

# CARES Strategies

## **Caring and cooperative classroom**

*Basic to implementing a CARES classroom model is setting up the classroom. Teachers learn knowledge and skills concerning:*

- designing the physical environment, selecting and organizing materials
- providing private space in Cozy Corner
- creating a caring emotional environment through the use of a classroom safety rule, positive guidance techniques, and class meetings
- predictable daily schedules, routines, and transitions

*Long term reduction of aggressive behaviors requires that the child be taught alternative positive social behaviors. Using responsive adult/child interactions, carefully designed props and themes for child selected play, class meetings, books, puppets, and role plays, teachers help children learn to:*

- consider others' needs
- identify prosocial and antisocial behaviors – “helpful” vs. “hurtful” actions
- engage in prosocial skills: helping, giving, comforting, sharing, showing empathy, etc.
- use the “Safety Rule” to decide on appropriate behavior for themselves and others

## **Assertiveness (self-esteem and mastery skills) strategies**

*For Children to assert themselves in positive ways by developing self-worth and a sense of mastery, teachers help children:*

- feel capable and competent
- become decision makers
- trust their own ideas
- approach tasks with confidence
- set goals and work independently
- assert their own point of view appropriately
- become motivated to learn

## **Relationship skills: strategies in initiating and maintaining relationships**

*The most important factor contributing to resilience against stress (including exposure to violence) is establishing a strong caring relationship with one or more key persons. To enhance children's abilities to form positive relationships with adults and peers, teachers help children learn skills to:*

- separate appropriately from primary caregivers
- attach appropriately to teacher as a surrogate caregiver
- develop a sense of association and belonging
- engage in play with peers
- initiate social contact
- join a group
- develop friendships
- demonstrate respect for diversity

**Emotional regulation and reactivity strategies**

*Children's ability to control their emotions, demonstrate a range of emotions, and react in appropriate ways to emotional situations is an indicator of emotion well-being. Teachers help children learn to:*

- label, validate, and express feelings
- control impulses and self regulate
- monitor, evaluate, and modify emotional reactions
- practice stress reduction and tension relief

**Self control: managing aggression and conflict**

*Early intervention in the antecedents of aggressive behavior can reduce the risk of habitual patterns. Teachers help children acquire skills concerning:*

- social problem solving/conflict resolution
- anger management/alternatives to aggression
- recognition of responsibility and consequences of one's actions