regarding body position
- Spatial awareness—the interpretation and judgment of space to determine the body’s distance from a person or object
- Motor-planning skills—the ability to plan one’s motor actions for functional use
- Social-referencing skills—the observation of a social situation to determine how to interact within the context of the situation
- Intersubjectivity—the ability to understand how someone else might behave or feel
- Difficulty in maintaining a steady visual gaze due to poor ocular motor control or head, neck, and eye control
- Increased or decreased arousal due to difficulty interpreting complex emotions and facial expressions, thus feeling overwhelmed by eye contact. Additionally, avoiding eye contact may be a protective response used by the child to avoid setting off a fight-or-flight response.

Social consequences of poor body talk

Since your body plays a key role in communicating your intentions or emotions in a conversation or play situation, difficulty with body talk sets the stage for misunderstanding and frustration in social communication. The child may unintentionally convey the wrong message such as disinterest, anger, shyness, or boredom, even if that’s not how he or she is feeling. A child with poor interpretation or expression of body language may struggle

UNIT 3: BODY TALK

to understand someone else's emotions and know how to react. The child may miss important non-verbal cues, or misinterpret other people's cues. It may be difficult to know when the conversation has ended or when someone wants a turn to speak. If the child has difficulty reading another person's body language, he or she may not automatically pick up on the social rules of a setting. For example, realizing where to line up to place an order at a restaurant depends on the awareness of the direction people are facing, the spacing between customers, and the eye contact used between the customer and the service person. If these important social cues are missed, awkward, inappropriate, or confusing responses are likely to occur.

See Appendix A for more information on development of body language.

TEACHING THE CONCEPTS OF BODY TALK

The accompanying DVD demonstrates how to explain and teach body talk using "foot placement" cards (see Appendix). It will be helpful to have the feet cards available as a visual cue to assist in teaching the concept of how to position your body when you want to talk with someone.

Start with helping the child *understand the concept of body talk:*

- We communicate with more than words. The way in which we position our bodies tells people that we are interested in playing or relating.
- We communicate more effectively when not only our face, but also our toes, knees, hips, and shoulders are directed toward the person to whom we are talking or listening.
- It is sometimes hard to look into someone's eyes, but it is important to try to look at a part of the person's face. When people are not us-

QUICK TIPS

EYE CONTACT

- ◆ Asking for eye contact may be counterproductive and actually reduce the child's willingness to interact.
- ◆ Encourage children to briefly look at a part of the face, for example an ear or chin, to help them begin to bring their gaze toward the face.

BODY POSITION

- ◆ Use specific information to indicate how you want a child to position their body. For example, "your toes should be looking at my toes."
- ◆ Visual cues assist with knowing the direction a child should face. Place the body-talk feet cards on the floor in the direction the child should be facing.

ing body talk, it may mean they are not interested in talking. If you are uncertain, ask. Sometimes people are interested but don't know how to show you.

Once the child understands the concept of body talk, present *some rules about body talk:*

- Show others you are ready to talk by turning your whole body—your toes, knees, hips and shoulders—toward them and also look at their eyes.
- Do not talk to others with your back turned toward them.
- Do not talk to someone when you or the other person is walking away.
- Do not keep talking if others are not listening to you.

INTRODUCTORY LESSON

Use this instructional session to reinforce the concept and rules of body talk.

MATERIALS

- Paper
- Markers

SETUP

- None

ACTIVITY

- Show Unit 3: Body Talk on the accompanying DVD.
- Outline each child's feet on a piece of paper or encourage the children to outline each other's feet.
- Discuss or define body talk, giving rules about where to position your body.
- Ask the child to place the pictures of the feet in relation to your feet.
- Ask the children to practice greeting each other using their "body-talk feet."
- Ask two children to practice shaking hands or trading a toy while using their body talk.
- Decorate the feet pictures with stickers or markers. Take home the decorated pictures as a reminder of what was learned.



UNIT 3: BODY TALK



FACILITATOR CHECKLIST: BODY TALK

Use the following questions to determine the child's understanding of body-talk concepts.

- ◆ Does the child make eye contact during social situations?
- ◆ Does the child match his or her emotions to the situation or read emotions in a person?
- ◆ Does the child face others when talking to them?
- ◆ Will the child stop talking as he or she is walking away from the group?
- ◆ Does the child end or change the conversation if others are not listening to them anymore?



BODY TALK: PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

I SEE YOU (MAKING EYE CONTACT)

MATERIALS

- Pair of feet (see Appendix B)
- Mirrors
- Sunglasses

SETUP

- Place two pair of feet facing a mirror.
- Have the children stand on the feet facing the mirror.

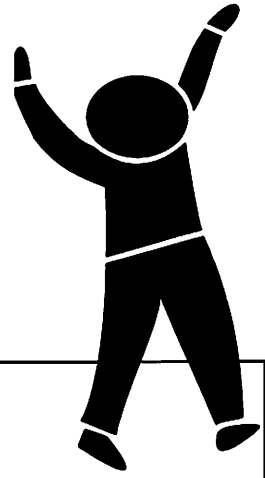
ACTIVITY

- Play a game of Simon Says by asking the children to look at different parts of each other's faces. For example, "Simon Says look at each other's noses." Occasionally, ask the children to briefly look at each other's eyes.
- Turn the pair of feet to face each other. Have the children wear sunglasses and repeat the game of Simon Says.
- Finally, remove the sunglasses and continue playing.

UNIT 3: BODY TALK

BODY TALK: PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

BODY-TALK CROWNS



MATERIALS

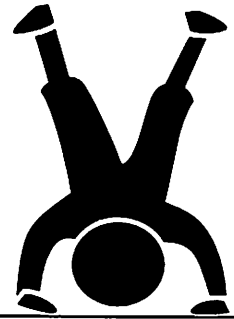
- Construction paper cut into four-inch-wide strips, long enough to fit the circumference of the child's head, one for each participant
- Four-inch diameter circles, one for each participant
- Markers
- Decorative items (e.g. feathers, beads, jewels, stickers)
- Stapler, glue, and masking tape

SETUP

- Mark off personal-space areas where children will be making the crowns and remind the children of their personal space.

ACTIVITY

- Discuss with the group that you are making crowns to help them remember body talk. When they face someone, that person will know we want to talk to them.
- Glue the circle to the center of the crown. When worn, the circle sits in the center of the child's forehead. You can make the activity more fun by suggesting that the circles are magic or powerful.
- Give each child a different decorative item. For example, one child has the glue, another has the markers, and a third has the feathers.
- Tell the group that each of their friends has something they need. They will need to use body talk to ask if they can use something.
- Decorate the crowns.
- When complete, staple the ends of the long strip to form a crown.
- The children wear their crowns for the remainder of the session.
- Remind them that their crowns face the person with whom they want to talk.



BODY TALK: PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

CHARADES

MATERIALS

- Large scarf
- Emotion cards (pictures and words, homemade or available through professional catalogs)
- Large bag or bowl

SETUP

- Place the emotion cards on the table or floor where everyone can easily see them.

ACTIVITY

- Practice imitating the variety of emotions pictured on the cards, using your body and facial expressions. Be sure to use pictures and words to help children define each emotion. Once you feel the group understands how to use their bodies to express emotion, move on to a game of charades.
- Place the cards in the large bowl and mix them around.
- Have one child select a card without showing it to any of the other children. Have the child cover his or her head and face with the scarf so the group cannot see the child's facial expressions.
- Encourage the children to act out the emotion with their bodies when it is their turn.
- Have the group try to guess what the emotion is.
- Have the children take turns being the "actors" versus the "guessers."

UNIT 3: BODY TALK

TAKING IT HOME AND TO THE COMMUNITY

Use of body talk in daily life

Cue cards can be made using two-inch square cards with a picture of eyes, feet, and upper body. These can be discreetly shown in a community or school setting as a subtle way to remind children to use body talk. Remind the child of the meaning of the card in advance so that he or she can get into position when talking with others. When a child has difficulty remembering to use body talk, casually show or hand the reminder card to the child.

It is helpful to prepare children about what to expect in new settings before they arrive. For example, on the way to a birthday party, discuss when it would be appropriate to use body talk. "When Tim's mom asks you if you want cake, you can use your body talk to say, 'yes please' or 'no, thank you.'" Ask the children to think of other times they might need to use body talk.

**REAL-
WORLD
STRATEGIES**