



Relationships



Areas and outcomes from the relationships unit

- Cooperation with others
- Solving problems
- Knowing, following, and asking for rules/frameworks
- Solving and resolving conflicts
- Experiencing social resources, safety and security, and trust

What relational competence means

Developing relational skills is an important developmental task for preschool-aged children. These skills are usually required together with emotional, physical, and narrative competence. Good emotional awareness of the self and others, the ability to perceive one's own and other's physical (bodily) boundaries, and expressive linguistic skills are all needed for creating positive and robust social relationships.

Dear parents,

In the third part of the ReSi programme for children, we will be focused on the topic of relationships. The children will be supported in extending their knowledge and skills in areas that will help them to develop positive and robust relationships with other people.

Typical topics that are repeatedly and recurrently managed in relationships are differing interests and needs. Using playful exercises and picture stories, the children can see how people can deal with challenging situations in relationships. For example, behaviours and habits for successful interaction are explained and practiced, a positive understanding of conflict is promoted, and non-violent solutions for conflicts are explored. The children are also encouraged to collaborate with others and help each other. Some exercises are about setting boundaries or saying no when necessary.

It is especially important for the children to consciously reflect on and think about friends and confidants that they already have. This increases their feelings of safety and trust which allows the children to more easily get help and to talk about stressful experiences. This can include boundary violations by others, for example. But it can also include "bad secrets", which occur when children are asked to keep or are engaged in keeping situations or experiences secret against their will. Being aware of such situations and being able to talk about them is very important in the prevention of sexual abuse.



Letter to parents about the ReSi programme

Contact

ReSi+ Team
infos@resiplus.de



Project Leadership
Prof. Simone Pfeffer
simone.pfeffer@th-nuernberg.de
Prof. Christina Storck
christina.storck@th-nuernberg.de

More information:

www.resiplus.de

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Examples of ReSi children's programme exercises

Tickle-chase game: In this exercise, the children chase, catch, and tickle each other. Tickling is only allowed, however, until the child being tickled says, "stop". This allows the children to practice setting physical boundaries in an appropriate manner if touching is no longer (or not) pleasant. Complying with and respecting other's boundaries is also practiced. Getting help when it is needed is positively presented in this exercise and differentiated from tattling.

Strictly secret? The cats, Resi and Ralf (puppets) speak first about secrets with the children. What is a secret, actually? Which secrets are good, which are bad? Different everyday situations where secrets can come up are discussed and evaluated together with the children. The aim of this exercise is that the children come to know that good and bad feelings can be associated with secrets. They should feel secure that they never have to keep a secret that causes them bad feelings. If such a case occurs, they can always turn to a trusted person to tell them about it and get support or help.

Tips for parents

In the following you will find a few suggestions for how you can support your child to develop relational skills at home.

Make sure you are understanding and respectful of your child in situations when they open up to you - especially when the child has done something "naughty" and you are actually quite annoyed or angry. Even when it is difficult for you, praise the child for their honesty! This will help them learn that they can trust you categorically in all situations, even if unpleasant feelings like fear or guilt are in play.

Something to try: Together with your child, think about which people are especially close to them or with whom they have bonded. These people may be parents, relatives, or friends of the child or neighbours or educational staff from a day care facility or sports association. The child can draw or paint these people on a poster or perhaps craft a figure for each person. The figures could be assembled into a mobile and hung in the child's room.