

Peaceful Practices: Playing for Peace — Using Children’s Literature to Promote Play



Age Range:	All, including adults
Rationale (Why):	Play can be used to intentionally promote peaceful interactions through building trust, sharing authority, communication, planning together, resolving differences, building community. “Play is the way we learn to make sense of the world.”
Resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Music: See Music List of resources (PDF)• Books: See Book List of resources (PDF)• Games: Cooperative Games (PDF) that help build community by including everyone: “no losers”
Environment set-up, inside and outside:	A child-oriented environment, inside and out, helps children understand that they are empowered to be curious, solve problems of all sorts, learn, and enjoy being together.
Materials needed:	Materials: Quality children’s literature Accommodation or modifications: Including everyone may require consideration of special needs such as, when reading a story, moving a child with vision concerns up to the front, being certain that everyone can hear, and that all are comfortable.

How, Process, Directions

Opening: Introduce the topic	Read stories that welcome all, build community, and solve problems. <i>The Big Umbrella</i> , by Amy June Bates and Juniper Bates is an example of a wonderful story that involves inclusion, diversity, and equity as everyone who wishes to be included under the big red umbrella is welcome no matter size, color, number of feet... there is space for everyone!!! For more books: See Book List (PDF) .
Explorations: Children’s Work	Set up opportunities for children to explore, create, manage, organize... their time, materials, and interactions. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Making space at the snack table for everyone to sit and enjoy snack together.• Bringing a relevant concern or problem to the group to be studied and managed or solved.• Add materials to the dramatic play areas around themes that relate to the interests of the children.
Wondering Questions — adapt for specific experiences	Examples of open-ended questions: I wonder... <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ...where you would like to play today?• ...who you would like to play with?• ...what would you like to play with?

Extended opportunities

Select books that reflect the play, problems or issues that the children are encountering or working through.

Closing reflection

In the group setting, review any interesting and insightful things that took place... with children's input.

Notes to share with other teachers and families

Classroom notes describing how the activities that engaged the children in play were really based on learning to be peaceful together. Peace is based upon trust, welcoming one and all, cherishing the contributions everyone makes, offering help and support, as we come together with all our gifts and differences.

Final notes

Have fun!