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Social Skills

List of Articles

Social Stories: An Introduction

By The Autism Home Page

Understanding and Teaching Friendship Skills

By Tony Attwood and Carol Gray

Listening Strategies

The Social Skills Picture Book

By Jed Baker

Social Skills--My View

By Kathy Grant

Friendship and the "Possibilities of Belonging"

Source: Community Resources for People with Autism

How To Encourage Friendships for Children With Disabilities

Source: Beach Center on Disability

How Parents Can Help Their Children Develop Friendships

Source: PEAK Parent Center, Colorado Springs, Colorado

15 Tips for Social Etiquette

Source: Natural Learning Concepts

Top 6 Tips to Teach Social Skills and Help Kids Make Friends

Source: About.com

Recess Survey Form

By Dot Lucci, M.Ed., C.A.G.S.

How Do I Know If I Am Being Teased?

By Dot Lucci, M.Ed., C.A.G.S.

Social Skills--Everyday Solutions

By Mindy Small and Lisa Kontente

Social Skills Websites

Social Skills

By Family Village Library

Social Stories: An Introduction

<http://groups.msn.com/TheAutismHomePage/socialstories.msnw>

I remember using "social stories" when my kids were little. Of course, none of us called them social stories back then - it was just good parenting. "Charity, we are going to the doctor's office tomorrow. He will give you a shot so you do not catch a disease. The shot will hurt. I will be there and I will hold you if you want me to. The nurse will probably give you a sucker when we are done." I know it doesn't fit Carol Gray's structured approach to a social story but it prepares the child for an uncertain event, shares important information, and gives her a strategy to deal with it.

Carol Gray defines a social story in this way: "A social story is a short story that describes a situation in terms of relevant social cues and common responses, providing a student with accurate and specific information regarding what occurs in a situation, and why." (Social Stories and Comic Strip Conversations, Social Stories Unlimited™, 1997, page 1).

Social stories work especially well for children with autism because often they lack the ability to see situations from the perspective of others (Theory of Mind), may miss important social cues ("tunnel vision", Stimulus Overselectivity, and social interaction deficits), they tend to dislike surprises, and tend to respond well to repetition. A social story is designed for the specific child and may include things the child values and is interested in. For example, if a child likes dinosaurs, you could include dinosaurs as characters in a story about going to school, etc. Children with autism are often visual learners, so the story can include drawings, pictures, and even real objects.

Carol Gray recommends a specific pattern to a social story (see the links below and/or attend one of her presentations). The pattern includes several descriptive and perspective sentences. Descriptive sentences clearly define where a situation occurs, who is involved, what they are doing, and why. They are used to describe a social setting, step-by-step directions for completing an activity, etc. Example of a descriptive sentence: "Sometimes at school, the fire alarm goes off. The fire alarm is a loud bell that rings when there is a real fire or when we are practicing getting out of the building. The teachers, janitors, and principal all help us to line up and go outside quickly. The fire alarm is loud so that everyone can hear it. Sometimes I think it is too loud."

Perspective sentences describe the internal states of people, their thoughts, feelings, and mood. Perspective sentences present others' reactions to a situation so that the individual can learn how others perceive various events. Example of a perspective sentence: "The fire alarm does not bother all people. The teachers, janitors, and principal may not understand how much the fire alarm bothers me. Sometimes they get mad if I do not move quickly or get confused. Their job is to get me outside quickly so I am safe in case there is a real fire."

Two other types of sentences are sometime used: directive and control sentences. These sentences may not be used at all and if they are, Carol Gray recommends using them in the ration of 0 - 1 directive or control sentence(s) for every 2 - 5 descriptive and/or perspective sentences. Too many directive and/or control sentences turn a social story into an "anti-social story" of demands and commands. As Carol Gray would say, "Try the decaf!"

Directive sentences are always stated in positive terms and are individualized statements of desired responses. Directive sentences often follow descriptive sentences, sharing information about what is expected as a response to a given cue or situation. Directive sentences often begin with "I can try..." "I will try..." or "I will work on...." Example of a directive sentence: "I will work on staying calm when the fire alarm rings."

Control sentences identify strategies the person can use to remember and apply the social story. A control sentence should be written or inspired by the child. Example of a control sentence: "When the fire alarm rings, will think about the dinosaurs following each other out of the forest to escape the burning meteors."

When the story is put together, you may include pictures that mean something to the child and will help them remember the story. The story can be used as a bed-time story, a story for story time, etc. It may be read daily by the child or read to the child at various times during the week. Carol Gray reports fantastic results with her stories.

Social stories are not just for children. I have used a modified version of the stories to prepare an adult with autism and mental retardation for a visit to his physician (who planned a very invasive procedure). The result was absolutely perfect and the man was a perfect gentleman with his physician. To learn more about social stories, visit the following web sites:

Internet References on Social Stories

[Sample Social Stories](#) - From Carol Gray and the Gray Center.

[Social Stories](#) - Excellent social stories from the Flemington-Raritan Autism Program.

[Social / Self-Help](#) - Some good "social stories" and ideas for teaching many topics. Stories include: menstruation and deodorant use.

[Polyxco.com: Social Stories](#) - The Polyxco.com - Teaching Children with Autism web site is a recent find. This page has many examples of real social stories and a very nice [Introduction to Social Stories](#).

[Social Stories by Meredyth Goldberg Edelson, PhD](#) - Center for the Study of Autism summary on Social Stories. Provides a good summary of the structure of a social story, a link to The Morning News, and Carol Gray's address.

[The New Social Story Book by Carol Gray](#) - Order Carol Gray's newest book from Future Horizons.

[Social Stories and Comic Strip Conversations](#) - From the Online Asperger Syndrome Information and Support (O.A.S.I.S.) web site. Includes links to Carol Gray videos, books, and newsletter.

[Newsletter #2 - Powerful, Effective Social Stories](#) - An article by Lee Irwin, PhD. Includes helpful information on how to write simple, effective social stories.

[Social Stories . . . What They Are and How They Can Help](#) - An article by Reva Schafer, MEd. Provides a good definition and description of social stories, when to use them, and some neat examples.

[Examples of Social Stories](#) - Three short social stories.

[Sumlin Stories](#) - Richard Saffran provides an excellent list of many social sentences or "Sumlin stories" (not technically Social Stories - but close) on a variety of topics. Includes some good notes on Applied behavior Analysis (ABA) strategies.

[Social Stories.com](#) - A description of several prepared books with "social stories" on a variety of topics. Titles include: "Going to the Dentist," "Going to the Doctor," and "Going to the Grocery Store." Each title costs \\\$14.95. I have not reviewed the books nor have any experience with the author. Interesting pictures and ideas though.

[RoadMaps for Autism](#) - Illustrated Social Stories from Debby Greene, M.S. - Written to your order for a fee.

Understanding and Teaching Friendship Skills

Tony Attwood and Carol Gray

One of the central diagnostic criteria for Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) is a failure to develop peer relationships and clinicians examine how the child conceptualises and demonstrates friendship skills. Normal childrens' conception of friendship changes over time and it is notable that children with autism and Asperger's Syndrome often have an immature and unusual definition of friendship. The research literature on the concept of friendship indicates there are four levels between early childhood and adolescence. The four levels are summarised as follows:

Level 1: Approximately 3 to 6 years

The child recognises that games and activities cannot happen unless there is an element of turn taking but there is an egocentric or simple conceptualisation of friendship in terms of defining a friend as someone who gives you things or someone you play with. Friendship is based on proximity and physical attributes and when asked *Why is _____ your friend?* The typical response is *He lives next door!*

Level 2 : Approximately 6 to 9 years

There is an increasing understanding of the concepts of reciprocity and mutual rather than one-way assistance. The likes and dislikes of the other person are more likely to be considered with friendship based on how closely each friend matches their self interest, for example, in liking similar games. There is also a new awareness of the motives, thoughts and feelings of others. When asked *Why is _____ your friend?* the typical response is *He lets me play the games I want to, Because she comes to my party and I go to hers or She's nice to me.*

Level 3 : Approximately 9 to 13 years

The child is more aware of other peoples opinions of them and how their words and actions affect the feelings of others. They are more careful in what they say and do because it may be hurtful to someone. Friendship can be based on shared experience or common interests and helping becomes more valued than simply playing together. There is a greater selectivity in choosing friends, a gender split and a greater durability in the relationship. There is increased value placed on personal attributes such as trust, loyalty and keeping rather than breaking promises. When asked *Why is _____ your friend,* the typical response is *He sticks up for me and helps me with my maths homework, She enjoys doing the things I like to do or I can talk to them and they listen.*

Level 4 : Adolescence to adult

Peer group acceptance becomes more important than the opinions of parents, there is a greater depth and breadth of self disclosure, desire to be understood by friends and recognition that there are different types of friendship - from acquaintances to close friends with autonomous interdependence. When asked *Why is _____ your friend,* the typical response is *or Because we think the same way about things.*

When children with an ASD are asked *What makes a good friend?*, clinical experience suggests that a common response is a list almost exclusively of actions that a friend should not do, eg. bully or tease you, which indicate that the child has experienced a disproportionate level of negative experiences in their peer relationships. They know what a friend should not do but have little idea what they should do.

Social Play with friends

The social play of children with an ASD is often more immature than their peers and includes unusual characteristics such as having less motivation to seek friends, autocratic qualities and being less able to demonstrate the wide range of behaviours that we use as an index of friendship skills. The traditional school curriculum pays little attention to the development of friendship skills yet these skills are the foundation of abilities that are highly valued by adults in their professional and personal lives, namely having teamwork skills, the ability to manage conflict and having successful personal relationships. A recent study examined the perceived quality of life of high functioning adults with autism and Asperger' Syndrome and only one variable, *Ahours spent with friends@,* was able to significantly predict the scores on any of the quality of life measures . These adults valued and desired friendships more than anything in their lives, yet few had the ability to maintain acquaintances, let alone friends. As children we were

never directly tutored in friendship skills, so how do we start teaching someone who appears to lack the intuitive ability we take for granted?

The starting point is an assessment of the friendship skills the child demonstrates and the skills that are conspicuously absent. We have standardised tests to measure cognitive, linguistic and movement skills but at present we do not have standardised assessment instruments for friendship skills that can be applied to children with an ASD. However, a review of the research literature on the range of social behaviours used as an index of friendship skills with ordinary children can produce a primitive checklist of friendship skills for children with Asperger Syndrome. The key social behaviours to be examined are as follows:

Entry Skills: How the child joins a group of children and the welcome they provide for children who want to be included in their activity.

Assistance: Recognising when and how to provide assistance as well as seeking assistance from others.

Compliments: Providing compliments at appropriate times and knowing how to respond to a friend's compliment.

Criticism: Knowing when criticism is appropriate and inappropriate, how it is given and the ability to tolerate criticism.

Accepting Suggestions: Incorporating the ideas of others in the activity.

Reciprocity and Sharing: An equitable distribution of conversation, direction and resources.

Conflict Resolution: Managing disagreement with compromise, and recognising the opinions of others. Knowing not to respond with aggression or immature mechanisms.

Monitoring and Listening: Regularly observing the other person to monitor their contribution to the activity and body language. Their own body language indicating interest in the other person.

Empathy: Recognising when appropriate comments and actions are required in response to the other person=s circumstances and the positive and negative feelings of others.

Avoiding and Ending: The appropriate behaviour and comments to maintain solitude or end the interaction.

The next stage is to use behavioural and cognitive strategies to maintain and improve friendship skills. If the skills outlined above occur, then it is essential that such behaviour is recognised and rewarded. The authors would add that the praise should also be directed at the other child, as they need encouragement to maintain their friendship, especially as such children are often not among the most popular children in the class or neighbourhood. It is also essential that the child=s social play is monitored by an adult to identify when the cues for specific friendship skills occur but the child has not recognised them or is unsure how to respond. The child=s attention is drawn to a specific cue or opportunity and verbal prompts and instruction given as to what to do. This is an application of the traditional behavioural techniques of task analysis, prompting, shaping and reward. Children with an ASD are unusual in that they can be taught what to do in a given situation, but they may not understand why the action or comment is appropriate. They need to learn the theory as well as the practice. Conventional programs to encourage friendship skills with ordinary children make assumptions that may not be applicable to children with an ASD who have significant problems with Theory of Mind Skills, Affected Relatedness, Central Coherence and Executive Function. However, Social Stories can be used to assist the child to acquire the necessary cognitive mechanisms. The following is an example of a social story for a grade one child who needs to learn about the concept of assistance in friendship. It is designed to understand what 'help' is

Sometimes Children Help Me

Sometimes children help me. They do this to be friendly.

Yesterday, I missed three math problems. Amy put her arm around me and said, Okay, Juanita She was trying to help me feel better.

On my first day of school, Billy showed me my desk. That was helpful.

Children have helped me in other ways. Here is my list:

I will try to say, Thank you! when children help me.

How I Can Help Children in My Classroom

My name is Juanita. Sometimes, children help me. Being helpful is a friendly thing to do. Many children like to be helped. I can learn to help other children.

Sometimes, children will ask for help. Someone may ask, "Do you know what day it is today" or "Which page are we on?" or maybe something else.

Answering that question is helpful. If I know the answer, I can answer their question. If I do not know the answer, I may try to help that child find the answer.

Sometimes, a child will move and look all around, either under their desk, in their desk, around their desk. They may be looking for something. I may help. I may say, "Can I help you find something?"

There are other ways I can help. This is my list of ways I can help other children:

Children like to be helped.

Other techniques can be used to encourage friendship skills such as a friendship diary, matching individuals and support groups. For younger children, a friendship diary can be used to record occasions when the child demonstrated friendship abilities and other children were particularly friendly towards the child. It is interesting that one of the criteria ordinary children use for defining what makes a good friend is someone who has similar interests. However, the special interests of the child with an ASD may not be interesting or popular with their peers. One option is to identify other children who have the same interest and introduce the two children to each other. An example is a child with Asperger=s Syndrome who has a special interest in ants, a solitary pursuit for him as no other of his acquaintances at school shared his enthusiasm and knowledge of this topic. However, by chance, another local child who also has Asperger=s Syndrome, was also interested in ants. When they were introduced a genuine friendship occurred with joint expeditions to observe and collect ants and the sharing of information and resources on these insects. It was notable that each child=s friendship skills with other children appeared hesitant and contrived, yet when the two met, their natural friendship skills were far more fluent and spontaneous. This technique can be facilitated by local parent support groups having a registry of children and their interests, pen pal registries, special interest clubs and Internet chat lines. An extension of personal matching is the development of local support groups run by adolescents and young adults with Aspergers Syndrome. These groups hold regular meetings and excursions to destinations that may not be valued by their ordinary peers, such as museums and transport facilities. These groups provide a social life outside school, and the opportunity to meet someone who shares the same experiences and values, the basis of many friendships for adults

One of the issues raised during social skills workshops for young adults with an ASD is recognising when someone appears to be friendly but may actually be taking advantage of their social naivety, and how to identify and respond to the different types of personality. Tuition may be required in identifying hidden motives, seeking a second opinion and how to manage situations of potential abuse. It can also be necessary to teach the strategies of maintaining friendship, coping with grief when the friendship ends and overtures of friendship that are not reciprocated. The authors have also noted that children with Asperger=s Syndrome appear to lack an ability to perceive and describe the personality characteristics of others and themselves. When asked "What sort of a person is _____?" their responses are predominantly descriptions of physical attributes such as height or what a person does, eg. a teacher.

What is missing is a wide lexicon to describe the different types of character. When personality characteristics are nominated, a common response is "nice and kind", and synonymous words to this one characteristic. The children appear to have a one dimensional approach to characterisations. Other children can quickly "read" a person's character and adapt their behaviour accordingly. They know which children to avoid and are more proficient in choosing who complements their own personality. To teach such skills in young children with Asperger's Syndrome the authors advocate using the popular Mr. Men stories by Roger Hargreaves. They describe a range of personality types such as Mr. Grumpy and Mr. Nosey and Little Miss Chatterbox.. Another activity is encouraging the child to choose an animal that represents someone's personality. Older children can use adaptations of literature studies to identify the indications of personality type and how to respond to such people. It is important to help the child understand their personality and to recognise the type of person they are likely to get along with and who might become their friend.

Resources on developing friendship skills

Preschool Age

Baby Faces (1998) . New York, NY: Dutton Children's Books.
 Conlin, S. & Friedman, S. L. (1991, 1993) . All My Feelings At Preschool. Seattle, WA: Parenting Press, Inc.
Funny Faces: A very first picture book (1996,1999) . New York, NY: Lorenz Books.
 Hallinan, P. K. (1999) . Heartprints. Nashville, TN: Ideal Children=s Books
 Rogers, R. (1996) . Making Friends. New York, NY: The Putnam & Grosset Group
 Offerman, L. (1999) . Little Teddy Bear's Happy Face Sad Face. Brookfield, CT: The Millbrook Press, Inc.

School Age

Brandenberg, A. (1993) . Communication. New York, NY: Greenwillow Books
 Brown, L. K. & Brown, M. (1998). How to be a Friend. USA: Little, Brown & Company
The Care and Keeping of Friends (1996) . Middleton, WI.: American Girl Library Editor, Pleasant Company Publications.
 Conlin, S. & Friedman, S. L. (1989, 1993) . All My Feelings At Home. Seattle, WA: Parenting Press, Inc.
 Holyoke, D. (1997) . Oops!: The Manners Guide for Girls. Middleton, WI: Pleasant Company Publications
 Kipfer, B. A. (1994) . 1,400 things to be happy about. New York, NY: Workman Publishing
 Krueger, D. W. (1993). What Is A Feeling? Seattle, WA: Parenting Press, Inc.

Adult books

Dimitrius, J. & Mazarella, M. (1998, 1999) . Reading People: How to Understand People and Predict Their Behavior-Anytime, Anyplace. New York, NY: The Ballantine Publishing Group
 Gabor, D. (1983) . How to Start a Conversation and Make Friends. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster
 Gray, C. (1999, Spring) . Gray's Guide to Compliments. The Morning News, 11-1, 1-17.
 Rubin, L. B. (1985) . Just Friends: The Role of Friendship in Our Lives. New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers.
 Mattews,A (1990). Making friends: A guide to getting along with people. , Singapore, Media Masters.

Observation Schedule

Child's Name: Location: Date: Start Time: Finish Time: Observer:

Friendship Skills	Rating of Friendship or Team Skills	Comments/Observations											
Entry Skills	Joining a												

	group																		
	Welcoming Others																		
Assistance	Given																		
	Sought n																		
Compliments	Give																		
	Received appropriately																		
Criticism	Appropriate																		
	Inappropriate d																		
	Receive																		
Accepting Suggestions	Incorporating other's ideas																		
Reciprocity	Conversation																		
Sharing	Resources																		
Interest	Listening																		
	Looking																		
Conflict Res	Compromise																		
	Aggression e																		
	Immatur																		
Monitoring	Observing Others																		
Empathy	Responding appropriately																		
	Ignoring																		
Avoiding	Seeks solitude appropriately																		
Eye Contact	Social Punctuation																		
	Read facial clues																		
Ending	Closure Appropriate																		

The checklist was designed by Dr. Tony Attwood in December 1999 and is currently only in a draft format. If you have any suggestions regarding modifications to the form and whether it has proven useful, please contact Tony at: tony@tonyattwood.com

Listening Strategies



6 Good Strategies

(to let someone know you are listening)

1. Give the speaker good eye contact.
2. Lean forward slightly to show interest in what is being said.
3. Nod your head and give the speaker feedback (e.g., say things like, “oh yeah?” or “uh-huh!”).
4. Ask questions that deal with the speaker’s topic.
5. Give the speaker your full attention. (Try not to do two things at once.)
6. Let the speaker finish before you talk. (Don’t interrupt.)

The Social Skills Picture Book

Teaching Play, Emotion, and Communication to Children with Autism

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featured book

Contents

Part One

The Nature of Autism
Teaching Social Skills
About Social Skills Picture Stories
Making Your Own Social Skills Picture Stories
References

Part Two – Social Skill Picture Stories

Communication Related Skills

Don't be a Space Invader
Listening Position
Interrupting I (help opening a jar)
Interrupting II (help with a zipper)
Interrupting III (asking peers for a toy)
Greetings
Listening During a Conversation
Starting and Maintaining a Conversation (about the Present)
Starting and Maintaining a Conversation (about the Past)
Ending a Conversation
Introducing Yourself
Talking Briefly

Play Related Skills

Asking to Play
Joining in Play
Sharing
Compromising
Turn Taking in Play
Playing a Game
Dealing with Losing

Emotion Related Skills

Keeping Calm
Showing Understanding for Others' Feelings
Accepting No for an Answer
Dealing with Mistakes
Trying Something New (Fear of a New Situation)
Dealing with Teasing
Trying When it's Hard (Dealing with Hard or Frustrating Work)

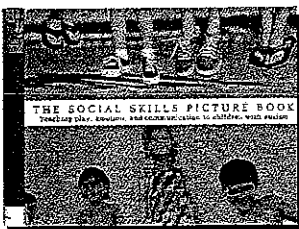
From Part One

About Social Skill Picture Stories

The Social Skills Picture Book depicts, step by step, children demonstrating various social skills. Each skill is formatted sequentially, similar to a cartoon strip, with digital pictures of actual children combined with text and cartoon bubbles to denote what the children are saying – and sometimes thinking – as they engage in the skill. Included are the right (and sometimes the wrong) way to act with accompanying text that enhances the learning experience.

These pictures provide a means to compensate for the inherent difficulties many autistic individuals share. They make explicit what to do and say in social situations. In addition, by utilizing a picture format, they capitalize on students' visual processing strengths to facilitate attention and comprehension.

Reading *The Social Skills Picture Book* is not a substitute for actually practicing skills. It is a useful tool in the initial acquisition of skills and should be followed with actual skill practice in the situations in which they are needed. If the goal is for a student to demonstrate a skill in a particular situation, then ultimately the student will need to repeatedly practice that skill in that situation. However, before students can physically practice a skill, they need some understanding of what to do. *The Social Skills Picture Book* can facilitate that initial understanding. Furthermore, it promotes independence in that a student can refer to the book once a skill has been learned for further reinforcement of appropriate behaviors. The book can travel with a child across social environments, from home to school, through recess, or out into the community, thereby augmenting learning and further increasing independence.



Interrupting

Interrupting III - Asking Peers for a Toy

- Sometimes it is okay to interrupt people who are busy or are talking.
 - If you need help, information or guidance
 - If there is an emergency
 - If you want something
- Walk up to the person(s) and wait for a pause in their conversation or activity.
- Say, "Excuse me..." then ask for what you want or need.
- Wait for their response.
- Say, "Thank you" before leaving.

- Decide if you need to interrupt someone, because you need help, information or you want something.



The boy wants to play with one of the dinosaurs. He will need to interrupt the girls.

- Walk up to the person(s) and wait for a pause. A pause is when others stop talking.

Right Way

The boy walked up to the girls and is waiting for them to stop talking and look at him.



Wrong Way

The boy did not wait for them to stop playing. He grabbed the girl's shoulder to get her attention.



27

The Social Skills Picture Book helps youngsters visualize (a) the positive outcomes of performing a skill and (b) how people think and feel in response to their behaviors.

Accepting No for an Answer

Accepting "No" for an Answer

- Sometimes teachers and parents say, "No" when you ask for something.
 - "Mom, can I have a cookie?"
 - "No, it's too close to dinner time."
- Accept "No" by saying "Okay" and do not get mad. Sometimes this is not easy to do, especially when you really want something.
- If you do not get mad* and accept "No" for an answer, the other person will feel good about you. She may give you some of what you want later, or let you do something you want to do later.

* If you do get mad, then look at page 135, Keeping Calm.

- Sometimes people say, "No" when you ask them for something.



When the boy asks to play the game, the teacher says, "No", and tells him to do his work first.

- Accept "No" by saying, "Okay" and do not get mad.

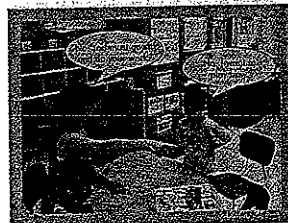
Right Way

The boy says, "Okay", and does not get mad. He knows he will get to play the game later.



Wrong Way

The boy gets mad and does not accept "No" for an answer.



163

- If you accept "No", then the other person will be happy. She may let you do something you want to do later.

Right Way

The boy now gets to play because he waited until he finished his work.



Wrong Way

The boy still can't play because he would not accept "No" and wait to play.



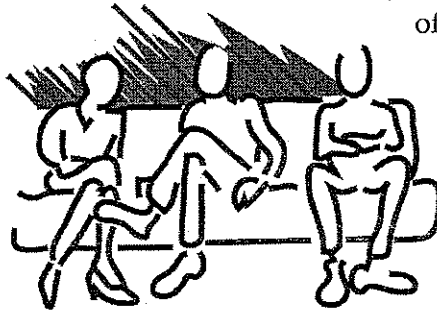
164

Social Skills - My View

by Kathy Grant

As a person with autism, having social skills is necessary for me to function in life. I am constantly working on improving this but there are still areas that I need to work on.

There are situations that occur when I can use the confidence, smoothness, and ease which others have that I lack. For example, I had a class in European Geography last fall and would come early to class and observe the students closest to where I sat interacting with each other. It amazed me how easily and smoothly their conversations flowed. And not only that, what they talked about interested me. I envied them because when I talk or enter into a conversation, I feel like a bull in a china shop. These students would smoothly talk about what they did over the weekend, or what happened in the workplace or talk about the other classes they took. And these conversations would flow from one subject to another without missing a beat. With me, I don't flow in conversation well with more than one person at a time. And whatever comes into my head comes out of my mouth because I don't think things through. For example, in class the professor was talking about Paris and I said "it was well worth a Mass." because I was quoting a historical figure that liked the city. The professor thought I was saying something about religion, and didn't understand that I was quoting something from history.



There are many social things, looking back hindsight 20/20, that I wish I had been taught when I was a child. As a child and teenager, I didn't have the skill of being interested in what other people were interested in and only talked about the stuff I was interested in. There were times at the dinner table, when the family would talk about things such as houses and real estate and I'd say "Lima, Peru!" or talking about Iranians, the hostages, and Ayatollah Khomeini while my Mom talked about getting Grandma a Christmas present. What I needed to be taught was how to listen and enter into conversation step by step, with patience and love. Also, I didn't know how to get a birthday or Christmas presents for people and needed to be taught that without being nagged at or just having someone do it for

me. I needed one-on-one time to learn these things and didn't get it until adulthood.

I intellectually understand the importance of manners in social situations and try my best to use them when I am out in public. I am always nice to cashiers and give up my seat on the bus for someone who needs it more than I. And when I go on trips, I try to get souvenirs for the people who are closest to me. But I am not perfect and mess up a lot, even now. For example, just this past December, my advocate Sue got me a present for Christmas and asked if I please wait until the 25th to open it. I said to her that if you didn't want me to open it right now, don't give it to me because I'll open it anyway. I was only thinking of myself and not of her

feelings because like a horse with blinders on, I focused on what I wanted. Another example of me not understanding social manners was after Christmas shopping at K-Mart, Sue wanted to take me out to a nice lunch for the occasion, but I wanted to eat at the McDonald's close by. I didn't take Sue's feelings into consideration because it never occurred to me to think of her feelings. She wanted to eat at a nicer place and not a fast food place, and it never crossed my mind to even consider that. And this

happened about 5 weeks ago! Also another social skill that I am working on presently is on setting boundaries. I have a hard time standing up for myself in certain situations. I have a tendency to "rescue" people from their troubles. And when I finally do stand up for myself, it is almost too late. For example, Tony, a man who is homeless and goes to my church, stayed at my place for 3 months, always wanted to watch war movies and never let me watch the movies I rented like, "What's Up Doc?" Instead of standing up for myself, I'd let him watch his war movies, while I retreated to my bedroom to read and/or pray. I finally had to boot him out with the help of my family and advocate.

Social stuff for me is hit or miss because, from my perspective, it lacks continuity and everything changes too quickly for me to hold on to. I'm a specific to general learner and not a general to specific learner. And it's hard for me to carry these things from one situation to another. I need to know, in black and white, what to do. When I know what to do, I will do it and try to carry it over to the next situation. I am constantly learning and improving on this. It is always a learning process that will last for the rest of my life. ■

Go Ahead and Ask



by Susan Hepburn, Ph.D. & Judy Reaven, Ph.D.

Question: I have two boys, a 7 year old and a 9 year old. My 7 year old has autism, and is just beginning to play with peers. I would love for my children to play together, but everything I've tried does not seem to work. Either the 9 year old complains about having to play with his brother, or my younger son just walks away every time I try to encourage a play time. I end up having to play separately with each of my boys to keep them happy. What should I do?
Signed, Tired of Playing in Fort Collins

Dear Tired of Playing:

We agree that it would be great for your two children to play together. They are close in age and this is the perfect time for them to begin to develop a set of shared play interactions that they both enjoy. Not to mention that once they have established a good play set with each other, it can free you up from being the primary playmate for each of your sons. Be aware, that the following recommendations will likely require more time and energy to implement initially. However, your investment in time will likely be well worth it as your children enjoy their time together.

We would suggest you begin with the following:

First, make a list of all of the play activities that each of your son enjoys. Include everything you can think, including indoor and outdoor activities. Some examples might include:

- a. constructional toys like Legos, tinker toys, blocks, and K'nex
- b. physical activities such as basketball, riding bikes, going for a walk or hike, playing catch, or 4-square
- c. table top games such as Lotto or other matching games, Connect 4, Kerplunk, Sorry, Uno or other card games.
- d. imaginative play with a variety of symbolic toys such as action figures or superheroes.

This list is not meant to be exhaustive—feel free to be creative and varied in your list. One caveat—it may be tempting to have your children play together with video or computer games. While electronic games may be enjoyable, and entertaining, these activities are best used to occupy time, and do not really promote social interaction.

Next, select a few activities from each list as a place to start. Make sure that for each targeted activity, your 7 year old can engage independently with other people (probably an adult) around that activity, before you have the expectation that he will play independently with his brother with those same materials. For example, if you are playing with Legos, make sure your 7 year old can play appropriately with them himself or with you—such as building structures independently, or by following a model, or by using step by step picture directions.

For some toys you may need to specifically teach him how to play with them. The easiest way to do this is to have duplicate objects (i.e. two sets of identical Legos). Then, you can slowly put two or three together and have him imitate your structure. Physically

guide his hands to imitate you if he does not easily take hold of the materials, then praise him for playing with Legos. You can use the duplicate materials technique to learn a variety of independent functional play skills. Typically, this approach works best for teaching children how to play with a variety of cause/effect toys, as well as constructional toys. As he becomes comfortable with one toy, you can introduce another one so that he is gradually building a repertoire of age appropriate play skills.

Turn-taking may need to be taught separately as well. The best way to teach children with autism how to take turns, is to begin with a simple activity that he can easily complete independently, and has a clear beginning and ending. Completing puzzles or matching pictures in a lotto game usually work well. Then, teach him by physically guiding him to pull the materials towards himself when it is his turn, and guide him to push the materials towards you when it is your turn. If he is verbal, you can also verbally prompt him by saying "my turn" when it is his turn, and "your turn" when it is your turn. Remove your physical prompt as soon as it is clear that he understands the process. Play slowly at first so that he has plenty of time to nonverbally mark turns (looking at you, reaching for materials), rather than working quickly to finish the activity.

Select a time during the day that will be play time. It is particularly important that both boys know ahead of time when they will be playing together (at least initially while you are trying to get some kind of routine going), what they will be doing, how long they will be together, and what will happen after they play. For example, you can schedule this time into the daily routine for both of your children, although you may need to do different kinds of preparation for each child. Your 7 year old will likely require prepping on how to play with the materials, while your 9 year old will require some coaching on how to best play with his brother. Look for times when your younger son responds only to his brother and highlight his important role as "big brother".

Follow play time with something rewarding for each boy. Although the ultimate goal for teaching your boys to play together is for them to have fun with each other, at first, your efforts during play time may feel more like a chore. Therefore, in order to keep them interested in playing, it may be a good idea to follow play time with something that each boy enjoys or finds motivating. It may be a special dessert, or simply a preferred activity, anything that helps to acknowledge their hard work.

Continue to set aside regular "alone" time with your older son. Your older son may already know that his brother has autism, but continuing to provide regular time to be together without his brother, can give him the opportunity to share his feelings or experiences privately.

Build on existing interactions that are going well. Probably the easiest place to start is with building on what your boys are already doing together. Look for moments when they are enjoying each other, and find ways to expand on those opportunities. Playing chase can turn into hide and go seek, or jumping on the bed can turn into a modified "Simon Says."

Good luck and most importantly, have fun!

FRIENDSHIP AND THE “POSSIBILITIES OF BELONGING”

The importance of friendships cannot be overstated—it is certainly one of the universal “good things in life.” Research shows that friendships give people with disabilities social, emotional, and practical supports throughout their lives and help to integrate them into community life. Without friends, people with disabilities may find themselves in an often impersonal service delivery system, especially after their parents are gone. Supportive social ties are usually the most effective means of insuring a good and safe life for people with disabilities.

But making friends and maintaining relationships may be very difficult for children, adolescents, and adults with autism. Parents must be open to helping their children develop friendships by being flexible and persevering, and by creating or hunting out opportunities that may foster reciprocal friendships.



How To Encourage Friendships for Children With Disabilities

Research shows that friendships give people with disabilities social, emotional, and practical supports and integrate them into community life. People who have disabilities also bring certain gifts, such as acceptance, spontaneity, trust, simple enjoyment of life's pleasures, honesty, and several other contributions to their friends.

To facilitate friendships, you must be open to helping children develop friendships, by being flexible and persevering. Orient yourself toward the child's strengths and allow the child to make his or her own choices, because the ability to make good choices develops independence.

With younger children, you might have to teach the child how to interact with his or her peers in play. You will also need to educate peers. Start by discussing the child's disability with playmates. Ask for questions. This encourages tolerance and understanding of individual differences. If the child has a communication disability, help potential playmates learn ways to communicate with the child with a disability.

Studies indicate that group size influences the social play of children with disabilities. Small groups of two or three children often play better than larger groups with a child with a disability. Another tip is to vary the children in the group. More sophisticated children will be role models and have better communication skills. Less sophisticated children allow the child with a disability to display leadership and problem solving skills.

Play activity also factors in connections. Some toys (balls or board games) promote play with other children. Other toys (such as books or crayons)

encourage solitary play. Organize materials to promote children's interaction and have them in a defined area with sufficient space to play.

With older children, research shows that peer tutoring, cooperative learning, and disability awareness training help children with and without disabilities to socialize, play, and just hang out together. Some successful strategies are:

One-to-one matching. Here, in a formal volunteer program (such as Best Buddies or Natural Ties), one person is matched with a similar-aged peer who has a disability. Some long-lasting friendships have emerged from these kinds of matches. You can find Best Buddies on the Internet at <http://www.bestbuddies.org/>

Existing or formal networks. In the McGill Action Planning System (MAPS), the child and family are asked to look closely at their environment and plan for a better life by examining the child's current relationships and coming up with ways to expand and improve those connections. A related method is Group Action Planning, which brings together family, friends, and community members to regularly problem solve for and with the child with a disability. For those who have few or no relationships, "Circle of Friends" is a method where peers are invited to make a commitment to a child with a disability. Often, this is done in the school setting and can be part of an existing or a new club. Promoted to students as an extracurricular activity, this "friendship club" should allow members to choose the relationship they want to develop and make sure the child with a disability is regarded as a peer at all times.

Community activities. Many places in the

community actively encourage people with disabilities to participate in their programs. These include the YMCA, Boy and Girl Scouts of America, 4-H (which offers more than agricultural projects only), parks and recreation programs, community theater groups, and volunteer organizations.

Consciousness raising advocacy. This approach, where one person or a group goes into the community to discuss disability issues, often leads to friendships.

Winning Strategies:

- ♥ Find opportunities to bring children together. A key trait of friendship is close proximity and frequent opportunities to socialize.
- ♥ Highlight the child's strengths and gifts.
- ♥ Have the physical environment accessible to the child with a disability.
- ♥ Encourage independence. Follow the child's lead.
- ♥ Collaborate with general education teachers.
- ♥ Present information on disabilities to others to promote understanding.
- ♥ Teach social skills. Talk to the child about how to make and keep friends.
- ♥ Expect people to accept the child.
- ♥ Have the child attend the neighborhood school.
- ♥ While planning the child's school goals, include community activities and developing relationships.
- ♥ Give the child time to spend with friends.
- ♥ Invite community members to participate in the family's life.

- ♥ Prepare the child to answer questions others may ask, such as "Why do you use a hearing aid?"
- ♥ Consider how the child can make the best possible first impression in terms of clothes, hair style, or greetings.
- ♥ If the child has communication difficulties, offer meaningful comments to emphasize his or her similarities to other children.
- ♥ Be open to different types of relationships.
- ♥ Encourage the child to make friends with others who have empathy, those who can "stand in the shoes" of another.
- ♥ Get information on Circle of Friends, Group Action Planning, or other person-centered future planning approaches.
- ♥ Realize that true friendship needs some basis for exchange (reciprocity).

For additional information see the following:

Friendships and Community Connections Between People With and Without Developmental Disabilities published by Paul H. Brookes,
and
A Guide to Thoughtful Friendship Facilitation for Education and Families by C. Beth Schaffner and Barbara Buswell, available from PEAK Parent Center, 6055 Lehman Drive, #101, Colorado Springs, CO 80918.

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If you are interested in other issues concerning families who have members with a disability, please contact the Beach Center on Families and Disability at 1200 Sunnyside Avenue, 3111 Haworth Hall, The University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045-7534. Phone: 785-864-7600. Email: Beach@dole.lsi.ukans.edu. See other fact sheets and research briefs at our internet site: <http://www.beachcenter.org>. This is a publication funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research of the U.S. Department of Education. Opinions contained in this publication are those of the grantee and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of Education. Permission to reproduce and distribute these guidelines is granted. Please credit the Beach Center on Families and Disability.

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP CHILDREN DEVELOP FRIENDSHIPS

Parents can try a variety of strategies to encourage relationships to develop:

- ◆ Create an environment in your home that attracts kids; make it a fun place for them to get together. *Have snacks available; make children feel welcome to visit or just drop by. Have activities going on that your child and peers enjoy, such as video games, bike riding, etc.*
- ◆ Play “detective.” Observe very carefully the places where other children in the neighborhood hang out, noting the activities they enjoy, trends in clothing, music, hairstyles, etc.
- ◆ Sign your child up for community groups and activities that involve other neighborhood children of the same age. *Consider scouts, swimming, summer day camps, afterschool clubs, church groups, craft classes.*
- ◆ Help your child reach out to children he/she likes. Make phone calls, invite kids over to watch a video, take several along to the pool, the mall or on a family outing. *Be sure your child has a typical routine, school day, and lifestyle—minimize differences.*
- ◆ Find and model ways for friends to help your child participate—even if the participation is only partial. *Demonstrate ways to include your child in games and activities as well as techniques to make your child feel comfortable and safe in new situations. Then let the kids be together.*
- ◆ Minimize adult presence and intervention in day-to-day activities. *Let your child be directly involved with other children without an adult always being right at the child’s side.*
- ◆ Find a role in which your child can succeed, using his/her interests and strengths in different settings.
- ◆ To keep things moving, invite two friends at a time over to play with your child.
- ◆ Speak up when you need assistance or ideas to help your child develop relationships. *Ask people at school, family, friends, and siblings for support.*
- ◆ Become involved and visible with your child in neighborhood and community activities.

15 Tips for Social Etiquette

Source: Natural Learning Concepts.

One of the most endearing qualities of children on the autism spectrum is their forthright nature. Free of pretenses, un-swayed by public opinion and not concerned with making a good impression, spectrum kids simply are who they are! This refreshing quality sometimes makes us **LAUGH** and sometimes makes us **GASP!** Let's take a **lighthearted** look at this charming quality along with 15 tips for social etiquette.

1. Telephone manners

Your child has finally learned to talk on the phone and you're glowing with pride. He's on the phone with his Grandma and you're smiling from ear to ear when suddenly you're appalled to notice the phone has been abandoned, your child is nowhere to be seen and Grandma is still yakking away.

Social Etiquette Tip

When you're finished talking to someone on the telephone, it's a good idea to say good-bye and then hang up. If you just put the phone on the desk and walk away, the other person won't know the conversation is over.

2. In a restaurant

The waitress leads you to your table with your child in tow. As your family is being seated you look around for your child. To your horror and everyone else's your child is sampling other people's food on the way to your table.

Social Etiquette Tip

Other people's food might look delicious and smell delicious but it's their food. It might be tempting but you can't take food off stranger's plates and start eating it.

3. Expressing gratitude

Your child thanks his uncle for the gift and rips open the wrapping paper. His uncle sits next to him, eagerly anticipating his reaction. To your dismay, your son glances at the gift for one second before he disinterestedly drops it on the floor and runs off to get his train.

Social Etiquette Tip

People spend a long time looking for gifts we like. Even if you don't like the gift, it's important to smile and say "Thank you."

4. Respecting people's space

Retrieving a book from the library shelf, you turn around to ask your child a question. You're frozen in shock when you notice a gentleman seated and trying to read a book while your son is an inch away from his face, staring into his wire rimmed glasses.

Social Etiquette Tip

Some people have big eyes and some people have small eyes. Sometimes glasses make their eyes look different. Sometimes glasses have interesting frames. Even so, you cannot put your face right in front of theirs to take a closer look.

5. Tact and diplomacy

Upon entering an ice cream shop you notice an acquaintance sitting at one of the tables. You greet her and introduce your son. As she smiles and says "Hi" to your son, he points his finger to a large mole on her cheek and in a very loud voice asks "What's that?"

Social Etiquette Tip

A mole is a dark bump on somebody's skin. If somebody has a mole, you should not point to it, you should not touch it and you should not ask in a loud voice "What's that?" You should try not to look at it if it bothers you.

6. Sensory issues

Seated in the waiting room, the woman next to you is wearing a beautiful shirt. It's red and silky with bits of gold thread. The receptionist beckons you for a moment. As you turn back you're horrified to see your son run his hand down the front of her shirt because he wants to feel the silky material.

Social Etiquette Tip

People might have nice things and might wear nice things. These things might look good to touch but it's important to respect people and keep our hands to ourselves.

7. Feigning Ignorance

You've spent the last hour enthusiastically telling your friend how much your son has progressed. "His comprehension is right on track" you explain. When your son arrives home with your husband, your friend happily greets him. "I hope school was fun" she says "What's your teacher's name?" It's an easy question for him but much to your distress, your son stares at her and answers "I don't know."

Social Etiquette Tip

If you don't want to answer a question you can say "I don't want to talk about it" but you shouldn't pretend you don't know the answer.

8. Halloween

Glowing with pride you watch your son walk up to the door and ring the bell. Within earshot, you're thrilled when the door opens and he says "Trick or Treat." Your smile widens as you watch the lady handing him some candy. Your son looks at the Snickers Bar distastefully, puts it back into her hands and walks back down the drive, leaving the lady stunned and you aghast.

Social Etiquette Tip

Trick or treating is fun. Sometimes we get candy we like and sometimes we don't. This is because people don't know what we like to eat. If you get candy you don't like, you should say "Thank you" and put it in your Halloween bag. Someone in your family might want to eat it later.

9. Expressing concern

As your neighbor enters your house she trips over the step and almost goes flying on the floor. Your son is standing nearby and thinks it's hilarious. To your dismay, he bursts into laughter while pointing at your neighbor.

Social Etiquette Tip

You should not laugh if somebody trips or falls. They might get hurt or need help. You should ask "Are you OK?"

10. Unexpected meetings

Strolling through the mall you run in to your son's previous teacher. "Look who's here." You tell your son, "Do you remember Miss Halden?" Seeing the recognition in his eyes and knowing full well that he does, you're dismayed when he looks at her blankly and responds "No."

Social Etiquette Tip

We often see people in unexpected places. There's no need to worry because they just want to greet you. The doctor won't start examining you and your teacher won't start teaching you. You should smile and say "Hi."

11. Repetitive

"Produced by DreamWorks and coming to a theater near you" says your son to his aunt for the 38th time in a row. As patient as she is, even she can't bear to hear it one more time and she says "I know. You already told me that."

Social Etiquette Tip

When somebody says "You already told me that" it's time to change the conversation. You could ask "What do you want to talk about?" or you could think of something new to say.

12. Sometimes things change

Your husband's business partner stopped over for a quick meeting. You never noticed that he always wears a baseball cap but your son has and he doesn't like this change. In his mind, this man belongs with a baseball cap. No matter what you say, and to your utter embarrassment, you cringe as your son continually finds a way to try and put a baseball cap on his head.

Social Etiquette Tip

It feels good when things stay the same but sometimes people change and things change. If people change the way they look, it might seem different. If you give it some time, you will see that even though it's different, it's still OK.

13. Staying on topic

Your son is playing at a friend's house and you're relieved it's going smoothly. Just then the hostess asks your son "Do you want some juice?" to which he replies "The car fell in the prickly pear. Ha Ha Ha!" She looks at him oddly and your heart sinks.

Social Etiquette Tip

We all think lots of thoughts every day. When someone asks you a question you should answer them. If you didn't hear the question you should ask "What did you say?" After you answer you can say "I want to tell you what I was just thinking."

14. Avoidance

Eating lunch in the mall you unexpectedly see your son's school teacher. "That looks delicious" she tells your son. "What's your favorite food?" Having tried to convince her for weeks that your child's comprehension is better than she thinks, you're distraught when your son says "Peanut butter" a food you both know he's severely allergic to and hasn't eaten in years.

Social Etiquette Tip

Giving the wrong answer is not a good way to get someone off your back. It's better to say "I don't feel like talking now. Let's talk later."

15. Giving a gift

At the end of year class party you encourage your son to hand his teacher a thank you gift. He takes the gift and walks towards his teacher while you eagerly watch from your chair. He approaches the teacher who is talking to someone else. Without a word and without looking at her, he thrusts the gift in her belly and continues walking, leaving the gift falling to the floor.

Social Etiquette Tip

Getting a gift makes people happy. If you're giving a gift to someone you should walk up to them. If they're talking to someone else you can say "Excuse me." If they're not looking at you it's a good idea to tap their arm to get their attention. Then hold the gift out to them and say "This is for you."

- By Jene Aviram

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Top 6 Tips to Teach Social Skills and Help Kids Make Friends

From [Ann Logsdon](#),

Social Skills Instruction - LD Kids Benefit by Learning How to Make Friends

In the middle of school IEP committee meetings, academics issues are at the forefront. Whether or not social skills are ultimately included in an [Individual Education Program](#), there are some things that can be done to help children with [learning disabilities](#) build the valuable social relationships that are so important to their self-esteem and sense of belonging. Try these tips to teach your students what they really want to learn - how to make friends.

1. Build Social Skills - Encourage Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities

Developing Social Skills - Participating in School and Community Activities is a Good Start

Surprisingly, many children in [special education programs](#) do not participate in extracurricular activities. Help your child discover what his extra-curricular [strengths and interests are](#). Whatever your child enjoys, it is likely there are opportunities in your community for him to join with others for learning and building relationships. For ideas, contact community resources such as the local library YMCA, church youth group, 4-H clubs, scouting organizers, or community parks and recreation staff.

2. Activities with Others Help LD Kids Build Social Skills and Make Friends

Developing Social Skills - Participating in Activities Away from School

Your child will benefit from social interaction outside the school setting. With your encouragement, even [reluctant or shy children](#) can learn to interact with others through activities. Many relationships he builds will flow naturally into the school environment. Just as importantly, non-disabled students will have the opportunity to see your child in successful roles outside of school and get to know him as a friend, rather than an acquaintance.

3. Help Kids Develop Friendships and Social Skills in Easy-to-Manage Steps

Developing Social Skills with Easy Step-by-Step Tasks

Teach your child to develop friendships in [small, easy steps](#). This skill may not come easily for them. Children with disabilities may feel intimidated by other kids, and they may find it too uncomfortable to try to reach out to them. Help your child work on these skills by setting small goals. Ask your child to smile and greet one new child each day. Just say, "Hi." This is often enough to reduce the pressure and begin some conversations that build toward relationships. Each night, have a friendly chat about his day and who he met.

4. Building Social Skills and Making Friends Takes Practice

Practicing Social Skills - Role Play Social Situations

Some children benefit from [rehearsing social situations](#) ahead of time. Role play meeting a new person with each other. Take turns being the greeter and "greetee." Teach your child the art of getting others to talk about themselves. Help him see that by doing this, he can learn about his peers and find common interests. Kids can use friendly questions to encourage kids to talk and break the ice. Focusing on others will also help your child feel less self-conscious. Help your child learn [how to choose good friends](#) to develop healthy relationships.

5. Work on Game and Sportsmanship Social Skills in Advance

Practice Social Skills with Your Child at Home

Help your child learn and practice games and activities at home that are popular at school. Aside from being a good way to practice skills such as reading, counting, and fitness, learning these games will help your child participate in them with other children, while reducing the impact of his learning disability on his ability to play. He will feel more confident and enjoy his interaction with others if he knows the games and can play them with some skill. Consider [making your house the hangout for outdoor fun](#).

6. Schedule Fun Time to Make Social Skills and Making Friends a Priority

[Create a circle of friends](#) by encouraging playtime with a few neighborhood children. Invest in some quality time and snacks, and you'll cultivate friendships that may stay with your child throughout high school, maybe even for life. Friends from the same class at school can provide important social and emotional support, and not to mention, occasional homework help when a worksheet or assignment fails to make it from school to your house.

RECESS SURVEY FORM
Written by: Dot Lucci, M.Ed., C.A.G.S.

Gather Information about the Playground.

Answer the “WH” Questions: who, what, when, where, why, how. These answers will guide the formation of strategies for the child with PDD. They form the formation of playground politics & the hidden curriculum for the rules of behavior (NV and V) on the playground.

1. What does the student with PDD usually do at recess?
 - a. Is it different at different times?
 - b. Is it different with different children?
 - c. Is it different during different seasons/weather?
 - d. Is it different with different adults on duty?

2. What are the other children doing at recess?

Equipment

Field

Black-Top

3. What are children from _____’s class doing?
4. Who usually plays together?
5. Does _____ want to play with them or someone from another class?
6. How does _____ usually communicate?
7. Does _____ indicate he wants to play?
8. Does it appear that _____ wants to do something else (i.e. play with another child, play a different game, etc). How do you know?
9. What does _____ usually do at recess?
10. Does _____ know how to play the games the other children are playing?
 - a. Does _____ have the vocabulary of the game?
 - b. Does _____ know the rules of the game?
 - c. Does _____ know the “moves/skills” to participate in the game?
 - d. Does _____ understand and use the abstract/slang language of the game?

HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM BEING TEASED?

Sometimes students do or say mean things. Mean things are actions or words that may make me feel un-safe, uncomfortable, sad, angry, frightened or another not so good feeling. This could be Teasing. If I am with a student or a group of students and they are saying or doing things that are mean or that I don't understand I should think these questions to myself:

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1.) Do I feel unhappy, unsafe, uncomfortable or another not so good feeling? | YES | NO |
| 2.) Is the student doing or saying something to me that I know or think is wrong or against the rules? | YES | NO |
| 3.) If other students are around are they laughing at me? | YES | NO |
| 4.) Does the student(s) only do or say these things when there is no adult near by? | YES | NO |
| 5.) Is the student(s) hurting my body? | YES | NO |
| 6.) Is the student(s) taking my things or money without me liking it? | YES | NO |
| 7.) Is the student(s) asking me to do something or say something that I think or know is against the rules? | YES | NO |

If I answered YES to any of these questions I may be being TEASED and I should Do My TEASING STEPS

STEP 1. SAY IT & MEAN IT – Pick one or think of your own:

“I don't like it. Stop.”

“Leave me alone.”

“I hear you.”

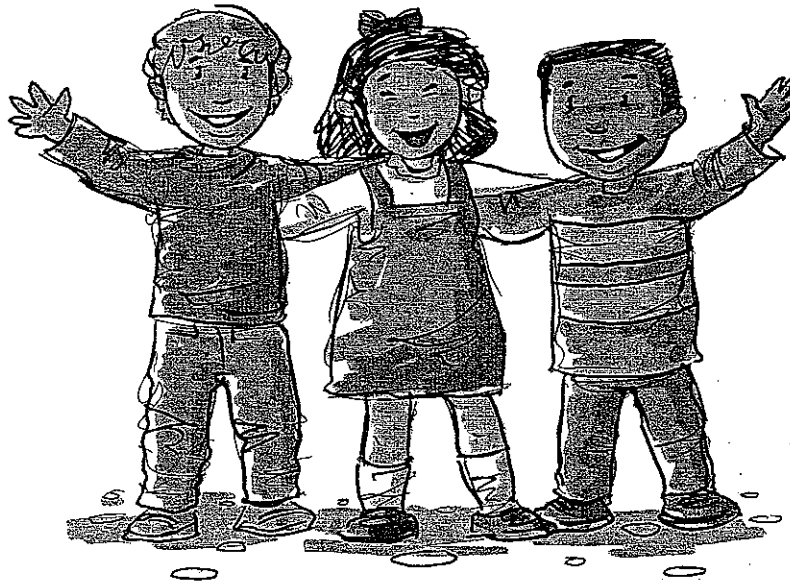
Stand straight with my head straight, keep all my body parts to myself, firm voice, stand an arms length away

STEP 2. DO IT - WALK AWAY AFTER SAYING IT

STEP 3. GO TO AN ADULT & REPORT THE INCIDENT

STEP 4 GATHER THE FACTS AND FILL IN A TEASING ATTEMPT INCIDENT FORM

EVERYDAY SOLUTIONS



**A Practical Guide for Families
of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders**

**Mindy Small, M.A.
Lisa Kontente, ACSW**

CREATED BY HERBERT G. BIRCH SERVICES, INC.

SOCIAL SKILLS**Presenting Problem:**

Emily was unaware of the impact her statements and actions had on others. For example, each time she visited a neighborhood bakery, she commented on the "very fat lady" who worked there.

Possible Relevance to Autism Spectrum Disorders:

- Lack of perspective-taking ability
- Difficulty interacting with others
- Difficulty initiating social interactions

Suggested Strategies/Recommendations:

- Use Social Stories to provide a concrete visual method to teach a variety of social scenarios. To deal with the situation involving the bakery employee, a Social Story could be constructed about how that lady might feel upon hearing Emily's comments. It should also include other, more socially acceptable statements Emily could make instead.
- Provide role-play experiences that address specific instances of Emily coming into contact with someone who appears different.

Conclusion:

Social Stories provide relevant and appropriate alternative strategies to support the person with ASD throughout a given interaction. Social Stories become an extremely useful tool, given the understanding that the visual modality is strongest for people with ASD. Whether the stories use pictures or words, they relay the necessary information in the manner that is most effective for individuals with ASD.

Vignette-Example YY

SOCIAL SKILLS

SOCIAL STORY

Sometimes people look different.

Sometimes I forget and tell them how different they look.

When I tell people they look different, it may make them feel sad.

My mother says to STOP AND HOLD THE WORDS IN MY HEAD.

It is very hard to do this but I try.

When I leave the place, I whisper my thoughts to my mother.

The person who looks different doesn't feel sad.

Social Skills Website List

<http://www.asperger.net>

<http://www.therapeuticresources.com>

http://www.education-connection.com/html/social_skills.html

<http://www.polyxo.com/socialstories>

<http://www.socialskillssolutions.com>

<http://www.difflearn.com/>

http://www.thegraycenter.org/books_and_resources.htm

<http://www.teachersandfamilies.com/open/parent/socialskills1.cfm>



Family Village

Social Skills

(<http://www.familyvillage.wisc.edu/general/social-skills.html>)

- [Informational Resources](#)
 - [Programs and Products](#)
-

Informational Resources

- [Behavioral-Developmental Initiatives \(BDI\)](#) (www.temperament.com)
This website is intended as a clearinghouse for research and practical information about temperamental characteristics to be used by parents, students, professionals and others who have an interest in temperament.
- [Behavior Management: Getting to the Bottom of Social Skills Deficits](#)
(<http://www.ldonline.org/article/6165>)
From LD Online
- [Developing Recreation Skills in Persons with Learning Disabilities](#)
(<http://www.ldonline.org/article/6173>)
From LD Online
- ["Do's & Don'ts" for Fostering Social Competence](#) (<http://www.ldonline.org/article/6168>)
From LD Online

- [Emotions and Emotional Intelligence](http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/Gallery/Young/emotion.htm)
(<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/Gallery/Young/emotion.htm>)
From Bill Trochim's Center for Social Research Methods
- [Encouraging Social Skills in Young Children: Tips Teachers Can Share with Parents](http://www.humsci.auburn.edu/parent/socialskills.html)
(<http://www.humsci.auburn.edu/parent/socialskills.html>)
From the Department of Family and Child Development at Auburn University
- [Friendship and Stories: Using Children's Literature to Teach Friendship Skills to Children with Learning Disabilities](http://www.ldonline.org/article/6166) (<http://www.ldonline.org/article/6166>)
From LD Online
- [Learning the Language of Relationships](http://www.ldonline.org/article/6167) (<http://www.ldonline.org/article/6167>)
From LD Online
- [Playing with Self-Esteem: The Importance of Social Skills](http://www.nldline.com/dr.htm) (<http://www.nldline.com/dr.htm>)
From Stephen Rothenberg, Psy.D.
- [Preventing Antisocial Behavior in Disabled and At-Risk Students](http://www.ldonline.org/article/5973)
(<http://www.ldonline.org/article/5973>)
From LD Online
- [Self-Help and Social Skills...and Why They're Important](http://www.parent-education.com/e3.html) (<http://www.parent-education.com/e3.html>)
From Parent Education Resources and the Kindergarten Survival Handbook
- [Social Competence and the Child with Learning Disabilities](http://www.ldonline.org/article/6169) (<http://www.ldonline.org/article/6169>)
From LD Online
- [Social Skills and Learning Disabilities](http://www.lidaamerica.org/aboutld/teachers/social_emotional/counseling.asp)
(http://www.lidaamerica.org/aboutld/teachers/social_emotional/counseling.asp)
From LDA
- [Social Skills Resource Listing](http://uscm.med.sc.edu/CDR/social%20skills.html) (<http://uscm.med.sc.edu/CDR/social%20skills.html>)

- [Social Skills: The Bottom Line for Adult LD Success](http://www.ldonline.org/article/6176) (http://www.ldonline.org/article/6176)
From LD Online
- [Teacher's Role in Developing Social Skills](http://www.ricklavoie.com/teacherart.html) (http://www.ricklavoie.com/teacherart.html)

Programs and Products

- [Behaviour Change Consultancy \(BCC\) -- United Kingdom](http://www.behaviourchange.com/1-0.htm) (http://www.behaviourchange.com/1-0.htm)
- [Berent Associates Center for Shyness and Social Therapy](http://www.social-anxiety.com/) (http://www.social-anxiety.com/)
- [Classwide Social Skills Program](http://vaxxine.com/socialskill/) (http://vaxxine.com/socialskill/)
- [Cognitive, Academic, and Social Skills Training Program \(CAST\)](http://web.indstate.edu/soe/edschpsy/cast.html)
(http://web.indstate.edu/soe/edschpsy/cast.html)
- [PCI Educational Publishing](http://www.pcicatalog.com/default.aspx) (http://www.pcicatalog.com/default.aspx)
This company offers over 500 high-quality functional "life skills" products. PCI is one of the world's leading publishers of educational materials which help teach basic skills needed to succeed at home, school, work and in the community.

[\[Family Village Home\]](#)

[\[Library\]](#) [\[Coffee Shop\]](#) [\[Hospital\]](#) [\[Shopping Mall\]](#) [\[Post Office\]](#) [\[Bookstore\]](#) [\[Research\]](#)

[\[Living with Disability\]](#) [\[Disability Culture\]](#) [\[School\]](#) [\[Legal Issues\]](#) [\[Recreation & Leisure\]](#) [\[Family Resources\]](#)
[\[Information\]](#)

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