

Newsletter De Vreedzame School

Block 5: We are alle contributing



We dragen allemaal een steentje bij

Block 5: General

We want children to feel connected to the classroom and the school. This is only possible if we make children feel that they matter. To achieve this, the children are given tasks and responsibilities.

Within the school it is agreed what the children are allowed to think and decide about.

When the children feel involved in the classroom and the school, a positive atmosphere is created. They are then motivated to participate in what happens in the classroom.

One of the responsibilities of children in our school is to work as student mediators. Student mediators are specially trained children from the upper grades. They help children solve conflicts. For the children from the lower grades, this is often still new. Therefore, the student mediators present themselves to the lower school and explain how a mediation with student mediators works. The middle and upper school children already know this.

Contributing is also about performing tasks within the classroom and school. This starts with performing assigned tasks and culminates in working with class committees. An assigned task involves a kind of corveetask. The children are responsible for doing that task properly. A class committee goes further. A class committee figures out what to do, arranges the organization and executes. For example, a class committee may be concerned with the decoration of the classroom. The class committee presents to the whole class what it has done or makes a proposal. The teacher, of course, is present in the background.

If you would like to learn more about De Vreedzame School please visit www.devreedzameschool.nl

We start the lessons from Block 5:

In grades 1 - 4, lessons focus on:

- recognizing anger in yourself and others
- learning to deal with your anger.
- making up after a conflict.
- learning to look for solutions to a conflict.
- learning when something is helping and when it is interfering.
- difference between helping in a conflict as referee and helping as a mediator.
- learn that at school you can ask student mediators to help when you have a conflict.

In groups 5 - 8, the children learn to make their own contribution to the group and to the school:

- the children devise activities to make it everyone even more fun in the classroom and in the school.
- the children make a newspaper for the parents about what they have done for the class and for the school.
- the children learn the difference between merely doing of assignments and coming up with and co-deciding on plans and activities that are good for the group.
- the children learn to work with class committees and school committees.

In block 4 – “We take care of each other” the children have learned, that they:

- be able to recognize their own feelings recognize.
- know what makes them angry and what behavior they exhibit then.
- feelings such as being angry may have, but that it is how you deal with them.
- need to cool down first before they can think of solutions.
- know what it feels like to be shut out.
- have to stand up for each other.
- have gotten to know some classmates by asking for opinions and feelings in an interview.
- put themselves in the feelings of other person's feelings



- Take time to listen to your child's story and to listen when he/she has a conflict.
- Come up with solutions that is satisfying for all.
- Make at home a plan together with your child and agree on who does what.
- Let your child(ren) think about and decide about things you want to do, such as choosing the vacation destination, so that it is fun for everyone.

Children speaking:

We have a cooling off area in the classroom. This is a place where children can cool off when they are angry. It makes you very calm. When you sit there no one is allowed to disturb you. We all got a feeling booklet where you can write how you feel every day and that helps a lot.

In the cooling off area you have to count to 10 and that calms you down. Then it is easier to make friends again.

Report by a student from group 6

During this block of the peaceful school we have talked a lot together about emotions and feelings. We noticed that sometimes it is quite difficult to talk about feelings such as sadness. But we also noticed that it can be very relieving to talk about your sadness. To do that, you have to feel comfortable within the group. Otherwise you dare not vent your heart. The teacher often asked us how we felt on a scale of 1-10. There were days when many children were happy and joyful and we gave ourselves high scores, but also days when we were tired and irritable and we gave low scores. Also the teacher sometimes had a low score because of a sleepless night because of her little son or a high score because she thought we worked so well. So you see that adults also change in their moods.

We learned three difficult words. They were :

The fact = something that is true or really happened

The interview = an interrogation

The grief = sadness because someone is dead

The director visiting group 3

When I enter the classroom, the word feeling is displayed very large on the IWB. Around the word feeling are words like scared, surprised, sad, happy, disappointed, ordinary, angry. These are the feelings the children have come up with. The children are given a large sheet of paper to draw over one of the feelings. For the feeling angry, some draw a lion, others draw a face with angry eyes. The children receive a commendation from the teacher for doing such a good job with their assignment. When the drawings are finished, the children tell each other in pairs about the feeling they drew. Wies also gets to tell the class about her drawing. 'I drew happy. I drew a happy little doll here and a happy sun and a happy tree here.' Then Sam gets to tell. 'I like to be on a ship, so I drew a ship for happy. I get scared when the ship sinks, though.' The teacher says, 'We had the introductory lesson, we gave words to feelings, we just drew about feelings, we learned about feelings today.' Stefanie has a pick-me-up: I liked the drawing about the cat by Andreus. To finish, they do commando pinking. Then the children go home.

Children speaking:

We have a small folder where we can write how we feel such as happy, sad, angry and scared. But there are many other feelings like uncertain, disappointed, tough, grateful, enthusiastic, surprised, jealous, shy, in love, left out, innocent, relieved, alone, proud or sad.

We did fun games. We had a ball but we pretended that was a present. In the circle you had to give that "gift" to someone and they had to act out what kind of gift it was and how it made you feel.

I now know more about how a person can feel. The teacher makes up fun games that are also educational. What I found most difficult was the lesson about mourning and dying. It is difficult to talk about that. The teacher allowed us to discuss it with a buddy. That way you could talk to a familiar person and that makes it easier.

Sometimes we discuss with the class how we feel on a scale from 0 to 10 with the barometer.