

TEACHER COMPANION • MORE MESSAGES TO TEACH

Little Talks, Big Ideas

Companion to the **Preschool Teacher Guide**

Six ready-to-go mini-lessons that expand the “More messages to teach” page of the Preschool Teacher Guide. Each one gives you exactly what to say, what kids might say back, a song or chant, and ways to keep it going. Plus printable picture cue cards to hold up during circle time.

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How to use this guide

Each message is a 2–5 minute “little talk.” You don’t need special training, only this page, a prop, and your warm voice.

1. Say it

Read the **SAY** lines word for word or put them in your own words. Keep each part to one or two sentences.

2. Ask it

Ask one question and welcome every answer. The “**If a child says...**” table helps with the tricky ones.

3. Do it

End with a song, chant, or movement. Doing something with their bodies helps little ones remember.

TIPS FOR GREAT LITTLE TALKS

- Sit at the children’s eye level and hold up the picture cue card.
- Keep it short. Stop while they’re still interested.
- Repeat the same message on different days. Repetition is how preschoolers learn.
- **Catch them doing it.** Name inclusion when you see it: “You invited Leo to play. That was kind!”
- No need for medical words. Friendship, feelings, and fairness are enough at this age.

IF A CHILD IN YOUR CLASS HAS DOWN SYNDROME

- Talk with the family before your 3.21 week. Ask how they’d like it shared.
- Keep the focus on everyone. Never use one child as the example.
- Let the child join in exactly like everyone else: same songs, same socks, same fun.
- If classmates ask questions about a specific child, answer simply and kindly, and check with the family about what they’re comfortable with.

A SAMPLE WEEK OF LITTLE TALKS

Mon

Different Is Good

Tue

Everybody Looks Different

Wed

Everybody Has Feelings

Thu

Friends Include Friends

Fri

Kind Words + Rock Your Socks!

THE ONE LINE TO REPEAT ALL WEEK



“Different is good. Everyone belongs.”

MESSAGE

1

Everybody Looks Different

Children notice and name differences in how people look, with curiosity and kindness.

3-5 MIN

CIRCLE TIME

UNBREAKABLE HAND MIRROR

STEP BY STEP

1

Become “looking detectives”

Hold up the mirror like a magnifying glass.

SAY

Today we’re looking detectives! We’re going to look closely at our faces and find all the cool ways we’re different.

2

Model it first

Look in the mirror and name two things about yourself.

SAY

I see curly hair and brown eyes. I have glasses too!

3

Pass the mirror

Each child looks and names one thing they see. Children can also point, or you can name it with them.

SAY

What do you see? ... Yes! Beautiful blue eyes.

4

Same or different?

After each turn, ask the group to compare.

SAY

Who else has curly hair? Who has something different?

5

Wrap it up

Bring it back to the big idea.

SAY

We all look different, and that’s what makes us US. **Different is good!**



Everybody looks different!

Hold up cue card #1 (last pages)

IF A CHILD SAYS...

YOU CAN SAY...

“Her hair is weird.”

Her hair is *different* from yours. Different isn’t weird, it’s just different. What do you like about it?

“Why does he look like that?”

Everybody’s face and body is a little different. That’s how people are made.

“I don’t like my freckles.”

I think your freckles are wonderful. They’re part of what makes you, you!

SING IT • MOVE IT: “HEAD TO TOES” CHANT

Touch each part as you say it: *“Hair and eyes and nose and toes, everybody’s different, and that’s how it goes!”*

TAKE IT FURTHER

Set up a self-portrait center with mirrors and skin-tone crayons or paper. Hang the portraits together under “Look at Us!”

Home connection: Families look in a mirror together and name one thing they love about each other.

MESSAGE

2

Everybody Has Feelings

Children name basic feelings and understand that everyone has them, including people with Down syndrome.

3-5 MIN

CIRCLE OR MORNING MEETING

FEELINGS CUE CARD (OR DRAW FACES)

STEP BY STEP

1

Show a feeling

Hold up the feelings cue card and point to the happy face.

SAY

What feeling is this? Show me YOUR happy face!

2

Try them all

Point to sad, mad, and silly. Kids make each face. Laugh together at silly!

SAY

Can you show me sad? ... Mad? ... Silly?

3

Everybody feels them

Make it clear that feelings are for everyone.

SAY

Grown-ups have feelings. Kids have feelings. People with Down syndrome have ALL these feelings too. Everybody does!

4

What helps?

Ask what we can do when a friend feels sad. Accept all kind answers.

SAY

When a friend is sad, what could we do? ... Sit with them, ask if they want a hug, or get a teacher. Great ideas!



Everybody has feelings!

Hold up cue card #2 (last pages)

IF A CHILD SAYS...

YOU CAN SAY...

"My friend is always happy."

Everybody feels happy sometimes and sad sometimes. That's okay!

"I'm never sad."

Everybody feels sad sometimes, even grown-ups. It's okay to feel sad.

"He's mad at me."

Let's ask him how he feels and what might help.

SING IT • MOVE IT: SING A FEELINGS SONG

Sing *"If You're Happy and You Know It"* with new verses: "If you're sad and you know it, say boo-hoo..." "If you're silly, wiggle your nose!"

TAKE IT FURTHER

Add a feelings check-in chart at arrival. Children move their name or photo to the face that matches how they feel.

Home connection: At dinner, everyone shares one feeling they had today and why.

MESSAGE
3

Everybody Learns

Children understand that people learn at different speeds, and practice patience and cheering each other on.

3-5 MIN

CIRCLE OR TRANSITION

A SHOE WITH LACES OR A SIMPLE PUZZLE

STEP BY STEP

1 Tell a quick story

Hold up the shoe.

SAY

When I was little, tying my shoes was SO hard. I tried and tried... and one day I did it!

2 Ask about them

Let a few children share something hard to learn: zipping a coat, riding a bike, writing their name.

SAY

What's something that was hard for you at first?

3 Everyone learns their way

Keep it simple and positive.

SAY

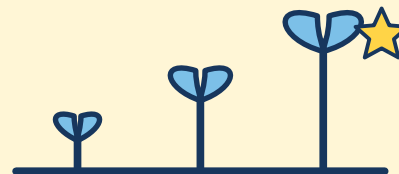
Some friends learn fast and some need more time and practice. Friends with Down syndrome might need more time to learn some things, and they learn! Everybody learns in their own way.

4 Practice cheering

Have everyone practice a cheer for a friend who is trying.

SAY

Let's cheer: "You can do it! Keep on trying!"



I can't do it... YET!

Hold up cue card #3 (last pages)

IF A CHILD SAYS...

YOU CAN SAY...

"She's too slow."

She's taking her time. We can wait and cheer for her.

"I can't do it!"

You can't do it *yet*. Let's keep trying together.

"Why does he need help?"

Everybody needs help with something. What do you need help with?

SING IT • MOVE IT: THE "YET" CHANT

"I can't do it... YET! I'll keep on trying, and I won't forget!" Shout "YET" and throw your hands in the air.

TAKE IT FURTHER

Start a "Look What I Learned!" wall. Add a drawing or photo each time a child learns something new.

Home connection: Families share one thing their child learned this year and how they practiced.

MESSAGE
4

Friends Include Friends

Children notice when someone is alone and practice the words to invite them in.

5 MIN

BEFORE CENTERS OR RECESS

2 PUPPETS OR STUFFED ANIMALS

STEP BY STEP

1 Puppet show

Puppet A plays with blocks. Puppet B sits alone and looks sad.

SAY

Hmm. How do you think Puppet B feels?

2 What could A say?

Take ideas. Then teach the magic words.

SAY

A could say, **“Do you want to play?”** Let’s all say it together!

3 Replay it

Act it again with the invitation. Puppet B joins and cheers.

SAY

Look how happy B is now! And A has a new friend.

4 Partner practice

Children turn to a neighbor: one asks, the other answers “Yes!” or “Not right now, maybe later.” Switch.

SAY

Both answers are okay. Asking is the kind part!



Do you want to play?

Hold up cue card #4 (last pages)

IF A CHILD SAYS...

YOU CAN SAY...

“I want to play by myself.”

That’s okay sometimes! You can say “maybe later” and invite them next time.

“She doesn’t talk.”

Some friends talk with words, some with hands, pictures, or smiles. You can still play together.

“There’s no room.”

Can we make room? Let’s scoot over so everyone fits.

SING IT · MOVE IT: “COME AND PLAY” CHANT

“Come and play, come and play, there’s room for you today!” Open your arms wide on “room.”

TAKE IT FURTHER

“Catch them including”: when you see a child invite someone, name it out loud: “I saw you invite Maya. That was so kind!”

Home connection: Families practice the invitation words at the park or playground.

MESSAGE
5

Kind Words

Children learn that words can help or hurt, and practice saying kind things to friends.

5 MIN

CIRCLE TIME

PAPER HEART • ONE FUN SOCK

STEP BY STEP

1 The wrinkled heart

Hold up a paper heart. Pretend to hear an unkind word (“You can’t play!”) and crumple one corner. Repeat once or twice.

SAY

Ouch. Unkind words make hearts feel crumple.

2 Try to fix it

Say sorry and smooth the heart out. Show that the wrinkles are still there.

SAY

Saying sorry helps! But the heart still remembers. That’s why we try to use kind words first.

3 Pass the kind words sock

Pass a fun sock around the circle. Whoever holds it says something kind to the friend next to them.

SAY

Try: “I like your...” or “You are good at...” or “I like playing with you.”

4 Wrap it up

Hold up the sock.

SAY

Kind words help everybody feel like they belong.



I use kind words!

Hold up cue card #5 (last pages)

IF A CHILD SAYS...

YOU CAN SAY...

“I don’t know what to say.”

Try: “I like playing with you.” That’s a great kind word!

“He called me a name.”

That hurt your feelings. Let’s go talk to him together.

“You’re a baby!”

Hmm, that word could hurt. Can you try a kind word instead?

SING IT • MOVE IT: “KIND WORDS” CHANT

*“Kind words, kind words, make a friend feel good!
Kind words, kind words, just like friends should!”*

TAKE IT FURTHER

Keep a “kind words jar.” Add a pom-pom each time you hear a kind word. When it’s full, have a sock dance party!



Home connection: Families try a kind-words jar at home for one week.

MESSAGE
6

Different Is Good

Children celebrate differences through socks and connect it to World Down Syndrome Day.

3-5 MIN

CIRCLE TIME

EVERYONE'S SOCKS (OR THE SOCK BASKET)

STEP BY STEP

1

Socks up!

Everyone sits in a circle and sticks their feet into the middle.

SAY

Socks up! Let's look at all these socks!

2

Count together

Count how many socks are striped, spotted, or a certain color. Are any exactly the same?

SAY

How many have stripes? ... How many are blue?

3

Imagine all the same

Ask the big question.

SAY

What if ALL our socks were exactly the same? Would that be fun? No way! **Different is good!**

4

Connect to 3.21

Hold up three fingers.

SAY

On March 21 we wear socks that DON'T match to celebrate people with Down syndrome, and to show that different looks good here!



Different is good!

Hold up cue card #6 (last pages)

IF A CHILD SAYS...

YOU CAN SAY...

"My socks are boring."

Every sock belongs in our circle! What would your dream sock look like?

"Mismatched socks are wrong."

Usually we match, but on 3.21 mismatched is the whole point. It's a celebration!

"Why do people have Down syndrome?"

They were born with an extra tiny piece inside their body. It's just part of who they are.

SING IT · MOVE IT: THE SOCK CHANT

"Red sock, blue sock, one, two, three! Everybody's different, and that's okay with me!" Wiggle your feet on "one, two, three."

TAKE IT FURTHER

Take a "socks up" photo from above: just feet, no faces, so it's easy to share.

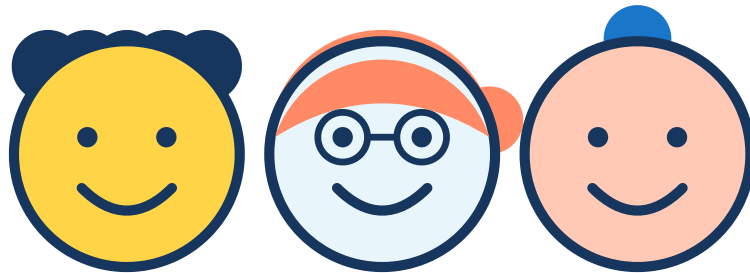
Home connection: The whole family wears

♥ mismatched socks on 3.21 and shares a photo with #Celebrate321.

Picture cue cards

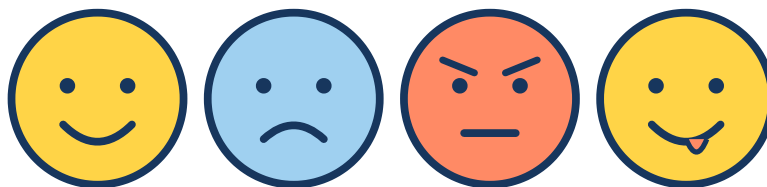
Print on cardstock, cut on the dashed lines, and hold up during each little talk. Tape them to craft sticks for easy holding. ✂

CUE CARD 1 · EVERYBODY LOOKS DIFFERENT



Everybody looks different!

CUE CARD 2 · EVERYBODY HAS FEELINGS

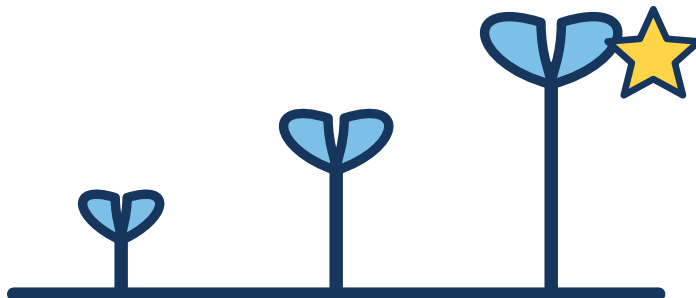


Everybody has feelings!

Picture cue cards

Print on cardstock, cut on the dashed lines, and hold up during each little talk. Tape them to craft sticks for easy holding. ✂

CUE CARD 3 · EVERYBODY LEARNS



I can't do it... YET!

CUE CARD 4 · FRIENDS INCLUDE FRIENDS



Do you want to play?

Picture cue cards

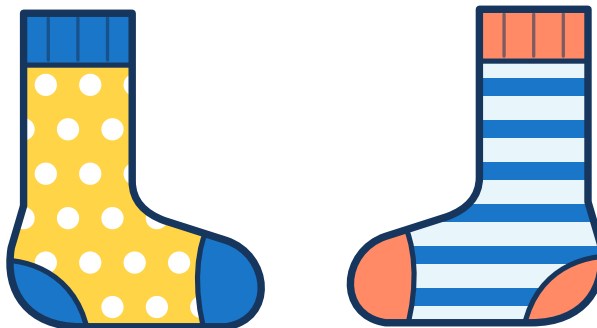
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CUE CARD 5 · KIND WORDS



I use kind words!

CUE CARD 6 · DIFFERENT IS GOOD



Different is good!