Activity: Courtesy Scripts

Domain: Social, Emotional and Character Education

Skill Areas: Using Courteous Language; Cooperation; Positive Peer Relationships

**Courtesy Script 1: Making a Request**

**Goal:** Children make requests of peers and teachers in a courteous manner (e.g. ask each other for materials; tell each other what to do or not to do). When children are bothered, or need something, they will have the language to address their needs directly with each other rather than needing to “tattle” to a teacher.

**Why:** Talking directly with each other about our problems or requests builds autonomy. Children can solve their own problems and create change in the classroom on their own using a language script. Courtesy script # 1 reduces tattling to almost zero (unless a child refuses to cooperate with the script). The 3 responses facilitate a wide range of interactions and address most situations.

**Person A**: *“Will you please…..”* (pass me a pencil; not bump me in line, etc.)

**Person B**: *Okay*

*Post the script on chart paper on the wall and practice it daily during the morning meeting routine.*

*Sorry*

*That wasn’t me*

**Tips:** If Person B refuses to respond to the “please request,” then Person A asks the teacher to help. The teacher then asks Person B to follow the script by responding with one of the 3 responses (okay / sorry / that wasn’t me). Children must be coached to follow the script using an *emotion-neutral* tone of voice. If they use the script with a demanding or angry tone, it will not work.

**Courtesy Script 2: Sharing**

**Person A:** *“Can I share* (this/that item) *with you?”*

**Person B:** *Yes*

*In two minutes* (Person B sets the timer for 2 minutes)

*This is not for sharing* (food or certain personal items)

**Tips:** The *sharing script* implies that everything will be shared eventually unless sharing the item is not required or allowed. The skill of setting a child-friendly timer will need to be modeled and rehearsed. Have a few kitchen timers with magnets / clips in the classroom (1 button for minutes, 1 button for seconds, no other buttons). If the teacher helps Person B follow through and pass the item as soon as the timer goes off, this routine becomes automatic. The sharing script is especially useful during free play periods.