Social Awareness for young children helps them understand and function in the world in which they live. During their early years, children are developing their values and attitudes about themselves, other children, their family and community, and the world. They are developing a concept of self. It is important that they have a broad range of experiences and are exposed to people and materials without gender, racial, ability, or cultural bias. People with disabilities must be portrayed accurately, including both their abilities and disabilities.

ACTIVITY GOALS AND STANDARDS
Activities are organized by the goals and standards they support. The activities themselves serve as prototypes of activities that can be used again and again with minor changes. Goals and standards that focus directly on social competence and social studies are given first. Books that are referred to in the text with an * have a complete citation and annotation in the Children’s Bibliography; others have a complete citation where they are cited. For books where a lexile score is available, it is given after the book, for example, (500L). The notation “AD” before the lexile means that the book requires adult direction and should initially be read by an adult and discussed with children before children read it independently.

Social Awareness Activities

1w

GOALS:

To increase awareness of individual differences and similarities; to increase inclusion; to encourage problem solving

STANDARDS:

SS 1 Culture; S&L 3 Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood.

MATERIALS:

None

PROCEDURE:

Have a discussion about how animals and people communicate without using words.

- Bees dance to help other bees find honey
- Dogs bark, wag tails
- Birds chirp, sing
- People gesture

Give one child in the class instructions for a task the group must perform. Have this child get the other children to carry out the task without using words. Initially, all the children could do the same thing, for example, go to the bathroom and wash their hands. Make the tasks easy, and have a pair of children convey the message. As the children get better, assign more difficult tasks.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND INTEGRATION:

Discuss specific traditional nonverbal strategies used to communicate (e.g., waving for good-bye, throwing a kiss, making a circle of the thumb and index finger, high fiving) and ensure that children know their meaning. Talk about cultural variations in nonverbal language (e.g., eye contact, open or closed hand gestures) and their meaning during interactions. Talk about American Sign Language and why it is used. Teach children some signs. Discuss the differences between nonverbal and verbal “language,” especially as they relate to conveying information. Discussion communication in general and how difficult it is to express yourself when you do not know the right words to say.

1-32w

Hello Poem

GOALS:

To increase awareness of individual differences and similarities; to increase cultural awareness; to increase respect for diversity in modes of communication
**STANDARDS:** SS 1 Culture; S&L 6 Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly; L 5 Explore word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

**MATERIALS:** None

**PROCEDURE:** Talk with the children about how people can speak differently but say the same things. Also talk about the different ways of saying hello in English (e.g., “Hi,” “How are you?” “Hey, what’s up?”). Introduce the “Hello” poem. Discuss with children why it is a poem and not a story. Use motions to help the children get involved. Replace hello with hello in Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, or another language, including the languages of the children in the classroom.

**Hello** (poem)
Hello’s a handy word to say,
At least 100 times a day.
Without hello, what would I do
Whenever I bumped into you?
Without hello, where would you be
Whenever you bumped into me?
Hello’s a handy word to know.

**HELLO IN OTHER LANGUAGES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Hello</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mandarin (China)</td>
<td>ni hão</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hmong Daw</td>
<td>nyob zoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>maida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>privet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>hola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>annyong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>guten tag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>merhaba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>terve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>bonjour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ACCOMMODATIONS AND INTEGRATION:** Shorten the poem. Have children become familiar with the poem before they try it in other languages. Fingerspell hello. This allows children to hear and speak different languages and still be understood. Use this as a platform to talk about other languages and cultures. Be sure to include the languages of all children in the class. For more languages go to http://users.elite.net/runner/jennifers/hello.htm#F for greetings in 810+ languages.

**GOALS:** To increase inclusion; to increase cultural awareness, to increase awareness of individual differences and similarities

**STANDARDS:** SS 1 Culture; SS 5 Individuals, groups, and institutions; R.L 3 Identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.

**MATERIALS:** Book such as F. Asch and V. Vagin, Here Comes the Cat! (New York: Scholastic, 1990), or another bilingual book. Video of Here Comes the Cat! (11 minutes) available online or from Weston Woods video

**PROCEDURE:** During group time, introduce the book Here Comes the Cat! Have the children look at the text. Tell the children that the story is written in English and Russian. (The same phrase is repeated throughout the entire book: “Here Comes the Cat!”) Begin to read the book. Encourage the children to say the Russian phrase with you as it appears in the book. Afterward, talk about difficulties in reading and understanding the book. Encourage children to talk about things that frighten them (like the cat frightened the mice). Also, talk about friendship and the ways friends care for each other and how they may have misconceptions about another’s intent. Help children recount the story.

**ACCOMMODATIONS AND INTEGRATION:** Just read the English and talk about the Russian. Then read the book on another occasion. Talk about languages and how they are different. Listening and looking at a book written in another language with a different alphabet expands children’s concept of language. Show the children the video Here Comes the Cat!, and have the children compare and contrast the two (they are quite close).
Creepers

**GOALS:** To increase awareness of individual differences and similarities; to increase inclusion; to encourage problem solving

**STANDARDS:** SS 3 People, places, and environments; S&L 3 Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood.

**MATERIALS:** Several creepers (mechanic’s dollies) or anything on wheels that is several inches from the floor and can be propelled by the children’s hands and/or feet

**PROCEDURE:** Focus first on the mechanics of using a creeper. Then have the children explore the room from the dolly and think about how much energy it takes, how tired they get, what they can and can’t reach, and how their body feels after a while. Ask children to perform specific tasks such as getting a puzzle and putting it together, getting something from the locker area, and so on. After the novelty has worn off, discuss with the children the challenges in moving around this way. Ask them about conditions and environments where this would be the ideal way to move.

**ACCOMMODATIONS AND INTEGRATION:** Have the children use the creeper by both sitting on it and lying on it. Use it both indoors and outside, and if possible, have several of them. Encourage children to be creative and think about how they might get things they cannot reach. Discuss other uses that children might make of creepers (e.g., working under cars, painting the underside of boats or other objects that are too large to move and are close to the ground).

Get-Well Cards

**GOALS:** To improve self-concept; to increase awareness of roles people play; to increase inclusion

**STANDARDS:** SS 4 Individual development and identity; S&L 5 Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail; VA 3 Choose and evaluate a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas.

**MATERIALS:** Construction paper, crayons or markers, computer, digital camera

**PROCEDURE:** Have the children draw, paint, or use the digital technology of their choice to make a picture that can be folded into a card. They can make either two pictures (front and inside of card) or one picture with a written message. Encourage children to work together. Talk with the children about a particular illness a child has and the kinds of activities that child particularly likes. Encourage children to write, dictate, or draw a message.

**ACCOMMODATIONS AND INTEGRATION:** Use a computer and printer to generate the card or take a picture with a digital camera, print it, and add a message. Be specific about the purpose of the card and the types of messages that are appropriate. Make the first card for a specific child; then start a collection of get-well cards so you will always have a card to send when the occasion arises. After a while, children may notice that certain members of the class are absent more often than others. Talk about why this may be happening.
Social Awareness Activities: Social Competence and Social Studies

**Social Competence: Small Group**

**Share Your Feelings**

**GOALS:** To increase inclusion; to improve self-concept; to express feelings

**STANDARDS:** SS 4 Individual development and identity; L 5 Explore word relationship and nuances in word meanings.

**MATERIALS:** None

**PROCEDURE:** Help children to think about themselves and their identity. After some characteristics (gender, position in family, etc.) discuss the concept of feelings and expressions, ask them to share a feeling with the other children, for example, liking. Some ways the children might share this are to hold hands, smile, hug, say “I like you,” and how this might be different from “I love you.” Or “I am angry with you” versus “I don’t like you.” Support children in expressing feelings with their peers and knowing that they are valued members of the class and how words and feelings relate. Give children the vocabulary they need to express their feelings accurately. Help them think of a variety of ways to share feelings, both verbal and nonverbal.

**ACCOMMODATIONS AND INTEGRATION:** Model feelings and behaviors as you state what you are doing. “I’m so glad to see Juniper Jane I am giving her a high five.” Coach children on expressing their feelings. Encourage children to ask others for feedback or clarification about how they interpret the behavior. Sharing feelings is not usual in some cultures. At first, older children might feel self-conscious doing this, but if you demonstrate and support them, they may learn that they can share feelings at school.

**Social Competence: Small Group or Individual**

**Simulated Glasses**

**GOALS:** To increase awareness of individual differences and similarities; to increase inclusion; to improve problem solving

**STANDARDS:** SS 3 People, places, and environments; SS 4 Individual development and identity; R.L 1 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

**MATERIALS:** Glasses, frames or sunglasses, gauze, half-face Halloween masks, cellophane, adhesive tape, The Patch; Randy Kazandy, Where Are Your Glasses?; or Luna and the Big Blur

**TO MAKE:** To simulate different visual conditions, use inexpensive sunglasses or half-face Halloween masks, putting cellophane over the inside opening, or a variety of coverings over the outside (see Figure RW1-1).

**PROCEDURE:** Read a book to the children about a child who has a visual impairment. Talk with the children about what this means and how it influences the child’s life. Encourage children to ask questions about the story. Then show children the glasses and encourage them to wear them and continue with their usual classroom activities. Talk with them about what is easy to do with the glasses, what is difficult, and what they can and cannot see with the glasses on.

**ACCOMMODATIONS AND INTEGRATION:** Use the glasses for a shorter time. Provide magnifying glasses and binoculars, and talk about the changes these make in what children see. Talk about vision and the purpose of lenses. Encourage children to explore different lenses, and suggest when they might be useful. Have the glasses available for several days so children can continue to experiment with them. Children can progress from being aware of what a particular visual impairment means to the implications it has for daily life. Have children think about how they could compensate for different visual problems and what is helpful and not helpful.

**Social Competence: Large or Small Group**

**Moving in the Dark**

**GOALS:** To increase awareness of individual differences and similarities; to increase inclusion; to improve cause and effect reasoning
STANDARDS: SS 4 Individual development and identity; R:L 1 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

MATERIALS: Blindfolds or half-face Halloween masks with the eyes covered, sunglasses with the lenses taped over, book such as The Hickory Chair

PROCEDURE: Read The Hickory Chair or make up a story about a child who has to go somewhere in the dark and is afraid of hitting her head. Have the children think of ways the child could move to avoid getting hurt, and then close their eyes and demonstrate these. Make it relevant to the children by suggesting they could get up in the night to try to find something. See if they can learn specific techniques for moving safely when they cannot see. Talk with them about not being able to see and how that would change their lives. Create some obstacles the children have to go around or through to add interest.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND INTEGRATION: Have children do activities in pairs. Encourage them to put on blindfolds and try out techniques. Have others provide feedback so that the technique can be modified. This increases children’s awareness of where their head is in space and the need to protect it. It also illustrates the problem of moving when you cannot see and what others can do that is helpful and not as helpful.

FIGURE RW1–1 Make the glasses with the instructions provided

Blindness
Adhesive tape over openings (sticky side of tape should face outward)

Tunnel vision
Adhesive tape over edges of openings

Low vision with light perception
Masking tape over openings

Cataracts
Gauze over openings

Loss of stereovision
Adhesive tape over one opening (also demonstrates problem of wearing a patch)

Peripheral vision only
Adhesive tape circles on cellophane in center of openings

Blind spots
Small adhesive tape circles on cellophane over openings

STANDARDS: SS 4 Individual development and identity; W 2 Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic; S&L 5 Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail.

MATERIALS: Paper, crayons, markers, pencils, computer

PROCEDURE: Provide paper and crayons, markers, and pencils. Encourage each child to write and/or draw an invitation
to a family member or friend to attend school with the child for part of a day. When the family member comes, he or she will participate in the activities. Encourage classmates to interact with the VIP (very important person). Have a note from the teacher that accompanies the invitation that gives specific information about possible dates, times, and expectations. When the VIP comes, have the child introduce him or her to the class and explain what makes this person so important.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND INTEGRATION: Be flexible about the days to include VIPs. This allows children to see different types of families and interact with them in a familiar setting.

1-43w Talking

GOALS: To increase awareness of individual differences and similarities; to increase inclusion; to increase respect for diversity in modes of communication

STANDARDS: SS 4 Individual development and identity; S&L 3 Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood.

MATERIALS: None

PROCEDURE: In a small group, give a child a specific thing to say, and then tell the child how to use her mouth. If you do not think she will understand, demonstrate the various ways of talking before asking them to do each one. For example:

Keep your teeth clenched while you talk.
Keep your lips closed.
Keep your tongue behind the lower teeth.

Have the children continue trying to make themselves understood until they experience some frustration. Discuss how it feels when others do not understand them. Help children focus on the function of the various parts of their mouths in speech. Ask children how speech changes based on the parts of the mouth that they cannot use.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND INTEGRATION: Have children begin by speaking extremely slow, fast, loud, or soft. Then have children speak into a tape recorder and listen to themselves. Have children do this in pairs to see whether they can understand each other, or have them talk in such a way that one child cannot see the other child’s mouth. Have a speech-language pathologist visit and talk about where different sounds are made in the mouth and discuss speech and the process of talking.

1-44w Feelings

GOALS: To increase inclusion; to express feelings; to improve cause-and-effect reasoning

STANDARDS: SS 7 Production, distribution, and consumption; RL 1 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text; RL 3 Identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.


PROCEDURE: Read a book such as The Can Man. Ask children questions about Tim and his family and the can man. Encourage them to ask questions about the story and discuss the characters and what happened. After the discussion, have children make a book about situations or events in which they were sad (or angry, unhappy, or mad). Have a group discussion and talk about how children might feel if a lot of sad things happen at one time, how hard it would be to be happy, and how they might be scared and expect sad things to happen. Talk about what children can do to help themselves when they feel sad. Encourage children to talk in greater depth and to distinguish short- and long-term emotions. Have them discuss how the actions and reactions of others influence their response. Ask them to compare their “book” to The Can Man.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND INTEGRATION: Start with pictures of two relatively obvious situations and ask children which one they think would make them feel happy. Do the same with other emotions. Move from the more obvious (happy, sad, angry) to embarrassed, jealous, and so on. This helps children realize that all people, including adults, have bad days. Help them differentiate a bad day from a pattern of negative emotions that might cause children to either withdraw or become aggressive.

1-45w Slings

GOALS: To increase inclusion; to increase body awareness; to increase awareness of individual differences and similarities

STANDARDS: SS 5 Individuals, groups, and institutions; S&L 3 Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood.

MATERIALS: A piece of material or scarf for each child, large enough to make a sling

PROCEDURE: During group time, talk about what it is like to be able to use only one arm. (Some children are born with only one arm, others break their arms.) Discuss why children might have an arm in a sling and note that the child might also have a cast. Have the children discuss what things would be difficult to do with just one arm. If possible, demonstrate some of these. Discuss some of the everyday problems of dressing, hand washing, drawing, eating, and so on. Encourage them to participate in activities with one arm in a sling. Help children who participated discuss their feelings and difficulties they had. If they become frustrated and take the sling off, use their experience of frustration to make your point.
First put the sling on the child’s nondominant arm, and then move it to the dominant arm. Help children discuss the kinds of adaptations having only one arm might require. Encourage them to think about adaptive devices, skills they would have to develop, and what they would do differently.

**SOCIAL COMPETENCE:** LARGE GROUP

**I’m Thinking Of**

**GOALS:** To increase inclusion; to encourage problem solving; to increase awareness of individual differences and similarities

**STANDARDS:** SS 4 Individual development and identity; S&L 3 Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood.

**MATERIALS:** None

**PROCEDURE:** This is a variation of the game “20 Questions” used as a teaching tool to help children realize when they do not have enough information. Start with obvious clues.

**Teacher:** “I’m thinking of someone with brown hair. Who am I thinking of?”

**Child:** “Me.”

**Teacher:** “I could be thinking of you, but you can’t be sure. Listen. I’m thinking of someone with brown hair and a blue shirt. Who am I thinking of?”

**Child:** “Sam.”

**Teacher:** “I could be thinking of Sam, but who else has brown hair and a blue shirt?”

**Child:** “Tom.”

**Teacher:** “I’m thinking of . . .”

As children become more proficient, make the clues subtler to help children develop the skills of classification and observation. Give children several characteristics to consider at one time: “I’m thinking of someone who has blond hair, who loves to paint, and whose last name starts with ‘J.’”

**ACCOMMODATIONS AND INTEGRATION:** Start with the obvious, for example, “I’m thinking of someone whose name is Miles.” This is good at the beginning of the year or for when a child joins the group. Start with visible characteristics (e.g., hair color, clothing) and move to less concrete characteristics (e.g., what children like to do). This is designed to create a sense of group belonging; children learn that they are similar to and different from each other. Children can participate verbally or nonverbally. Do not pick out stereotypic characteristics, such as “I’m thinking of someone who uses a wheelchair.”

**SOCIAL STUDIES:** LARGE OR SMALL GROUP

**Going to the Beach**

**GOALS:** To increase social studies concepts; to improve cause-and-effect reasoning; to encourage problem solving

**STANDARDS:** SS 3 People, places, and environments; S&L 1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups; S&L 4 Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.

**MATERIALS:** Flannelboard, pictures of objects, drawn or glued onto Pellon, that children would be likely to take to the beach

**PROCEDURE:** Discuss the beach and what people do there. Then play the game “I am going to the beach, and in my backpack I’m going to take a swimsuit.” The child must repeat the sentence and add another item. Initially, have a backpack and real items that children actually pack. If children have trouble remembering the items, give them functional cues (e.g., “What will we sit on?”). Then have children choose from the pictures available. As each child chooses, place the picture on the board (or the clothes in the backpack), as in Figure RW1–2. Write the name of each item below its picture. When the children have used up all the pictures, take the cards down in order and see how many they can remember.

**ACCOMMODATIONS AND INTEGRATION:** Give children hints by reminding them of what they are going to do at the beach. This sequencing activity can be adapted to many themes. The class can go for a picnic and pack their lunches; they can pack for a trip to the jungle, desert, North Pole, hospital, grandparents’ house, and so on. Discuss why specific items are necessary and appropriate.

**FIGURE RW1–2 Packing for the Beach**

John’s back pack  +  Swimming suit  +  Beach ball  +  Sun hat  +  Sandals  +  Beach towel

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EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Scholastic has information on many areas including social studies that is helpful for parents and educators and is organized by topic and age/grade. They also have a newsletter and a kids’ site. http://www.scholastic.com/resources/article/preparing-for-preschool-social-studies/

Preschool Social Studies has a collection of free downloadable videos that are designed to meet the Ohio curriculum standards in social studies. Two of their outstanding videos are by the U.S. Marine Corps. One explains the Pledge of Allegiance and the other the American Flag. This web site is being added to on a regular basis. http://willoughby-eastlake.k12.oh.us/classroom/technology/preschool_social_studies.htm/

Kindergarten Links provides activities to support social studies and other curriculum areas. It also has a link to activities that support DIBELS® Interventions for literacy. These activities are designed to help meet the Delaware curriculum standards and the common core state standards. http://teachers.cr.k12.de.us/~galgano/klinks.htm/