



Building Good Social Skills

Social skills are the skills that help people live, work, and play together. These “people” skills are how we behave and interact with others. They impact how other people treat us and how we get along in the world. Some good people skills are:

- Courteous
- Fair
- Helpful
- Honest
- Kind
- Patient
- Positive Attitude
- Respectful

Here's how parents can build their child's social skills:

Infants & Toddlers

- Be a good role model for your child. It is one of the best things you can do. Your child watches you and gets clues about what to do and how to act.
- Touch, hold, and cuddle your baby often. Talk to your baby in a soothing voice, even if she does not respond. These actions teach him that you will be there when he needs you.
- Talk to your child about feelings (anger, happiness, sadness, frustration, or nervousness). For example, “You seem to be frustrated that you can't get the toy to work. Let's talk about it and see if we can figure out how to solve the problem.”
- Practice with your child the words or actions she can use to show respect and caring: giving compliments (saying something nice) or heartfelt smiles, being patient, holding doors open for others, and saying please and thank you.

Preschoolers

- Do nice things for others. Help your child: bake cookies for a neighbor, make a “get-well” card for a friend who is sick, or pick flowers for a teacher to say thank you.
- Set up routines that help your child practice good social skills. For instance, have your child help you make the bed in the morning, pack a lunch for school, clear the table after dinner, or pick up toys before bed. Let your child know that you love the help!
- Volunteer with your child at church, at school or for a community-based organization.
- Be Secret Agents! Tell your child that she has one week to do something kind for someone else – but no one can know! This is a fun way to get your child to learn to help others.

Book Suggestions

Have You Filled a Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids by Carol McCloud • The Recess Queen by Alexis O’Neill • Ordinary Mary’s Extraordinary Deed by Emily Pearson