

Social Skills Tip Sheet

What are Social Skills?

"Social skills can be defined as socially significant behaviors exhibited in specific situations that predict socially important outcomes for children and youth" (Gresham, 2002). These skills can include verbal and non-verbal communication, play skills, active listening, and perspective taking.

Why Do they Matter?

Social skills are often a prerequisite skill to academics and can improve how children relate to peers and their environment. Social skills allow children to build healthy relationships, regulate their emotions, and get their needs met.

Gresham, F. M. (2002). Best Practices in Social Skills Training. In A. Thomas & J. Grimes (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology IV* (p. 1029–1040). National Association of School Psychologists.

Tip #1 - Deficits in Social Skills

- Deficits in these skills can lead to behavioral, communication, and peer challenges.

Tip #2 - Provide positive and productive feedback to guide students' learning.

- Feedback may be verbal, nonverbal, or written, and should be timely, contingent, genuine, meaningful, age appropriate, and at rates commensurate with task and phase of learning (i.e., acquisition, fluency, maintenance).

Tip #3 - Teach social behaviors

- Interpersonal skills such as communication and self-management should be explicitly taught. Once taught, skills should be prompted and reinforced. For example, providing praise for greeting a peer appropriately.
- Break skills/social behaviors down into small steps that can be explicitly taught.

Tip #4 - Modeling

- Model appropriate social skills to your child and talk out loud about the skills you're using. For example, if entering a conversation, say, "excuse me," before interrupting and then explain to your child when and how to use the phrase.

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