

My Words, My Rights

Primary Objectives

3b. Solves social problems

Why It's Important

Expressing needs and desires verbally gives your child the power to make others aware of his rights. When he can use words to describe his feelings and wants, he may be less likely to assert his rights physically, such as by hitting. Learning simple verbal phrases will increase your child's ability to communicate effectively with others.

Materials

None

What You Do

1. Observe how your child transitions from nonverbal to verbal assertion of his rights. Notice if his new phrases increase his ability to be heard and acknowledged by others.
2. Invite your child to use the command *Stop!* as a way of standing up for his rights. *When someone tries to take your teddy bear away from you, say Stop!* Encourage him to practice saying *Stop!* in a loud voice. You may need to expand on his words to help other children understand his desires: *He said Stop! He does not want you to take his bear.* When your child appears comfortable asserting himself verbally, add phrases such as *my turn* and *I want that*. For each phrase, offer an example of when to use it and encourage your child to practice.
3. Until your child feels completely effective in responding verbally to violations of his rights, encourage him to combine his words with his original, non-confrontational, nonverbal responses, such as shaking his head for *no*. This may help your child build confidence in his ability to stand up for himself. Let him know that he may repeat the words to reinforce his assertion. *Stop. No. Stop!*