THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-IMAGE

The way we perceive ourselves as a person and what we believe about the way others see us is our self-image. This self-portrait, this feeling we have about ourselves, influences the way we think and behave.

Michele and Craig Borba, research psychologists, have observed that:

1. Self-image is acquired, not inherited.
2. Self-image guides thinking and behavior.
4. Self-image plays a role in the kind of friends, type of job, and the spouse a person chooses.

The child with low self-esteem may exhibit one or more of the following behavior characteristics:

1. **Boisterous and Overbearing:** This compensative behavior often disguises inner feelings of insecurity and low self-esteem.

2. **Indecisive:** The child unable to make decisions or unwilling to take reasonable risks may have been overprotected or could be avoiding ridicule or being rebuked. Alternatively, this behavior may be imitating a vacillating role model.

3. **Passive or Disinterested:** This child is reluctant to engage in an exchange of opinions.

4. **Fear of Failure:** No matter what the activity is, the child greets it with expressions like, "I don't like that" or "I can't." This behavior may result from a series of failures or low self-esteem, but it may also be manipulative, attention-seeking behavior.

5. **Timid and Insecure:** This child is unwilling to undertake new activities or is withdrawn or standoffish in social settings.

The young child may exhibit any of these behavior characteristics at one time or another. The infrequent occurrence is normal, but when the behavior occurs with any degree of regularity, it is time for the group leader to become concerned and begin to probe for the underlying causes. Several questions that may be asked are:

1. What prompted that action?
2. Is it harmful?
3. How does this child feel about himself or herself?
4. How can I help this child to overcome this potentially harmful behavior?
5. What kinds of physical, social, and emotional experiences will help this child build self-confidence and increase self-esteem?

The child's self-esteem is molded by experiences. The successful social experience results in good feelings and attitudes. The child having good relationships with family and others might be heard saying, "I like being with my friends," "My family is just great," or "I have fun at school." The child with disappointing or unrewarding social experiences may be
withdrawn or heard to say things like, "Nobody likes me," "I have no friends," "Do I have to go with them?" or "Well, who cares that I didn't get to go." The group leader should be aware of these signs and should help the child get involved in activities that will positively influence the "social self."

The child's physical appearance and manual dexterity have a strong bearing on self-esteem. Successful "physical self" experiences result in increased self-esteem and a greater willingness to participate in physical and social activities. The positive comments might be "I like volleyball," "We had lots of fun doing that," "Boy, I'm getting good at baseball." Bad experiences result in avoidance behavior and expressions like "I can't," "I don't like that," or "Who cares."

The child's academic ability and level of achievement in learning activities influence the image of the "thinking self." A good understanding of the basic concepts in reading, writing, computing, and other academic subjects will result in positive attitudes and comments like, "I really enjoy reading," "Learning geography or (history) is fun," or "Boy, this math is easy." Poor performance, ridicule, or rebuke results in poor thinking self-images. The resulting comments are: "I can't," or "I don't want to." It is up to the group leader to see that the high achiever is adequately challenged and that the low achiever or the child with low self-esteem has the opportunity to experience success and positive achievement by engaging in well-chosen activity that builds on existing strengths and strengthens known weaknesses.
BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM IN THE GROUP

Group leaders can help children change poor self-image at any age, but in so doing, they must keep three important points in mind.

1. The group leader must value the child as an important individual and consistently, at each session, encourage and help the child develop the feelings of self-worth, self-esteem, or self-image that is extremely important to personal adjustment.

2. The group leader must realize that change in the child is usually a very slow process. Helping a child improve a poor self-image is not easy and requires nurturing if the child is to grow emotionally.

3. The group leader's attitude and the group environment are very important in helping a child develop a more positive self-image.

   a. The Group Leader's Attitude: A group leader becomes a "significant other" to the child when the child values the leader as a person who cares, and when the child feels he is accepted and respected by the leader. It is important that the teacher's attitude invites and nurtures feelings of self-worth and self-esteem in the child. Since the leader's attitudes are influenced by their own feelings of competency and self-worth, and by their feelings toward the children they are working with, it is crucial that the group leader have a keen awareness of who they are and what their strengths are so they can feel good about themselves. According to Michele and Craig Borba, a group leader who hopes to help a child improve his or her self-image possesses these qualities:

      1) A genuine interest and concern for the child.
      2) A rapport with the child so that the child feels the leader is a significant person to him or her.
      3) A genuine recognition of the positive qualities of the child.
      4) An understanding that the child feels very poorly about himself or herself.
      5) A real belief that the child's self-image can change.
      6) A willingness to make the effort and take the time to help the child feel better about himself or herself.
      7) The self-trust and self-respect to be confident that he or she can be instrumental in helping the child improve a poor self-image.

   b. The Group Environment

The group leader must create an environment of mutual support and caring, a place where kids can feel secure and comfortable. Only when such an environment exists, will specific self-esteem activities be effective, regardless of the cost of the activities. According to Michele and Craig Borba, groups which promote positive self-building can usually be described using these words:
1) Accepting
2) Encouraging
3) Kid oriented
4) Inviting
5) Warm
6) Happy
7) Comfortable
8) Positive
9) Caring
10) Encouraging
11) Nonthreatening
12) Trusting
13) Involving
14) Nonjudgmental
15) Secure
16) Nurturing

According to Dr. Harold J. Cornacchia, environments that are most effective in enhancing self-esteem and improving self-image are those in which:

1. Children perceive a sense of warmth and love.
2. Children are offered a degree of security which allows them to grow and to try new things without an overriding concern about failure.
3. Children are respected as individuals.
4. Children's ideas and initiative are encouraged.
5. Children are invited to express opinions.
6. Children recognize that there are clear and definite limits within the environment.
7. Rules and standards are reasonable and consistently enforced.
8. Children have a chance to succeed at their own levels.
INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE GROUP LEADER

Remember -

1. Research shows that you can change self-esteem. This change can be positive or negative. As "significant other," you determine which direction the change goes.

2. Situational specifics are possible - you can help a child with an unhappy home situation feel better about herself or himself at school.

3. The early years are the crucial ones for self-esteem building. It is during these years that you can do the most to help children feel good about themselves.

4. Change won't be easy - don't kid yourself, or expect too much too soon. Change takes place slowly. Be patient - it's worth it.

5. Provide as many opportunities for children to succeed as you can.

6. A positive attitude really is contagious! If children hear you consistently saying positive things to others in the group, they will begin to verbalize and feel the positive, too. In no time, they'll be passing it on to others.

7. You can't always be a bubbly, positive, effective educator. Keep in mind that while you're in the business of boosting children's feelings about themselves, sometimes you can use some boosting, too. Finding a support system of your own can be very helpful.

8. It is essential that you work at creating an environment of mutual support and caring, a place where kids can feel secure and comfortable. Each day remind yourself of how important this is. Try to start out each group on a positive, happy note by deliberately greeting each child in the group with a caring statement. The important thing is that children begin to gain an awareness of who they are and what their strengths are so they can feel good about themselves.
Listed below are ideas of ways to organize your group curriculum. Included are general topics to be covered in each lesson. Activities should be designed to achieve understanding of that topic.

**Preschool Curriculum**

1. The Special Me
2. All About Me
3. My Family
4. My Friends
5. My Feelings
6. How I See Me

**Kindergarten Curriculum**

1. Getting Acquainted
2. Me
3. Feelings
4. Feelings and Behavior
5. Limits and Rules
6. The Family I Live In
7. Friends
8. Talking and Sharing with Others

**First Grade Curriculum**

1. Getting Acquainted
2. Feelings
3. Unpleasant Feelings
4. Families
5. Friendships
6. Blaming
7. Limits and Rules
8. Choices

**Second Grade Curriculum**

1. Getting Acquainted
2. My Many Feelings
3. Hiding Feelings
4. Rules
5. Decisions
6. Friendships
7. Family Relationships
8. Handling Stress

**Third Grade Curriculum**

1. Getting to Know You
2. The Real Me
3. Brothers and Sisters
4. Feelings
5. Feelings About School
6. Feelings About Family
7. Listening
8. Belonging

**Fourth Grade Curriculum**

1. Getting Acquainted
2. Self-Concept
3. Interest and Abilities
4. Giving and Receiving Compliments
5. Awareness of Feelings
6. Communication Skills
7. Problem Solving
8. Wellness
Fifth Grade Curriculum
1. Getting Acquainted
2. Knowing Yourself
3. Knowing Your Feelings
4. Handling Everyday Pressures
5. Choices and Decision Making
6. Rules and Limit Setting
7. Goal Setting
8. Asking for Help

Sixth Grade Curriculum
1. Getting Acquainted
2. Developing Self-Understanding
3. Developing Understanding of Others
4. Recognizing Where You Fit In
5. Group Dynamics and Implications
6. Setting Realistic Goals
7. Problem Solving Styles
8. Evaluating Consequences
TITLE: I'm Special

OBJECTIVE: To build a positive self-image.

PROCEDURE: To encourage and develop self-awareness, have each child, in turn, tell one or two ways he or she is special. Make suggestions to those children who hesitate: "You make friends easily." "You sing well." "You paint lovely pictures." Write what each child says on a separate sheet of drawing paper and put his/her name on it. Have them use crayons to make special faces and bodies on the drawing paper. The finished product can be displayed on a bulletin board or taken home.

MATERIALS: Crayons and 9" x 12" construction paper.
TITLE: Feelings

OBJECTIVE: To recognize and accept and learn to express emotions in an appropriate way.

PROCEDURE: Choose a Snoopy picture that you like. Think of a time when you felt the way Snoopy feels in your picture. Describe that feeling without saying what the mood is. You may also describe your facial expressions or how you move your body, hands, etc., when you are feeling that way.

OR

Choose a feeling (it might help to think of a situation in which you felt that way) and acted out in front of your family of friends. Use exaggerated facial and body expressions - but no talking aloud! See if your audience can identify the feeling you are trying to express.

OR

An activity that really puts you in touch with your feelings: The sign that expresses your feelings of the day, hour, or moment! For example: "I am feeling cuddly - hug me!" or "I'm feeling grouchy - don't bug me!"
TITLE: "Me" Bags

OBJECTIVE: To help children realize their uniqueness as people and help them develop a sense of personal pride.

PROCEDURE: Follow the steps below to prepare a bag for each child or help the child prepare their own bag.

1. Draw a circle large enough to fit around the child's neck in the center of the bottom of the bag.

2. Draw a straight line from the edge of the bag right up the middle of one side of the bag. Continue this line at the bottom of the bag until it meets the circle.

3. Cut along the straight line and cut out the circle.

4. Draw and then cut out two oval arm holes, one on each of the narrow sides of the bag. The holes should be large enough for the child to be able to put his or her arms through them comfortably.

5. Add fringe by cutting two or three inch slashes close together along the bottom of the "vest.".

6. Carefully turn the bag inside out so that the inside of the bag becomes the outside of the vest.

The "bags" are now ready to be decorated. Provide an assortment of paper and other decorating materials. Direct the children to design their vest to show things that are special about themselves. They may represent these things using magazine pictures, cut and pasted paper scrap pictures, crayon, and felt pen drawings. Some things that children might depict
include: family members, pets, a musical instrument played, a favorite place to visit, favorite toys, favorite sports. The important thing is for each child to have a finished product he or she is proud of.

**MATERIALS:** You will need large, brown grocery bags for each child and an assortment of magazines, paper scraps, and other decorating materials.
TITLE: How Do We Feel?

OBJECTIVE: To help children develop self-understanding by giving them opportunities to identify feelings, as well as allowing them to see that others have feelings similar to and different from their own.

PROCEDURE: Give each child a seven inch by two inch strip of tagboard which represent happy, sad, silly, mad, scared, and puzzled feelings. Have each child attach a "clippy clothespin" to the strip below the faces after the group leader has read one of the open-ended sentences.

MATERIALS: Tagboard with "feeling faces" and "clippy clothespins."

During the opening group activity, read one of the following open statements aloud.

1. School makes me feel ...
2. Friends make me feel ...
3. When I walk in front of the class, I feel ...
4. During reading, I feel ...
5. During recess, I feel ...
6. When I share, I feel ...
7. When I'm with my family, I feel ...
8. When I'm in the dark, I feel ...
9. When my friend is sick, I feel ...
10. When no one plays with me, I feel ...

Have each child position the paper clip under the face which best represents his or her feelings in the situation posed. Allow the children to show their strips to each other.
TITLE: Graffiti Wall

OBJECTIVE: To get kids involved in exploring and understanding their own feelings.

PROCEDURE: Make several brick walls that allow written comments (graffiti-style) of situations and things that elicit a particular emotion. The wall might be labeled, "These things make me feel bored" - or "Happiness is - ."
SELF-COLLLAGE

Use words or pictures to describe yourself. Add something to each section of the mirror to "reflect" your true personality.
BUILDING BLOCKS

Think about who you are and the words that describe you. Then write a word in each of the boxes below and tell why it describes you.
TITLE: Growing Time

OBJECTIVE: To have children take a look at personal "positives."

PROCEDURE: 1. Trace around a circle pattern on yellow construction paper.
2. Take a tagboard circle for the center of your flower and eight tagboard petals.
3. Write your name on one of the petals.
4. Think about what makes you happy. Whom do you like to be with? What do you like to do? What places do you like to go to?
5. Write about each thing that makes you happy on a different petal.
6. Make the yellow center of your flower look like a face.
7. Paste each petal to the circle.
8. Tack your flower to the bulletin board.

MATERIALS: Construction paper, tagboard, crayon or pen, scissors, and paste.
"Magic" Circles

OBJECTIVE: To help children discover more about themselves - their strengths, feelings, preferences, weaknesses - as well as discovering more about their classmates.

PROCEDURE: During circle time, the children gather in a circle and concentrate their thoughts and activities on one specific idea or concept. Children seem to look forward to circle time, since it is generally a happy occasion when they have a chance to build each other up.

To ensure good circle times, establish and explain the following ground rules to the children.

Rule 1. Remain seated in the place you chose. Sitting in a circle is preferable, since it is informal and helps the children feel more comfortable about speaking in front of the group. Once they have chosen their places, have the children sprinkle a little pretend glue on the floor to remind them not to move around during the discussion.

Rule 2. Make only nice, friendly, true comments.

Rule 3. Talk only when it's your turn. Use a pass around prop to remind the group whose turn it is to speak.

Rule 4. Plan your comment or answer during "thinking time." To move circle discussions along, allow a few minutes early in each session as thinking time.

Rule 5. Put your hands on your head while instructions are given. This posture helps children concentrate and remember your instructions.
"Magic" Circle Topics (continued)

Any of the topics listed below or any of the other topics and ideas in this section may be used for circle time discussions. Introduce only one main topic for each circle time. For instance, you may have the children discuss things they're proud of. After introducing the topic and giving the children a few minutes of thinking time, invite each child to mention one thing he or she is proud of.

The following circle topics will help develop self-awareness and feelings of self-worth.

1. I'm happiest when...
2. I feel so mad inside when...
3. I wish I could...
4. Two of my favorite things are...
5. I'd sure like it if...
6. I like to be with...
7. The best thing about school is...
8. If I were a teacher, I'd...
9. Sometimes I feel...
10. The best thing about home is...
11. I like to be with people who...
12. Sometimes I get scared when...
13. I hate it when...
14. I'm really good at...
15. It's hard for me when...
16. I like to...
17. Something I once did all by myself was...
18. I like to think about...
19. I love...
20. I wish grown ups would...
21. It's easy for me to...
22. I wish it were easier for me to...
23. I like to hear people tell me...
24. My favorite part of the day is...
25. I was really sorry I...
26. I felt really proud the time I...
27. Something I'd like to learn about is...
28. I wish I could change...
29. The best thing that could happen to me would be...
30. I don't like it when people...
31. My best friend...
32. Right now I feel...
33. I'm happy that...
34. I wish my parents knew...
35. Someday I hope...
36. I'm best when...
37. I would like to...
38. My favorite sport is...
39. A funny thing that happened to me once was...
40. A part of me that I like is...
41. When I'm big, I...
42. My favorite color is...
43. If I had a magic carpet, I'd...
Handouts for Self-Concept Growth

MY GOALS FOR THE YEAR

This year in school I would like to do better in:

1. _______________________________________________________________________
2. _______________________________________________________________________
3. _______________________________________________________________________

This year at home I would like to try harder to:

1. _______________________________________________________________________
2. _______________________________________________________________________
3. _______________________________________________________________________

THE STRONG ME

1. In school my best subject is _______________________________________________________________________
2. The game or sport I play best is _______________________________________________________________________
3. My friends think I am great at _______________________________________________________________________
4. I know someone who is proud of me! That someone is __________ (name) _______________________________________________________________________
   (she or he) is proud of me because I _______________________________________________________________________
5. These are the people I help _______________________________________________________________________
6. I can show ______________________________________________________________________ how to ______________________________________________________________________
MY SPECIAL INTERESTS

1. I enjoy collecting ____________________________________________.

2. I take __________________ lessons.

3. I belong to this club or group: __________________________________.

4. I think it would be fun to learn more about ____________________________________________.

5. I have been doing:

   __________________________________ At home
   __________________________________ At school
   __________________________________ With my friends
   __________________________________ With my family
   __________________________________ All myself

SOMEONE SPECIAL

(Pick someone in your family to tell about: your mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, aunt, or uncle.)

1. His/her name is ____________________________________________________.

2. He/she helps me to do these things: ____________________________________________

   __________________________________
   __________________________________
   __________________________________

3. He/she is special to me because ____________________________________________.

4. I like to go __________________________ with him/her.

5. His/her favorites:

   __________________________________ Food
   __________________________________ Book
   __________________________________ Hobby
   __________________________________ Television Show
MY FEELINGS ABOUT SCHOOL

1. I am in the _______ grade.

2. The name of my school is ________________________________.

3. My teacher's name is ________________________________.

4. The best day I had in school this year was ________________________________.

5. The worst day I had in school this year was ________________________________.

6. I would not have had this bad day if ________________________________.

MY SUPER FAVORITES

1. My favorite color is ________________________________.

2. My favorite place is ________________________________.

3. My favorite animal is ________________________________.

4. My favorite sound is ________________________________.

5. My favorite smell is ________________________________.

6. Here are pictures of my favorite:
   (Draw your picture.)
SPECIAL FEELINGS

1. On the first day of school, this is how I feel:

2. When someone says something nice about me, this is how I feel:

3. When I have a fight, this is how I feel:

4. When I do something good, this is how I feel:
MY MANY FEELINGS

I have many feelings:

1. One time I felt very sad when:

2. One time I felt very silly when:

3. One time I felt very scared when:

4. One time I felt very important when:

Here is a picture of the time I felt very important.
Activities to Improve Relationships and Interactions with Family and Friends

Relationships play a significant role in the development of self-concept. Every interaction - friendly or not - helps children better understand their social world. Through the feedback they receive from others, children paint a picture of how others perceive them and thus learn to view themselves as others do. Providing children with activities designed to help them think about their interactions with others allows them to form a clearer picture of themselves and a better understanding of the social world in which they live.

Children learn to interact with others by being with others. The more cooperative experiences children have, the better they will be at friendship making. The following activities will help enhance children's interaction skills.
TITLE: Hanging Positive Comments

PROCEDURE: Hang a clothesline across a window area or from one side of the room to another. Provide several different tagboard clothes shapes, such as, dresses, shirts, pants, and socks. Also provide an assortment of colored paper, scissors, felt pens, and clothespins. Tell the children that whenever they hear someone make a happy, positive comment or see someone do a special friendly deed, they may then write the friendly doer's name and the statement of the deed on the piece of clothing and hang it on the line with a clothespin.

MATERIALS: Clothesline or string, colored paper, scissors, felt pen, and "clippy clothespins"
TITLE: Friendly Pins

OBJECTIVE: To encourage friendships and recognition of friendly deeds.

PROCEDURE: Duplicate a supply of "Friendly Pins" below and place the pins in a designated, accessible location. Inform the children that you are granting them a special, new power. Explain that each time a classmate makes an especially thoughtful or kind statement or gesture, they may award that person a friendly pin. Show the children how to attach the pin by using a small piece of tape, folded over, and affixed to the back of the pin. To make sure that all of the children receive a pin, you may wish to have frequent pin days. Be sure to distribute several awards yourself to children who rarely receive that honor.

MATERIALS: "Friendly Pins" and tape.
TITLE: Happy Thoughts for One Another

OBJECTIVE: To initiate positive communication among students and to encourage growth of self-esteem.

PROCEDURE: Decorate the outside of the container using construction paper or wallpaper. Place a hole punch and yarn in assorted colors near the tree. Prepare a supply of construction paper Happy Thought Cards in assorted colors and shapes. To add variety, scallop the edges of some and use pinking shears to cut others out.

Tell them that each time someone says a happy thought, they are to write the thought and the name of the classmate on one of their cards. Then they are to punch a hole in the top of the card and use yarn to attach it to the tree. Soon the tree will be blossoming with happy thoughts.

1. Find a sturdy but dead tree branch.
2. Paint or spray it with paint.
3. "Plant" the tree in the can by pouring gravel or wet plaster around the base of the tree.
4. Use string to hang thoughts from the tree.

MATERIALS: Tree branch, thought cards, paint, and string.
TITLE: Share a Friend

OBJECTIVE: To encourage positive relationships among students.

PROCEDURE: Discuss with the children things that are most valuable to them. After they have offered a few suggestions, ask them if they think that all valuable things can be bought with money. Ask what things special to them cannot be bought with money. Lead the children to the issue of the value of friends. At this point, you may wish to ask them what is valuable or special about a friend. Write their answers on the chalkboard or on a large chart to be referred to during friendship activities. Inform the children that next week (specify a date and time), they will have a chance to share their valuable friends with one another. Explain that not all friends need to be in the group. Ask the children to give examples of friends that are not in the group or in their classes, such as, parents, teachers, a pet, a neighbor, a special adult. When sharing day comes, each child should bring his or her friend (if possible) or a photograph or a drawing of him or her to school and explain to the rest of the group why the person is a special and valuable friend.
TITLE: What Is a Friend?

OBJECTIVE: To allow group members an opportunity to think about their feelings, their thoughts, and their hopes concerning the friends they interact with.

PROCEDURE: Have students give their responses to the following sentences:

1. My best friend is . . .
2. I am a good friend when . . .
3. I like my friends because . . .
4. I could be a better friend if . . .
5. My friends think I'm good at . . .
6. I make new friends by . . .
7. The things I look for in a friend are . . .
8. I can tell that someone likes me when . . .
9. When I am with my friend I feel . . .
10. I wish my friends would . . .
11. My favorite thing to do with a friend is . . .
Activities to Improve Children's Skills in Confronting and Solving Problems

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE GROUP LEADER

Each of us is constantly confronted with one kind of problem or another. Certainly, one of the most frustrating tasks for a teacher or parent is that of dealing with the child who has a problem. Far too often, we find ourselves guilty of a common error—trying to solve our children's difficulties for them. This approach certainly alleviates the tensions of the moment, but think about what it does for the child. By solving a child's problem, we instill the attitude that someone else will always "fix it." Since problems are an inevitable part of life, one of the best things we can do for children is to teach them ways to solve their own problems. If we can convey that there are alternatives and means of coping with frustrations—no matter how big or how small—we've taught our children a most valuable lesson.

The purpose of the activities in this section is to improve children's skills in confronting and solving problems, so that when they meet problems in their own lives they will have the confidence to say, "I can solve this myself!"

Use the activities and suggestions in this section to fit your needs and the needs of your students.
TITLE: Problem Solving

OBJECTIVE: To help children gain insight in solving problems.

PROCEDURE: Compile a list of problems appropriate to the age of the children you are dealing with. Write each problem on a separate card and put it in a small card file or box "labeled" problems. The problems most appropriate to the children are those real-life situations that they deal with daily. Children should also be able to add problem situations to the file.
TITLE: Role Playing

OBJECTIVE: To help children gain insight into solving problems.

PROCEDURE: Compile a list of warmup situations and write each one on a separate card. Have a child choose a card and read the situation (or have it read to him/her). Allow a few minutes of thinking time. When the child has thought of a solution to the problem, have him or her "show" the solution to the class. Repeat this procedure for each child involved in the warmup.

ROLE PLAYING SITUATIONS

1. You have bubble gum stuck to your mouth and nose.
2. Your bike has a flat tire and you need to deliver your papers.
3. Your cat is stuck in a tree.
4. Your foot fell through the hole in the ice.
5. Your combination won't work on your bike lock.

Role playing differs from both acting out stories and creative dramatics in that it requires children to think of and act out solutions to problems and to evaluate the solutions. Consider the following suggestions for effective role playing:

1. Wait until the group members are acquainted and at ease with one another before you introduce role playing.
2. Anticipate some self-consciousness (evidenced, perhaps, by giggling and silliness) when you first introduce role playing. Tell the children that you felt awkward the first time you role played, too. Then remind them that the purpose of the activity is to see if there solutions really work and that role playing gives them a chance to try their ideas. In the beginning, ease their discomfort by serving as the warmup model yourself, demonstrating role-playing techniques.
3. Always choose a problem or story situation that is relevant to the children's lives and that have a number of realistic, but not obvious, solutions. Any of the problems in their everyday life may be role played.
4. Avoid role playing situations that might invade a child's privacy. When misunderstandings occur or feelings get hurt, be warm, sensitive, and responsive.
5. Make sure that the children understand that the purpose of role playing is to find solutions to a given problem and that, therefore, they must deal with the situation as it is rather than changing it in order to create a solution.

6. Invite children to volunteer to role play, but only after they have thought of a possible solution.

7. Caution children not to hurt one another physically, especially when role playing situations become very active.

8. Involve the children who are observing the role playing by urging them to listen carefully and to ask themselves, "Could that really happen?" "What would I do?" "Is there another way to solve this problem?"

9. Stop the role play when personal conflicts arise. Be sure to ask those involved to share their feelings. When an impasse occurs, discontinue the role play and ask if anyone else has an idea he or she wants to try out.

10. Stop the role play when the children reach a solution. Discuss the role-played solution with all the children. Invite them to think about the solution's possible consequences. Ask, "Is the solution a good one?" "Why?" "Why not?" Encourage the children to think of and role play other alternatives.

11. Conclude the role-playing session by helping the children evaluate their solution. Ask, "Which is the best solution?" "Which is the worst?" "Why?"

12. If a role-playing session is not successful, ask yourself, "Did I acquaint the children well enough with the techniques of role playing?" "Did I describe the situation or story situation clearly?" "Did the children have enough time to think of possible solutions before I asked them to volunteer to role play?"
TITLE: Puppets

OBJECTIVE: To help children observe themselves objectively.

PROCEDURE: Puppets can be a valuable tool in helping children gain insight into their own feelings, in solving group dilemmas, and in gaining appreciation for their own physical characteristics. For example, a child who wears glasses, cannot alter the fact that he or she needs glasses. Yet a child who does not like the way his/her hair looks can try a new style. There are many ways to make puppets:

1. Box puppets - cut holes and stick fingers through for noses or tongues.
2. Spoon puppets - for each puppet, add appropriate facial features to the back of the spoon bowl. (Paints and crayons work well on wooden spools, but they won't stick to most other spoons. For faces on plastic or metal spoons, cut out construction paper eyes, ears, and noses. Tape in place.)
3. Popsicle stick puppets.
4. Paper plates on sticks.
5. Dress up fruits and vegetables for puppets.
6. Hands, fingers, and toe puppets (paint faces on hands, fingers, and toes).
7. Mitten or glove animal puppets - decorate a mitten or garden glove.
8. Soft puppets - cut a slit for the mouth, sew red felt inside.
9. Old hairbrushes - decorate the backs of the brushes with various facial features.
10. Tin can puppets - put your hands inside to make the movement.
11. Chore-boy puppets - use chore-boy for the head. Cut wire lengths for the legs or use paper luncheon bags.
12. Dish soap bottle puppets - decorate the bottles with various facial features.
14. Finger puppets - use pencil to trace puppet patterns on white paper, or draw your own puppet characters. Paint or color each puppet, then cut out. Put your fingers through the holes in the back of the puppet (your fingers become the puppet's legs).

MATERIALS: Various articles for puppet, paste, tape, and colored paper.
TITLE: My Worry Bug

OBJECTIVE: To give children an opportunity to think about and express things that worry them.

PROCEDURE: 1. Take tagboard bug and four feet and eight precut red circles made of construction paper.
2. Paste the feet to the bug's body.
3. Make the bug's eyes, nose, and mouth from red construction paper. Paste them on the bug's face.
4. Now think carefully about the things that bother you or make you worry. What are they? Write each thing that worries you on a red circle of paper. Use a black felt pen.
5. Paste the circles on the bug's body.

MATERIALS: Tagboard bug, red circles, paste, scissors, and black felt pen.
TITLE: Name the Pet

OBJECTIVE: To give children practice in group decision making.

PROCEDURE: Display a picture of a pet - a kitten, puppy, bunny, bird, fish. (Stuffed animals and live pets might also be used.) Tell the children that a group will have a limited time to agree on a name for the pet. When time is up, invite the group to share its final decision and tell how they reached it. Vary this activity by giving the group a picture of a different animal to name and rotating the pictures until the group has named all the pets.

MATERIALS: Pictures of pets or stuffed animal.
TITLE: Problem Pictures

OBJECTIVE: To give children an opportunity to see that there is often more than one way to interpret a given problem.

PROCEDURE: Find an assortment of pictures showing problem situations. Good sources for these pictures include magazines, coloring books, workbooks, story books, and published posters and story boards developed for problem-solving activities.

Have the group gather in their designated area. Tell the children that the group will be given a picture and that they will have a limited time to look at the picture carefully and decide what problem the picture shows. Explain that when the group decides what the problem is, the reasons for their interpretations will be discussed.

MATERIALS: Pictures from magazines, storybooks, etc.
TITLE: Growing Solutions

OBJECTIVE: To give children an opportunity to see that one problem can have many solutions. You can use this activity over and over again each time giving children a different problem.

PROCEDURE: Choose several problems and write them on 8" construction paper circles. Example:

1. Your good friend borrows your library book. When she returns it, several of the pages are torn.
2. You accidentally tripped a classmate. He falls and cuts himself. Before you have a chance to explain, the teacher sends you to the principal.
3. You buy your dad a birthday present. When you get home, you realize that the clerk gave you too much change.

Read the problem aloud. Tell the group that they have three minutes to come up with as many ways to solve the problem (solutions) as they can, that all solutions count, and that they are to write each solution on their circles.

When time is up, give the signal and collect the circles. Read the solutions aloud. Discuss the solutions with the class, asking the children to tell whether they think the solution is a good one or not and why they feel that way. At the end of the activity, pin the circles in a long line to a bulletin board. Make the line look like a caterpillar by adding facial features, a hat, and a bow tie to a circle, using construction paper or felt pins. Add the circle to one end of the caterpillar and pin a caption (such as, "Growing Solutions") to the display.

MATERIALS: 8" construction paper circles, pen or pencil.
TITLE: Shopping Spree

OBJECTIVE: To give children practice in group decision making.

PROCEDURE: Provide the group with a store catalog, a sheet of paper, scissors, and paste. Tell the children that each group has $100 to spend buying presents from the catalog for a man, a woman, and a child. Explain that the members of each group must agree on the gift choices and that they may not spend more than $100. Set a generous time limit, so that the children have ample time to become familiar with the contents of their catalogs.

When a group reaches its final decisions, have the group members cut out the pictures of the gifts and their prices and paste them on the sheet of paper. (For younger children, you may wish to eliminate the price factor in this activity and simply have each group choose three gifts - one for a man, one for a woman, and one for a child.) To conclude the activity, invite the groups to share the decision and to tell how they arrived at their final gift list.

MATERIALS: Store catalog, paper, scissors, and paste.