

Peer Interaction Skills

Peer interaction skills are specific behaviors to teach kindergarten students that lead to friendship, cooperation, and collaborative learning. These skills build upon one another, so make sure students have the prerequisite skills before teaching a new skill.

Skill 1: Greet a friend

Teach this skill if students are having limited interactions when a new student joins a group, such as at the beginning of the day or when going to a different center.

1. Look at your friend.
2. Say, "Hi," and your friend's name.
3. Wave at your friend.

Skill 2: Get a friend's attention

Teach this skill if students are not using their friends' names. It might sound like, "Hey, you."

1. Look at your friend.
2. Say your friend's name or "excuse me."
3. Gently touch your friend on the shoulder or arm if they aren't looking at you.

Skill 3: Give an object or material

Teach this skill if students are reluctant or refuse to give materials to other students or they do so by throwing objects to others. Students not using this skill might also keep all materials to themselves during an activity.

1. Get your friend's attention.
2. Hold out an object or material.
3. Say, "Here" or "Here you go."
4. Put the object in their hand.

Skill 4: Request an object or material

Teach this skill if students do not ask for objects/materials or they take what they want/need from others.

1. Get your friend's attention.
2. Hold out your hand.
3. Say, "Can I have _____?" or "Please pass me the _____."
4. Wait for your friend to give it to you.
5. Say, "Thank you" after you receive the object or material.

Skill 5: Take turns

Teach this skill if students are grabbing objects or materials from other students or if students pass a material once and not back and forth. Think of this skill as combining skills 3 and 4.

1. Get your friend's attention.
2. Say, "Can I have a turn with the _____?"
3. Wait for your friend to give it to you.
4. Take a turn with the object.
5. Say, "Here," and give it back to your friend.
6. Repeat.

Skill 6: Join a group at play or work

Teach this skill if students are taking things from peers, destroying others' work, or not participating in play/work with a group.

1. Get your friend's attention.
2. Say, "Can I play/work with you?"
3. Do what your friends are doing or hold out your hand and say, "Can I have _____?"

Skill 7: Invite someone to play or work

Teach this skill if you notice students are not including others in their play or work.

1. Get your friend's attention.
2. Say, "Would you like to _____ with me?"
3. If you have objects or materials, give your friend some.

Skill 8: Ask for help

Teach this skill if students are not asking for help when they are unable to complete a task or need something.

1. Get your friend or an adult's attention.
2. Say, "Please help me _____." or "Can you please help me?"
3. Wait for your friend or an adult to help.

Skill 9: Offer help

Teach this skill if students are not helping others or ignoring peers that needs help.

1. Get your friend's attention.
2. Say, "Can I help?" or "Do you want help?"
3. If your friend says, "Yes," help them; if your friend says, "No," let them keep trying.
4. If your friend still needs help, ask an adult for help.

Skill 10: Give a play or work idea or suggestion

Teach this skill if students are getting into conflicts while playing or working together.

1. Get your friend's attention.
2. Say, "Let's _____," and give your friend an idea or suggestion about what to do with the materials.
3. If your friend has an idea or suggestion, too, listen to them.
4. Make a plan together and keeping playing/working.

Skill 11: Give a compliment

Teach this skill if students are saying negative things about peers' play/work, or they say nothing at all.

1. Get your friend's attention.
2. Say nice things, such as "I like that you _____," "thank you for _____," "I was so happy when you _____," "you made a really cool _____," etc.
3. Give them a thumbs up or high five.

Skill 12: Respond to a friend's request/words appropriately (including responding to a friend's request to stop a behavior).

Teach this skill if students are not honoring the requests of others.

1. When your friend gets your attention, stop what you are doing.
2. Listen to what your friend has to say.
3. If your friend asks for an object or material, give them some, trade, or tell them you will give it to them when you are done.
4. If your friend asks you to stop doing something, stop what you are doing and make an amend (if this skill has been taught).
5. If your friend gives you an object or material, hold out your hand; say, "Thank you" after you get the object or material.
6. If your friend gives you a compliment, say, "Thank you"; give them a compliment back.

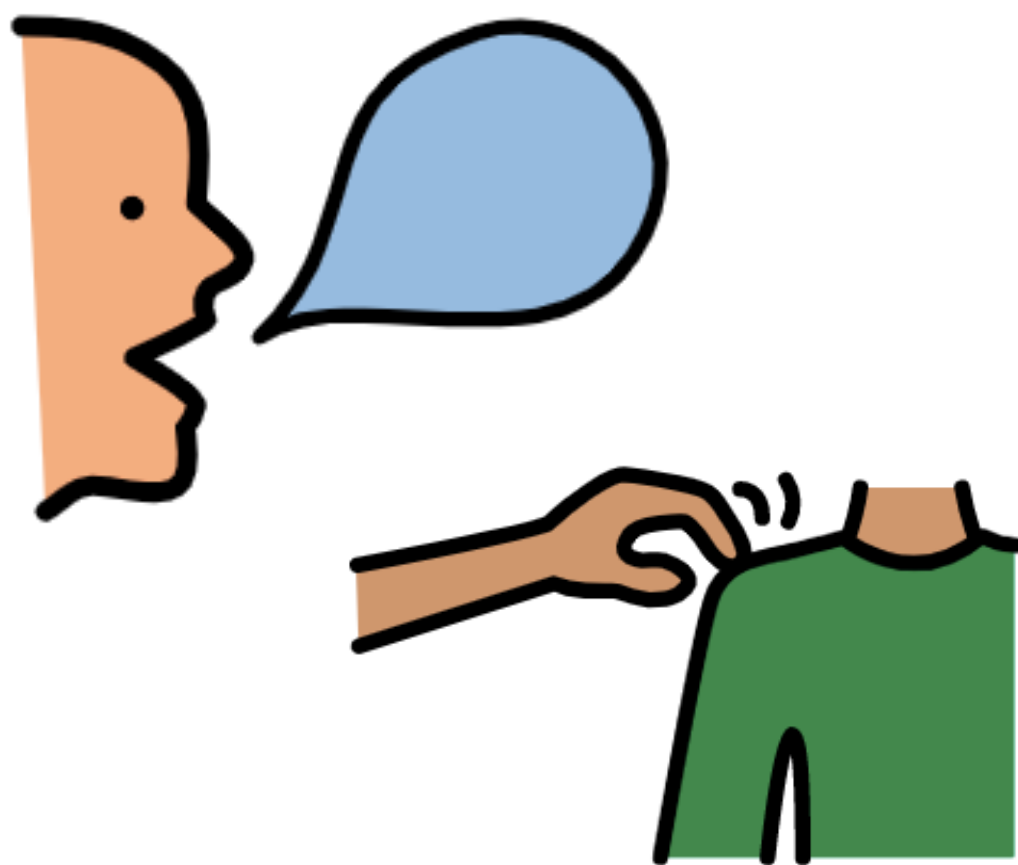
Note: All images used in this document are from Boardmaker 7 (2021).

Greet a friend



Look at your friend, say, “Hi” and your friend’s name, and wave at them.

Get Attention



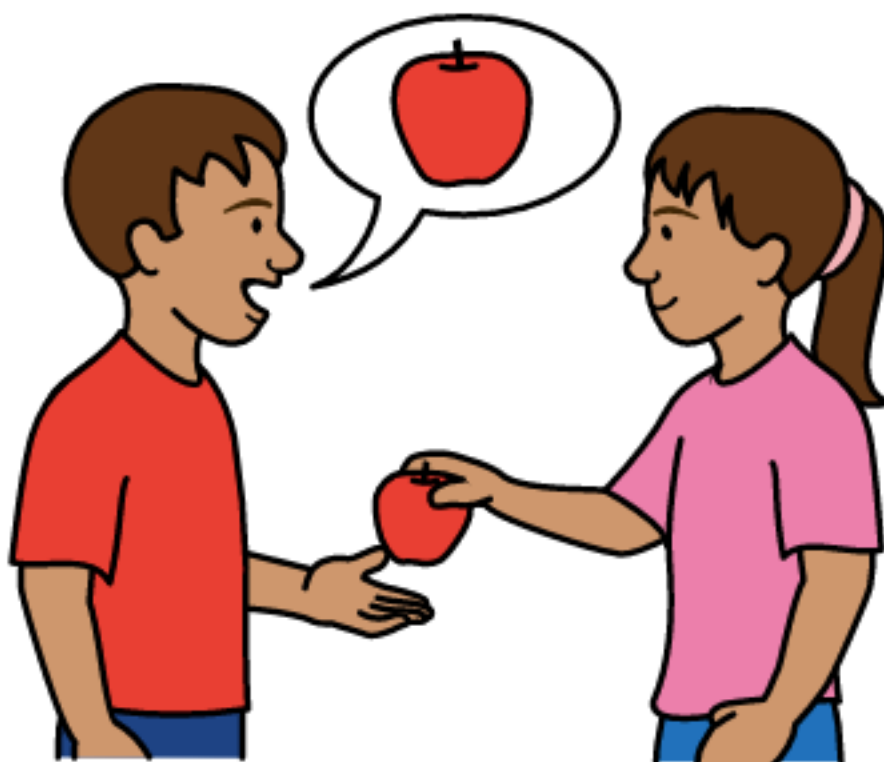
Look at your friend, say their name or "Excuse me," and tap them on the arm.

Give an object



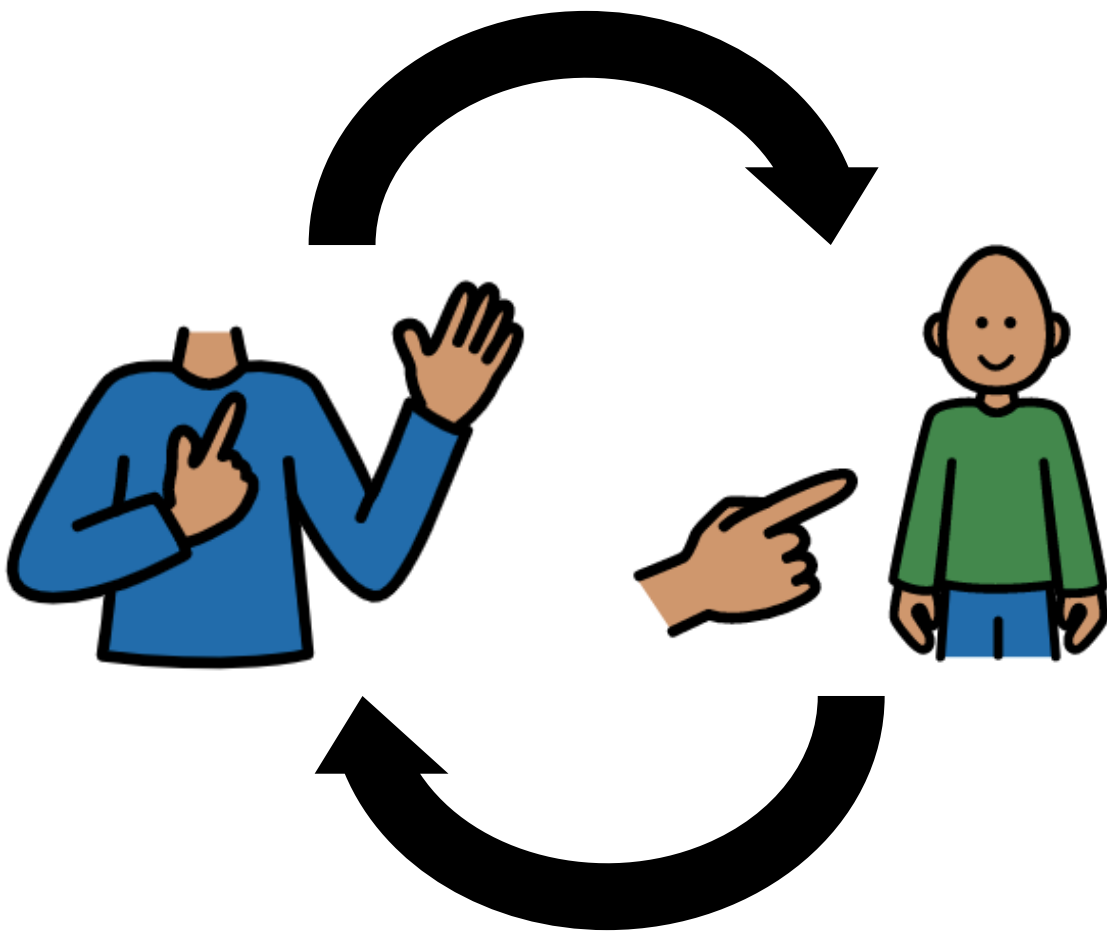
Hold out an object or material, say, “Here,” and put it in your friend’s hand.

Request an object



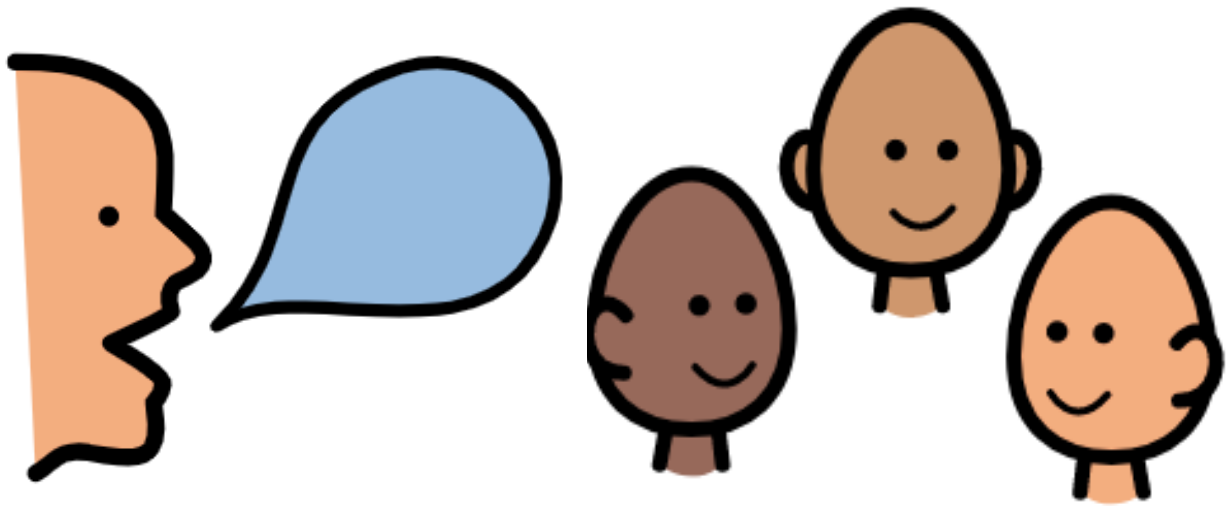
Hold out your hand and ask for the object or material with kind words.

Take turns



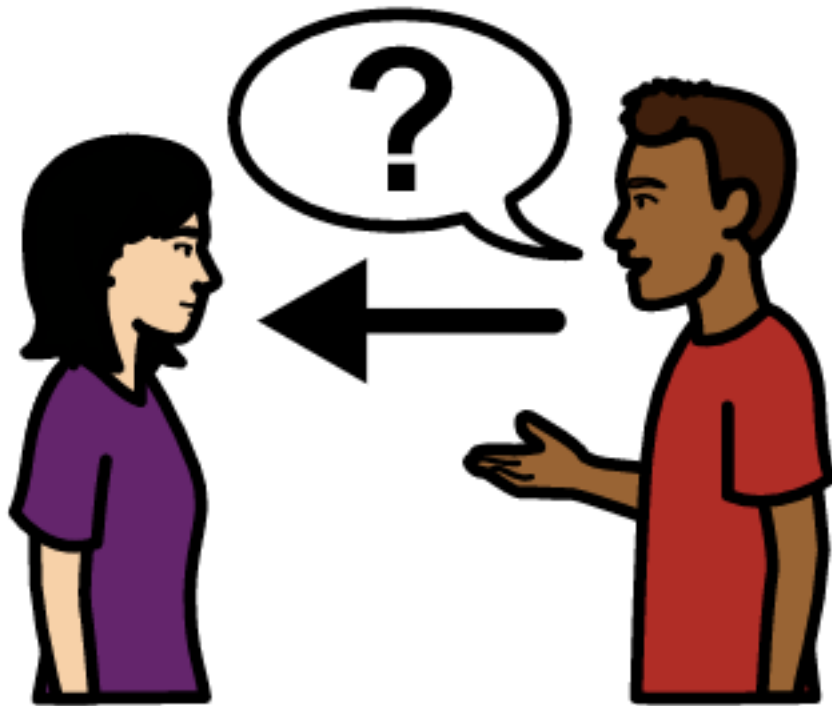
Take a turn with the object or material, pass it to your friend for their turn, and wait for your next turn.

Join a group



Ask, "Can I play/work with you?"

Invite a friend to play or work



Say, "Would you like to _____ with me?"

Ask for help



Say, "Please help me _____" or "Can you please help me?"

Offer help



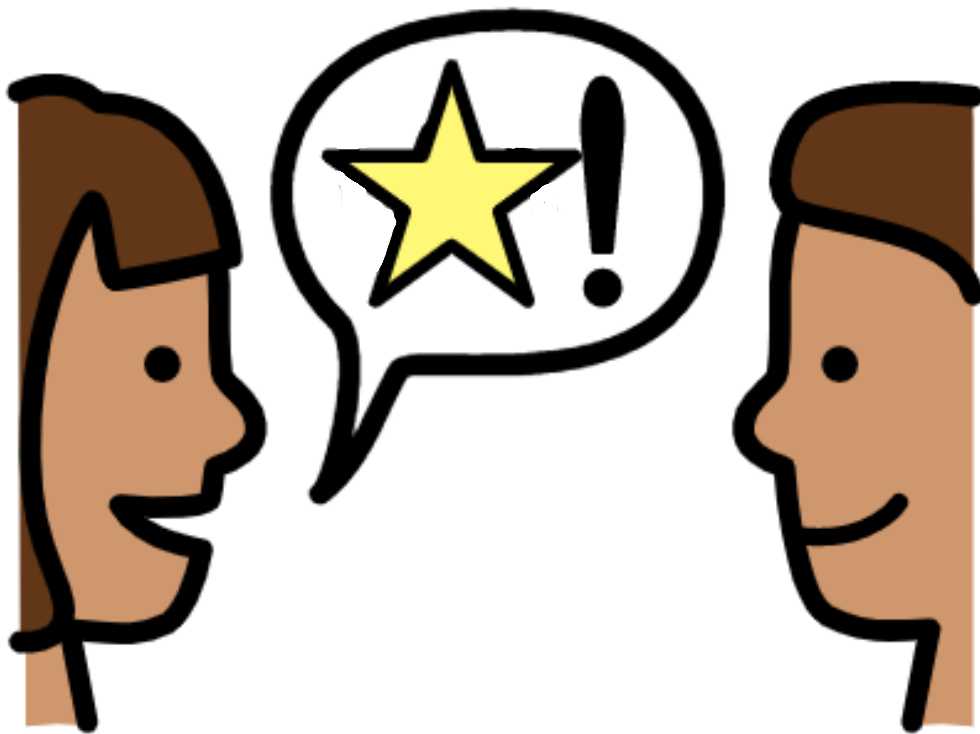
Say, "Can I help you?"
or "Do you want help?"

Give a play or work idea



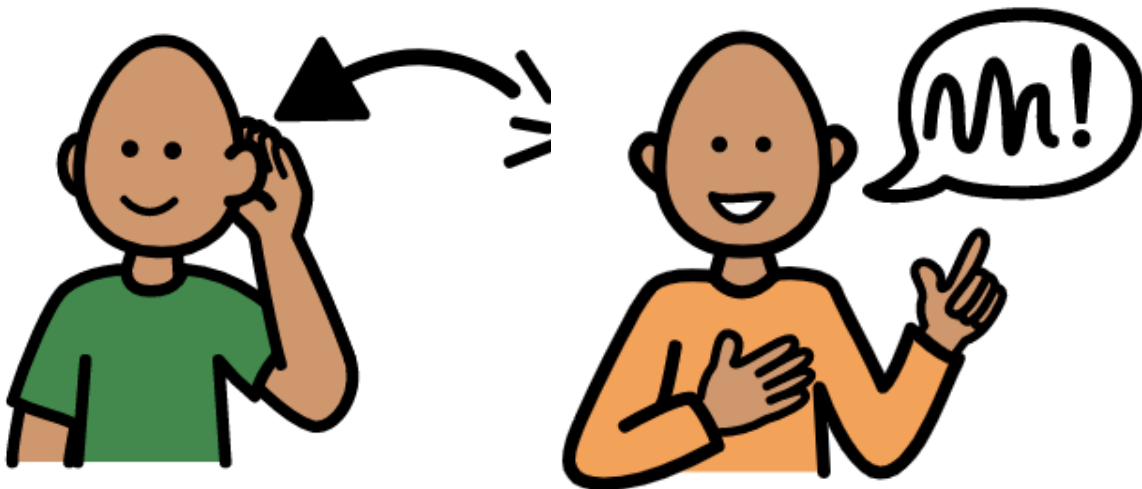
Give your friend an idea about how you can play or work together by saying,
“Let’s _____”

Give a compliment



Tell your friend that they are doing something interesting or making you feel good.

Respond to a friend's request/words



Listen to what your friends are telling or asking you and answer them kindly.