

Teaching Social Skills- Because No One Lives in Isolation

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Let's play a game....



Think about your day

- * Now, turn to someone by you and tell them how your day has been.
 - * Was it easier if you knew the person?
 - * Did you automatically take turns describing each of your days?
 - * Did someone have to teach you how to have this conversation?

Now let's add some more variables

- * Still talking about how your day went
 - * Turn to another person but this time you are at work and you are speaking to your boss
 - * Now you're talking to your boss at a party
 - * Now try it as if you're speaking to a close friend
 - * Now you're talking to your friend when you're sitting with a group of people
 - * Now you're speaking to your son or daughter
 - * Now you're talking to them when you're in a store

It got complicated, didn't it!



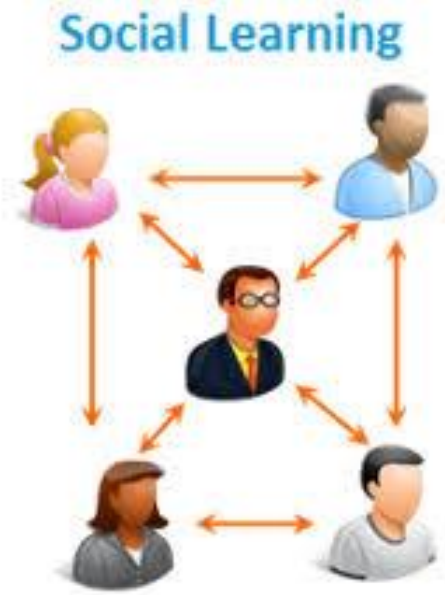
Social Skills

- * For many of our sons or daughters with disabilities they will not learn these skills just by watching.
- * They also may not be able to adjust their interactions based on person and location.
- * Additionally they may not have social maturity and may function from 1/3 to 2/3rds of their chronological age.

Despite all of this....

- * Start as soon as possible to work on social skills.
- * Keep practicing, learning takes time.
- * They will learn as they grow and mature.
- * Even if they don't become social experts- they will still learn essential skills necessary to function in this world.

What we really are doing is Social Learning



- * Teaching how to interpret and respond to people in different settings

This includes...

- * Constantly interpreting surroundings
- * Figuring out the expectations of others
- * Gauging your own emotional response
- * Adapting your behavior based on what you want to achieve



Remember.....

- * Most of your children have the desire to interact but they may not be sure how to figure out the situation that they are in and how to respond
- * This takes work and can be draining to focus so intensely
- * They are not necessarily being difficult purposefully.

How do you even start?

- * Observe

- * Watch your child in different situations. This includes environments and people
- * Watch their actions plus what how others respond to them.
- * Recruit someone impartial to help with this and allow them to be honest with you about what they observe



Next step



- * Listen

- * Listen to what other people say about your child's social abilities, such as family members and teachers.
- * Listen when your child describes situations they find difficult.
- * Listen to me when I'm telling you not to take your child's difficulties personally!!!

Evaluate

- * If the school has done an assessment, really look at all areas of it.
- * Complete a simple assessment yourself.
- * [do2learn JobTIPS Determining Interests & Social Skills Assessments](#)
- * Make a list of areas or situations that they need to work on.

Parent Interview of Social Functioning ***Social Functioning***

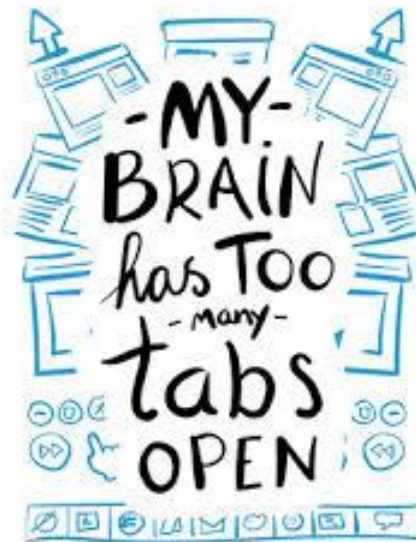
1. How many friends does your child have? If none, does he express an interest in having friends? Has he ever had friends?

Most importantly.....

- * Most of the time there is not a standard measurement.
- * Subjectivity will always be present
- * Most social expectations are always changing and adjustments have to be made.



Are you overwhelmed yet???



Lets break it down

- * Choose a skill to start working on don't focus on this:



Let's break it down into categories or skills

- * Motivation
- * Unwritten Rules
- * Perspective Taking
- * Initiative
- * Face to Face Time
- * Social/Emotional reactions

Emphasize

- * We are part of a social world and we all need people
 - * We don't eat, play games, or learn without others
 - * You have strengths and that's what you want to show others
 - * Focus on how you want to be treated. Are you treating others the same?

Motivation

- * Some may not care or want to put in the effort to work on social learning.
- * This is when you need to find their motivation or currency:
 - * Friends
 - * Jobs- school, home, community
 - * Being treated better
 - * Outside motivator

Unwritten Rules

Every environment has unwritten rules such as:

- * Store
 - * Don't cut in line
 - * Be ready to pay
 - * Put items back where they belong
 - * Close the dressing room door
 - * [Understood.org 5 unwritten social rules](#)

Other unwritten rules for....

- * School
- * Home
- * Family Gatherings
- * Friendships
- * Hygiene
- * Personal Information
- * Eating
- * Humor

Teach them directly

Expected vs Unexpected Behaviors

- * Expected helps you be seen positively
- * Unexpected causes you to be perceived as different or difficult
- * Make lists of expected behaviors and how they make others feel
- * Explain consequences of unexpected behaviors and how they make you feel about themselves

Expected Home behavior

- * Put your dishes in the dishwasher
- * This makes mom and dad very happy
- * Consequence is that they don't nag or fuss at you and you get time to play your video game
- * This makes you happy!

Unexpected Home Behavior

- * You left your plate on the table after eating
- * Mom and dad are angry because now there is a plate with food stuck to it and they are having to find you
- * Consequence- parents fuss at you and make you leave your activity to clean your plate
- * You're upset because you can't finish playing your game and your parents spoke to you firmly

Perspective Taking

- * Being able to think about your own ideas and thoughts and recognizing that others have their own thoughts and ideas
- * Others are thinking of you while you are thinking of them
- * Your thoughts and ideas may not be the same and that is okay!!

Activity Ideas

- * Mind reader- What are they thinking?
- * Sandwich- Make one for someone else
- * Gift giving- What does mom want?
- * Compliment- What will make them happy?

A Compliment is a nice and friendly thing to say to someone.



Initiative

- * Being able to start something. This includes tasks and conversation such as:
 - * Asking for help or asking to find out more information
 - * Introductions
 - * Making “small talk” or “big” talk
 - * Calling someone on the phone
 - * Answering the phone

Activity Ideas

- * Bumper sticker- What would you talk to them about?
- * Errands-Delivery or doing a task that involves another
- * Deliver messages-Verbal with and without responses needed
- * Follow asking for help rules
- * Phone calls- staged and code word
 - * Added note use scripting to begin if necessary

Face to Face Time

- * Being able to concentrate on what others are saying and by showing your interest by
 - * Turn taking
 - * Body language
 - * Using appropriate language
 - * Proper closure

Activity Ideas

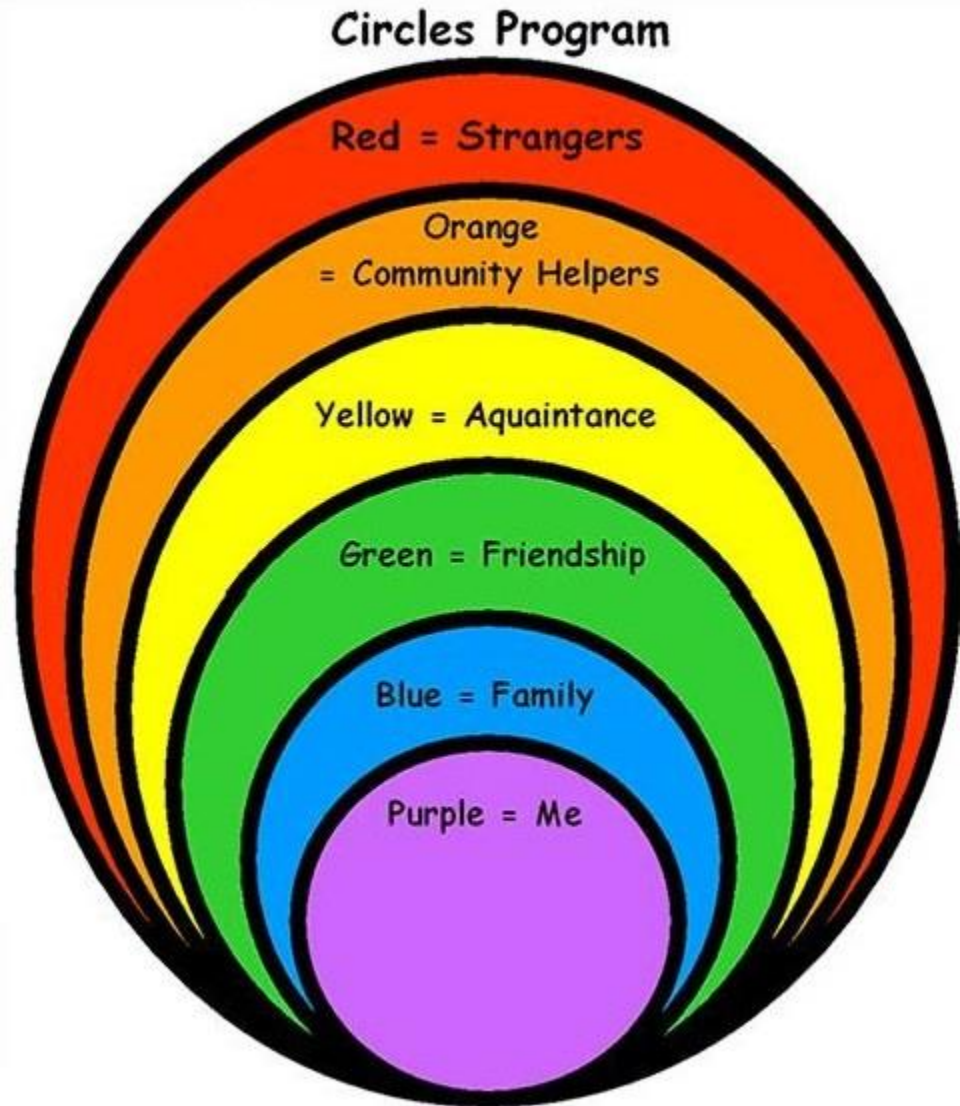
- * Toolkit- known facts and starters
- * Teach and practice appropriate social greetings- formal & social
- * Stoplight turn taking- green (30) yellow (30) red-switch
- * TV detective- Johnny Bravo & Tool Time
- * People watching- read their body language & make up stories
- * How was your day?
- * Video modeling

Social/Emotional Reactions

- * Others will react to how your social behavior makes them feel which in turn affects how they respond to you.
- * In time or severe instances, this creates a lasting impression or image they have of you.
- * This in turn affects our own thoughts, feelings and actions.

Activity Ideas

- * Circle of People
 - * Appropriate responses to each
 - * Actions allowed
 - * Role or importance in life
 - * How you want to be treated by each

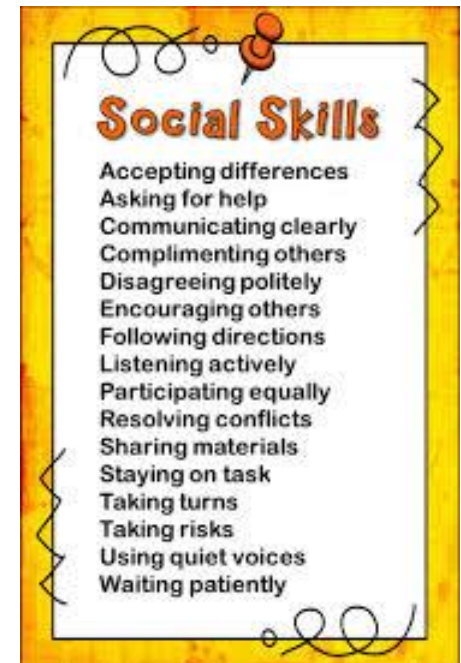


More Ideas

- * Code word for self-monitoring
- * Practice by:
 - * Role playing (what if cards)
 - * Living out loud in family situations and sharing your own social mistakes
 - * Social stories- describe social situations and define appropriate responses
 - * Scripting- plan response ahead of time

Choose a category or skill

- * Focus on that skill or component to work on.
- * Practice in different settings and with different people.
- * Use social stories and/or scripting
- * Praise results!!!



IEP Goals & Objectives

- * Social learning goals are crucial but the difficulty is taking something abstract and subjective and then turning it into concrete measurements.
- * The objectives should be measurable and specific.
- * The objective should begin where your child's baseline measurement is and represent a critical skill.
- * They should be written clear enough that the same conclusion would be reached if several people were measuring the criteria.

Which is clearer and measurable?

- * For 36 instructional weeks, Chris will converse for 10 minutes with a peer.
- * For 36 instructional weeks, during structured class time, using no more than 1 gestural prompt (point or pre-arranged signal), Chris will initiate a conversation with a peer that will last a minimum of 2 verbal exchanges in 3 of 5 weekly trials.

It's a marathon not a sprint



Thank you

- * [Jill Kuzma's SLP Social & Emotional Skill Sharing Site](#)
- * [Carol Gray and Social Stories](#)
- * [Michelle Garcia Winner and Social Thinking](#)
- * [Scott Bellini Building Social Relationships](#)