

BLUE JAY NEWS

November 2015

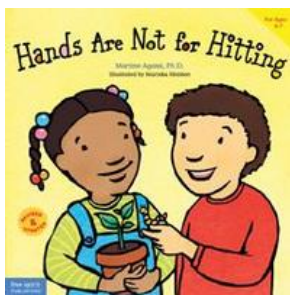
Learning About our Social Selves

Just as the Blue Jays begin to understand who they are as individuals, they must also learn how to navigate social planes. This is a massive undertaking for a person whose number of years on Earth can still be counted on one hand! With this in mind, the Blue Jay educators are making major efforts to facilitate social competencies in the classroom.

The Blue Jays have moved into a new developmental stage of play: games. To function successfully, games rely on rules, cooperation, & flexibility. These necessities can be challenging for a group of preschoolers to maintain over a period of play so game playing presents many opportunities for us to work on conflict management & prosocial behavior. We often hear "___ said I can't play with them!" from distraught children & initially struggled to work the problem without forcing unwilling children to play together. Indeed, it's never enjoyable when someone interrupts us & tries to change everything we were working on! After some trial & error, we discovered that encouraging the excluded child to ask their peers "How can I play with you?" is consistently effective. This question seems to prompt the group to figure out how to work the new child into the game (i.e. "you can be the dad!" or "you can be the airplane pilot!") without further issue. The "how can I play" question is slowly becoming the default discourse among the children.

Another aspect of the social sphere we've been problem solving is friendship. Even the best of friends need distance sometimes, but it's difficult to communicate this gracefully. At this point in their development, the children form dichotomies easily: hot vs. cold, good vs. bad, etc. The gray space, however, is a little more difficult to see at first glance. This (developmentally appropriate) way of thinking incites the children to make statements like "___ isn't my friend" & "___ is my friend," even though the children actually consider all of their classmates their friends! To challenge this way of thinking, the Blue Jay educators have started encouraging the children to say "I need some space" or "You *are* my friend, but right now I want to play by myself/with ___" instead. Speaking to each other in this manner not only helps the children express & respect social boundaries, it also seems to create interactions where feelings are not hurt so badly.

Favorite Books

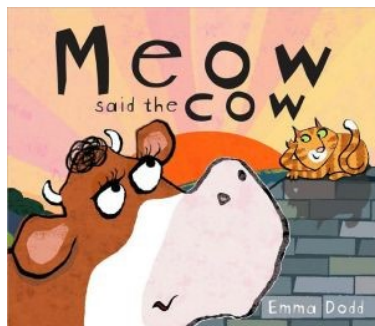


*Hands Are Not
for Hitting*

by

Martine Agassi, Ph.D.

From the
library...
*Meow Said the
Cow*
by
Emma Dodd



Miscellaneous Reminders

- It's time to *replace any summer clothes in your child's cubby* with school-friendly winter clothes.
- If possible, please bring *rain boots & a raincoat* to school on rainy days. This permits us to enjoy the great outdoors comfortably if the rain has stopped or is drizzling.
- Please *lock the door behind you* when you enter or exit the school.
- The Nest Fest is coming up, *purchase your tickets* online or with Kristi. Please collect your *auction donations* & invite your friends to join us. Also, don't forget to sign up for childcare with Trisha in the dining room!
- Be on the look out for an upcoming *Parents' DAY* Out sign-up in late November or early December!