

*No one can whistle a symphony. It takes an orchestra to play it.* - H. E. Luccock

In her article, "A Classroom Community: Where Everybody Knows Your Name," in the September 2008 issue of Exchange Magazine, Joni Levine talks about the many ways of building community in an early childhood classroom. One basic way is how you welcome a new child:

*When a new child joins a classroom community, there is a great opportunity — not only to welcome the new child, but also to strengthen a sense of cohesion among all of the children in the group.*

Here are some concrete ways to welcome a new member of the community:

- **Prepare the class.** Share with them some basic information about the new child. What are some of this child's hobbies or interests? Draw attention to commonalities. Perhaps you can tell Shawna that Kyle also has a pet dog!
- **Explain the goal of welcoming a new child.** Ask the group to brainstorm ways they can help the new child to feel comfortable and welcome. Maybe they would like to make a welcome banner or sign.
- **Pair up the new child.** Assign a buddy. This child can help the newcomer feel welcome and connected as well as serve as a guide by touring the classroom and explaining routines. Pick a child you know would be willing and enthusiastic for this task. An outgoing, highly verbal child is a good choice. Additionally, pairing up children who know each other is an effective way to promote collaboration and teamwork.
- **Break the ice.** Take the time to revisit "getting to know you" games and activities. Have all of the children wear nametags again. Play games that focus on names and identity ("My name is Tony and I like tangerines").

#### New Exchange Resource for Parents

In her new Exchange book, *The Top Ten Preschool Parenting Problems and What to Do about Them!*, parenting expert Roslyn Duffy offers parents practical advice for dealing with these common challenges (and more!):

- Whining
- Not Listening
- Meltdowns
- Negotiation and Manipulation
- Morning Hassles, Mealtime Mischief, Bedtime Blues
- Sibling Fights
- Clean-Up and Chores
- Bathroom Battles
- Hitting, Kicking, Pinching, Spitting, Biting...
- Bad Language

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#### Motivate Teachers

We've posted 30 questions you can incorporate into a fun team building activity with your staff. Have staff members answer one question per staff meeting as an icebreaker or ask them to interview one another and introduce each other using the information they discovered. [Click Here](#)