



5 ACTIVITIES YOU CAN DO AT HOME TO

IMPROVE YOUR CHILD'S SOCIAL SKILLS

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HOW IMPORTANT ARE SOCIAL SKILLS?

Social skills are a crucial aspect of child development and are essential for forming and maintaining positive relationships, over a lifetime. Developing these foundational skills is critical, as it reduces the risk of social isolation and positively impacts mental health and self esteem.

Luckily, social skills can be taught in a fun, natural and effective way, through direct teaching, repeated practice, reinforcement, modelling, social stories and positive feedback. Greater communication skills, play skills, self control, and the ability to manage conflict more effectively, are just a few of the benefits of social skills training.



UNDERSTAND & DEVELOP YOUR CHILD'S SOCIAL SKILLS

How can I teach Social Skills from home?

This eBook will educate you on a few fundamental topics surrounding social skills development, as well as providing you with five detailed activities that you can conduct in your household.

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CHAPTER 01

PARENT INVOLVEMENT & REINFORCEMENT

Becoming involved in your child's development is a win-win. You improve your relationship, you learn fundamental parenting skills and your child develops skills that lead to a greater quality of life.

► PARENT INVOLVEMNET

Evidence suggests that parental involvement in social skills interventions can increase the benefits of social skills programs, providing additional opportunities to practice throughout the week, supervise completion of homework activities, in addition to supporting the growth of their child's social network.

► REINFORCEMENT - CATCH YOUR CHILD BEING GOOD!

Sometimes we get so caught up in our own lives, we only notice kids when they are misbehaving! Remember to provide attention when you notice a child is playing beautifully, speaking kindly, following the rules, being creative or learning well.

Most of the time children are being fantastic little humans. We don't want them thinking they are only noticed when they're in a bad mood or making mistakes.

"Active parent involvement is effective in supporting skill acquisition & creating long lasting change!"

"Play is the highest form of research."

- Albert Einstein

5 SOCIAL SKILLS ACTIVITIES YOU CAN DO AT HOME

The following social skills activities are designed to develop skills in a variety of different areas, including; social language, turn taking, self regulation, joint attention, social/emotional, perspective taking, non verbal communication, coping with winning and losing & social play.

► ACTIVITY 1: EMOTIONAL CHARADES

The focus of this activity is to develop emotional skills through non-verbal communication.

Each participant takes a turn standing in front of the other participants and uses their body language and facial expressions to convey an emotion (**Happy, Sad, Angry, etc..**). The participants watching have to determine how they are feeling.

e.g. Participant #1 stands up in front of the family, slumps his shoulders, his face and eyes are directed towards the ground and his lips are slanting downwards.

A participant puts up their hands and says Participant #1 is sad. Participant #1 gives a thumbs up if correct, or a thumbs down if incorrect.

Once a participant successfully conveys an emotion, change roles.

With enough people involved, a parent can facilitate the game (help choose which emotions to convey) and assist their child in participating.



"You see a game. I see turn taking, following directions and a natural setting for language."

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► ACTIVITY 2: FEELINGS UNO

The focus of this game is to develop social emotional skills and feeling empathy towards peers. You will need a deck of uno cards.

Using the Uno colours, discuss what each of the colours might mean.

For example:

Blue can stand for feeling sad, tired, bored, or sick.

Green can stand for feeling happy, calm, focused, and in control.

Yellow can mean frustrated, worried, or nervous.

Red could stand for angry.

Ask your child to pick up a card from the top of the deck. Every time your child picks up card, teach them to use an emotion word that matches the colour of that card.

Ask your child to share a time they felt that emotion, or discuss when someone might feel that way.

This activity works best with more than two people involved.



"When children can communicate their wants and needs, it facilitates their ability to get along with others."

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ACTIVITY 3: PREFERENCE INTERVIEW

This is a Social Language Activity that focuses on the participant asking & answering questions, it allows the participant to develop an understanding of their own and others preferences.

Create a Preferences Interview Form (use the image as an example) to help your Child ask for the family's preferences according to the category.

i.e For 'food', whats your favourite type of pasta? (try to avoid the easy, obvious ones, such as whats your favourite colour?)

Once your child has completed the list of questions, they must interview everyone in the family with the questions.

Your child needs to write down the answers and also their own answers to the questions.



Preferences Interview Form

	MUM	DAD	SIBLING	ME
ANIMAL				
FOOD				
COLOUR				
DRINK				
GAME				
HOLIDAY				
SCHOOL SUBJECT				
WAY TO RELAX				
TV SHOW				

*"A little progress every day,
can lead to huge results."*

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► ACTIVITY 4: BUILDING A TOWER

This is a Turn Taking Activity that focuses on participants waiting their turn and cooperating with a partner. The activity requires building blocks or Jenga blocks. You can improvise by using other objects you have around the house (e.g. plastic cups).

Begin building a tower with your child, making sure that you are taking turns placing a block onto the pile. Be sure to have a limited number of blocks, so the participants know when the activity is over.

It is important to note that turn taking can be a tricky skill to master for most children. Teach your child to ask for a turn 'Say..."it's my turn", or say..."Can I have (item)?"'. If you are experiencing difficulty, try redirecting your child to engage in other preferred activities until it is their turn.



"It is your response to winning and losing that makes you a winner or a loser."

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► ACTIVITY 5: SOCCER GOLF

This is a Turn taking game that focuses on coping with winning & losing and waiting your turn.

Set up a hula hoop or use a towel to make a circle, anywhere in the house or in the back yard, this will be the goal.

Making sure all players have a ball each, take turns kicking the ball towards the goal. Only one person kicks at a time. The player who can kick the ball into the goal, with the least amount of shots, is the winner.

Make sure your child waits until the other player's ball has completely stopped before they get to kick their ball.

If you only have one ball, let your child completely finish their go of kicking the ball in the goal, then make them wait until you completely finish your turn.

The more people that are playing, the longer your child has to wait for their turn.

Progressions of this activity can focus more on fine and gross motor skills, you could set progress to a game where each player must stand on only one leg when kicking, maybe players have to close their eyes when kicking or must use their weak foot to kick the ball.

Use your imagination!



Imagine a child scrunches up work that is too hard, causing the teacher inevitably to come over and help. In this situation the child is asking for the teachers attention and help in the best way they know how. **INSTEAD** of relying on scrunching paper to ask for help, we should teach the child to simply 'ask' for help.

CHAPTER 03

UNDERSTANDING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS



Many behaviours we deem to be challenging are a form of **communication**. They are an effort to communicate our need to GET AWAY from something (i.e. sensory input, or a non-preferred task) or GAIN ACCESS to something (attention from mum, a cuddle, a glass of water, or a shared activity).

Have a think about why your child might be engaging in the challenging behaviour and then determine effective replacement communication (i.e. "ask for help", "ask for an item", say "mum come here please").

Common reasons for challenging behaviours in childhood:

- **Access to items or an activity**

Throwing a tantrum at the shopping checkout because they want a candy bar – Instead we might teach our child to ask nicely for a candy bar.

Perhaps a dangerous running away behaviour is actually an initiation to play a fun game of chasing with dad. In this case we might want to teach the child to say 'chase me' in safe situations.

- **Escape**

When a child yells/throws item when told to clean their room, they could be saying "No way, I don't want to do that!" (Realistically why would they?) OR when your child hides in small spaces, they might be saying the lights are too bright or noises are too loud.

- **Attention**

When a child starts tugging at you whilst you are on the phone, or climbing on furniture, perhaps they are trying to communicate "Get off the phone and pay attention to me!"

*"You're allowed to
scream, you're
allowed to cry, but
do not give up."*

CHAPTER 04

LETTING YOUR CHILD STRUGGLE & FAIL

We can spend a lot of time ensuring that everything runs smoothly for kids. However, problem solving and perseverance are taught through struggle, failure and mistakes.

► CHALLENGES

In the real world, we all face challenges, sometimes we fail and sometimes we persevere through trial and error, learning for months before making progress.

If you notice your child is struggling on an age appropriate task;

- **Express empathy** - "this is really tough, don't worry if you are struggling"
- **Pause before you intervene** - they might figure it out!
- **Repeat** - Allow them to do the task all over again
- **Don't give the answer away** - use problem solving ("have you tried moving it a different way?")



"Do not fear failure, but rather fear not trying."

What are you fighting for?

► FALL BACK ON YOUR VALUES

Week in week out you are devoted to taking your child to various activities and therapies in order to meet many different developmental goals.

If you are going through a period where there are challenging behaviours, or progress is slow, you are often left feeling deflated.

Take the time to fall back on your values.

What do you value for your child?

Values are the lighthouse which guide us in making decisions to create a meaningful life.

Happiness, independence, belonging, individuality, resilience, kindness

*"It's not hard to
make decisions when
you know what your
values are."*

VALUES





ACCESS MORE ACTIVITIES

You can access more of
our Social Skills activities
by contacting us!

We have a massive
catalogue of activities
& resources that you
can use/do at home.

Have some questions
regarding social skills?

Reach out and we'll do
our best to help!

ENQUIRE NOW



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