



Promoting Social Emotional Competence Adapted for Kindergarten and Grade 1

Session 2.1: Identifying the Importance of Teaching Social Skills

Presenter's Script

Promoting Social Emotional Competence

**PROMOTING CHILDREN'S SUCCESS:
IDENTIFYING THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING
SOCIAL SKILLS**



Teaching Social Skills

- What
- Why
- When
- How

What Is Social Emotional Development?

- A sense of confidence and competence
- Ability to develop good relationships with peers and adults/make friends/get along with others
- Ability to persist at tasks
- Ability to follow directions
- Ability to identify, understand, and communicate own feelings/emotions
- Ability to constructively manage strong emotions
- Development of empathy

Slide 1

Introduce the speakers and today's topic.

Slide 2

1. We are continuing to move up the pyramid, building on our base of nurturing relationships and supportive environments.
2. This session builds on that with ways to enhance social skill development.

Slide 3

1. Tell participants that there are several things that we want them to think about throughout this module: why it is important to be more intentional about teaching social emotional skills, when we should teach, and ideas and resources for how we can teach these skills. The following slides address these areas.
2. We'll start by looking at what we mean by teaching social skills, why it is important to be more intentional about teaching social emotional skills, when we should teach, and ideas and resources for how we can teach these skills.

Slide 4

1. Review the slide and remind participants that they talked about these skills in earlier sessions.
2. Will these help in the classroom? Think about which ones help the most with the common core academic push.

Slide 5

1. Ask participants why they think it is so important for us to "teach" children social emotional skills. Add to their comments by sharing that these are some of the skills that we know that children need in order to be more successful and to prevent

Why Teach Social Emotional Skills?



- Children are not born with social emotional skills
- Children face challenges and stressors **every day**
- These challenges and stressors **will** impact their ability to function in the school setting
- Children who have strong social emotional skills become resilient.

Teach Me What to Do!

Children must be taught socially appropriate behaviors:

- Friendship Skills
- Emotional Literacy
- Anger Management and Impulse Control
- Problem Solving Strategies



ALL children can use your help to learn social emotional skills.

The single best childhood predictor of adult adaptation is not school grades, and not classroom behavior, but rather, the adequacy with which the child gets along with other children.

Willard Fogel, President of International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development



challenging behavior—not only in early care and education settings, but also in future educational settings.

2. While we tend to be very thoughtful and intentional about teaching literacy, cognitive, and other skills, we need to be just as intentional about teaching social emotional skills. These skills build and strengthen resiliency in children. Resilience is important because it is the human capacity to face, overcome, and be strengthened by or even transformed by the adversities of life.

Slide 6

Read slide and re-emphasize the importance of these behaviors for long-term life & academic success!

Slide 7

1. Research suggests that young children who learn positive social skills are more likely to have positive relationships, acceptance, and friendships later on in school and as adults.
2. Although many children develop these positive social skills naturally, some children do not.
3. Children who don't develop these skills naturally have difficulty interacting appropriately with their peers and are thus at risk for later social problems.
4. The good news is that adults can teach young children friendship skills – even to children with very challenging behaviors. And in doing so, YOU can make a tremendous difference in a child's life --potentially for a lifetime.

Children draw from three sources of resilience features

Have:

- People around me I trust and who love me no matter what
- People who set limits for me so I know when to stop before there is danger or trouble
- People who show me how to do things right by the way they do things
- People who want me to learn to do things on my own
- People who help me when I am sick, in danger or need to learn

Children draw from three sources of resilience features

Learn:

- A person people can like and love
- Glad to do nice things for others and show my concern
- Respectful of myself and others
- Willing to be responsible for what I do
- Sure things will be all right

Children draw from three sources of resilience features

Learn:

- Talk to others about things that frighten or bother me
- Find ways to solve problems that I face
- Control myself when I feel like doing something wrong or dangerous
- Figure out when it is a good time to talk to someone or to take action
- Find someone to help me when I need it

Why: The Importance of Social Skills



What happens when children don't have these skills?...

When: Identifying Teachable Moments



Slides 8-10

1. The next three slides lists the features of resiliency (*I have, I am, I can*). A child does not need all of these features to be resilient but one is not enough. Resiliency results from a combination of these features.
2. Point out to participants that while these features may seem obvious and easy to obtain, they are not. In fact many children are not resilient and many parents and other caregivers do not help children become resilient. Too many adults crush or impede resilience in children or give mixed messages and too many children feel helpless, sad and not fully loved.
3. Unfortunately many of the students you will see in your Kindergarten and first grade classrooms will not have mastered or even begun to grasp the social emotional skills in the pre-k settings and have now reached a time in their development when they need to add new social emotional skills, like accepting similarities and differences, that all feelings are valid but should be expressed in appropriate manners, and adding new ways to control anger and impulse.

Slide 11

Ask participants what happens when children don't have these skills? Have them think about children in their settings who don't have these skills. What have they noticed about these children?

- Answers might include everything from specific challenging behaviors to quiet and withdrawn.
- How do we help children learn these social emotional skills? We "teach" them!

Slide 12

1. Now that we have discussed why it is important to teach social emotional skills, we are going to talk about "when" during the day we might teach these skills.
 - Describe a typical situation that might happen in a classroom or child care setting.
 - For example, Trey is building a castle in the block area. Blair comes to the block area to play and decides that she needs the block that is right in the middle of Trey's castle. Blair grabs the block, and Trey's castle crumbles. Trey hits Blair and takes the block away. Blair starts crying (red arrow).
2. Ask participants to generate ideas about what teachers or child care providers might say to Trey and Blair at this point
 - e.g., "Use your words." "Hitting is not okay." "Say you're sorry." "Ask nicely if you want something." "Get

an adult if you need help.” “Calm down.”

3. Point out that it is often at the crisis (red arrow) point that teachers try to teach new social skills. Discuss that while this is a teachable moment, and can be a social skills lesson for Trey and Blair, this might not be the most effective teachable moment because:
 - The incident has already happened.
 - Both children are upset.
 - Blair may find the teacher reinforcing (“Wow, I might do this again so I can get the teacher’s attention!”).
4. Discuss effective teachable moments (referring to the green arrows at the left-hand side). The main point here is that we want to make sure that these “crisis moments” are not the only time that we are “teaching” social skills! Social skills can be embedded into almost any part of the daily schedule— Intentional, planned times as well as taking advantage of naturally occurring moments throughout the day.

Increasing Social Skill Use

Priming
• Setting up opportunities before cooperative activity or play begins

Reinforcement Timing
• Avoid interrupting activity
• Comment immediately after activity

Be Specific
• Describe skills used



Provide lots of opportunity for friendly interactions across the day

Slide 13

1. Teachers can increase the likelihood of children using social skills with specific priming strategies.
 - For example, prior to a free play period, teachers can ask children who they are going to play with; they can ask what specific toy or material they are going to share; and they can provide practice opportunities. A practice opportunity might include, “Hey, Jaymin, let’s pretend I am Cody and you are going to ask me to play trucks.” Jaymin would then practice asking, with or without adult prompting, and the adult would provide encouragement or feedback for Jaymin’s social initiation to play.
 - Other play ideas include the following:
 - Teachers can increase the duration of peer play by providing suggestions or prompting role reversals.
 - Expanding play ideas can occur by suggesting new ways of playing with the materials, new ways for dramatic play to unfold, and new ways of including more children in a game or activity.
 - When a teacher notices that children are disengaging from play with one another, he or she can prompt the children to reverse dramatic play roles (“How about you be the mom now and she can be the baby?”). This

strategy can reengage children in the play sequence and lead to more lengthy social encounters.

2. Although it is important to acknowledge children for their use of social skills, it is also the case that the effective use of acknowledgement requires ongoing attention to several key factors:
 - Timing of reinforcement delivery is crucial. As long as children are engaged in friendly behavior, it is a good idea to withhold reinforcement. Although this approach may seem counterintuitive, evidence suggests that adults' delivery of attention to children at play can have the immediate effect of terminating their play. Given this fact, it is advisable to comment on children's friendly play shortly after the fact.
 - When commenting on children's friendly play, it is essential to describe the specific friendly behavior(s) that you observed. Instead of saying, "You're playing so nicely together," say, "You are taking turns and saying nice things to each other." This descriptive commenting provides children with specific feedback about what they are doing well.
 - For many children, caregivers may need to provide lots of reinforcement early on. Once children start to use their friendly behaviors, however, adults need to begin the process of slowly removing their specific feedback from the ongoing play. The goal is not to remove all adult reinforcement, but to provide sufficient opportunity for friendly play in and of itself to become reinforcing.
3. Refer participants to **Handout *Developing Social Skills and Increasing Skill Use*** for more ideas on supporting the development of social skills.

Slide 14

Stages of Learning

- **Acquisition** – introduction to new skill or concept
- **Fluency** – the ability to immediately use the skill or concept without a prompt
- **Maintenance** – continuing to use the skill or concept over time
- **Generalization** – applying the skill or concept to new situations, people, activities, ideas, and settings

1. Remind participants that as we think about "when" to teach social emotional skills, we also need to consider stages of learning that should affect "how" we teach these skills:
 - **Acquisition** – When children learn how to do something new, they acquire new skills or concepts. To support children's acquisition of new skills, we need to explain and demonstrate the skill/concept and encourage children as they attempt to learn the skill. Skills can easily be lost at this stage – so encourage, encourage, encourage!
 - **Fluency** – Once children acquire a new skill, they need to be able to use the skill proficiently or fluently. We need to

provide multiple opportunities for them to practice and master this skill/concept, as well as prompt children to use their new skills in new situations.

- Maintenance – Once children are fluent with their new skills, they need to be able to use the skills (or “maintain” the skills) without support or prompting from an adult.
 - Generalization – When children apply their new skills to new situations, people, activities, and settings they demonstrate generalized use of these skills. For example, a child might learn a new skill at child care and then generalize that skill by using it at home (a different setting) or a child might learn a new skill with a grandparent and generalize it by using it with their aunt (different people).
2. Being more aware of supporting learning also “tunes” us in to being purposeful and direct as well as not missing opportunities to encourage children when they are spontaneously learning and using their new skills. We want to take advantage of both planned and unplanned opportunities!

Activity: Action Planning

- Think back to the **What? Why? When?** and **How?** of social skills.
- What social skills would be most useful to teach in your classroom?
 - What steps can you take to model appropriate social skills?
 - Are there any children in your classroom that would particularly benefit from you modeling social skills? How will you involve them?

Questions?



Slide 15

1. Refer participants to their Action Plans and give time to complete.
2. Review with whole group.

Slide 16

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **What Works Brief 5 - Using Classroom Activities and Routines as Opportunities to Support Peer Interaction**
- **“You Got It!” Teaching Social and Emotional Skills By: Lise Fox and Rochelle Harper Lentini**
- **Developing Social Skills & Increasing Skill Use – Teacher Support Examples**