

After the Buzz, social thinking ideas for parents and caregivers

From *What's the Buzz?* for Early Learners: A complete social skills foundation course



Lesson 1: Meeting friends and discovering differences!

After the Buzz presents ideas for parents, guardians and educators to encourage the generalisation of the social thinking the children have learnt in the session. Children rely on our commitment to consolidate these skills by modelling them, and emphasising the language and the ideas used in the lesson. Here are a few practical ideas parents can do at home to support the quality of their child's social thinking based on Lesson one, 'Meeting friends and discovering differences!'



Find an investment

In our experience the children who make better progress are those who come along with a small personal investment about developing their social thinking. As a parent, or an educator, how do you manoeuvre children to want to improve? The answer is deceptively simple and often overlooked.

Briefly discuss with them just one skill that could do with a little strengthening or fine-tuning. Is it meeting people, keeping friends, fixing upsets with others, being happy, dealing with worry, sharing or being too bossy? Provide an example to tune them into a time when such a skill could have really helped them out! That's it. There's no more to it. Then, let *'What's the Buzz?'* with its playful and connecting approach, gradually work its magic.

Before the lesson

Prior to the lesson take a few moments to read it. By doing so you'll know exactly what your child will be learning. Buy or borrow a copy of the book to help you become familiar with its content and intent. Talk to your child about the lesson's topic. Avoid going on and on with tedious details – simply tune them in so they develop a mindset to receive the information and gain maximum benefit.

After the lesson

Follow up on what happened at *'What's the Buzz?'* However, be clever how you do this. Instead of asking, "What did you do?" or "What did you learn?" which invariably leads to, "nothing" or "I can't remember," you might ask, "What did Archie look like?" or "Hey, what did Archie like that you like?" or "Do friends always have to like the same things?" Well placed questions prompt children to think about the focus of the lesson and nudge the expansion of their social thinking. This is important to help them begin to transfer or generalise the skill from one situation to another.

Ask your child share their 'Likes and Dislikes' with you, and share a few of yours as well.

Develop a big book or video diary

Never hesitate to take a photo of your child re-enacting an activity or role-play from *'Show me the Buzz?'* Add captions and speech bubbles to highlight the vital social messages. Alternatively, develop a video diary by using your iPad, camera or smartphone. It is great fun to rework together the role-plays your child has been involved in. This is such an appealing way to re-experience and strengthen the key social principle from each lesson. In essence, you'll be creating a social story, which is away to explain the social world to children and teach them what to do,

when to do it, how to do it and why do it. They give the rules and guidance about making of appropriate choices. For an original explanation of social stories and loads of help; <http://www.thegraycenter.org/social-stories/what-are-social-stories>.

Invite your child to share the GROUP VALUES

Ask them why the group has group values and how will they help everyone to get along? This may be a perfect moment to develop your own FAMILY RULES or values. After all, rules help to keep each of us safe, sociable and responsible for what we do. They highlight how-to treat and live with one another by delivering expectations, structure and predictability. So, begin by putting to your children, the question; "What rules do you think will help our family live happily together?" Just as you know what is likely to help, so will they.

Typical example of 'FAMILY RULES'

We tell the truth
We are kind to each other
We listen
We are helpful
We fix mistakes we make

Finally, take a photograph of everyone in the family with their agreed GROUP VALUES giving it their thumbs up. Display them in a prominent place at home. Review them every few months.

Congratulations

Be sure to congratulate your child on completing their first '*What's the Buzz?*' lesson. Tell them how keen you are to learn more about Archie and how-to be the best friend you can be. Let them know that you're relying on bringing home some good tips for you!