

Welcome to Session 5

The Skill of Assertiveness and the Power of Attention

SESSION OVERVIEW:

- Utilize the Power of Attention to focus on what we want
- Discover how to access and develop an assertive voice
- Apply the Skill of Assertiveness through visuals to increase compliance
- Examine the necessary steps to empower children to use their BIG Voice in times of conflict



ConsciousDiscipline®



If you are in a group setting, choose a partner for Session 5:

Session 5: Pre-Learning Survey

Let's begin with a little survey to help you measure your perceptual shift as you learn helpful, new information.

1. An assertive voice requires we tell children what to do.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. Tattling is a needless disruption.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. What you focus on you get more of.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

4. The question, "How did that make you feel?" is one of the first steps in teaching children how to use their BIG Voice.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

5. In times of conflict, we should go to the victim first.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

In This Session We Will Explore...

Skill of Assertiveness: Saying “no” and being heard, setting limits respectfully

Power of Attention: What you focus on, you get more of

Adult Goal: To set limits for children in an assertive manner, focusing vigilantly on what we want children to do

Child Goal: To use an assertive voice to teach others how you would like to be treated

Combined Tools for Creating Safety

N= Noticing

A= Assertiveness (adults)

R= Routines with pictures

C= Composure

S= Safe Place and Safekeeper

Three Nice Mice

Three nice mice, three nice mice.

Facing each other, hold up three fingers. Move side to side as you say the line.

See how they care, see how they care.

Facing each other, cross your arms over your chest and hug yourself.

They hold both hands and give a shake.

Facing each other, reach out and hold hands. Move your clasped hands up and down in a handshake.

Smiling together, good friends they make.

Continue holding hands and twist while moving your body up and down.

Then turning around, for goodness sake.

Tailor the movement to the age group. Ages 4-7, continue to hold hands while turning each other around. Ages 2-3, release hands and you both turn around. Ages 1-2, release hands and guide the child in turning around. When you are face to face again, give each other a gentle high five.

Three nice mice, three nice mice.

Facing each other, hold up three fingers and move back and forth as you say the line.

Are you willing to try this *I Love You Ritual* with your children or the children in your care? _____



The Power of Attention

Our attention determines how we perceive and respond to our world.

When we are upset, we are always focused on what we don't want. Focusing on the negative primes us to react from the lower centers of the brain. In order to access our executive skills and our wisdom, we must consciously focus on the actions we want to see.

The last time you were upset, where did you place your focus? _____ .

What did you truly want? _____ .

1. We cannot change behavior by focusing on what we don't want. Instead, tell children what _____ .

If your attention is focused on the problem, it is not open to a solution.

The Importance of Conscious Attention

Where we place our attention literally alters our brain.

Neuroplasticity is the brain's ability to change its structure and function based on the demands of a situation. It allows us to adapt, wire, and rewire the brain over and over again. The brain is constantly changing.

2. We have the power to mold our brains by consciously focusing our attention on _____ .

3. _____ is a powerful tool we can use to help children develop conscious attention.

Here are some examples:

"You walked in and opened your book to page 20."

"You picked up your dirty laundry and placed it in the hamper."

"It seems like Jennifer is having a hard morning. What could we do to be helpful?"

Give two examples of noticing you might use in your daily interactions:

- _____
- _____

Noticing sounds like a sports announcer or coach. Good sports announcers describe what they see in such a way that even someone who isn't watching is aware of the action taking place. Similarly, good athletic coaches provide specific feedback about what each player contributes to a successful play in order to help all players become more aware of their actions. Awareness is the prerequisite to growth.

Noticing uses verbal language to describe children's nonverbal behavior. This not only increases children's self-awareness, it also builds vocabulary and language skills.

The Skill of Assertiveness

A child climbs on a table to get a toy. When we are focused on what we don't want, we might say, "Don't climb on the table!" When we pivot to focus on the action we do want, we will provide useable information by teaching, "When you want the toy, ask, *May I have the toy?*"

4. An assertive voice is the voice of _____ .

There are three voices, and each communicates something specific:

- Passive voice: Asks permission
- Aggressive voice: Says "Do it or else!"
- Assertive voice: The voice of knowing, no doubt

5. An assertive "voice of knowing" does these three things:

6. Verbally painting a picture and posting images of what to do is helpful because the _____ hemisphere of the brain loves images and is also where self-regulation develops.

Change these common statements into one statement that assertively paints a picture of what to do:

"No running!"

"Walking feet, walking feet!"

"What is our rule about running?"

"What did I just tell you?"

7. _____



Young children’s brains are unable to consistently understand the “not” part of “do not.” They often hear statements such as “don’t touch, don’t hit, don’t yell” as “touch, hit, yell,” resulting in confusion, frustration and more of these unwanted behaviors.

To help children understand and behave as we desire, we must shift our focus from what we don’t want to what we do want.

8. Change the following phrases to reflect what you do want...

Don’t touch! _____

Don’t hit! _____

Don’t yell! _____

Name, Verb, Paint	
Educator example:	Parent example:
Name: “Kayla,”	Name: “Eric,”
Verb: “Push in your chair and walk to your place in line.”	Verb: “Put your plate in the sink...”
Paint: Make the motion of pushing in a chair, and then walk toward the line and point from Kayla to her place in line.	Paint: Gesture from the plate to the sink or say, “...like this” and demonstrate the expectation by picking up your own plate and putting it in the sink.

Think of a recent situation you experienced and fill in the words you would use to **Name, Verb, Paint** an assertive command.

We often forget to celebrate children’s choice to comply, even though stopping what they’re doing in order to do what we’ve requested may require significant willpower on their part. When children comply, notice and encourage them! If the command is to stand up and go to the door, say, “Good for you; you’re heading for the door,” as soon as they begin to stand up.

If children choose not to comply, say, “I’m going to show you how to get started,” and then guide them in getting started. Once they make the slightest movement, offer encouragement by saying, “There you go! You’re doing it!” Even if the child didn’t really intend to comply, your encouragement will often sway him toward the desired action.

Two Steps for Assertive Commands

Step 1: Give an assertive command using **Name, Verb, Point**.

Step 2: If children comply, **encourage**, “You did it!” If children resist, say, “I’m going to show you how to get started,” and then **encourage** by saying, “That’s it, you’re doing it,” as soon as they begin to move.

When children resist, we feel powerless. When we feel powerless, we often downshift to Emotional State and Survival State reactions like blaming and attacking. To avoid this downshifting:

- Breathe!
- Pivot to focus on what you want the child to do.
- Provide more structure, like posting pictures that show the expected behavior.
- Use the “Tell and Show” approach by saying, “I will show you how” and then modeling how to do it.
- Encourage children and remain confident that they can do it!

Tattling

Children eight years and younger are genetically programmed to bring their problems to an adult. If we send them away, we teach them to distrust authority.

One of the best ways to teach children to use an assertive voice is through tattling. Tattling is an opportunity to teach!

Children eight years and younger are genetically programmed to bring their problems to an adult. Responding constructively now builds trust and teaches them it is safe to go to adults with their problems throughout life (even during the teen years).

Intrusion tattling occurs when one child reports how another child has wronged him. The first step to transform intrusion tattling into an opportunity to teach assertiveness is to ask, “Did you like it?” This phrase raises the child’s awareness, harnesses his inner strength and creates the willingness to learn a new skill. This question opens the door for us to teach the exact skills we would like him to use.

What is a helpful initial response to the following intrusion examples:

9. Addison hit me! _____

10. Denton pulled my hair! _____

11. Maddie is looking at me! _____

Now it is time to teach a new skill. This skill must be specific, phrased in the form of what to do and utilize an assertive tone of voice. Instead of saying, “Use your words,” we would say, “Go tell Sydney, *I don’t like it when you push me. Walk around me next time.*”

12. Tone and _____ must travel with children when we give them the words to say.



13. In addition to providing the exact words, it is essential to practice until children achieve an assertive tone of voice because passivity invites _____, aggression begets _____ and assertiveness dissipates _____.

Conflict is never resolved until we tell the other person the new behavior we want them to use.

Finish these statements with what to do:

14. I don't like it when you push me. When you want my attention, _____ .

15. I don't like it when you call me names. _____ .

16. I don't like it when you hit me. When you want a turn, _____ .

Teach the social skills you want children to use with peers.

17. Tattling Practice for Parents	18. Tattling Practice for Educators
Child: "Justin called me a butthead!"	Child: "Ashley wrote on my paper!"
Parent: " _____ ?"	Teacher: " _____ ?"
Child: "NO!"	Child: "No."
Parent: "What do you want him to call you?"	Teacher: "What do you want Ashley to do?"
Child: "By my name!"	Child: "Stop it!"
Parent: "Ok. Then tell Justin, I don't	Teacher: Rephrase the statement to focus on the
_____ .	action you want to see. "So, you want her to
Please: _____ ."	write on her own paper! Tell Ashley, I don't
_____ ."	_____ .
Let's practice that now.	Please _____ ."
Child: "Justin, I don't like it when you call me	Child: "Ashley, I don't like it when you write on
names. Call me Cody."	my paper. Write on your own."
Parent: Practice an assertive tone of voice if	Teacher: Practice an assertive tone of voice if
needed, and then offer encouragement,	needed, and then offer encouragement,
"You've got it! You're ready to solve the	"You've got it! You're ready to solve the
problem by teaching Justin how to	problem!"
treat you."	



19. Unless there is a safety issue, we must go to the _____ first in conflict situations.

Approaching the victim first shows that we value healing over aggression.

20. By flipping from what we don't want to what we do want, _____ .

21. The structure for Assertiveness that teaches children how to handle their conflicts is the _____ .

Visual Routines as Assertive Communication

Visual routines are an extension of assertive communication. They clearly communicate our expectations to children in a form that is easy for the brain to understand and encode.

Visuals help create safety for children through predictability and consistency.

What are some visuals you currently use in your school or home to show children what to do?

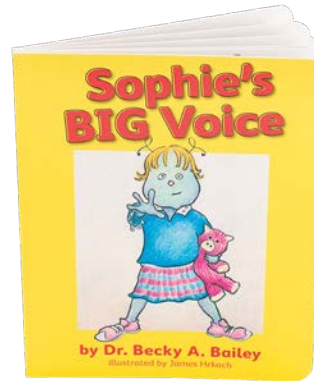
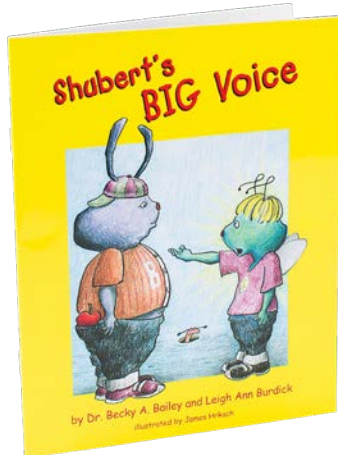
What are some visuals you could add?

All behavior is a form of communication. Times of chaos and struggle often communicate the lack of a clear routine.

What is one time of the day that is generally a struggle?

Create a visual routine: Write and draw the steps needed to create a visual routine to help stabilize the difficult time mentioned above. Though there are six spaces to fill, young children require fewer steps in order to be successful.

Sometime this week, photograph children executing each of the steps you planned. Make a visual routine by printing the images, gluing them on a paper and writing each step beneath the corresponding image. Post the visual routine in the place where the routine is conducted. (The meal routine goes on the kitchen table. The bedtime routine might go on the pajama drawer.)



I am willing

To spend one week of my life discovering where I focus my attention. I am going to be conscious of my outer and inner speech. I am willing to vigilantly focus on what I want in my life and notice the changes.

SIGN: _____ DATE: _____

Focus Points for Parents

As primary attachment figures, our style for setting limits provides the blueprints for the way our children will set limits and boundaries in all of their future relationships. In addition to this long-term impact, it also teaches our children how to handle themselves in conflicts with peers and siblings right now.

Sometimes, we don't even realize our voice is aggressive or passive because of the blueprints that were handed down to us from our parents.

Tone of Voice Practice

Say, "The ceiling is above me."

The tone you use to make a statement of fact like, "The ceiling is above me," is an assertive voice, the voice of "what is."

Now use the same assertive tone to say, "Put your shoes on, it's time to go to school."

Review: Two Steps for Assertive Commands

Step 1: Give an assertive command using Name, Verb, Paint.

Step 2: If children comply, encourage, "You did it!" If children resist, say, "I'm going to show you how to get started," and then encourage by saying, "That's it, you're doing it," as soon as they begin to move.

Think about the last power struggle you had with your child.

Did your communication start out passive, aggressive or assertive? _____

Was your communication passive, aggressive or assertive at the end of the exchange? _____

Now, mentally reframe the power struggle as an O.O.P.S. (Other Oppportunity to Problem Solve) and write an assertive command for the situation using the two steps for assertive commands that we discussed in this session.

Remember, aggression begets aggression, passivity invites aggression and assertiveness dissipates aggression. We must consistently find our assertive BIG Voice in order for our children to hear us, understand us and comply.

Focus Points for Educators

Remember the Conscious Discipline Brain State Model? The brain cannot learn unless it feels safe. A passive voice and an aggressive voice are unsafe because both encourage aggression and fail to provide clear communication. As the classroom's Safekeepers, it is our job to communicate our expectations through assertive commands and assertiveness tools like visual routines.

Tone of Voice Practice

Say, "The ceiling is above me."

The tone you use to make a statement of fact like, "The ceiling is above me," is the assertive voice of "what is."

Now use the same assertive tone to say, "Put the fuzzy pen in your backpack until class is over."

Review: Two Steps for Assertive Commands

Step 1: Give an assertive command using Name, Verb, Paint.

Step 2: If children comply, encourage, "You did it!" If children resist, say, "I'm going to show you how to get started," and then encourage by saying, "That's it, you're doing it," as soon as they begin to move.

Think about a common power struggle or difficult time in your classroom.

Do you clearly communicate your expectations for this time with assertive commands and assertiveness tools like visual routines? _____



Now, mentally reframe it as an O.O.P.S. (Other Oppportunity to Problem Solve). First, write an assertive command for the situation using the two steps for assertive commands.

Next, list the visuals you currently use to show children what to do.

Now, write a plan for providing more visuals. This might include posting a visual routine near the location it is needed and/or making a personalized visual routine book for individual students who have difficulty meeting the expectation.

Review: Skill of Assertiveness

Power:

Attention: What you focus on, you get more of

Becoming Brain Smart:

Attention directs neuroplasticity and all learning

Skill:

Paint for assertive commands, "I'm going to," Tell and Show, "I don't like it," redirection

School Family:

M.A.P. Visual Routines, Visual Daily Schedule, Time Machine, Routine Books

Reflection: Power of Attention

We see what we expect to see and what we want to see. If we choose to see the negative instead of the positive, the question is, “Why?” This month vigilantly practice the following to focus on the behaviors you want to see more of:

- Consciously pay attention to your focus:** Are you focusing on the action and behaviors you want to see or the ones you don’t want? Say to yourself often, “What I focus on, I value and teach others to value.”
- Pivot when you are upset:** Say to yourself, “I’m safe. Keep breathing. I can handle this.” Then honestly ask yourself, “Do I want more of this behavior?” If the answer is, “No,” breathe deeply (be a S.T.A.R.: Smile, Take a deep breath And Relax). Then, paint a picture of what you want children to do and why. Relate the “why” to the language of safety.
- Breathe deeply and affirm the following principles three times a day:** 1. What I focus on, I get more of. I’m going to focus on behaviors I want to see. 2. When I’m upset, I always focus on what I don’t want. I can choose to pivot instead. 3. I am upset because I’m resisting what is. I can take three deep breaths and say, “The moment is as it is.”
- Listen to the language around the school:** Can you hear passive, aggressive and assertive voices? Breathe and wish well to those struggling with assertiveness. Listen to your language. When you hear your passive or aggressive voice, be a S.T.A.R., Oops! and restate the same command in an assertive voice.
- Watch the Power of Attention video** on the portal to deepen your reflection.

Review: Brain Smart Teaching Moments

Every conflict and every expectation about children’s behavior is a teaching moment for assertiveness. Key teaching moments include:

- **When giving a command:** Use your assertive voice to Name, Verb, Paint a picture of what you want to see happen. Follow up with encouragement (Chapter 6).
- **When a child has attacked your dignity, belongings or personal space:** Use I-Messages. “I don’t like it when you wave your hand in my face. Raise your hand over your head like this (demonstrate).”
- **When a child does not comply:** If a child does not follow an assertive command, it creates a new teaching moment. This allows us to model composure during times of distress and hold tight to the value of respect by vigilantly using the Tell and Show process.
- **When there is disorganization or chaos in the room:** Clear visual routines are necessary for the entire class; put them in class books and post them in logical places throughout the classroom. Individual children who are struggling with specific routines benefit from personalized books and postings.
- **When children are disrespectful and aggressive with each other:** Use this opportunity to teach children how to use their assertive voices and become social skills teachers in your classroom.



Reflection: Traditional Discipline and Conscious Discipline

If possible, partner up with someone and say the following two statements out loud. See if you can feel the difference. After each statement share, “The difference between Traditional Discipline and Conscious Discipline for me was...”

Traditional Discipline	Conscious Discipline
Don't make me send you to the principal's office.	I don't like it when you speak to me using hurtful words. Take a breath, and use a calm tone and respectful words so I can help you.
Let me finish this up and then I'll come help you.	I'm going to finish up and then I will help you.
I can't turn the page until you are all in your seats.	Sit down in your space with your bottom on your circle so everyone can see the book.
You do this in public just to embarrass me!	I'm feeling very frustrated. I'm going to take a deep breath to calm down and then I will speak with you.
It's time to form a circle for our class meeting, okay?	Close your book, push in your chair and walk over to your place in the circle. Turn your head to see that your friends have enough space just like this (demonstrate).
How nice of you to join us (with sarcasm)!	When you show up late, I feel disappointed and frustrated because our time together is important to me.

3-2-1 Reflections

3 Things you learned...

2 Ways that you were personally impacted...

1 Question you still have...

Implementation Plan: Make a Commitment

Commitment for Educators

What are you willing to begin implementing right away? Pick one commitment from below or fill in your own. Take out your **Reminder Mini-Poster** for this session and write your commitment in the space provided. If you are in a group setting, verbalize this plan to your Commitment Buddy.

- Name, Verb, Paint when giving assertive commands.** Paint a picture of the behaviors you want.
- Tell and Show when children start to become defiant or noncompliant.** Say, “I’m going to show you what to do, how to get started, what is expected,” etc.
- Actively calm yourself and give an I-Message when a child acts disrespectfully.** Make sure each I-Message ends with what you want the child to do
- Redirect young children** with face-to-face contact, joint attention, clarification of boundaries and assistance in connecting with the new object/activity to nurture prefrontal lobe development.
- Use modeling and “I don’t like it”** to teach children to be assertive with each other
- M.A.P. all school-wide routines** including arrival, dismissal, walking in the halls and the cafeteria. Post visuals throughout the school.
- M.A.P. classroom procedures.** Notice any classroom transitions that still create chaos. Go back and re-M.A.P. the procedures for these transitions.
- Post your daily schedule visually.**
- Create class-made books** so children can read the daily schedule and routines. Place them in the class library and have children check out the routine books to read at home.
- Create individual routine books** for children who have difficulty seeing the patterns in the school day.
- Review additional helpful resources on the portal and visit Shubert’s School,** focusing on visual routines and the Time Machine.
- Other** _____



Commitment for Parents

What are you willing to begin implementing right away? Pick one commitment from below or fill in your own. Take out your **Reminder Mini-Poster** for this session and write your commitment in the space provided. If you are in a group setting, verbalize this plan to your Commitment Buddy.

- Name, Verb, Paint when giving assertive commands.** Use words and gestures to paint a clear picture of the behaviors you want.
- Tell and Show if your child starts to resist.** Say, “I’m going to show you what to do, how to get started, what is expected,” etc.
- Actively calm yourself and give an “I-message” when a child acts disrespectfully.** Make sure each I-message ends with what you want the child to do.
- Redirect young children** with face-to-face contact, joint attention, clarification of boundaries and assistance in connecting with the new object/activity to nurture prefrontal lobe development.
- Use modeling and “I don’t like it”** to teach children to be assertive with siblings and peers.
- Create a visual routine** for a difficult part of the day such as bedtime, morning, and weekend activities.
- Create a home schedule** for the entire day (eat breakfast, get dressed, go to school, do homework, play outside, go to piano class, eat dinner, shower, read a book, brush teeth and go to bed).
- Other** _____

Session 5: Post-Learning Survey

Let's revisit our little survey. Answer the questions below. Then take a moment to re-read your Pre-Learning Survey from the beginning of the session and reflect on the transformational changes you've already internalized.

1. An assertive voice requires we tell children what to do.

1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Undecided	4 Disagree	5 Strongly Disagree
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2. Tattling is a needless disruption.

1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Undecided	4 Disagree	5 Strongly Disagree
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3. What you focus on you get more of.

1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Undecided	4 Disagree	5 Strongly Disagree
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4. The question, "How did that make you feel?" is one of the first steps in teaching children to use their BIG Voice.

1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Undecided	4 Disagree	5 Strongly Disagree
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5. In times of conflict, we should go to the victim first.

1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Undecided	4 Disagree	5 Strongly Disagree
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(odd numbered items with a "1" and even numbered items with "5" show the highest level of understanding)

Reflect



Extend Your Learning

Essential Reading

- *Conscious Discipline: Building Resilient Classrooms*, Chapter 5, Assertiveness (Pages 120-159)
- *Easy to Love, Difficult to Discipline*, Chapter 4, Assertiveness: Saying NO and being heard (Pages 73-96)
- *Creating the School Family* Chapter 6-Visual Rules and Routines (Pages 99-127)
- *Creating the School Family* Chapter 12-Time Machine (Pages 247-275)

Rubrics

- Skill of Assertiveness 2.0
- Teaching Assertiveness to Children 2.0
- Visual Routines 2.1
- Visual Daily Schedule 2.2
- Time Machine 2.3
- Transition Rituals 2.4

Products to Support the Skill of Assertiveness

- *Shubert's BIG Voice*
- *Sophie's BIG Voice*
- *Shubert Puppet*
- *Sophie Puppet*
- *Daily Routine Cards*
- *Seven Skills Poster Set*, Assertiveness poster

Additional Resources

- *Brain Smart Choices for Connection and Calming*
- *Songs for I Love You Rituals*, Vols. 1 and 2 music CDs
- *I Love You Rituals* book
- *I Choose Self-Regulation* board
- *Conscious Discipline: Building Resilient Classrooms* book
- *Creating the School Family* book
- *Kindness Counts* music CD
- *It Starts in the Heart* music CD
- *Brain Boogie Boosters* music CD

- *Conscious Discipline Premium Digital Toolkit*, including:
 - Make-N-Takes
 - CD Games
 - We Care Cards
 - Audio Series
 - Elevate SEL Video Sessions

Online Resources

Log in to your e-Learning Portal at ConsciousDiscipline.com to access additional resources and video FAQs for Session 5.

- Facebook.com/ConsciousDiscipline
- Pinterest.com/ConsciousDiscipline
- Twitter.com/ConsciousDiscipline or [@ConsciousDiscipline](https://twitter.com/ConsciousDiscipline)
- YouTube.com/user/LovingGuidance



ANSWER KEY: SESSION 5

1. To do
2. What we want
3. Noticing
4. Knowing
5. Tells us what to do
 - Uses a tone that says “Just do it,” (the voice of no doubt)
 - Paints a clear and direct picture
6. Right
7. Walk safely in the hall with your hands by your side just like this.
8. You can touch the ball instead.
 - Touch my arm gently to get my attention.
 - Match your voice to mine so I can understand what you are saying.
9. Did you like it?
10. Did you like it?
11. Did you like it?
12. Intention
13. Aggression / aggression / aggression
14. Tap me on the shoulder.
15. Call me by my name, it’s John.
16. Say, “Turn, please.”
17. Did you like it?
 - like it when you call me names
 - call me Cody.
18. Did you like it?
 - like it when you write on my paper
 - Write on your own paper
19. Victim
20. We integrate the brain
21. Time Machine