

7 WAYS TO DEVELOP YOUR Child's Social Skills

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There's nothing as painful for a parent as watching your kid grapple with making friends and figuring out how to fit in. You pick your kid up from school and see him sitting by himself, huddled up in a corner, staring at his lunch bag. You ask him how he feels, and he mumbles something about loneliness. It's an unfortunate moment for any parent.

The key to preventing your child from becoming socially isolated is to help him develop social skills.

To teach your child social skills, you must observe him closely. Does he look you in the eye when you start a conversation? Is he easily distracted, or do his eyes light up with excitement? Is he nervous when talking with his friends?

These clues can help you understand why your child has a problem with social skills. And once you know, it's time to get to work.

So how can you help your child develop social skills and begin to feel more comfortable in new situations? Here are some ideas:

- 1. Motivate your child to maintain eye contact.** Eye contact helps others feel comfortable around you. It also enables you to convey your personality.
 - **Encouraging your child to maintain eye contact helps him feel more comfortable in social settings.** It might seem like a simple thing. But it can make an enormous difference if a child feels insecure in a new situation.
- 2. Teach him to ask the right questions.** Too many children -- especially socially awkward children -- worry that they'll say the wrong thing. But **questions are**

great for starting and holding conversations.

- Teach your child to ask good questions by pretending to be a reporter. Act as if you're interviewing your child about his game collections. Then swap roles. You'll notice your child's confidence skyrocket.

3. Find out their interests. Children have different things that interest them. But you may usually find that they have a favorite hobby. **Involve yourself in their interests.** Invite a friend or two to join him in one of his favorite activities.

4. Understand your child's limits. Everyone socializes in different ways. Children are the same. An introvert may feel more comfortable chatting with friends over text, while an extrovert prefers face-to-face interactions.

- **Avoid trying to force your "right" way of doing things onto your child.** Allow him to choose how they interact with their peers, whether it's through live conversations or online chats.

5. Teach him the value of listening. Effective listening is one of the most critical aspects of social interaction.

- Whether your child wants to engage in a group discussion or strike up a conversation with a friend, he must be mindful of how he listens. Listening to teachers is integral to getting the most out of education at school.

6. Play turn-based games. A turn-based game is one in which each player makes their move in turn rather than concurrently.

- A game like that can **help children gain valuable social skills by teaching them how to wait and be patient.** Your child's skills from playing these games will set the foundation for social success throughout his life.

7. Teach him to respect personal space. Some children like to come physically close when they're talking.

- While there's no harm in this, **your child needs to understand that it's rude to invade other people's personal space.** Being able to listen and speak to others respectfully is a crucial skill.

Social skills are essential to a happy, fulfilling life. It's never too early to start teaching your child social skills. It might be a challenge initially, but with patience and perseverance, your child will thank you for it. And remember, social interaction is an important life lesson for your child.