



FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE

KC Ready 4s Multicultural Education Newsletter

The KC Ready 4s Funds of Knowledge Newsletter is a new publication for the Early Childhood Education sector. The name is intentional: to honor the funds of knowledge each person contributes to the teaching and learning environment. We welcome your insights and encourage you to submit questions, future topics for consideration, and things you do to create inclusive and equitable learning spaces for all. Please submit to: mpeake@kcready4s.org

Teaching and Modeling Self-Advocacy



Consider...

Expressing one's needs is self-advocacy that manifests in different ways for different children.

Variables that contribute to the expression of self-advocacy include but are not limited to: age, developmental stage, physical and emotional capacities, family composition, culture, experiences, exposure, and socialization.

The role the variables above contribute to interpreting the expression of self-advocacy in children.



Avoid...

Assuming that children will have the language, disposition, and opportunity to advocate for themselves in a specific manner.

Imposing personal ideals on "correct" and "incorrect" ways to self-advocate and express needs.

Conveying contempt and/or using sarcasm when assisting a child with re-framing expression of needs and wants.

Deciding that a child is choosing disruptive behavior for the purpose of disrupting adults.



Embrace...

Knowing the variety of ways in which pre-school aged children communicate needs and wants.

Creating classroom agreements that include different examples of self-advocacy.

Modeling effective and peaceful ways of expression and requests.

Seeking to understand behavior in context and identifying the cause, rather than focusing on the expression or behavior.

Understanding that children with IEP's may have additional dimensions to navigate in regard to self-advocacy.



Exploring Resources for Learning

Books to support discussions about self-advocacy

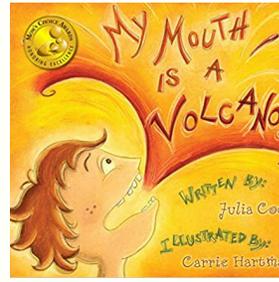
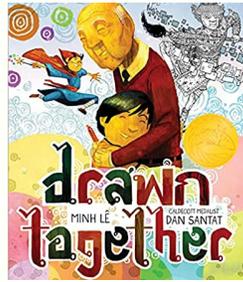
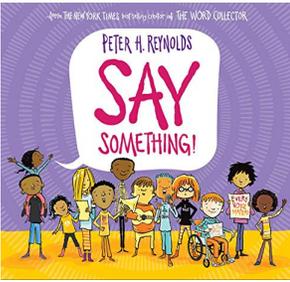


Image description L-R: front cover of the books: Peter H. Reynolds (Author, Illustrator), Drawn Together by by Minh Lê and Dan Santat, My Mouth is a Volcano by by Julia Cook (Author), Carrie Hartman (Illustrator), and Sweetest Kulu by by Celina Kalluk (Author), Alexandria Neonakis (Illustrator).

Self-Reflection Activity

Educator Self-Reflection and Inquiry Activity:

1. What messages did I receive growing up about expressing my needs and wants?
2. What did the messages teach me about self-expression and self-advocacy?
3. How might these messages influence my interactions with children?

Educator Scenario:

At spring kindergarten round-up, a four-year old entering kindergarten approached my colleagues while I was talking with the parents. The child exclaimed, "Hey lady, I gotta use it!" and was doing the wiggle bathroom dance. In simultaneous response, one of my colleagues began admonishing the child (colleague A), while the other (colleague B), immediately stood and asked the parents if it was okay to escort the child to the nearby restroom. The parents smiled and said yes (the restroom was in view), and continued talking to me.

After the event, my colleagues and I were talking and colleague A expressed their irritation at the way this child asked to go to the restroom and commented, "I would have let them pee their pants until they asked appropriately." Colleague B tenderly asked, "And what would that have accomplished? Shame and embarrassment before the child ever started school here?". Colleague A rolled their eyes. I was then able to share that upon colleague B and the child returning from the bathroom, the parents gently talked to the child about different ways to ask to use the restroom, and the child promised to remember "as long as it was not an emergency!".

As adults and educators, we each get to choose how to respond to children and whether to (1) model and teach, or (2) shame and humiliate. Colleague B chose the former, the parents corrected the behavior they desired and found socially appropriate, and the child's dignity was maintained while learning a new way to self-advocate.



Adult Skill Building, Guidance & Resources

To learn more about modeling and teaching self-advocacy:

<https://www.understood.org/en/articles/how-to-build-the-foundation-for-self-advocacy-in-young-children>

<https://parents-together.org/how-to-teach-your-child-to-advocate-for-themselves/>

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/teaching-children-to-be-their-own-self-advocate>

<https://dcmp.org/learn/587-self-advocacy-is-important-at-any-age>

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/mar2018/promoting-social-and-emotional-health>