

Tips for Teachers

The Main Event

This month our topic is **Manners**.

Good ideas for teaching students to better understand these social concepts include:

- Have students make a list of the manners that are most important to their mothers.
- Have students try to keep track of how often they say, “I’m sorry” or “Thank you” to other people. Have them notice how other people respond to these words.
- Talk about being on time. Take a survey to see if students are typically on time or typically late. Discuss how being punctual is a habit that can be cultivated. Being late when you have a job can get you fired. Being on time is being respectful of others.
- Talk about how we teach children to on time. Do your students think this works? Make a chart and tally how many families are typically late for functions, how many are typically on time?
- Ask students to list manners that they think are important to their peers.
- Ask the class if there are any manners they think are kind of dumb. Generate a list. Go through the list and ask students to think about why the manners might be important to someone else.

I am Kari Dunn Buron,
a teacher from Minnesota,
and I just love this magazine!



You betcha.

Departments

I Second That Emotion!:

Use this scale to break people into groups and list their possible perspectives: parents, teachers, siblings, friends, students who are not friends, younger children, and senior citizens. For example, what might be offensive behavior to someone in each of these groups?

Point of to students that when they get a job, any behavior rated 3-5 by their boss could get them fired. Actually, if the other people they work with are upset by their behavior, they could get fired.

Coming to Our Senses:

This topic is called **Gym Class** and was submitted by Jennifer Veenendall, an occupational therapist.

- Ask students how many like gym class. List reasons for a “no” or “yes” responses.
- Explore with students what they think is the hardest part of gym class.
- Ask your students if they have ever come up with a survival plan for gym class or if they have had a gym teacher who was helpful in coming up with a plan.

Gets-It Knows!:

- Ask your class if anyone has ever heard of the rule suggested by Roger.
- Explore why it might be easier to have a “rule” about hallway interaction than just hoping that each time goes well.

Something to Talk About:

- Ask students if they have ever told a teacher that something was boring?
- Discuss why it is a bad idea to tell a teacher something is boring.
- Ask students if they ever thought about the fact that such a comment could hurt a teacher’s feelings?
- Ask students to think of comments that someone might make to them that hurt their feelings and different people may be hurt by different comments.

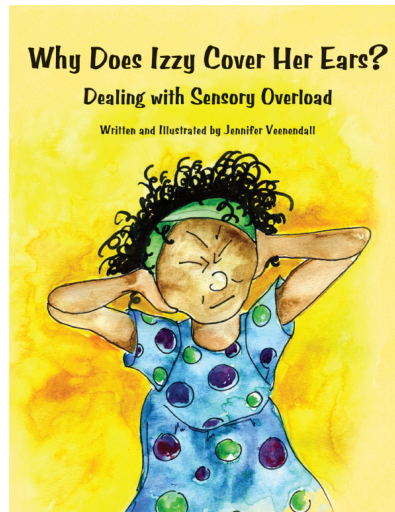
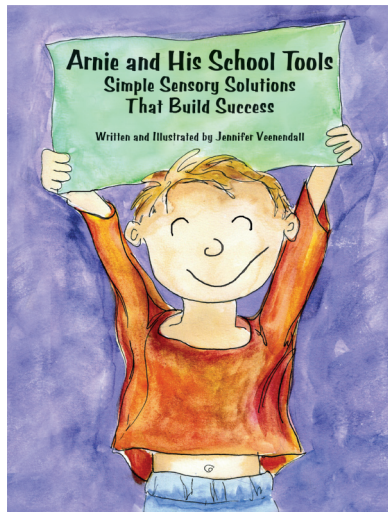
The Cartoon:

(NOTE: The abstract nature of the cartoon is purposeful. Social rules and faux pas are subtle, and this activity gives students and opportunity to analyze the social information, point by point. It is expected that the teacher or group leader will support the discussion using the following prompt questions.):

- Discuss what is funny or odd about the cartoon.
- Discuss what social rule is being broken.
- Explore with students how the man feels.

Contributor to This Issue

Jennifer Veenendall is a school-based occupational therapist in West St. Paul, Minnesota. Working with students with a wide range of abilities, she is especially passionate about creating learning environments that meet students' sensory processing needs. Jennifer received her occupational therapy degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and her master's degree in human development from St. Mary's University of Minnesota. She lives in Hudson, Wisconsin, with her husband, Scott, and their two children, Anna and Benjamin. When she is not working, Jennifer enjoys spending time with her family at their cabin as well as drawing and painting. Jennifer is the author of *Arnie and His School Tools, Sensory Solutions That Build Success* and *Why Does Izzy Cover Her Ears? Dealing with Sensory Overload*.



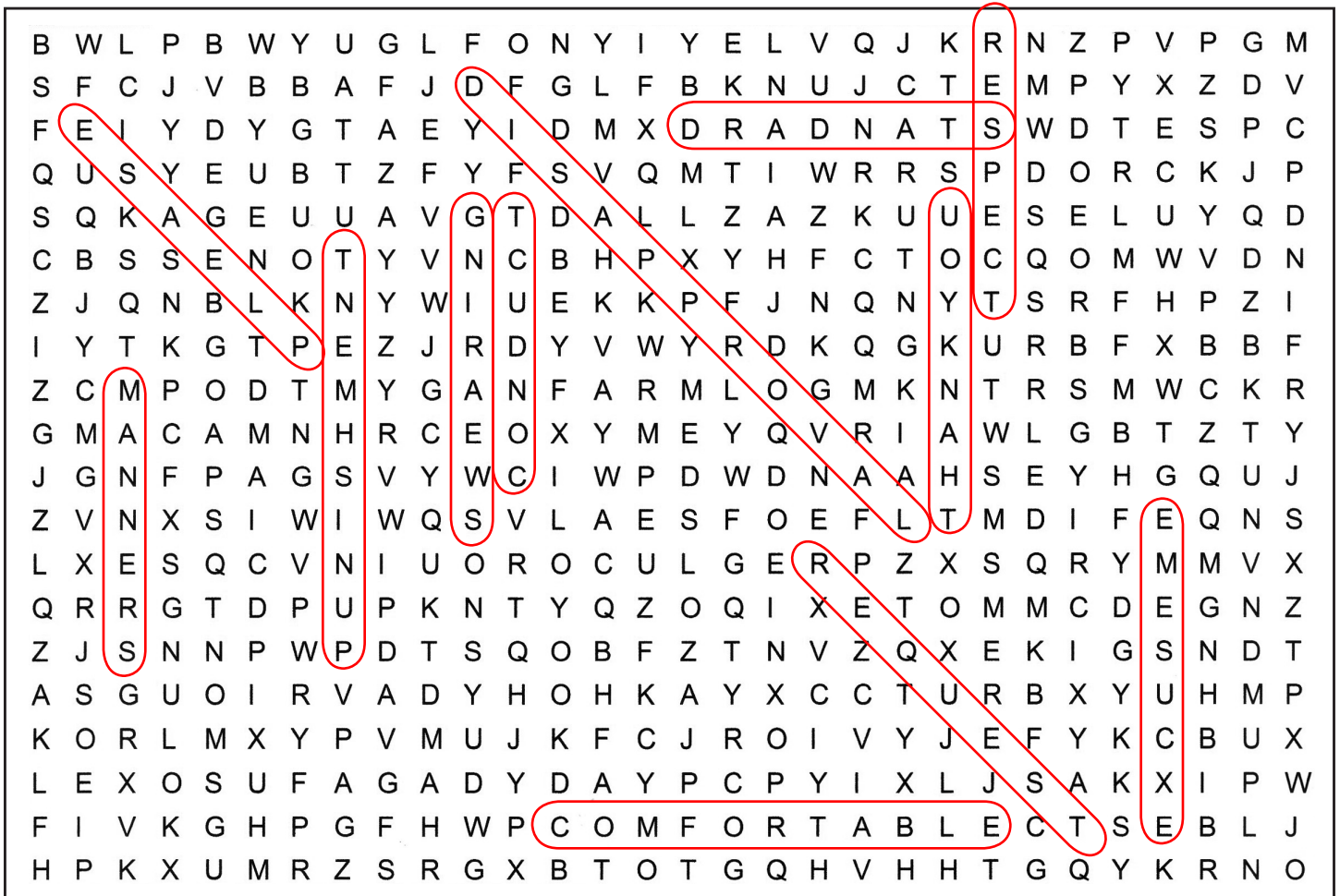
Teacher Handout

Understanding and addressing problems of *manners* in students with social cognitive problems:

If you don't understand how other people think about social situations, it is difficult to understand why you would do something just to make another person think well of you. Social cognitive problems typically involve the inability to understand how one's behavior impacts or influences another person. The topic of manners can be frustrating for students with social cognitive challenges because to truly understand manners, you have to understand why it matters.

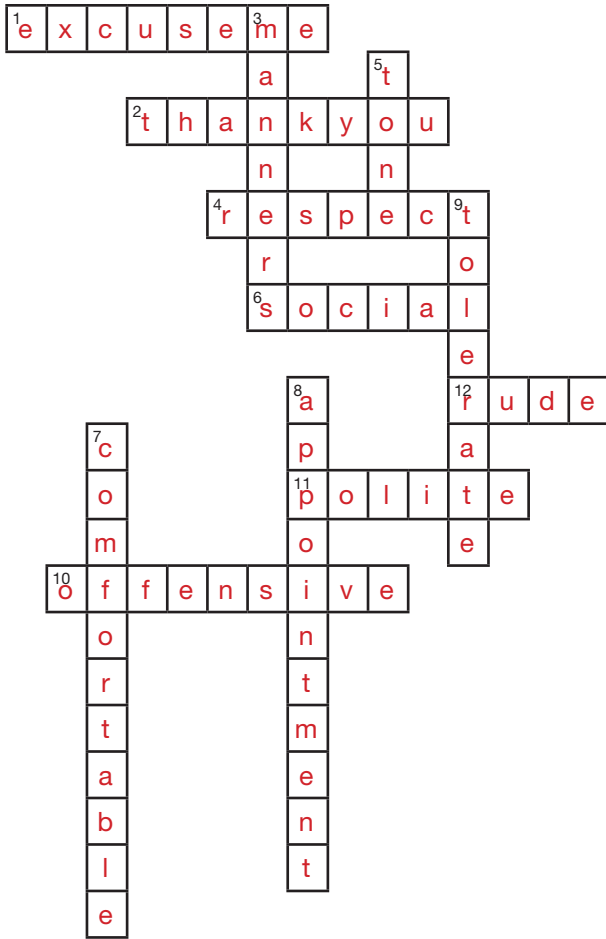
- **Be honest with your student about how their behavior makes other people *think*.** If your student never says "please" or "thank you," it doesn't necessarily mean he doesn't feel grateful or respectful. It might mean that he simply doesn't understand that using these terms will increase the chances that another person will grant his request.
- **Talk to your whole class about manners.** In order for 28 students to exist in the same space for an hour at a time, there are certain things we can do to let those around us know we are safe to be around. One such thing is to say "excuse me" if we accidentally bump into someone. If we don't say "excuse me," the other person has to wonder about our intentions. Using good manners simply helps others know that we are safe.
- **Use the following example about airplanes to explain the impact of manners.** Michelle Garcia Winner (www.socialthinking.com) is a professional in the area of social cognition. She often talks about the subtle nature of manners by using the example of an airplane. When you are on an airplane, you are not really expected to talk to other people, but you are expected to conduct yourself in a way that makes others feel comfortable and safe. For example, if someone looks at you, it is a good idea to smile. It is just a social cue to say "I'm friendly." You are expected to stay in your space and not put your hands, arms, or legs into someone else's space. You are expected to keep your voice low, and if someone else is busy reading a book, you are expected to notice and not engage them in conversation. If you want to listen to music, you are expected to use headphones. All of these unspoken rules of social interaction are examples of good manners that all students can think about whenever they are in public places, like a classroom.
- **Discuss the topic of cell phone use with your whole class.** Cells are new enough in our society that we have not yet established "rules of conduct" for their use, but the use of cell phones has become so common that people are affected, depending on how we behave around cell phones. Have your class make a list of good cell phone manners. Your student with social problems will benefit along with the whole class.

Manners – Word Search Answers



Word Bank: COMFORTABLE, CONDUCT, DISAPPROVAL, EXCUSEME, MANNERS, PLEASE, PUNISHMENT, REQUEST, RESPECT, STANDARD, SWEARING, THANKYOU

Manners – Crossword Answers



ACROSS

- 1) two words: something we say if we bump into someone
- 2) two words: something we say when another person is helpful
- 4) consideration of another's feelings
- 6) any time two or more people are in the same space
- 10) disrespectful; uncomfortable feeling
- 11) a way of being that usually makes another person feel good about us
- 12) a disrespectful way of acting

DOWN

- 3) rules of conduct between people
- 5) how a voice sounds is sometimes referred to as what?
- 7) feeling good and safe
- 8) a prearranged meeting or date
- 9) handle; accept

Manners – Quiz

Name: _____

- 1) True or False? Manners are rules of conduct between people.
A) True
B) False
- 2) True or False? Different people have different thoughts about what is rude and what is polite behavior.
A) True
B) False
- 3) True or False? Manners don't really matter when you grow up and get a job.
A) True
B) False
- 4) True or False? Saying 'thank you' to someone will probably make them feel bad.
A) True
B) False
- 5) Match the incident to a good response

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| _____ If you accidentally bump someone | a) Excuse me |
| _____ If you are asking for something | b) I'm sorry |
| _____ If you offend someone | c) Please |
| _____ When someone does something for you | d) Thank you |

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d) Thank you