



NEWHALL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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# How Parents Can Support Social Skills

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Aylin Derkrikorian - School Psychologist  
Susan Nijmeh - Speech & Language Pathologist  
Joanne Woo - Education Specialist

# What Are Social Skills?

- Social skills refer to the abilities and behaviors used to interact effectively with others in social situations.
- These skills are essential for building and maintaining positive relationships, navigating various social contexts, and communicating effectively.

“Children are eventually going to recognize letters. But learning how people work and what’s in other’s minds is a much deeper and more profound learning.” Dr. Alison Gopnick



# Areas of Social Skills

- Saying please and thank you
- Deals with anger and frustration appropriately
- Asks questions appropriately
- Accepts responsibility for own mistakes and decisions
- Deals with losing without yelling or showing physical aggression: sportsmanship
- Conversation skills
- Accepts “no” answer and accepts praise appropriately
- Greets others appropriately
- Follows simple rules
- Understands feeling of others, shows empathy
- Turn taking
- Listens to others
- Sharing materials
- Helping others
- Participating
- Staying on task
- Active listening
- Waiting patiently
- Using people's names

# Physical Challenges With Social Skills

- Poor eye contact
- Can not maintain an appropriate conversation distance
- Body language does not match speech (stares into space: emotions too strong: no body language to reinforce emotion)
- Facial expressions do not match the topic or situation (forgets to smile: does not nod to show understanding)



# Verbal Challenges With Social Skills

- Talks constantly about random topics or may not speak at all
- Interrupts conversations of others
- Does not know when/how to interrupt someone
- Shares too much information in conversation
- Speaks too softly or loudly or speaks in a monotone voice
- Does not know how to give or receive a compliment or may insult someone
- Does not know how to introduce himself/herself to individuals or groups; avoids group gatherings
- Does not like to shake hands, show affections
- Does not acknowledge others when entering a room

# Cognitive Challenges With Social Skills

- Does not consider someone else's emotional state before speaking
- Takes jokes, sarcasm or irony literally
- Laughs or talks at inappropriate times and in inappropriate places
- Forgets to take his/her turn in conversation
- Does not pick up on cues to continue conversation
- Does not consider his/her words before speaking and how it may impact others feelings

# Dealing With Anger and Frustration Appropriately

Social skills can lead to many unpredictable situations so being equipped to work through these moments is important.

- Deep breathing
- Taking a break
- Finding alternatives
- Stating the emotion & validating the emotion
- Create a safe space for your child to be become upset and frustrated while you guide and walk them through it
- Create situations when things do not go as expected so they can practice skills & build tolerance.

# Turn Taking

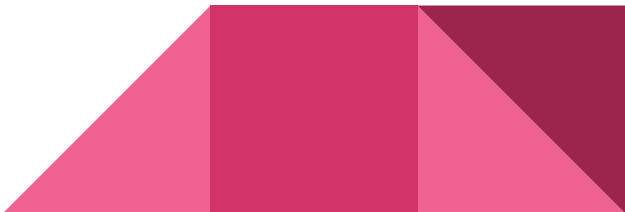
- Involves listening, waiting and taking turns
- Begins early, long before children learn to talk (even in infancy)
- Should encouraged daily
- Work on turn-taking when you're alone with your child at first
- Ensure that your child takes turns, but be in control of the situation by keeping hold of the equipment being used
- Demonstrate the activity first
- Use appropriate signed or spoken language for turn taking (my turn, your turn)
- If your child is reluctant to take turns, let him have two turns for everyone one that you have





# Sharing Materials/Problem Solving

Teaching children to share materials and problem solve conflicts is an essential aspect of their social and emotional development.

- Modeling behavior
  - Choose a solution together
  - Brainstorm solutions
  - Encourage communication
  - Identify feelings
  - Provide opportunities for sharing
  - Use role playing
  - Be consistent
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# Brainstorming Solutions

- Encourage creativity
  - Allow children to think outside of the box and try new ideas
- Have patience
  - Recognize those moments when you can spend a few extra minutes allowing the children to solve a problem independently
- Teach children that it is okay to make mistakes
- Propose multiple possibilities
  - Offer a variety of possible answers to solve a problem
- Praise their efforts




# Strategies for Working on Social Skills


- Social stories
- Scripting
- Playing games
- Pretend play
- Emotion recognition
- Modeling



# Scripting

- Scripts provide students with predetermined phrases or responses for various scenarios that help them practice what to say or do in real life situations.
  - Scripting is a type of role-playing that students use to help them learn about and practice various social skills.
  - Social scripts teach social skills, behavioral skills and problem solving skills to the student.
  - Scripts are also used teach conflict resolution, routine steps, socializing with peers, asking for help, etc.
  - Repeated practice with scripts helps reinforce the desired behaviors gradually.
  - increasing the students ability to navigate social situations independently.
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# Modeling

- Modeling allows children to learn a new skills by observing and then imitating that skill.
  - The goal is to create a supportive and structured environment where students can observe, imitate, and internalize appropriate social behaviors.
  - Students can learn through play while observing the proper behavior of others.
  - Can be done using demonstrations and narrations.
  - Verbally narrate what you are doing (now it's my turn, I'll move my game piece).
  - Narrate when you encounter a challenging behavior as well.
  - Utilize the “I do, We do, You do” strategy.
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# ME Play

- Attention Focused on Objects
- Singular Imagination

Child plays alone (Solitary Play)

Briefly attends to adult who is actively seeking child's attention

- Adult led- Scripting (Behavior-What to do, Communication-What to say)
- Imitates adult- Speak for your child ex: "My turn" when it's their turn
- Follow your child's lead and become a part of their world



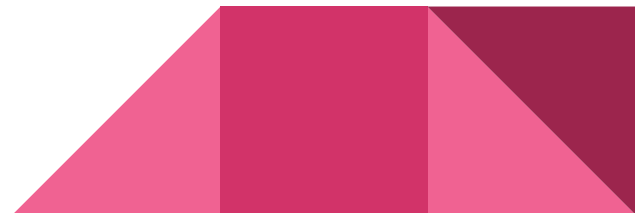
# ME + YOU Play

- Attention Focused on Objects & Adults
- Singular Imagination (Parallel Play)

Play is still quite singular but attempts to engage the adult to play their way. With a lot of work by the adult, the child will briefly attend to a peer.

Adult models and uses self talk.

Introduce your involvement so they have to wait for you.



# ME to WE Play

- Noticing peers but Attention focused on Adults
- Emerging into Shared Imagination

Adult directed play with adults providing the ideas, script, and context.  
Peers take a role and enact the play within the adult structure.  
Adult facilitates peer interactions with shared ideas.





# We Play

- Attention starting to focus on peers with adults present
- Shared Imagination (Cooperative Play)

With minimal adult facilitation in the form of props, materials and initial ideas, peers can begin to create structured play together.

Adult facilitates peer decision making-suggest ideas, shift gears to incorporate different ideas of peers/others.

Kids can get play going until there's a conflict, more responsibility for students.



Questions and comments

