

Peaceful Practices: Creating Group Agreements



Age Range:	Preschool and up
Rationale (Why):	Gives ownership to the group, agreements bind a group together, they help create a group culture and set norms.
Resources:	Educators for Peaceful Classrooms and Communities , Core Training materials, 2025.
Environment set-up, inside and outside:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agreements can be developed and signed either inside or outside, if the environment allows everyone to see, hear and speak.• The agreements apply to all interactions, whether inside or outside.
Materials needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accommodation or modifications: using visuals, pictures• Other: Something to write on that everyone can see, e.g. poster paper

How, Process, Directions

Opening: Introduce the topic	What kind of environment will help all of us feel safe and encourage trusting others? Think about how you hope this space will feel and sound. Establish a set of interaction guidelines which are co-created by the participants (not rules imposed by others).
Explorations: Children's Work	Apply and test the Agreements in a variety of situations.
Wondering Questions — adapt for specific experiences	Examples of open-ended questions: I wonder... <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ...what types of sounds would you like to hear in our space?• ...how do you want to see people treating or being with each other?• ...what do you think is important to you?
The Agreements Process may include the following steps:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brainstorm — Record all suggestions and offer positive language where possible. Encourage everyone to have a voice.• Consolidate group suggestions by categories so that you end up with 5 – 7 agreements.• Discuss — Check for understanding and encourage everyone to have a voice.• Agree — Agreements are a consensus activity. If you need to, review the consensus process before starting.• Sign in an age-appropriate way. Make some ceremony over agreement. For adults this may be verbal or physical. Children often benefit from signing the agreement document as it formalizes the commitment, feels empowering, and can be referred to when needed.• Post in a visible place (e.g. classroom wall at children's eye level) or otherwise make available. Making the Agreements an authority moves us from Power-On to Power-With. Being able to refer to them in problem solving is invaluable.
Extended opportunities	In what other settings could you use agreements?
Closing reflection	We will use these agreements for a week, then revisit them and adjust as needed.
Final notes	How long it takes depends on the ages, numbers and how safe the participants feel to participate. It is time consuming but saves a lot of time later.