

# Cooperative Musical Chairs

At this age, the topic of inclusiveness and fairness is best explained through social situations and games. This initial lesson will approach these new concepts through an interactive game of cooperative musical chairs.

## Inclusiveness Sub-Concept(s)

Fairness, Kindness

## Lesson Timeframe

45 minutes

## Required Materials

- Horace and Morris, But Mostly Dolores* by James Howe
- Music for the activity
- Chairs for each student (minus one)

## Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.



DESIGNATED BY CASEL  
AS A RECOMMENDED PROGRAM  
FOR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING.  
See last page for details.

## Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Explain the importance of fairness when playing cooperative games.
- Demonstrate ways to include others that are different from themselves.

## Teacher Connection/Self-Care

The topic of inclusiveness is often overlooked once we reach adulthood. We seem to falsely assume that loneliness, bullies, and cliques are a thing of the past. However, it is just as difficult, if not more so, once we have developed our own comfort levels on different hot button topics, personality types, and overall approaches to life. They say you can't teach an old dog new tricks, but that's not true! It might be harder, but we CAN and SHOULD strive to grow in kindness daily. This week, examine your surroundings at school carefully. Are there any new teachers that you are unfamiliar with? Maybe YOU are that new teacher and are feeling exceptionally shy. Identify 3 people this week to include in some capacity. Perhaps it's the old "saved you a seat" at lunch adage, an invite to walk the playground during lunchtime, or even a morning coffee to brighten their day! Your efforts to include others will definitely increase the kindness quotient in your school exponentially.

### Tips for Diverse Learners

- Use a piece of paper as a marker for one of the chairs to accommodate a wheelchair; the student must touch the paper (or someone that is on the paper) to be safe.
- Students with limited mobility can be the "director" of the game by explaining how to play, starting and stopping the music, and praising the players as they show fairness and inclusiveness.



## Share

5 minutes

Gather the class at your community/circle time area. Review the concept from last month (CARING):

- *Name one time this week that you were able to help another person.*
- *How did it feel to show helpfulness?*

Ask the following questions to spark interest:

- *Have you ever played a game in which you got “out” quickly?*
- *How did it feel when you had to sit out a watch?*



## Inspire

### **Fairness and Inclusiveness**

7-10 minutes

How do you feel when you are left out? Have you ever asked to join a game and the other children said no, or worse, they laughed at you? Fairness is treating others in a way that does not favor some over others. Every time we use kind words and fairness to include others, it makes them feel good inside. Treating others fairly is a choice that you make every day. Remember, when we only choose our favorite friends and leave out others, we are being unfair. We can brainstorm ways to show fairness throughout our school day. Let's start with some questions to help us think:

- *How can you show fairness during our math/reading time?*
- *How can you show fairness on the bus?*
- *How can you show fairness on the playground?*
- *How can you show fairness during specials?*

### **Read Aloud: *Horace and Morris, But Mostly Dolores* by James Howe**

5 minutes

Read Aloud: [\(49\) Horace and Morris but mostly Dolores By James Howe Read Aloud - YouTube](#)

Read this story about fairness and inclusiveness aloud to the class (or watch the video using the link above). After the story, ask the following questions:

- *How did the friends leave each other out? Does this show fairness? Why or why not? Does this show inclusiveness? Why not?*
- *How do the friends fix their problems?*
- *How are they able to show fairness and inclusiveness?*
- *Has this ever happened to you? What did you do to solve the problem?*



## Empower

15-20 minutes

To practice the concepts of fairness and inclusiveness, the class will play a modified version of musical chairs. Explain the rules of this game.

- Place enough chairs in a circle for everyone except one person.
- You will play the music as the class calmly and quietly marches around the chairs.
- When the music stops, every person must find a chair.
- Since there are not enough chairs, one person must use FAIRNESS to INCLUDE the last person by making room on their chair.
- Repeat this activity to see how inclusive your class can be. You can set a goal: down to 10 chairs, 5 chairs, 1 chair?
- After the chairs get very low add the following instruction: A person is considered to be included if they are touching any person that is sitting on a chair.



## Reflect

5 minutes

*Showing fairness to everyone in class can be hard when you have made good friends and enjoy spending time with them. However, we want to create a kind classroom where everyone feels safe and special. Let's work together to practice inclusiveness throughout our day. When you see someone left out, invite them to join you! When you find yourself all alone, seek out other friends to play with. When we are fair and inclusive, everyone in our class enjoys coming to school!*



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LEARNING.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has been reviewing evidence-based SEL programs since 2003. Kindness in the Classroom® meets CASEL's SElect Program and is included in the CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs.

Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

<https://casel.org/guide/kindness-in-the-classroom/>