

Jakers! Activities

- Dramatic Play Activities

Skills: Self-reflection, imagination, problem-solving, creative expression

Materials: No Materials Needed

Ages: For Ages 5-8

Directions:

Jakers! presents situations that children face every day and the Jakers! characters learn how to deal with those situations in a humorous way. They typically rely on their wits and their problem-solving skills.

Your children too, often encounter confusing or difficult situations at home or in school. Role-playing these situations can be very helpful to children. If they have an opportunity to role-play a situation before it happens, they may be better prepared to respond when they face the situation. If children have already faced such a problem, role-playing may give them ideas for alternative ways to handle it if it happens again.

Try out these dramas or make up your own. At the beginning, you and/or another adult might wish to play the roles of the children. Be sure to show the children how you feel in a particular situation and see how they respond. Try to help them understand that the point of the drama is to play act helpful solutions to problems in which a child has their feelings hurt or breaks the rules in some way.

Then step back and choose children to act out the scenes. Discuss the different behaviors the children choose. Be sure to guide children toward behaviours that are socially acceptable. There is no one “right” way to handle any of these situations. The idea is to let the children know that there are many ways to deal with the situation and they can choose the one that feels right to them. Make sure each dramatic play session ends on a positive note.

Don't do more than one “drama” per day. You may even want to play act the same scenario a few times over the course of a week. At the end of each session discuss with the children how they felt about the “drama”. Ask them which actions they thought worked best.



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The Dramas

1. A child's lunch money has been taken by another child. Choose two children to play the roles. When they have acted out the scene once, ask them to switch roles.
2. Two children will not allow a third child to play with them. Choose three children to act out this scenario. Give each child the opportunity to play the child who is left out.
3. An older sibling is picking on a younger one. What should the younger child do? Ask one child to be the younger sibling and another child to be the older sibling. Then have them switch roles.
4. One child in the classroom constantly tells the teacher if other children break the rules. Ask two children to take the parts; one will play the "tattler" and the other child will play the role of the child who has broken a rule. Have them act out one or more ways to handle the situation. Then ask them to switch roles. **NOTE:** Sometimes it takes intervention by a parent or teacher to let the "tattler" know that the only time he or she needs to inform the teacher is in case of an emergency. However, there will still be strong feelings between the two children.
5. A child does not want to go along with what his/her friends want to do. What should he/she do or say? Choose three children to act out this drama and have them rotate roles so that each child has the opportunity to be the child who does not want to go along.
6. One child is afraid to join a ball game because he/she is SURE the other children are better than he/she is. He/she comes up with all sorts of excuses for not playing. How can his/her friends help him/her? Choose no more than four children to act out this drama. The goal here is to get the friends to empathize with the child who feels insecure and encourage him to try.
7. A child is in a bakery and cannot resist taking a chocolate chip cookie that is meant for another customer. Choose children to play the roles of the baker, the child, and the customer.



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8. A child is very frustrated trying to figure out how to make a new remote control car work. This child is on the verge of having a tantrum with some of his/her friends around. Choose children to play the role of the frustrated child and his or her friends. Give each child a chance to play the frustrated child. If you think that a grown-up needs to join the scene you can be the grown-up or ask one of the more mature children to be the grown-up.
9. A neighborhood bully has scared two children into giving him/her their lunches. Choose three children to act out the scene. Since this is such a troubling experience for children, they may need more adult guidance. NOTE: There is no "best" way to handle a bully. If children are not being physically threatened they can simply say how they feel and then stay away from the bully. If the bully threatens a child with physical harm, an adult should intervene.
10. At a birthday party two children who don't like each other very much are paired up to play a game. Can these two learn to get along? As you choose two children to play the parts ask them to keep in mind that their goal is to learn how to get along despite their differences.

