

Parents Help to Encourage Social Success at Home, Too!

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Parents are fundamental contributors to their child's success. As many educators acknowledge, parents are a child's first teachers. A home environment that promotes academic and social success should not be undervalued. Many parents work to improve a child's academic success by making sure the child completes all homework, studies for tests, and develops creative projects. But parents also have opportunities to help improve a child's social success. Below are suggestions for teaching social skills that parents can practice with their children at home.

Steps for Teaching Social Skills at Home

1. **Discuss the Need for Social Skills**-Children need to understand that social skills are important. Share with your child that adults use social skills in their workplaces and community. Talk about/point out experiences that you or your child may have had or observed when social skills were necessary. Brainstorm and come up with a list of social skills that you and your child can work on throughout the year. Below is a list of suggested social skills to work on at home with your child.

List of Suggested Social Skills

- Taking Turns
- Using quiet voices
- Celebrating success
- Resolving conflicts
- Helping others
- Participating
- Sharing ideas
- Active listening
- Praising
- Staying on task
- Organizing materials
- Accepting differences
- Sharing materials
- Saying kind things
- Paraphrasing
- Communicating clearly
- Asking for help
- Using people's names
- Following directions
- Waiting patiently

2. **Work on One Social Skill at a Time** - When working with your child on social skills, focus on just one skill at a time. You may want to select one skill to focus on each week. Create a chart to list the skill for that week and record how the child is doing. Use a simple system such as happy face, neutral face, and sad face to show progress.
3. **Talk About the Social Skill** - Help your child identify what appropriate behavior looks and sounds like. For example, praising looks like a thumbs up, clapping, or smiling. Praising sounds like, "*Terrific!*" "*I knew you could do it!*" "*You're so smart!*" or "*Way to go!*" Make a list with your child of "looks like" and "sounds like" behaviors and post it next to your chart for recording the target behavior and the progress your child makes in demonstrating appropriate behavior.
4. **Practice the Social Skill** - After discussing what a particular social skill looks and sounds like, provide an immediate opportunity for your child to practice the appropriate social skill behavior (looks like and sounds like). Act out a scenario with your child in which he/she must use appropriate behaviors to respond in a social situation.
5. **Pause, Reflect, and Review** - At the end of each day, take the time to pause, reflect, and review your child's use of social skills that day. You may want to encourage your child to keep a journal to write down thoughts about the day. If your child is not yet writing, you can keep a journal together, in which you write the entries. Help your child celebrate his/her social skills successes—if you make it a big deal, your child will, too.

Parents can engage their children in these types of activities anytime during the day. Think about using time in the car or at the dinner table to discuss social skills. As parents, emphasizing the necessity of social skills is one of the most important things you can do to help your child succeed in school—but more importantly, in life.